ARGENTINA

SIGNIFICANT ADVANCEMENT

In 2023, Argentina made significant advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. The province of Misiones approved a bill to create a certification program for agricultural producers to prevent child labor and increase traceability. In addition, the Government of Argentina; the International Labor Organization; and representatives from unions, employers, and civil society developed and started implementation of the 2023–2025 National Roadmap to achieve the 8.7 Alliance goals toward the eradication of child labor. Furthermore, in partnership with local unions, the province of Chubut launched a mobile application and distributed tablets to inspectors to better detect and record child labor incidences. The government also approved the Fourth National Plan for Prevention and Eradication of Child Labor and the Protection of Adolescent Labor, which includes efforts to strengthen the labor inspectorate. Finally, the Good Harvest Program, providing childcare services to rural and migrant families, was expanded into three additional provinces. Despite these efforts, Argentina's legal minimum age for work of 16 years is lower than the compulsory education age of 18 years, which may encourage children to leave school before the completion of compulsory education. Lastly, Argentina lacks social programs that address child labor in street work and begging.

PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Statistics on Children's Work and Education

Children	Age	Percent of Population
Working	5 to 14	5.3% (371,771)
Hazardous Work by Children	15 to 17	Unavailable
Attending School	5 to 14	98.9%
Combining Work and School	7 to 14	6.2%

Children in Argentina are subjected to the worst forms of child labor, including in commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking, and use in illicit activities, including drug trafficking. Children also engage in dangerous tasks in agriculture.

Overview of Children's Work by Sector and Activity

Agriculture

Harvesting† cotton, grapes, olives, strawberries, tomatoes, tobacco, *yerba mate* (stimulant plant), harvesting† and shelling garlic, and fishing.

Industry

Production of garments and bricks; construction.†

Services

Street begging.† Refuse collection, recycling, and garbage scavenging.† Domestic work, including cleaning, doing laundry, and ironing. Selling produce in grocery stores.

Categorical Worst Forms of Child Labor‡

Commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking. Forced labor in agriculture, domestic work, and street vending and in the production of garments. Use in illicit activities, including trafficking drugs.

† 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 Argentina's implementation of its international commitments to eliminate the worst forms of child labor.

Legal Framework
Raise the minimum age for work from 16 to 18 years to align with the compulsory education age.
Enforcement
Increase the number of labor inspectors from 368 to about 921 to ensure adequate coverage of the labor force of approximately 13.8 million workers.
Publish information on the labor inspectorate budget.
Enhance coordination and information-sharing with provincial governments in order to publish information on the number of child labor penalties that were imposed and collected.
Provide law enforcement bodies with adequate funding and resources to carry out their operations.
Ensure the number of labor inspections conducted is commensurate to the size of the labor inspectorate to maintain adequate quality and scope of inspections.
Social Programs
Develop programs to address sectors in which child labor is prevalent, including street work and begging.

CHILDREN AT HIGHER RISK

Children from the northern provinces, as well as Bolivia, Paraguay, and Peru, are at risk of forced labor in numerous sectors, including garment production, agriculture, street vending, domestic work, and in small businesses. Girls from Argentina's northern provinces are also victims of sex trafficking.

BARRIERS TO EDUCATION ACCESS

Although the school attendance rate is high in Argentina nationally, it is lower in northern provinces for secondary education. In addition, migrant children attend school at lower rates than other students.

LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR CHILD LABOR

Argentina has ratified all key international conventions concerning child labor. However, Argentina's laws do not meet international standards, including a gap between the minimum age for work and the compulsory education age.

Child Labor Laws and Regulations	Meets International Standards	Legislation
Minimum Age for Work, **16 Years**	✓	Articles 2, 7, and 17 of the Prohibition of Child Labor and Protection of Adolescent Work Law; Article 9 of the Special Code on Contracting Domestic Workers; Article 25 of the Child and Adolescent Rights Protection Law; Articles 54 and 55 of the Law on Agrarian Work; Article 189 of the Employment Contract Law
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work, **18 Years**	✓	Article 10 of the Prohibition of Child Labor and Protection of Adolescent Work Law; Articles 176, 189, and 191 of the Law on Labor Contracts; Article 62 of the Law on Agrarian Work
Identification of Hazardous Occupations or Activities Prohibited for Children	✓	Article 1 of Executive Decree 1117/2016 on Dangerous Work
Prohibition of Slavery, Debt Bondage, and Forced Labor	✓	Article 15 of the Constitution; Article 1 of the Modifications to the Prevention of and Sanction Against Trafficking in Persons and Assistance to Victims Law; Articles 140, 145 bis, and 145 ter of the Penal Code; Article 9 of the Child and Adolescent Rights Protection Law
Prohibition of Child Trafficking	✓	Article 1 of the Modifications to the Prevention of and Sanction Against Trafficking in Persons and Assistance to Victims Law; Articles 145 bis and 145 ter of the Penal Code; Article 9 of the Child and Adolescent Rights Protection Law
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children	✓	Article 1 of the Modifications to the Prevention of and Sanction Against Trafficking in Persons and Assistance to Victims Law; Articles 125–128 of the Penal Code; Aisemberg, Aaron s/ recurso de casación (2018)
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities	✓	Article 11 of the Possession and Trafficking of Drugs Law
Minimum Age for Voluntary State Military Recruitment, **18 Years**	✓	Article 8 of the Voluntary Military Service Law
Prohibition of Compulsory Recruitment of Children by (State) Military	✓*	Article 19 of the Voluntary Military Service Law
Prohibition of Military Recruitment by Non-state Armed Groups	✓	Article 10 of Law No. 26.200
Compulsory Education Age, **18 Years**	✓	Articles 16 and 29 of the National Education Law; Article 2 of the Law on Early Education
Free Public Education	✓	Articles 15 and 16 of the Child and Adolescent Rights Protection Law

** Country has no conscription*

As Argentina's minimum age for work of 16 years is lower than the compulsory education age of 18 years, children may be encouraged to leave school before the completion of compulsory education.

ENFORCEMENT OF LAWS ON CHILD LABOR

In 2023, labor and criminal law enforcement agencies in Argentina took actions to address child labor. However, insufficient human resources hindered enforcement efforts.

Agencies Responsible for Child Labor Law Enforcement

Ministry of Labor, Employment, and Social Security: Conducts labor law enforcement efforts in cooperation with labor officials and authorities at the provincial level and the Autonomous City of Buenos Aires, and operates a national hotline to receive reports of labor violations. Through its Inspection Directorate of Child Labor, the Protection of Adolescent Work, and Indicators of Labor Exploitation, it enforces child labor laws and collaborates with the National Registry of Rural Workers and Employers to enforce child labor laws in the agricultural sector. Formerly known as the Ministry of Labor, Employment, and Social Security, but it was incorporated into the new Ministry of Human Capital as a secretariat on December 10, 2023.

Public Prosecutor's Office: Detects, investigates, and prosecutes cases of human trafficking and labor exploitation through its Special Prosecutor's Office for Human Trafficking and Exploitation. Receives public reports of suspected human trafficking cases through an anonymous national hotline, Line 145. In 2023, the Trafficking in Persons Executive Committee, the Argentine Football Association (AFA) and NGO *Red Solidaria* promoted Argentina's Trafficking in Persons hotline in a campaign that reached over 12 million people.

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**

In 2023, **368** labor inspectors conducted **125,025** worksite inspections, finding **26** child labor violations. There were also **9** investigations into suspected worst forms of child labor crimes with **28** prosecutions initiated and **4** perpetrators convicted.

COORDINATION, POLICIES, AND PROGRAMS

Key Mechanism to Coordinate Government Efforts on Child Labor Argentina established a mechanism to coordinate its efforts to address child labor.	***National Commission for the Eradication of Child Labor (CONAETI):*** Coordinates federal efforts to prevent and eradicate child labor. Led by the Labor Ministry's Under Secretariat of Policies of Inclusion in the Labor World and includes representatives from 25 government agencies, workers' representatives from unions, and business representatives, in addition to benefiting from the advice of the ILO and UNICEF. There are also 24 Provincial Committees for the Prevention and Eradication of Child Labor (COPRETIs), which coordinate activities at the provincial level between government, business, unions, and civil society stakeholders. During the reporting period, CONAETI started the third phase of the Federal Strengthening Program for the Eradication of Child Labor that trained 308 individuals as "promoters of childhoods free of child labor" and kicked off the 2023 Action Plan of the Network of Companies against Child Labor. Held four plenary sessions during 2023 and approved the Fourth National Plan for Prevention and Eradication of Child Labor and the Protection of Adolescent Labor (2024–2028), which it implements.

Coordination, Policies, and Programs (Cont.)

Key Policies Related to Child Labor Argentina established policies that are consistent with relevant international standards on child labor.	***Fourth National Plan for the Prevention and Eradication of Child Labor and the Regulation of Adolescent Work (2024–2028):†*** Aims to prevent and eliminate child labor, including its worst forms, and to regulate adolescent work. Promotes the dissemination of information on child labor, efforts to strengthen the labor inspectorate, civil society engagement on child labor issues, inclusive education, and institutional and legislative reform. Fourth iteration approved during the reporting period.
	Federal Strengthening Program for the Eradication of Child Labor: Supports leaders at the sub-national level to improve strategies to prevent and detect child labor and irregular adolescent work. Aims to coordinate efforts among COPRETIs, civil society organizations, labor unions, and companies in common geographic areas and sectors that show high risks of child labor. In 2023, the Program launched the Third Cohort to train 500 people across the country.
	National Plan Against Human Trafficking and Exploitation, and for Protection and Assistance of Victims (TIP Action Plan 2022–2024): Managed by the Federal Council to Fight Human Trafficking and to Protect and Assist Victims, this program focuses on the prevention, assistance, prosecution, and institutional strengthening. The plan sets forth 19 measures and 68 actions that seek to further public policies to fight human trafficking and to secure victims' full enjoyment of rights and guarantees. By October 2023, 82 percent of the actions had been implemented. Under the plan, the Ministry of Health implemented specific policies to strengthen victims' access to therapeutic care, expanded its policy on housing assistance for victims and their families, and outlined stages of development for building new shelters in the northwest, northeast, central, and southern regions of the country.
Key Social Programs to Address Child Labor Argentina funded and participated in programs that include the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor. However, these social programs do not address the problem in all sectors. *† Program is funded by the Government of Argentina.* *‡ The government had other social programs that may have included the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor.*	***Universal Child Allowance Program (Asignación Universal Por Hijo):†*** Government program funded in part by the World Bank that provides a conditional cash transfer to unemployed parents and workers in the informal economy, contingent upon parents' fulfillment of health and education requirements for their children. In April 2023, the government announced an increase in the amount, impacting 4 million children.
	National Registry of Rural Workers and Employers Awareness-Raising Campaigns:† During the reporting period, continued implementing awareness-raising campaigns and the CRECER (Grow) Program to provide care and services for children during the harvest season.
	Good Harvest Program: Provides childcare facilities and services for migrant and rural families involved in seasonal harvests. Around 148 centers provide services to more than 6,600 children. In 2023, extended to the provinces of Misiones, Catamarca, and Cordoba, totaling 13 of the 24 Argentine provinces. Along with national and provincial cooperation to fund and staff the childcare centers under this program, this initiative also promoted public-private partnerships with the Argentine Chamber of Tobacco in Salta province and the Argentine Blueberry Chamber in Tucuman province.

*For information about USDOL's projects to address child labor around the world, visit **dol.gov/ILABprojects***
*For references, please visit **dol.gov/ChildLaborReports***

BANGLADESH

MINIMAL ADVANCEMENT – *Efforts Made but Continued Law and Practice that Delayed Advancement*

In 2023, Bangladesh made minimal advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. The Bangladesh Department of Inspections for Factories and Establishments identified 3,459 child labor violations and border guards prevented 75 individuals, including children, from being trafficked into neighboring countries. Moreover, the government supported a project that supported the rehabilitation of children living and working on the street from the Dalit and Bihari minority groups. The government also continued to support UNICEF's Myanmar Curriculum Pilot, which enrolled 300,000 Rohingya children for the 2023–2024 academic year. The Myanmar Curriculum provides Rohingya students with formal, standardized education based on Burma's national education system. However, Bangladesh is assessed as having made only minimal advancement because it continues to obstruct unannounced inspections in the Export Processing Zones. Under the Export Processing Zone Labor Rules, the Department of Inspections for Factories and Establishments is required to indirectly provide notice to the Bangladesh Export Processing Zone Authority, which may result in employers being notified of inspections in advance. The lack of routine unannounced inspections may leave potential violations of child labor laws and other labor abuses undetected in the Export Processing Zones. Moreover, the Bangladesh Labor Act does not apply to children working in all sectors in which child labor occurs. The government also did not publicly release information on its criminal law enforcement efforts related to child labor in 2023. In addition, penalties for child labor violations can only be imposed after a lengthy legal process and, when courts do impose them, the fines are too low to deter child labor law violations.

PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Statistics on Children's Work and Education

Children	Age	Percent of Population
Working	5 to 14	9.2% (Unavailable)
Hazardous Work by Children	7 to 17	Unavailable
Attending School	5 to 14	88.4%
Combining Work and School	7 to 14	8.2%

Children in Bangladesh are subjected to the worst forms of child labor, including commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking, and forced labor in the drying of fish and the production of garments. Children also perform dangerous tasks in the production of garments and leather goods, as well as breaking stones.

Overview of Children's Work by Sector and Activity

Agriculture

Harvesting and processing crops, including salt;† and raising poultry. Fishing, including drying and processing fish,† including shrimp.†

Industry

Producing textiles, including jute, and garments, including tailoring and working in the informal garment sector.† Producing leather† and leather goods,† including footwear. Manufacturing aluminum,† bricks,† glass,† hand-rolled cigarettes (*bidis*),† matches,† plastic,† soap,† and furniture (steel).† Shipbreaking,† battery recycling,† construction,† and breaking bricks† and stones.†

Services

Domestic work. Garbage collecting, sorting, and recycling.† Working in transportation, including ticket taking,† welding,† pulling rickshaws, driving, working as crew members on fishing boats, and repairing automobiles.† Working in retail shops, including grocery stores, restaurants, weaving, and tailoring shops.

Categorical Worst Forms of Child Labor‡

Use in illicit activities, including smuggling and selling drugs. Forced begging, forced labor in the drying of fish and the production of garments. Commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking. Forced domestic work.

† 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 Bangladesh's implementation of its international commitments to eliminate the worst forms of child labor.

Legal Framework
Extend minimum age for work protections to all children, including those engaged in domestic work and working on vessels and small farms.
Ensure that the types of hazardous work prohibited for children are comprehensive and include domestic service.
Criminally prohibit the use of a child for prostitution; the use, procuring, and offering of children for the production of drugs; and the recruitment of children under age 18 by non-state armed groups.
Legally establish a compulsory education age to align with the minimum age of work of 14.
Enforcement
Empower labor inspectors to recommend or assess penalties for all labor violations, including those that are initial offenses, and increase the penalties for child labor violations to sufficiently deter future violations.
Conduct investigations and prosecutions of public officials who are complicit in the trafficking and commercial sexual exploitation of children, including those who accept bribes.
Increase the number of labor inspectors from 446 to 1,861 to ensure adequate coverage of the labor force of approximately 74.5 million workers.
Permit and conduct unannounced labor inspections, including inspections for child labor, in Export Processing Zones.
Prosecute all criminal child labor violations, as opposed to using mediation and settlement.
Provide adequate training for inspectors and investigators on worst forms of child labor, including commercial sexual exploitation of children, to ensure that such cases are consistently investigated and prosecuted.
Collect and publish national-level data on the enforcement of criminal laws relevant to child labor, including information on training for investigators, and the number of prosecutions initiated, convictions attained, and penalties imposed.
Investigate and hold accountable local government officials who hire children for government-funded job programs.
Coordination
Establish a robust referral mechanism between civil and criminal enforcement agencies to promote coordination and cooperation to address child labor and its root causes.
Government Policies
Ensure agencies responsible for implementation of the National Plan of Action on the Elimination of Child Labor are effectively coordinating their efforts and strategies.
Social Programs
Enhance efforts to make education accessible for all children by improving bathroom sanitation and resources, ensuring a well-developed distance-learning mechanism, increasing the number of schools, offsetting costs for transportation and school materials, and permitting all children to enroll in school regardless of whether they have a permanent address or identity documents.
Expand programs to address the scope of the child labor problem, including in the informal garment, leather, and fish-drying industries.

CHILDREN AT HIGHER RISK

Most child laborers in Bangladesh work in the informal sector. Children living in coastal areas are likely to engage in child labor in the fishing sector, including drying and selling fish. Children from the minority Bihari community are forced into work at a young age, and in jobs considered less desirable. Children experiencing homelessness are forced to beg, pickpocket, and sell drugs. In border areas, traffickers force children to produce and transport drugs. Children displaced by natural disasters are also at a higher risk for human trafficking and forced commercial sexual exploitation. Finally, there are reports of Bangladeshi officials taking bribes to provide human traffickers access to refugee camps and facilitate the trafficking of Rohingya children. NGOs allege that some officials allow traffickers to operate at the India-Bangladesh border and checkpoints.

BARRIERS TO EDUCATION ACCESS

More than 40 percent of schools lack basic sanitation facilities and hygiene services, and one in five schools lack safe drinking water. Many schools in Bangladesh are overcrowded and over 80 percent run double shifts of students. The country does not have an adequate number of teachers for an education system of its size. The Primary Teacher Training Institutes cannot keep up with the demand for teachers, particularly in rural areas. Other barriers to education include the high costs for transportation, uniforms, and school supplies. The Urdu-speaking Bihari minority children face education barriers due to having temporary addresses associated with residing in long-term camps. The Dalit and lower-caste Hindu children have lagged behind other groups in accessing education. According to reports, 60 percent of children with disabilities from ages 5 to 17 are not enrolled in formal education. Additionally, children born to mothers who are engaged in commercial sex face barriers in accessing education since they are not permitted to obtain legal birth certificates. Many children from this community do not know their father's name, which is a legal requirement to gain national identity cards or birth certificates needed for school enrollment. Although previous reporting indicated that the Bangladesh government closed Rohingya-operated schools and threatened to confiscate UN Refugee Agency-issued identity cards from Rohingya teachers and move them to the flood-prone island of Bhasan Char, this did not occur in 2023. Over 300,000 Rohingya students were enrolled for the 2023–2024 school year, setting a new record and marking the first time Rohingya refugee children of all ages will have access to education under the UNICEF Myanmar Curriculum Pilot.

LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR CHILD LABOR

Bangladesh has ratified all key international conventions concerning child labor. Although the government has established laws and regulations related to child labor, gaps exist in Bangladesh's legal framework to adequately protect children from the worst forms of child labor, including the lack of criminal provisions comprehensively criminalizing the use of children in prostitution.

Child Labor Laws and Regulations	Meets International Standards	Legislation
Minimum Age for Work, **14 Years**	✗	Sections 1–2, 34, and 284 of the Bangladesh Labor Act; Sections 159, 161, and 175 of the Bangladesh Export Processing Zone Labor Act, 2019
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work, **18 Years**	✓	Sections 39–42 of the Bangladesh Labor Act
Identification of Hazardous Occupations or Activities Prohibited for Children	✓	Sections 39–42 of the Bangladesh Labor Act; Statutory Regulatory Order Number 65, List of Worst Forms of Work for Children
Prohibition of Slavery, Debt Bondage, and Forced Labor	✓	Sections 370, 371, and 374 of the Penal Code; Sections 2, 3, 6, and 9 of the Prevention and Suppression of Human Trafficking Act
Prohibition of Child Trafficking	✓	Sections 2, 3, and 6 of the Prevention and Suppression of Human Trafficking Act; Sections 2 and 6 of the Suppression of Violence Against Women and Children Act

Legal Framework for Child Labor (Cont.)

Child Labor Laws and Regulations	Meets International Standards	Legislation
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children	✗	Sections 372 and 373 of the Penal Code; Sections 78 and 80 of the Children's Act; Sections 2, 3, 6, and 11 of the Prevention and Suppression of Human Trafficking Act; Sections 2 and 8 of the Pornography Control Act
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities	✗	Section 79 of the Children's Act
Minimum Age for Voluntary State Military Recruitment, **16 Years**	✓	Army, Air Force, and Navy Regulations (titles unknown)
Prohibition of Compulsory Recruitment of Children by (State) Military	N/A*	
Prohibition of Military Recruitment by Non-state Armed Groups	✗	Article 79 of the Children's Act; Anti-Terrorism Act of 2009
Compulsory Education Age	✗	
Free Public Education	✓	Article 17 of the Constitution

** Country has no conscription*

Although the Bangladesh government maintains a list of hazardous work prohibited for children, the list does not cover domestic work, in which children are known to work long hours and are exposed to violence and sexual assault. Additionally, the Bangladesh Labor Act does not meet international standards for minimum age for work because a number of sectors are excluded from its application, including seamen, ocean-going vessels, agriculture farms with fewer than 10 workers, and domestic work. Bangladesh does not criminalize the use of children for prostitution unless the child is under guardianship or a third-party has involved them in prostitution. Bangladesh criminalizes the use of children in the transport of drugs but does not criminalize the use of children in the production of drugs. The Bangladesh Constitution also does not criminally prohibit the recruitment of children by non-state armed groups. The government's Primary Education Act stipulates a separate compulsory education age at 10, but this law is not binding as it has not been published in the national gazette. Even if the law were in effect, children between the ages of 10 and 14 would still remain particularly vulnerable to child labor as they are not required to attend school and are not able to legally work without restriction.

ENFORCEMENT OF LAWS ON CHILD LABOR

In 2023, criminal and labor law enforcement agencies in Bangladesh took actions to address child labor. However, the lack of unannounced inspections in Export Processing Zones and the lack of publicly released enforcement information hindered enforcement efforts.

Agencies Responsible for Child Labor Law Enforcement

Department of Inspection for Factories and Establishments (DIFE): Located within the Ministry of Labor and Employment (MOLE). Enforces labor laws, including those related to child labor and hazardous work. During the reporting period, DIFE implemented a 2022–2023 action plan for the Elimination of Child Labor from the Keraniganj sub-district in Dhaka and extended the program to 2025. According to DIFE, the agency removed 12,400 children through project intervention. Furthermore, DIFE organized awareness-building programs and meetings with Dhaka's District Child Labor Welfare Committee and District Child Labor Monitoring Committee.

Bangladesh Police: Enforce Penal Code provisions by protecting children from forced labor and commercial sexual exploitation. Through its Trafficking in Persons Monitoring Cell, the Bangladesh Police investigate cases of human trafficking and enforce the Prevention and Suppression of Human Trafficking Act's anti-trafficking provisions. Operate victim support centers for trafficked women and children through partnership with 11 NGOs.

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	**Unknown**
Unannounced Inspections Permitted	**Yes**	Imposed Penalties for Worst Forms of Child Labor Crimes	**Unknown**

Between June 2022 and July 2023, **446** labor inspectors conducted **47,826** worksite inspections, finding **3,459** child labor violations. It is **unknown** whether investigations into suspected cases of the worst forms of child labor were conducted, prosecutions were initiated, or perpetrators were convicted.

The Bangladesh Export Processing Zone Authority (BEPZA) is the official body of the government to promote, attract, and facilitate foreign investment in the Export Processing Zones, and is also responsible for ensuring business compliance with social, environmental, safety, and security regulations in these zones. Although the Department of Inspection for Factories and Establishments (DIFE) has authority to conduct inspections in the Export Processing Zones, it is required to notify the BEPZA's chairman in advance. Since some employers receive notification ahead of labor inspections, child labor violations may go undetected in the Export Processing Zones.

COORDINATION, POLICIES, AND PROGRAMS

Key Mechanism to Coordinate Government Efforts on Child Labor Bangladesh established a mechanism to coordinate its efforts to address child labor. However, it lacks a referral mechanism to coordinate efforts among government agencies and civil society stakeholders.	***National Child Labor Welfare Council (NCLWC):*** Coordinates government efforts to guide and monitor the implementation of the National Plan of Action on the Elimination of Child Labor. Chaired by the MOLE and comprises officials representing relevant government ministries, international organizations, child advocacy groups, and employer and worker organizations. During the reporting period, NCLWC conducted 11 national coordination meetings, 67 divisional child labor welfare council meetings, and 177 district child rights monitoring committee meetings. In October, the labor secretary met with all the divisional commissioners to intensify child labor monitoring activities by the divisional committees.
Key Policies Related to Child Labor Bangladesh established policies related to child labor. However, lack of coordination of government ministries responsible for implementing the National Plan of Action on the Elimination of Child Labor hindered the policy from fulfilling its mandates. *‡ The government had other policies that may have addressed child labor issues or had an impact on child labor.*	***National Plan of Action on the Elimination of Child Labor (2021–2025):*** Identifies strategies for developing institutional capacity, increasing access to education and health services, raising social awareness, strengthening law enforcement, and creating prevention and reintegration programs. In 2023, the MOLE monitored activities of the divisional councils and district- and sub-district level coordination committees to ensure coordinated work to eliminate child labor. The MOLE also conducted a feasibility study on the elimination of child labor and disseminated findings in a workshop. Based on the study, the MOLE initiated an "Elimination and Rehabilitation of Child Labor" project.

Coordination, Policies, and Programs (Cont.)

Key Policies Related to Child Labor	***National Plan of Action for Prevention and Suppression of Human Trafficking (2018–2025):*** Establishes a plan to build government capacity to address trafficking in persons and provide economic and social safety nets for victims and vulnerable populations, particularly children. Led by the Ministry of Home Affairs (MOHA). The national plan has been extended to 2025 due to the slow progress made during 2020 and 2021 pandemic lockdowns. During the reporting period, the government continued to focus anti-trafficking funding on prevention efforts. Additionally, in 2023, the Bangladesh government identified opportunities for improving data collection and analysis on trafficking in persons after the launch of the 2022 First National Study on Trafficking in Persons in Bangladesh.
Key Social Programs to Address Child Labor Bangladesh funded and participated in programs that include the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor. However, these social programs are inadequate to address the problem in all regions and sectors where child labor has been identified, including in the informal garment, leather, and fish-drying industries. *† Program is funded by the Government of Bangladesh.* *‡ The government had other social programs that may have included the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor.*	***Elimination of Hazardous Child Labor–Phase IV (2021–2023):†*** $33 million, 3-year project implemented by the MOLE. Removed 90,000 children from hazardous labor in Phases I through III by providing informal and technical education, stipends, and awareness raising for employers and families. The MOLE has signed agreements with 112 selected NGOs to remove 100,000 children from hazardous work in Phase IV. In 2023, the project supported non-formal education and rehabilitation of working children, children from Dalit and Bihari minority groups, and those experiencing homelessness or working in the streets. However, the project was insufficient to cover all geographical locations and all sectors involved in child labor, and irregularities in project implementation and identification of vulnerable children were found.
	School Programs:† Second Chance Education is funded by the Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee and provides informal schooling for children ages 8 to 14 who have dropped out of formal schools. The government has expressed a commitment to restart the school meal program with its own funding in 2024. During the reporting period, the World Food Program (WFP) used $19 million in funding from the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) to continue school feeding programs at 170 schools in the Cox's Bazar District to benefit 49,162 students.
	Child Protection Programs:† Child protection programs in Bangladesh include Child Sensitive Social Protection in Bangladesh (CSPB) II, which will end in 2024. The CSPB Project is implemented by the Ministry of Social Welfare's Department of Social Services, with support from UNICEF, and aims to reduce violence, abuse, and neglect against children. The project offers case management services to identify vulnerable children and provides psychological counseling through the Child Friendly Services hub and conditional cash support to reduce child labor. The government also operates a 24-hour emergency hotline called Child Helpline 1098. In fiscal year 2022–2023, the Helpline received over 10,000 reports related to child abuse. Of the reported cases, over 5,000 children received legal support through the helpline and the program helped stop over 2,000 cases of child marriage through counseling, legal, and financial assistance to parents.

*For information about USDOL's projects to address child labor around the world, visit **dol.gov/ILABprojects***

WORKER RIGHTS SPOTLIGHT

Although the Bangladesh Labor Act (BLA) allows formal sector workers to form and join trade unions, it excludes some informal workers including laborers, agricultural workers on farms with fewer than 10 workers, and domestic workers, in which large number of children work. The Bangladesh Export Processing Zone Labor Act prohibits trade unions in the export processing zones, which employ more than 502,000 workers. The government does not adequately enforce laws protecting freedom of association and the right to collective bargaining, and labor leaders and organizers face violence, dismissal, blacklisting, and arrest. Since unions play a pivotal role in identifying and combating child labor, these restrictions may allow violations, including in the informal sectors, to go unreported.

*For references, please visit **dol.gov/ChildLaborReports***

BOLIVIA

MODERATE ADVANCEMENT

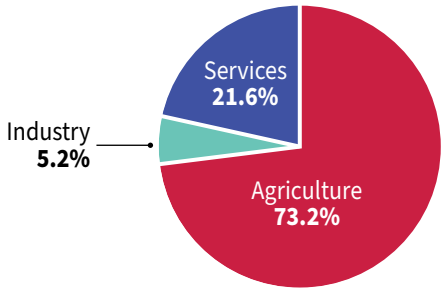
In 2023, Bolivia made moderate advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. As part of the Regional Platform Against Human Trafficking and Smuggling, Bolivia and Argentina signed an agreement that included 35 coordinated actions to combat human trafficking, migrant smuggling, and related crimes. In addition, the government, in collaboration with a civil society organization, Munasim Kullakita Foundation, and the police, released Alerta Juliana, a mobile application to help locate missing children, including some who could be vulnerable to human trafficking crimes, and refer them to authorities and protection services. In September, Ministerial Resolution No. 1444/23 which allows labor inspectors to conduct unannounced inspections at any time, was passed into law. However, despite these efforts, Bolivia's laws do not meet international standards on the prohibition against child trafficking because they require the use of threats, force, or coercion be proven for a crime of child trafficking to have occurred. Bolivian law also does not set a minimum age for participation in apprenticeships, and the government did not publicly release information on its labor and criminal law enforcement efforts in 2023.

PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Statistics on Children's Work and Education

Children	Age	Percent of Population
Working	5 to 14	8.3% (162,834)
Boys		8.2%
Girls		8.4%
Urban		2.1%
Rural		20.8%
Hazardous Work by Children	15 to 17	25.5% (171,369)
Boys		25.1%
Girls		25.9%
Urban		12.6%
Rural		54.4%
Attending School	5 to 14	98.5%
Combining Work and School	7 to 14	7.7%

Working Children by Sector, Ages 5-14



Children in Bolivia are subjected to the worst forms of child labor, including commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking, and forced begging. Children also perform dangerous tasks in agriculture, including in the harvesting of Brazil nuts, and mining.

Overview of Children's Work by Sector and Activity

Agriculture
Harvesting Brazil nuts/chestnuts,† sugarcane,† and coca; planting and harvesting corn; and raising cattle.

Industry
Mining† of gold, silver, tin, lead, and zinc; construction, including heavy lifting and shoveling; and production of bricks.†

Services
Street vending, shoe shining, assisting transportation operators, working in small stores, and cleaning cemeteries (grave sites).

Categorical Worst Forms of Child Labor‡
Forced labor in domestic work, mining, ranching, in the production and harvesting of Brazil nuts and sugarcane, and begging. Commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking. Use in illicit activities, including robbery and producing, transporting, or sale of drugs.

† 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 Bolivia's implementation of its international commitments to eliminate the worst forms of child labor.

Legal Framework
Raise the minimum age for work from age 14 to age 17 to align with the compulsory education age.
Remove the requirement of the use of threats, force, or coercion to be established for the crime of child trafficking to have occurred.
Prohibit children under the age of 14 from participating in apprenticeships.
Establish age 18 as the minimum age for compulsory recruitment by the state military, and criminally prohibit the recruitment of children under age 18 into non-state armed groups.
Enforcement
Publish information on child labor law enforcement, including labor inspectorate funding, training, penalties imposed and collected, and whether routine and unannounced inspections were conducted.
Employ at least 443 labor inspectors to ensure adequate coverage of the labor force of approximately 6.6 million people.
Provide sufficient funding to increase the Ministry of Labor's capacity to adequately enforce child labor laws, including in the informal economy.
Maintain systematized records or a consolidated database on the number of violations found related to child labor.
Establish and maintain a Child Advocate Office in every municipality, allocating sufficient resources from municipal-level budgets to ensure that legal protections are extended to all children who are permitted to work and that parents are assisted in registering their children for work.
Publish information on criminal law enforcement, including training for criminal investigators and disaggregated numbers on investigations conducted, prosecutions initiated, convictions achieved, and sentences imposed for child labor crimes.
Address issues of high rotation among police, prosecutors, and judges, as well as the existing judicial case backlog, to ensure adequate prosecution of child labor crimes.
Direct sufficient resources to rural areas to address trafficking in persons crimes.
Coordination
Ensure that the National Commission for the Progressive Eradication of Child Labor is active and able to carry out its intended mandate.
Government Policies
Establish and implement a new national policy or national action plan to address child labor, including its worst forms.
Social Programs
Increase availability of schools, teachers, and supplies to rural and indigenous areas to increase participation in secondary education, and facilitate access of migrant children to the requisite documents to enroll in school and to become eligible to receive academic credit and diplomas.
Establish programs for children displaced by droughts and floods to support their continued access to education.
Increase funding for social programs throughout the country for child labor victims, including for shelters for male victims of human trafficking, and ensure that victims are not cast prematurely out of shelters.
Implement programs to address the commercial sexual exploitation of children.

CHILDREN AT HIGHER RISK

Children from indigenous communities, Venezuelan migrant children, and children with disabilities have increased vulnerabilities to child labor exploitation and human trafficking. In rural gold mining areas, girls are trapped in commercial sexual trafficking and prevented from leaving by private security in brothels, and research indicates that children are at risk of labor trafficking in mines if their families are in debt bondage. Additionally, children in rural indigenous communities in the north of La Paz Department and around the city of Rurrenabaque are vulnerable to child sex trafficking in the tourism sector.

BARRIERS TO EDUCATION ACCESS

Attendance rates for secondary education remain low in rural areas. Additionally, the lack of teachers, schools, and textbooks in rural areas, especially in indigenous communities, create barriers to education. Venezuelan migrant families that have irregular status in Bolivia often face complications in obtaining proper documentation to enroll in the public school system, and some migrant children attending school do not receive credit and are prevented from receiving diplomas. Over two million children in Bolivia live in areas at high-risk of flooding, while an additional 600,000 live in areas at risk of droughts, disrupting their access to education and increasing their vulnerability to child labor. In 2023, 300 education systems in 21 municipalities were affected by droughts, causing temporary migration for work, with some areas reporting absence rates of 25 percent as a result.

LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR CHILD LABOR

Bolivia has ratified all key international conventions concerning child labor. However, Bolivia's laws do not meet international standards on prohibitions against child trafficking, as they require that the use of threats, force, or coercion be proven for a crime to have taken place.

Child Labor Laws and Regulations	Meets International Standards	Legislation
Minimum Age for Work, **14 Years**	✓	Articles 8 and 58 of the General Labor Law; Article 129 of the Child and Adolescent Code; Sentence 0025/2017 of the Plurinational Constitutional Tribunal; Article 3 of Law No. 1139
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work, **18 Years**	✓	Articles 58 and 59 of the General Labor Law; Articles 5 and 136 of the Child and Adolescent Code
Identification of Hazardous Occupations or Activities Prohibited for Children	✓	Article 136 of the Child and Adolescent Code
Prohibition of Slavery, Debt Bondage, and Forced Labor	✓	Articles 15, 46, and 61 of the Constitution; Article 291 of the Penal Code; Article 34 of the Comprehensive Law against Human Trafficking and Smuggling
Prohibition of Child Trafficking	✗	Article 15 of the Constitution; Articles 6, 34, and 35 of the Comprehensive Law against Human Trafficking and Smuggling
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children	✓	Articles 34 and 35 of the Comprehensive Law against Human Trafficking and Smuggling; Articles 281 *bis*, 321, 321 *bis*, and 323 *bis* of the Penal Code
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities	✓	Articles 47, 48, and 56 of the Law on Coca and Controlled Substances
Minimum Age for Voluntary State Military Recruitment, **16 Years‡**	✓	Article 2 of the General Directive of Pre-Military Recruitment; Articles 2 and 7 of the Law of National Military Service
Prohibition of Compulsory Recruitment of Children by (State) Military	✗	Articles 108 and 249 of the Constitution; Article 1 of Supreme Decree No. 1875; Article 1 of Supreme Decree No. 21479

Legal Framework for Child Labor (Cont.)

Child Labor Laws and Regulations	Meets International Standards	Legislation
Prohibition of Military Recruitment by Non-state Armed Groups	✗	
Compulsory Education Age, **17 Years‡**	✓	Article 81 of the Constitution; Articles 1, 8, 9, and 11–14 of the Avelino Siñani-Elizardo Pérez Education Law
Free Public Education	✓	Articles 17 and 81 of the Constitution; Article 1 of the Avelino Siñani-Elizardo Pérez Education Law; Article 115 of the Child and Adolescent Code

** The minimum age for combat is 18 per Article 36 of the Law of National Military Service.*
‡ Age calculated based on available information.

As the minimum age for work is lower than the compulsory education age, children may be encouraged to leave school before the completion of compulsory education. Furthermore, although Bolivian law specifies that education is compulsory through secondary school, it does not specify a start or end age. Bolivian law requires employers to allow apprentices time to attend school. However, it does not set a minimum age of at least 14 for participation in apprenticeships. In addition, prohibitions against child trafficking are insufficient because they require that the use of threats, force, or coercion be proven in order for a crime to have taken place. Articles 108 and 249 of the Constitution require Bolivian males to perform compulsory military service in accordance with national law. Article 1 of Supreme Decree No. 1875, passed in 2014, lowered the minimum age at which compulsory military service may begin, from age 18, as previously established, to age 17, which does not comply with international standards.

ENFORCEMENT OF LAWS ON CHILD LABOR

In 2023, labor and criminal law enforcement agencies in Bolivia took actions to address child labor. However, insufficient financial resource allocation, including for prosecutors and judges, hindered enforcement efforts.

Agencies Responsible for Child Labor Law Enforcement

Ministry of Labor (MOL): Enforces child labor laws by conducting routine labor inspections and responding to complaints from the public. Also refers cases to the Labor Courts for adjudication of penalties and unpaid wages. If a child is discovered working in hazardous or illegal conditions during an investigation, the case is referred to the municipal Child Advocate Office. Carries out child labor specific inspections though its Special Unit for the Progressive Eradication of Child Labor. However, MOL did not provide any official data in 2023 to show evidence that routine inspections occurred.

Prosecutor's Office: Enforces criminal laws related to the worst forms of child labor at the departmental level, in coordination with the Attorney General's Office. Together with the municipal Child Advocate Office, provides legal support and lawyers to child labor victims. The Attorney General's Office oversees investigations and prosecutions at the national level, while regional prosecutors, in collaboration with the Bolivian National Police, pursue cases of human trafficking and maintain a database of these cases. However, research indicates that prosecutors and judges are do not have adequate funding to carry out their work.

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	**No**

It is **unknown** how many labor inspectors conducted worksite inspections, or whether child labor violations were found. It is **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

Key Mechanism to Coordinate Government Efforts on Child Labor Bolivia established a mechanism to coordinate its efforts to address child labor. However, a lack of public reporting on activities hinders the effective coordination of efforts to address child labor.	***National Commission for the Progressive Eradication of Child Labor:*** Coordinates national efforts on child labor issues. Led by MOL, and includes the Ministries of Justice, Education, and Planning, and several NGOs. Research was unable to determine whether the coordinating body carried out activities during the reporting period.
Key Policies Related to Child Labor Bolivia established policies related to child labor. However, Bolivia does not have a national action plan to address all worst forms of child labor in the country.	***Plurinational Policy Against Trafficking in Persons, Smuggling of Migrants and Related Crimes (2021–2025):†*** Developed with support from the International Organization for Migration, the UN Office of Drugs and Crime, and civil society, and aims to educate the population about human trafficking and smuggling, reintegrate survivors, train law enforcement officials, provide prompt and effective justice, promote mechanisms for international coordination, and build an institutional environment able to address human trafficking and smuggling. In December 2023, the Bolivian government organized the Eighth National Meeting of Departmental Councils Against Human Trafficking to coordinate national policy against trafficking with the nine departmental councils.
Key Social Programs to Address Child Labor Bolivia funded and participated in programs that may contribute to eliminating or preventing child labor. However, these social programs are inadequate to address the problem in all sectors and in all states in which child labor has been identified, including in commercial sexual exploitation. *† Program is funded by the Government of Bolivia.*	***Juancito Pinto Subsidy Program:†*** Government program that provides a conditional cash transfer to all primary and some secondary school students to increase school attendance and reduce the dropout rate. In 2023, the program provided more than 2.3 million students with $29 annually upon proving regular attendance in school. ***Market Spaces:*** Program introduced by the Santa Cruz municipal government that trains over 300 university volunteers and reaches over 500 children between the ages of 3 and 12 in the 8 Santa Cruz markets. Children who previously worked with their parents in the market now receive mentorship and food, and abuse is monitored and reported. The concept was initially supported by the Government of Santa Cruz and UNICEF and costs about $5,000 per year to maintain but is now self-sustaining through a small tax collected from each market vendor or parent. ***Bolivian Foreign Trade Institute's Triple Seal Initiative:*** Initiative of the Department of Santa Cruz's MOL, in collaboration with the Bolivian Institute of Standardization and Quality, UNICEF, and ILO, to develop a voluntary certification program that recognizes companies that comply with Bolivian law and ILO conventions on child labor and forced labor issues. Active during the reporting period.

*For information about USDOL's projects to address child labor around the world, visit **dol.gov/ILABprojects***
*For references, please visit **dol.gov/ChildLaborReports***

BRAZIL

MODERATE ADVANCEMENT

In 2023, Brazil made moderate advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. The government published two updates to the national "Dirty List" in April and October with the total addition of 336 new employers. The "Dirty List" contains data on employers that the Ministry of Labor and Employment finds to be using slave labor, including that of children. The Ministry of Labor and Employment also developed a manual on child labor and the protection of adolescent workers that includes information about national and international standards on child labor, types of work permitted for adolescents, and how to identify child labor and its risks. In addition, the government conducted a preliminary assessment of the third National Action Plan to Combat Human Trafficking and presented the results to the National Committee to Combat Trafficking in Persons. Lastly, in March 2023, it relaunched the *Bolsa Família* cash program, which included the highest increase in the amount paid to participating families in the program's history. The new monthly amount provided to participating families increased to a minimum of $121, with families of children under age 18 or younger receiving an additional supplement of $10 to $30 per child. Although the government made meaningful efforts in all relevant areas during the reporting period, its laws do not meet international standards on the prohibition of child trafficking because they require the use of threats, violence, coercion, fraud, or abuse be established for the crime of child trafficking to have occurred. Furthermore, the reported number of labor inspectors is likely not sufficient to provide adequate coverage of the workforce, and local governments lack the capacity to fully implement and monitor the National Program to Eradicate Child Labor and other social protection programs.

PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Statistics on Children's Work and Education

Children	Age	Percent of Population
Working	5 to 14	2.1% (619,654)
Boys		2.7%
Girls		1.5%
Urban		1.2%
Rural		7.2%

Children	Age	Percent of Population
Hazardous Work by Children	15 to 17	16.3% (1,484,274)
Boys		20.2%
Girls		12.3%
Urban		14.3%
Rural		27.2%
Attending School	5 to 14	98.6%
Combining Work and School	7 to 14	2.5%

Children in Brazil are subjected to the worst forms of child labor, including in commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking. Children also engage in child labor in agriculture, including in the production of coffee.

Overview of Children's Work by Sector and Activity

Agriculture

Production of bananas, cocoa, coffee, corn, cotton,† manioc, pineapples,† rice, sisal,† sugarcane,† tobacco,† and the harvesting of açaí. Fishing. Raising cattle and livestock, including poultry, hogs, and sheep. Working in forestry, including logging, and producing charcoal.

Industry

Slaughtering animals,† including for beef production. Processing manioc flour† and cashews.† In the production of ceramics,† bricks,† and footwear. Construction† and work in stone quarries.†

Services

Street work,† as vendors,† beggars, car washers,† recycling† collectors, garbage scavengers.† Working in supermarkets, markets, and fairs, including hauling fruits and vegetables and transporting heavy loads. Working in restaurants and other food and drink establishments, including as food deliverers by bicycle and selling alcoholic beverages. Working in cultural work, including artistic and sports-related activities. Domestic work,† including childcare, housekeeping, and eldercare. Maintaining and repairing automobiles.

Categorical Worst Forms of Child Labor‡

Commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking. Forced labor in agriculture, begging, and domestic work. Use by gangs to perform illicit activities, including drug trafficking, 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 Brazil's implementation of its international commitments to eliminate the worst forms of child labor.

Legal Framework
Ensure that laws do not require the use of threats, violence, coercion, fraud, or abuse to establish the crime of child trafficking.
Criminally prohibit the recruitment of children under age 18 by non-state armed groups.
Raise the minimum age for work from 16 to 17 to align with the compulsory education age.
Enforcement
Significantly increase the number of labor inspectors from 1,951 to 7,192 to ensure adequate coverage of the labor force of approximately 108 million workers.
Publish information related to criminal law enforcement efforts, such as the number of investigations conducted, prosecutions initiated, convictions obtained, and whether penalties were imposed for child labor crimes.
Ensure that relevant enforcement agencies coordinate their efforts to collect and share data on cases of human trafficking for sexual exploitation and ensure that the data are disaggregated by victims' ages.
Hold perpetrators of child labor crimes accountable in accordance with the law.
Government Policies
Implement the Federal Pact for the Eradication of Forced Labor and publish results from activities implemented on an annual basis.
Social Programs
Remove barriers to education, including by ensuring an adequate number of trained teachers, building a sufficient number of schools, improving school infrastructure, and taking steps to enroll children in rural areas.
Provide funding to local governments so they can implement and monitor the National Program to Eradicate Child Labor.
Provide adequate resources to state governments to ensure that child trafficking victims receive appropriate social services and ensure the availability of specialized shelters for child victims of commercial sexual exploitation.
Publish the results of the National Forced Labor Survey conducted in 2019.

CHILDREN AT HIGHER RISK

Afro-descendant children and children from rural communities are particularly vulnerable to child labor. In remote rural areas, particularly in the north and northeast, children begin working in agriculture from an early age, including performing dangerous tasks. The high rate of poverty and extreme poverty in these regions makes children increasingly vulnerable to child labor. In addition, children in the states of Espírito Santo, Ceará, Pará, Mato Grosso, and the Federal District are at higher risk for being subjected to commercial sexual exploitation. Child sex tourism is particularly common in tourist and coastal areas, but reports indicate that child trafficking for sexual exploitation occurs throughout the country.

BARRIERS TO EDUCATION ACCESS

Some schools, particularly those in rural areas, are overcrowded, have poor infrastructure, and lack basic resources and teachers. These barriers to education access may leave children vulnerable to child labor.

LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR CHILD LABOR

Brazil has ratified all key international conventions concerning child labor. However, Brazil's laws prohibiting child trafficking do not meet international standards.

Child Labor Laws and Regulations	Meets International Standards	Legislation
Minimum Age for Work, **16 Years**	✓	Article 403 of the Labor Code
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work, **18 Years**	✓	Article 2 of the Hazardous Work List
Identification of Hazardous Occupations or Activities Prohibited for Children	✓	Hazardous Work List
Prohibition of Slavery, Debt Bondage, and Forced Labor	✓	Articles 149 and 149-A of the Penal Code; Article 13 of Law 13.344 amending Penal Code
Prohibition of Child Trafficking	✗	Article 149-A of the Penal Code; Article 244-A of the Child and Adolescent Statute
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children	✓	Articles 218-A, 218-B, 227, and 228 of the Penal Code; Articles 240, 241, and 244-A of the Child and Adolescent Statute
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities	✓	Articles 33 and 40 of the National System of Public Policies on Drugs; Article 244-B of the Child and Adolescent Statute
Minimum Age for Voluntary State Military Recruitment, **17 Years**	✓	Article 127 of the Military Service Regulation
Prohibition of Compulsory Recruitment of Children by (State) Military	✓	Article 5 of the Military Service Law
Prohibition of Military Recruitment by Non-state Armed Groups	✗	
Compulsory Education Age, **17 Years**	✓	Article 4 of the National Education Law
Free Public Education	✓	Article 4 of the National Education Law

The national "Dirty List" containing information on employers found to be using slave labor, including that of children, was updated in April 2023 with 132 new names and again in October 2023 with a record number of 204 new names. Employers and companies added to the List pay fines and unpaid labor taxes, are prevented from receiving any credit from government or private banks, and are kept on the list until they prove that they are making concerted efforts to clean up their supply chains. However, Brazil's laws prohibiting child trafficking do not meet international standards because they require the use of threats, violence, coercion, fraud, or abuse to be established for the crime of child trafficking to have taken place. Furthermore, the minimum age for work is lower than the compulsory education age, which may encourage children to leave school before the completion of compulsory education.

ENFORCEMENT OF LAWS ON CHILD LABOR

In 2023, labor and criminal law enforcement agencies in Brazil took actions to address child labor. However, insufficient human resources and impunity for violators of the law hindered enforcement efforts.

Agencies Responsible for Child Labor Law Enforcement

Ministry of Labor and Employment (MTE): Oversees the Secretariat of Labor Inspection, which is responsible for organizing, evaluating, and monitoring labor inspection activities, including those related to child labor and forced labor. Labor inspectors carry out actions outlined in the Labor Prosecution Office's Normative Instruction No. 02 of 2021, including by conducting unannounced inspections at sites where child labor is suspected, identifying and removing children from child labor situations, and issuing penalties. Its Special Mobile Group to Combat Child Labor carries out inspections of greater technical and operational complexity, including in isolated geographical areas and for cases classified as the worst forms of child labor according to Decree 6.481. In 2023, the MTE created a manual titled "Child

Labor and the Protection of Adolescent Workers," which includes best practices from its Labor Inspectorate. The manual is structured in a Q&A format and includes information about how to identify child labor and its risks, international and national standards, descriptions of work activities permitted to adolescents, and past activities implemented by the Labor Inspectorate to address child labor in the country.

Labor Prosecution Office: Prosecutes child labor and forced labor violations by working with prosecutors from the National Committee to Combat Child and Adolescent Labor, an in-house body that coordinates efforts to address child labor, collects fines for forced labor violations, and allocates funds for initiatives that address child labor and forced 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	**Unknown**
Unannounced Inspections Permitted	**Yes**	Imposed Penalties for Worst Forms of Child Labor Crimes	**Unknown**

In 2023, **1,951** labor inspectors conducted **66,803** worksite inspections, finding **2,564** child labor violations. However, it is **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

Key Mechanism to Coordinate Government Efforts on Child Labor Brazil established a mechanism to coordinate its efforts to address child labor.	***National Commission for the Eradication of Child Labor:*** Led by the MTE and responsible for the National Plan for the Prevention and Eradication of Child Labor and the Protection of Working Adolescents, research on child labor, and awareness-raising campaigns. In 2023, the commission was restructured back to its original multipartite composition, including representatives from the federal government, workers' and employers' organizations, civil society, the justice system, and international organizations, such as the ILO and UNICEF. With the restructure, all representatives regained their voting rights. In addition, the commission held six meetings and established two working groups to carry out priority activities during the reporting period.
Key Policies Related to Child Labor Brazil established policies related to child labor. However, it failed to implement some of these policies during the reporting period. *‡ The government had other policies that may have addressed child labor issues or had an impact on child labor.*	***National Plan for the Prevention and Eradication of Child Labor and the Protection of Working Adolescents III:*** Led by the National Council for the Rights of Children and Adolescents, prioritized the prevention and eradication of child labor and the protection of adolescent workers by raising awareness of child labor and its worst forms, strengthening enforcement efforts, providing families with employment opportunities, increasing access to quality education, and establishing health support systems for child labor victims. Although the Plan expired on paper in 2022, the government continued to implement the plan while it was drafting its next phase.
	National Plan to Combat Human Trafficking III: Outlined the government's strategy to address human trafficking throughout 58 objectives based on 6 themes: policy management, information management, training, accountability, victim assistance and prevention, and public awareness raising. Although this plan expired in 2022, during the reporting period the government conducted a preliminary assessment and presented the results to the members of the National Committee to Combat Trafficking in Persons to be used in the drafting of a new plan.
	Federal Pact for the Eradication of Forced Labor: Aims to establish a database and create state-level commissions to address forced labor and strengthen interagency coordination. Led by the Ministry of Justice and Public Security's Special Secretariat for Human Rights, and currently signed by 23 of the 27 states. Research was unable to determine whether activities were taken to implement this policy during the reporting period.

Coordination, Policies, and Programs (Cont.)

Key Social Programs to Address Child Labor

In 2023, Brazil funded and participated in programs that include the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor. However, these social programs are inadequate to address the problem in all sectors where child labor has been identified, including in commercial sexual exploitation.

† Program is funded by the Government of Brazil.
‡ The government had other social programs that may have included the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor.

National Program to Eradicate Child Labor (Programa de Erradicação do Trabalho Infantil [PETI]):† A nationwide social assistance program that addresses child labor through awareness-raising activities, victim identification and protection, and conditional cash transfers. To receive program benefits, family participants must ensure that children are not working and maintain at least 85 percent school attendance. During the reporting period, the National Forum for the Prevention and Eradication of Child Labor and Protection of the Working Adolescents (FNPETI) Working Group developed a manual with 12 guidelines to help institutions, municipalities, and states to better design their child labor-awareness campaigns. The FNPETI, in partnership with the Labor Prosecutor's Office, the MTE, the Labor Justice Program to Combat Child Labor, and the ILO conducted a national campaign titled, "Protecting childhood empowers the future of children and adolescents. Let's come together to end child labor," aimed at increasing public awareness of the child labor situation in the country and abroad, through social networks.

Bolsa Família:† A Ministry of Development and Social Assistance, Family and Fight against Hunger cash transfer program that assists families living in poverty and extreme poverty throughout the country. This program was re-launched in March 2023 and its average value increased to the highest amount in the program's history. The new monthly amount provided to participating families is a minimum of $121, with families of children under age 6 receiving an additional $30 per child, and those with children aged 7 to 18 receiving an additional $10 per child.

National Flow of Assistance to Victims of Slave Labor:† Creates an integrated network of social services providers and standardizes assistance to victims of slave labor, including child victims, across the country. Led by the Ministry for Women, Family, and Human Rights.

For information about USDOL's projects to address child labor around the world, visit ***dol.gov/ILABprojects***

WORKER RIGHTS SPOTLIGHT

Brazil also places restrictions on certain bargaining rights. Specifically, bargaining agreements can be voided if the government believes that the agreement does not conform with its economic and financial policies, or if it conflicts with the current wage policy in place. In addition, collective bargaining agreements are only permitted to stand for 2 years before needing to be renegotiated. As freedom of association and collective bargaining rights play a crucial role in identifying, addressing, and preventing child labor, these restrictions may allow violations to go unreported.

For references, please visit ***dol.gov/ChildLaborReports***

CAMBODIA

MINIMAL ADVANCEMENT – *Efforts Made but Continued Practice that Delayed Advancement*

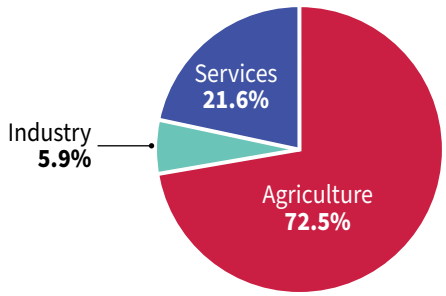
In 2023, Cambodia made minimal advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. The government rescued 123 children from commercial sexual exploitation and human trafficking and released guidelines on child safety online in the face of increasing instances of online sexual exploitation of children. However, despite these new initiatives to address child labor, Cambodia is assessed as having made only minimal advancement because the government failed to take active measures to investigate, prosecute, convict, and sentence public officials who participate in or facilitate the worst forms of child labor, including commercial sexual exploitation of children and debt-based forced labor in brick kilns. In addition, judges, police, and labor inspectors were reported to have accepted bribes to overlook child labor offenses in the country, especially when the perpetrator had alleged ties with the government. Lastly, the laws prohibiting commercial sexual exploitation of children are insufficient because the use or offering of a child for pornographic performances is not criminally prohibited.

PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Statistics on Children's Work and Education

Children	Age	Percent of Population
Working	5 to 14	8.9% (285,499)
Boys		9.3%
Girls		8.6%
Urban		5.4%
Rural		10.6%
Hazardous Work by Children	15 to 17	43.1% (422,161)
Boys		46.9%
Girls		39.3%
Urban		33.8%
Rural		49.5%
Attending School	5 to 14	87.3%
Combining Work and School	7 to 14	9.0%

Working Children by Sector, Ages 5-14



Children in Cambodia are subjected to the worst forms of child labor, including in commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking, and in forced child labor in brickmaking. Children also engage in child labor in the agriculture sector, including in the production of rubber and cassava.

Overview of Children's Work by Sector and Activity

Agriculture

Fishing, including deep-sea† and night fishing;† peeling shrimp; logging† for the production of timber; herding bovines; producing tobacco, cassava, rubber, and sugarcane.

Industry

Making bricks,† including feeding clay into brickmaking machines, removing wood fuel from trucks and feeding to brickmaking machines, drying bricks, transporting bricks to the oven,† and loading bricks onto and off of trucks. Working in construction† and in slaughterhouses for meat production.† Producing alcoholic beverages† and textiles. Manufacturing wood and metal† products.

Services

Domestic work and street work, including car washing, begging, vending, garbage scavenging, and collecting garbage. Also working as security guards† and in entertainment† as bartenders,† masseurs,† dancers,† and waiters.†

Categorical Worst Forms of Child Labor‡

Commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking; forced begging and street begging; producing bricks; and fishing.

† 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 Cambodia's implementation of its international commitments to eliminate the worst forms of child labor.

Legal Framework
Apply the minimum age for work to all children, including those engaged in informal work in domestic work and employed by their relatives.
Establish a law that criminally prohibits the use of a child for pornographic performances in not only public spaces, but also private spaces or through the use of communication and information technologies.
Establish a law that criminally prohibits the recruitment of children by non-state armed groups.
Ensure free education is guaranteed for all children, regardless of citizenship.
Establish by law a compulsory education age of 15 years old such that it aligns with the minimum age for work.
Enforcement
Build the capacity of labor law enforcement authorities to enforce child labor and forced labor regulations by providing more technical training opportunities on how to properly identify child labor during inspections.
Provide inspectors of construction sites training on identifying child labor violations and ensure that such training is coordinated with the Ministry of Labor and Vocational Training's labor inspectorate to ensure inspectors' safety.
Increase the number of labor inspectors to 628 to ensure adequate coverage of Cambodia's workforce of 9,418,600, including in the informal sector.
Conduct unannounced inspections in all sectors in which child labor is reported to occur, including in the informal, construction, and entertainment sectors, and impose penalties when child labor violations are found.
Collect, properly store, and publicly release disaggregated data on labor and criminal law enforcement efforts, including labor inspectorate funding, initial training for new criminal investigators, the number of prosecutions initiated, the number of convictions, and the number of penalties imposed for violations related to the worst forms of child labor.
Address malfeasance in all law enforcement agencies, including by prohibiting the acceptance of bribes to influence the outcome of cases or providing tip offs in advance of raids, and investigating and prosecuting individuals and government officials who are complicit in facilitating and profiting from the worst forms of child labor.
Train all criminal law enforcement officials on trafficking indicators and how to conduct investigations into trafficking crimes, and ensure that funding is sufficient to cover expenses, including transportation costs.
Develop standard judicial procedures to monitor human trafficking perpetrators pending trial to prevent criminals from fleeing and to enable victims to receive restitution.
Coordination
Improve interministerial coordination to address child labor, including but not limited to reporting efforts made by the National Committee on Countering Child Labor to implement the National Plan of Action on Combating the Worst Forms of Child Labor.
Publish activities undertaken by the National Committee on Countering Child Labor on an annual basis.
Government Policies
Publish activities undertaken to implement the Action Plan to Prevent and Respond to Violence Against Children (2017–2023) on an annual basis.
Social Programs
Increase regulation of microfinance and lending institutions to reduce borrowers' vulnerability to debt-based coercion and provide support to children whose families are victims of predatory microfinance institutions.
Publish the results of the 2019 nationwide child labor survey.
Increase access to free basic education by eliminating unofficial school-related fees; addressing issues related to limited transportation and inadequate school infrastructure, including the unsafe "floating schools" on or near fishing communities; eliminating barriers to school for ethnic minority children, indigenous children, children with disabilities, girls, and children from rural and disadvantaged communities; and providing safe, sanitary schools with access to water and latrines.
Provide sufficient funding for social programs so that they can fully address the extent of child labor in Cambodia, particularly the online sexual exploitation of children.

CHILDREN AT HIGHER RISK

Children continue to be at an increased risk of working in brick kilns and factories, though operational brick factories have experienced a slowdown in business recently. Moreover, failed harvests from droughts have compounded farmers' debts, forcing them to sell their harvests to brick kiln owners and subsequently placing farmers' families into debt bondage. In recent years, the microfinance industry in the country has grown rapidly with inadequate regulation, leading to an increasing number of overburdened debtors. Cambodian human rights organizations cite cases of extrajudicial land sales, child labor, and debt bondage linked to the microfinance crisis. Children are forced to work because their parents have incurred debts to landowners or employers, sometimes resulting in forced land sales to pay back debts owed. Research also showed that children were taken out of school so they could work to help with debt repayment. Additionally, since 2016, there has been an increase in the number of women and girls travelling from Cambodia to China for forced or arranged marriages, with a further spike since the pandemic.

BARRIERS TO EDUCATION ACCESS

The Education Law establishes free basic education for citizens only, and unofficial school-related fees, such as for extra classes or school uniforms, are prohibitive for some families. Other barriers to education include denied enrollment for children without birth certificates, limited transportation to schools in remote areas, a lack of drinking water, a severe shortage of teachers, language barriers, and a lack of safe sanitation conditions in some schools. Sanitation conditions are particularly unsafe in Cambodia's "floating schools" on or near fishing communities, to which children as young as age 6 row themselves by boat each day. These barriers disproportionately affect ethnic minority children, indigenous children, children with disabilities, and children from rural and disadvantaged communities.

LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR CHILD LABOR

Cambodia has ratified all key international conventions concerning child labor. However, gaps exist in Cambodia's legal framework to adequately protect children from the worst forms of child labor, including the lack of criminal prohibitions for the use of a child for pornographic performances in private spaces or through communication and information technologies.

Child Labor Laws and Regulations	Meets International Standards	Legislation
Minimum Age for Work, **15 Years**	✗	Article 177 of the Labor Law
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work, **18 Years**	✓	Articles 173 and 177 of the Labor Law; Regulation on the Prohibition of Hazardous Child Labor; Articles 339 and 340 of the Penal Code
Identification of Hazardous Occupations or Activities Prohibited for Children	✓	Article 2 of the Regulation on the Prohibition of Hazardous Child Labor
Prohibition of Slavery, Debt Bondage, and Forced Labor	✓	Articles 15, 16, 369, and 370 of the Labor Law; Articles 7, 8, 10, 12, 13, 15–17, and 19 of the Law on Suppression of Human Trafficking and Sexual Exploitation
Prohibition of Child Trafficking	✓	Articles 2, 3, 7, 8, 10–20 and 22 of the Law on Suppression of Human Trafficking and Sexual Exploitation
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children	✗	Articles 7-8, 10, 12, 15, 19, 23, 25, 28, 30–37, 40, and 41 of the Law on Suppression of Human Trafficking and Sexual Exploitation; Articles 284, 289, and 346 of the Penal Code
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities	✓	Article 345 of the Penal Code; Articles 3 and 47 of the Law on Control of Drugs

Legal Framework for Child Labor (Cont.)

Child Labor Laws and Regulations	Meets International Standards	Legislation
Minimum Age for Voluntary State Military Recruitment, **18 Years**	✓	Article 42 of the Law on General Statutes for the Military Personnel of the Royal Cambodian Armed Forces
Prohibition of Compulsory Recruitment of Children by (State) Military	✓	Articles 41 and 42 of the Law on General Statutes for the Military Personnel of the Royal Cambodian Armed Forces
Prohibition of Military Recruitment by Non-state Armed Groups	✗	
Compulsory Education Age	✗	
Free Public Education	✗	Article 31 of the Education Law; Article 68 of the Constitution

Cambodian laws do not sufficiently prohibit the commercial sexual exploitation of children, as the use of a child for pornographic performances is criminally prohibited in public places but not in private spaces or through the use of communication and information technologies. Although the Labor Code prohibits work by children under age 15, the law does not apply to children outside of formal employment relationships and, therefore, does not conform to international standards that require all children be protected under the law that sets a minimum age for work. Moreover, the Ministry of Labor and Vocational Training's (MOLVT) regulation on household work extends minimum age protections for domestic workers to age 18 and provides clear definitions of household work, but it does not specify legal protections for domestic workers employed in informal relationships, including when working for their relatives without a contract. Finally, Cambodia lacks compulsory schooling, which makes children under age 15 particularly vulnerable to child labor because they are not required to be in school but are not yet legally permitted to work.

ENFORCEMENT OF LAWS ON CHILD LABOR

In 2023, labor and criminal law enforcement agencies in Cambodia took actions to address child labor. However, a lack of unannounced inspections in the informal, construction, and entertainment sectors may hinder enforcement efforts.

Agencies Responsible for Child Labor Law Enforcement

Ministry of Labor and Vocational Training (MOLVT): Enforces child-related provisions of the Labor Law and trains Commune Committees for Women and Children that oversee local child labor monitoring systems. Tasked with removing children from child labor, including at brick kilns. Head of the MOLVT's Child Labor Bureau also serves as the Secretary General of the National Committee on Countering Child Labor (NCCL). Refers cases involving possible criminal violations to the Anti-Human Trafficking and Juvenile Protection Department. During the reporting year, raised awareness about child labor by disseminating labor laws and legal documents about child work. Also provided study materials for children under the age of 15 so they remain in school and vocational training for children over 15. Research indicates that Cambodia does not have an adequate number of labor inspectors to carry out their mandated duties. Reporting also indicates that labor inspectorates at the provincial level are unable to adequately enforce child labor laws due to insufficient funding and resources.

Ministry of the Interior Cambodian National Police Anti-Human Trafficking and Juvenile Protection Department (AHTJP): Enforces laws against human trafficking and commercial sexual exploitation of children in collaboration with municipal and provincial anti-human trafficking and juvenile protection offices; reports to the AHTJP Department Director. Provides training to labor inspectors. Fields complaints from the public about human trafficking, which can be filed through the anti-human trafficking hotline. Oversees the Information and Technology Office, which searches for evidence of human trafficking and sexual exploitation of children on the internet, in printed media, and in other sources.

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, **592** labor inspectors conducted **219** worksite inspections, finding **1** child labor violation. The number of criminal investigations into suspected worst forms of child labor crimes, prosecutions initiated, and perpetrators convicted is **unknown**.

Evidence suggests that labor inspectors and other law enforcement personnel are unwilling to investigate child labor allegations involving powerful business owners. In addition, law enforcement officials have requested bribes from employers when child labor violations have been found. Malfeasance within the MOLVT and law enforcement agencies limits the capacity of local authorities to adequately enforce regulations for children related to hazardous work, resulting in penalties related to the worst forms of child labor rarely being imposed in accordance with the law. Additionally, the Government of Cambodia has failed to regularly investigate, prosecute, or convict public officials who participate in or facilitate the worst forms of child labor, including commercial sexual exploitation of children and debt-based forced labor in brick kilns. NGO contacts claim that the government has limited political will to investigate any Cambodian officials complicit in these illegal activities, and there was no evidence of public officials being investigated, prosecuted, or convicted during the reporting period.

COORDINATION, POLICIES, AND PROGRAMS

Key Mechanism to Coordinate Government Efforts on Child Labor Cambodia established a mechanism to coordinate its efforts to address child labor. However, there is insufficient interministerial coordination, making it difficult to track progress and outcomes of efforts.	***National Committee on Countering Child Labor (NCCL):*** Serves as the primary interagency coordinating body for the government's various ministries on child labor issues. The Minister of Labor serves as its chair and the head of the MOLVT's Child Labor Bureau serves as the Secretary General. Coordination across relevant ministries remains a challenge. Research was unable to determine whether activities were carried out under this policy during the reporting period.
Key Policies Related to Child Labor Cambodia established policies related to child labor. However, there were no reported activities to implement the Action Plan to Prevent and Respond to Violence Against Children. *‡ The government had other policies that may have addressed child labor issues or had an impact on child labor.*	***National Plan of Action on Combating the Worst Forms of Child Labor (2016–2025):*** Overseen by the MOLVT and aims to build the capacity of law enforcement officers, raise public awareness of child labor issues, enhance child labor monitoring systems at the community level, and create a roadmap to eradicate the worst forms of child labor by 2025 in various sectors, including services, agriculture, mining, and energy. In 2023, trained hundreds of national and provincial officials and conducted campaigns in several provinces to raise awareness for factory owners about child labor and consequences of violations.
	Action Plan to Prevent and Respond to Violence Against Children (2017–2023): Provided Online Child Sexual Exploitation (OSEC)-related interventions in policy and governance, including providing training for teachers and developing curriculum to help children build online safety skills; providing OSEC materials to law enforcement; and developing an online hotline to help identify platforms that perpetuate OSEC. Research was unable to determine whether activities were carried out under this policy during the reporting period.
	Action Plan for Gender Equality Promotion and Child Labor Elimination in Fisheries Sector (2022–2030): Aims to prevent and withdraw children from child labor and hazardous work in the fisheries sector, and to improve monitoring and evaluation mechanisms on child labor in this sector. During the reporting year, trained 31 officials and held workshops in Takeo, Kandal, and Kampong Speu provinces to promote gender equity and raise awareness of child labor in the fishery sector. Plan was extended from 2026 to 2030.

Coordination, Policies, and Programs (Cont.)

Key Social Programs to Address Child Labor	
In 2023, Cambodia funded and participated in programs that include the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor. However, these social programs are inadequate to address all worst forms of child labor, including in the commercial sexual exploitation of children.	***Cambodia Countering Trafficking in Persons (CCTIP) (2019–2023):*** $10 million, USAID-funded, 5-year (including a 1-year cost extension) program implemented by Winrock International to strengthen the capacity of government and community stakeholders to prevent human trafficking, protect at-risk populations, and increase the number of successful prosecutions of perpetrators. During the reporting period, held public awareness campaigns and signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the National Police to strengthen the capacity of law enforcement personnel to address human trafficking.
	UN WFP Country Program (2020–2024):† Multi-government and private sector-funded program implemented in collaboration with the Government of Cambodia that includes a school feeding program for children in need. Provided school meals to 186,000 children in 2023.
	Child Protection Programs:† Family Care First (FCF|REACT) (2015–2023) was led by Ministry of Social Affairs, Veterans and Youth Rehabilitation (MOSAVY). Funded by the European Union, USAID, the GHR Foundation, Save the Children Hong Kong, and UNICEF. Aimed to support more than 7,000 Cambodian children to live in safe, nurturing, family-based care. Activities included supporting the development of Social Service Workforce Training curriculum, the reintegration of children from residential care institutions to family-based care, the closure of residential care institutions, and the provision of social services. During the reporting period, FCF provided cash and livelihood assistance to over 700 recipients, intended to reduce trafficking risks for children in extreme poverty. Cambodia Child Protection Program (2009–2023) was led by UNICEF and MOSAVY and aimed to strengthen the child protection system in Cambodia and to prevent and reduce violence against children and unnecessary family separation. Built capacity of national and sub-national authorities in all 25 provinces to formulate and implement nationally approved institutional and legal frameworks. The government stated that the program was operational but did not report implementation activities conducted during the reporting period.

† Program is funded by the Government of Cambodia.
‡ 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***

WORKER RIGHTS SPOTLIGHT

The government puts restrictions on workers' ability to form and join unions of their own choosing. Foreigners are only permitted to join unions if they are literate in Khmer, have worked in Cambodia for at least 2 years, and have permission to residence in/have a permanent residency in the country. In addition, the government prevents unions and workers from accessing collective dispute settlement under the Arbitration Council. These restrictions, as well as the Cambodian government's failure to investigate and prosecute cases of anti-union discrimination and harassment can create a climate of fear that hinders workers' ability to organize, advocate for their rights, and report labor abuses, including child labor.

*For references, please visit **dol.gov/ChildLaborReports***

COLOMBIA

SIGNIFICANT ADVANCEMENT

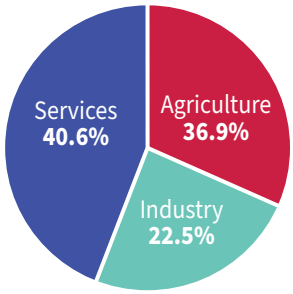
In 2023, Colombia made significant advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. The Ministry of Labor provided technical assistance and awareness-raising campaigns on child labor issues in over 550 municipalities. The Colombian Family Welfare Institute reached over 100,000 children and adolescents vulnerable to recruitment by armed or organized criminal groups through a program which uses cultural, sports, and science events. The government also introduced a new national action plan that provides monetary support to vulnerable groups affected by armed conflict, and another national action plan to guarantee uninterrupted education and safe spaces at schools in areas affected by armed conflict. In addition, the Governments of Colombia and Ecuador designed new data collection and assistance mechanisms to support children engaged in child labor in mining in the border region between the two countries. However, despite these efforts, the number of labor inspectors is insufficient to fully cover a workforce of over 24.6 million workers. In addition, social programs in Colombia are not adequate to address the scope of the country's child labor problem, particularly in areas impacted by armed conflict. Moreover, migrant children, refugee children, and children separated from their families require additional assistance to prevent them from being recruited and used by criminal or armed groups, including for illicit activities and commercial sexual exploitation, human trafficking, and forced labor.

PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Statistics on Children's Work and Education

Children	Age	Percent of Population
Working	5 to 14	1.3% (110,393)
Boys		1.6%
Girls		1.1%
Urban		0.6%
Rural		3.3%
Hazardous Work by Children	15 to 17	10.3% (258,990)
Boys		14.7%
Girls		5.7%
Urban		7.0%
Rural		19.3%
Attending School	5 to 14	93.4%
Combining Work and School	7 to 14	1.4%

Working Children by Sector, Ages 5-14



Children in Colombia are subjected to the worst forms of child labor, including in commercial sexual exploitation, forced street vending, forced begging, and recruitment by non-state armed groups for use in armed conflict.

Overview of Children's Work by Sector and Activity

Agriculture

Working in animal husbandry,† forestry, agriculture,† fishing,† and hunting, including in the production of coca, coffee, sugarcane,† pome and stone fruits, and grapes.

Industry

Mining† coal, emeralds, and gold. Construction,† particularly in large-scale projects. Producing bricks.

Services

Street work,† including vending and helping shoppers carry bags in urban markets,† begging,† and guarding cars and motorcycles.† Domestic work,† including caring for children,† cooking, gardening, and shopping for the home. Working in retail establishments, hotels, and restaurants. Recycling.†

Categorical Worst Forms of Child Labor‡

Commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking. Use in the production of pornography. Forced street vending and forced begging. Use in illicit activities by illegal armed groups and criminal organizations, including committing homicides, extortions, trafficking drugs, and the production of coca (stimulant plant), each sometimes as a result of human trafficking. Recruitment of children by non-state armed groups for use in armed conflict.

† 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 Colombia's implementation of its international commitments to eliminate the worst forms of child labor.

Legal Framework
Raise the minimum age for work from age 15 to age 18 to align with the compulsory education age.
Enforcement
Increase the number of labor inspectors from 1,159 to 1,642 to ensure adequate coverage of the labor force of approximately 24.6 million workers.
Publish information on the number of children removed from child labor due to inspections and the number of children referred to social services.
Ensure that labor inspectors do not encounter any barriers to conduct inspections in private residences if child labor is suspected.
Enhance the Attorney General's Office's case management system to track entire criminal proceedings beyond sentencing, to include information on the sentences and penalties handed down after conviction.
Ensure that all children rescued from child labor situations are provided social services.
Social Programs
Improve education access for all children, especially those in rural and marginalized urban environments, including by ensuring adequate transportation to school, improving school infrastructure, and addressing violence affecting school attendance.
Expand social programs to sufficiently address the scope of the worst forms of child labor, particularly commercial sexual exploitation, forced begging, and recruitment for use in illicit activities.

CHILDREN AT HIGHER RISK

In Colombia, migrant, refugee, and indigenous children are economically disadvantaged and, as a result, are more vulnerable to the worst forms of child labor. Venezuelan and Ecuadorian migrant and refugee children are at risk for commercial sexual exploitation and street work. Refugee and unaccompanied migrant children, as well as those who got separated from their families while transiting through areas of the country where state institutions have limited capacity, are at greater risk of being recruited and used by criminal organizations and armed groups for labor and commercial sexual exploitation. Afro-Colombian and indigenous children in the departments of Arauca, Cauca, Chocó, Córdoba, Nariño, Norte de Santander, Putumayo, and Valle del Cauca are at high risk of child soldier recruitment or use by non-state groups for armed conflict, as well as recruitment by criminal organizations. In addition, girls living in areas with foreign tourism, in mining communities, and in areas with large construction projects are vulnerable to commercial sexual exploitation, human trafficking, and forced labor.

BARRIERS TO EDUCATION ACCESS

Children in rural and marginalized urban parts of the country face barriers to accessing education due to poor school infrastructure, violence at school, and living long distances from schools combined with a lack of adequate transportation. While children under age 18 are eligible for Temporary Protected Status (TPS), migrant and refugee children face difficulties in obtaining TPS—without which they cannot attend school—due to their adult guardians' lack of familiarity with the process, thereby increasing barriers to education access and vulnerability to child labor. In 2023, 135,000 migrant children from Venezuela did not attend school. In addition, 27 attacks on schools took place and 18 schools have been used by armed groups in 2023.

LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR CHILD LABOR

Colombia has ratified all key international conventions concerning child labor. However, as Colombia's minimum age for work is lower than the compulsory education age, children may be encouraged to leave school before the completion of compulsory education.

Child Labor Laws and Regulations	Meets International Standards	Legislation
Minimum Age for Work, **15 Years**	✓	Article 35 of the Child and Adolescence Code
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work, **18 Years**	✓	Article 117 of the Child and Adolescence Code
Identification of Hazardous Occupations or Activities Prohibited for Children	✓	Article 3 of Resolution 1796
Prohibition of Slavery, Debt Bondage, and Forced Labor	✓	Article 17 of the Constitution; Articles 141 and 188A of the Penal Code
Prohibition of Child Trafficking	✓	Article 17 of the Constitution; Articles 188A–188C and 231 of the Penal Code; Law No. 2168
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children	✓	Articles 213–219B of the Penal Code
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities	✓	Articles 162, 188D, and 384 of the Penal Code
Minimum Age for Voluntary State Military Recruitment, **18 Years**	✓	Article 81 of Law 1861
Prohibition of Compulsory Recruitment of Children by (State) Military	✓	Article 4 of Law 1861
Prohibition of Military Recruitment by Non-state Armed Groups	✓	Article 162 of the Penal Code; Article 20 of the Child and Adolescence Code; Article 14 of Law 418
Compulsory Education Age, **18 Years**	✓	Decree 4807 of 2011
Free Public Education	✓	Articles 2.3.1.6.4.1 and 2.3.1.6.4.2 of Decree 1075; Article 1 of Decree 4807; Article 28 of the Child and Adolescence Code

ENFORCEMENT OF LAWS ON CHILD LABOR

In 2023, labor and criminal law enforcement agencies in Colombia took actions to address child labor. However, insufficient human and financial resource allocation hindered enforcement efforts.

Agencies Responsible for Child Labor Law Enforcement

Ministry of Labor (MOL): Receives complaints of labor law violations and conducts labor inspections, including inspections to verify labor conditions for adolescent workers and compliance with other child labor provisions through its Inspection, Monitoring, Control, and Territorial Management Directorate. Also oversees the Internal Working Group on Child Labor Eradication. Additionally, the Directorate of Fundamental Rights' Unit for Labor Protections operates the Comprehensive Child Labor Information System (SIRITI), a child labor monitoring system that identifies children engaged in or at risk of child labor.

Attorney General's Office (AGO): Investigates and prosecutes cases of child recruitment for use in armed conflict and illicit activities, commercial sexual exploitation, forced labor, and human trafficking. With support from the Office's Technical Investigation Unit, advises the Attorney General in the design of policies and strategies related to the role of judicial police investigators. Oversees the Articulation Group for Addressing Trafficking in Persons, which includes prosecutors, analysts, and judicial police engaged in addressing organized crime and human trafficking.

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, **1,159** labor inspectors conducted an **unknown** number of worksite inspections and found **7** child labor violations. The AGO also conducted **2,248** investigations into suspected cases of the worst forms of child labor, initiated **734** prosecutions, and convicted **1,908** perpetrators.

COORDINATION, POLICIES, AND PROGRAMS

Key Mechanism to Coordinate Government Efforts on Child Labor Colombia established a mechanism to coordinate its efforts to address child labor.	***Interagency Committee for the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labor and Protection of the Adolescent Worker (CIETI):*** Coordinates efforts to address the worst forms of child labor. Chaired by MOL, includes 21 government agencies and representatives from trade unions, business associations, and civil society organizations. Oversees department-level CIETIs throughout the country, each comprising municipal-level committees. In 2023, the committee convened twice.
Key Policies Related to Child Labor Colombia established policies that are consistent with relevant international standards on child labor.	***National Policy Guidelines to Prevent and Eradicate Child Labor and Protect the Adolescent Worker (2017–2027):*** Aims to address child labor in the agriculture sector, develop child labor prevention strategies, improve the quality and coverage of child protection services, protect adolescent workers from hazardous work, create strategies to address child labor in domestic work, and establish evaluation and monitoring mechanisms to assess progress. Contains a roadmap to prevent and eliminate child labor in mining and a cooperative agreement between the Ministry of Mining and Energy and the Colombian Institute of Family Welfare (*Instituto Colombiano de Bienestar Familiar* [ICBF]) to prevent child labor in mining. In 2023, MOL provided targeted support to the department of la Guajira through CIETI. It also provided a $25,000 grant to the department and reported that it would address 308 cases of child labor.
	National Strategy for the Prevention and Eradication of the Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children (2018–2028): Guides government actions at the national, departmental, and municipal levels for the prevention of commercial sexual exploitation, survivor assistance, and the strengthening of sentencing for perpetrators. As a core part of this strategy, the government maintains an "Eyes in All Places" *(Ojos en Todas Partes)* public awareness campaign, which aims to prevent child sex tourism. The campaign is led by MOL through the National Consulting Interagency Committee. The Committee consists of the Ministry of Commerce, Industry, and Tourism; ICBF; the Attorney General's Office; the National Police; UNICEF; the Foundation *Renacer;* and regional and municipal authorities.

Coordination, Policies, and Programs (Cont.)

Key Policies Related to Child Labor *‡ The government has other policies that may have addressed child labor issues or had an impact on child labor.*	***National Policy for the Prevention of Recruitment, Use, and Sexual Violence Against Children and Adolescents by Illegal Armed Groups of Organized Criminal Groups (2018–2028):*** Directs government actions to prevent the recruitment and use of children by armed groups, address violence against children, and improve interagency coordination. The government also has a roadmap that establishes protocols to assist child survivors of armed conflict.
Key Social Programs to Address Child Labor Colombia 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.	***Campaigns Against Child Labor:†*** ICBF campaigns to increase coordination for the protection of children and adolescents with other government agencies at the national, departmental, and municipal levels, while leading the Family National Welfare System. In 2023, ICBF organized awareness-raising events and workshops, conducted capacity building exercises, and distributed materials.
	Programs Addressing Trafficking in Persons:† Aim to raise awareness of child trafficking crimes. AGO oversees the "Don't be Fooled" *(#EsoEsCuento)* public awareness campaign to prevent human trafficking. The National Police also implement their own public awareness and child protection program, "Open Your Eyes" *(Abre Tus Ojos)*. The program aims to protect children from exploitation in the worst forms of child labor. In 2023, the National Police continued organizing workshops, as well as recreational and sports events, for children, adolescents, parents, and teachers. In 2023, the Ministry of Interior launched the "What is Trafficking?" (*De Que Trata la Trata*) public awareness campaign to educate the public on human trafficking and available resources, including a national anti-trafficking hotline.
† Program is funded by the Government of Colombia. *‡ The government had other social programs that may have included the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor.*	***Development for Social Prosperity Programs:†*** Families in Action *(Familias en Acción)* uses a conditional cash transfer program to address poverty and build human capital; United Network *(Red Unidos)* coordinates actions to reduce inequality and end extreme poverty; Healthy Generations *(Generaciones con Bienestar)* operates a children's rights program offering cultural and recreational activities for children ages 6 to 17 identified as vulnerable to the worst forms of child labor; and Youth in Action *(Jóvenes en Acción)* provides technical job training and conditional cash transfers to vulnerable urban youth ages 16 to 24.

*For information about USDOL's projects to address child labor around the world, visit **dol.gov/ILABprojects***

WORKER RIGHTS SPOTLIGHT

Violence, threats, harassment, killings, and other practices against trade unionists are common in Colombia. The government did not adequately enforce laws protecting freedom of association and the right to collective bargaining, resulting in a continued high degree of impunity for violators. As labor unions are integral to reporting and advocacy on the identification and prevention of child labor, violations of child labor laws and other labor abuses may go undetected when unions' ability to operate freely is curtailed.

*For references, please visit **dol.gov/ChildLaborReports***

COSTA RICA

MODERATE ADVANCEMENT

In 2023, Costa Rica made moderate advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. The government reactivated its National Committee for the Prevention and Eradication of Child Labor and Protection of Adolescent Work to coordinate government efforts to address child labor and signed two cooperation agreements with non-governmental organizations and labor unions to prevent child labor in the informal and agricultural sectors. The Office for the Eradication of Child Labor and Protection of the Adolescent Worker also provided cash transfers to 327 working minors and collaborated with the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock to respond to cases of working minors in the agricultural sector. However, social programs did not reach all child laborers working in the provinces of Limon, Puntarena, and Guanacaste, which have the highest incidences of child labor in the country. In addition, 108 labor inspectors were inadequate to effectively monitor a labor force of 2,521,400 and monitor all sectors in which child labor was occurring.

PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Statistics on Children's Work and Education

Children	Age	Percent of Population
Working	5 to 14	6.5% (46,509)
Hazardous Work by Children	15 to 17	Unavailable
Attending School	5 to 14	98.4%
Combining Work and School	7 to 14	7.0%

Children in Costa Rica are subjected to the worst forms of child labor, including in commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking. Children also engage in child labor in agriculture.

Overview of Children's Work by Sector and Activity

Agriculture
Picking coffee and cattle raising.

Industry
Construction and manufacturing.

Services
Working in restaurants and hotels. Street vending.† Domestic work.

Categorical Worst Forms of Child Labor‡
Commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking. Forced labor in the agriculture, construction, and commercial sectors. Forced domestic work. Use in transporting or selling 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 Costa Rica's implementation of its international commitments to eliminate the worst forms of child labor.

Legal Framework
Criminally prohibit the recruitment of children under age 18 by non-state armed groups.
Raise the minimum age for work from age 15 to age 17 to align with the compulsory education age.

Suggested Government Actions to Eliminate Child Labor (Cont.)

Enforcement
Publish labor law enforcement information, including the number of child labor violations, whether penalties were imposed for child labor violations, and the number of child labor penalties imposed that were collected.
Publish labor law enforcement information, including the number of worst forms of child labor violations, whether penalties were imposed for worst forms of child labor violations, and the number of worst forms of child labor penalties that were collected.
Allocate sufficient funding and human resources to ensure that labor inspections occur in all workplaces, including in rural areas and the agriculture and informal sectors.
Increase the number of labor inspectors from 105 to 167 to ensure adequate coverage of the labor force of approximately 2.5 million workers.
Ensure that the judiciary, prosecutors, municipal authorities, and the police have sufficient staff, training, and resources to investigate, prosecute, and convict perpetrators of human trafficking and commercial sexual exploitation of children, and to identify victims of child trafficking and refer them to appropriate social services.
Enhance data collection and monitoring of human trafficking cases in order to improve enforcement and prevention efforts.
Address instances of disorder, abuse, and neglect in the National Child Welfare Agency shelter network, which provides services to victims of the worst forms of child labor, by addressing issues of management, staff training, facility conditions, and any other areas identified as problematic.
Coordination
Strengthen coordination and information sharing between institutions responsible for investigating child labor and providing social services to victims.
Increase transportation and human resources for the Office for the Eradication of Child Labor and Protection of the Adolescent Worker so that the office can improve program oversight.
Social Programs
Enhance efforts to eliminate barriers and make education accessible for all children, including children in rural areas, girls, LGBTQI+ youth, children from indigenous and Afro-descendant communities, and migrant children, by increasing awareness of school enrollment requirements, improving school water and electrical infrastructure, and increasing access for students with disabilities.
Enhance social programs to address all forms of child labor, including in commercial sexual exploitation and illicit activities.
Ensure that the Let's Get Ahead Program is sufficiently funded to provide its intended benefits to all participants.
Update the 2019 Child Labor Risk Indicators Module that classified cantons according to levels of vulnerability to inform policies and programs.

CHILDREN AT HIGHER RISK

Children living in coastal regions have the highest risk for child labor in agriculture, including coffee production, with the highest incidences of child labor occurring in the provinces of Limon, Puntarenas, and Guanacaste. Afro-descendant, migrant, and indigenous children are particularly vulnerable to labor exploitation in Costa Rica. Children living in tourist destinations, border areas, and in the Northern and Pacific coastal zones are also subjected to commercial sexual exploitation. In addition, migrant girls from Nicaragua, the Dominican Republic, and other Latin American countries have been identified as victims of sex trafficking and domestic work, with children from Nicaragua subjected to forced labor in agriculture, domestic work, and commercial sexual exploitation.

BARRIERS TO EDUCATION ACCESS

While preschool and general basic education are free and compulsory, some children in rural areas, girls, LGBTQIA+ youth, children with disabilities, and children from indigenous and Afro-descendant communities face barriers to education access, including discrimination and gender stereotypes. Costa Rica has implemented innovative inclusion models for students and eliminated documentation requirements for enrollment, such as transcripts showing previous schooling or parent's identity documents. However, parents often incorrectly believe that such documents are still necessary, and school officials reportedly sometimes request them, either due to a lack of awareness of current regulations or influenced by discrimination. In addition, as the 2023 education budget was the lowest in 9 years, it may have affected the government's efforts to provide support to vulnerable populations. Moreover, in 2023, 19 percent of educational centers did not have access to water, and 10 percent lacked electricity.

LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR CHILD LABOR

Costa Rica has ratified all key international conventions concerning child labor. However, as Costa Rica's minimum age for work is lower than the compulsory education age, children may be encouraged to leave school before the completion of compulsory education.

Child Labor Laws and Regulations	Meets International Standards	Legislation
Minimum Age for Work, **15 Years**	✓	Articles 3, 78, 92, and 101 of the Childhood and Adolescence Code
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work, **18 Years**	✓	Articles 1 and 5 of Law 8922; Article 87 of the Labor Code
Identification of Hazardous Occupations or Activities Prohibited for Children	✓	Article 94 of the Childhood and Adolescence Code; Article 5 of Law 8922; Article 88 of the Labor Code; Articles 5 and 6 of Regulation No. 36640
Prohibition of Slavery, Debt Bondage, and Forced Labor	✓	Articles 1 and 2 of Law No. 9545; Articles 20 and 56 of the Constitution; Article 8 of the Labor Code; Articles 7,172, 189 bis, 192, 376, 381, 383, and 384 of the Penal Code; Article 7 of the Trafficking in Persons Law
Prohibition of Child Trafficking	✓	Law No. 9545; Articles 7, 172, 189 bis, 192, 381, and 383 of the Penal Code; Articles 5, 7, and 74 of the Trafficking in Persons Law
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children	✓	Articles 160, 167, 168, and 170–174 of the Penal Code
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities	✓	Articles 7, 188, 381, and 390 of the Penal Code; Article 77 of the Narcotics Law
Minimum Age for Voluntary State Military Recruitment	N/A†	
Prohibition of Compulsory Recruitment of Children by (State) Military	N/A†	
Prohibition of Military Recruitment by Non-state Armed Groups	✗	
Compulsory Education Age, **17 Years**‡	✓	Articles 57 and 59 of the Childhood and Adolescence Code; Article 78 of the Constitution
Free Public Education	✓	Article 59 of the Childhood and Adolescence Code; Article 8 of the Education Law; Article 78 of the Constitution

† Country has no standing military
‡ Age calculated based on available information

On August 23, 2023, Costa Rica enacted Directive MAG-N°003-2023, mandating that all institutions in the agricultural sector adhere to the Protocol for Interinstitutional Coordination for the Care of Underage Workers, preventing child labor and ensuring compliance with regulations concerning adolescent workers. The Directive also instructs Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock officials to refer cases of working minors in the agricultural sector to the Ministry of Labor and Social Security's Office for the Eradication of Child Labor and Protection of the Adolescent Worker (OATIA). Despite this effort, as Costa Rica's minimum age for work is lower than the compulsory education age, children may be encouraged to leave school before the completion of compulsory education.

ENFORCEMENT OF LAWS ON CHILD LABOR

In 2023, labor and criminal law enforcement agencies in Costa Rica took actions to address child labor. However, gaps exist within the operations of the Ministry of Labor and Social Security (MTSS) and criminal enforcement agencies, including insufficient resource allocation and training for criminal investigators, that hindered enforcement efforts.

Agencies Responsible for Child Labor Law Enforcement

MTSS: Monitors and enforces provisions in the Labor Code related to child labor, including conducting school visits and worksite inspections. Through OATIA, responds to and attempts to prevent child labor through policy development and public awareness campaigns. Also provides referrals for those found to be in exploitative labor to government social services. On October 19, 2023, MTSS signed two cooperation agreements to combat child labor and protect adolescent workers nationwide. The first agreement, with the Association for the Defense of the Rights of Persons Under 18 years of age (DNI Costa Rica), focuses on preventing child labor in the informal and agricultural sectors through training for labor inspectors. The second agreement, which involves MTSS, the Confederation of Workers Rerum Novarum, and the Trade Union of Women Workers and Costa Rican Education Workers, aims to prevent child labor and protect adolescent workers through coordinated efforts. MTSS also launched the SOMOS+ Socio-Labor Recognition System to support its annual initiative to recognize companies' best practices in four categories: prevention of child labor and protection of adolescent workers, inclusion of workers with disabilities, inclusion of older workers, and promotion of gender equality, with collaboration from various public institutions assisting vulnerable populations. In addition, OATIA provided direct assistance to 412 working minors in 2023 through the Working Minors Conditional Cash Transfer program, investing approximately $517,387 in this initiative. OATIA also worked with the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock to respond to cases of working minors detected during site visits in the agricultural sector.

Attorney General's Office: Enforces criminal laws protecting children, including laws prohibiting the worst forms of child labor. Coordinates efforts with the Judicial Investigative Police, which investigate violations related to the worst forms of child labor; the Immigration Police; the National Police; and municipal police forces. Also coordinates with the National Child Welfare Agency, the Social Security System, the Ministries of Education and Health, and the Civil Registry, as well as with NGOs, international organizations, diplomatic missions, and foreign law enforcement.

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, **108** labor inspectors conducted **14,031** worksite inspections, finding **1** child labor violation. There were also **53** investigations into suspected worst forms of child labor crimes, with **24** prosecutions initiated and **2** perpetrators convicted.

COORDINATION, POLICIES, AND PROGRAMS

Key Mechanism to Coordinate Government Efforts on Child Labor Costa Rica established a mechanism to coordinate its efforts to address child labor. However, there is a lack of sufficient human resources to ensure coordination among relevant agencies.	***National Committee for the Prevention and Eradication of Child Labor and Protection of Adolescent Workers***: On April 24, 2023, the government reactivated this committee with the participation of 11 public institutions, as well as representatives from the business sector, labor unions, and civil society. The committee is responsible for implementing the Roadmap to Make Costa Rica a Country Free of Child Labor and Its Worst Forms.
Key Policies Related to Child Labor Costa Rica established policies that are consistent with relevant international standards on child labor.	***Roadmap to Make Costa Rica a Country Free of Child Labor and Its Worst Forms (2021–2025):*** Aims to eradicate all forms of child labor in Costa Rica by 2025 by strengthening efforts to identify and track hazardous child labor, and by increasing social awareness and collaborative efforts to address child labor. In 2023, the National Child Welfare Agency worked with MTSS to monitor implementation of the roadmap and provided training to officials on how to identify and refer children in need to social services. The National Coalition against Trafficking in Person and Smuggling (CONATT) also continued to implement the Comprehensive Care Strategy for survivors of human trafficking and their dependents, providing legal, psychosocial, educational, employment, housing, and reintegration, repatriation, and resettlement support. On October 6, 2023, CONATT, with technical support from the UN, launched a joint program against human trafficking and smuggling, funded by the Migration Multi-Partner Trust Fund. The program's objective is to bolster authorities' capabilities in identifying, investigating, and prosecuting instances of human trafficking and smuggling. Additionally, throughout 2023, CONATT's Prevention Commission, in close collaboration with the state institutions, carried out activities such as 180 training processes focused on issues related to human trafficking and migrant smuggling. Through these programs, a total of 8,626 people were trained, including 1,656 public officials and 6,970 people from the general population, increasing awareness of trafficking in persons issues and how to refer suspected trafficking in persons cases.
	National Policy Against Trafficking in Persons (2020–2030): Outlines goals and actions to prevent and combat human trafficking and smuggling of migrants, as well as strengthen human trafficking investigations and sanctioning criminals. Research was unable to determine activities undertaken by this policy during the reporting period. In 2023, CONATT, in collaboration with state institutions and the International Bureau for Children's Rights (IBCR), developed a Work Plan for the prevention of human trafficking and migrant smuggling for the coming years. This plan, aligned with the National Policy and the Strategic Plan, was developed through working groups facilitated by IBCR and had the active participation of all the actors involved.
	Interinstitutional Coordinating Protocol for the Protection of Working Minors: Outlines provision of services for child laborers through collaboration between MTSS, the National Child Welfare Agency, the Ministry of Public Education, and the Joint Social Welfare Institute (IMAS), as well as their regional and local agencies and the private sector. In 2023, 153 cases were referred through the mechanism. Additionally, MTSS, through the Special Worker Protection Department, trained 2,543 people on child labor, adolescent labor, and dangerous adolescent labor through the coordination protocol during 2023.

Coordination, Policies, and Programs (Cont.)

Key Social Programs to Address Child Labor

Costa Rica funded and participated in programs that include the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor. However, these social programs are inadequate to address the problem in all sectors where child labor has been identified, including in commercial sexual exploitation and illicit activities.

† Program is funded by the Government of Costa Rica.
‡ The government had other social programs that may have included the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor.

Houses of Joy (Casas de la Alegría):† Public-private initiative that seeks to support the social inclusion of children, particularly migrant and indigenous children, while their parents and relatives are working in the coffee harvest. The program provides centers that offer free childcare, healthcare, meals, and social protection services and mitigate the risk of child labor on coffee plantations. IMAS funds meals, caregiver salaries, and training while farm owners provide the land and classrooms, with financial contributions from UNICEF for buildings and teaching materials. The program continued in 2023 and operates in 41 centers nationwide. Notably, *Cafetalera de Tierras Ticas SA*, a coffee farm in Los Santos and Coto Brus, has been praised for its social, environmental, and economic responsibility, operating 6 Houses of Joy that benefit over 300 children and 205 collaborators and their families, while also championing sustainable production and community education.

Let's Get Ahead Program (Avancemos):† IMAS program that provides monthly conditional cash transfers to low-income families to keep children in school and out of exploitative work. As of September 2023, the program provided $165,659,855 (85,303,736,000 *colones*) to 289,974 participants. In 2023, the Brunca Region was one of the largest beneficiaries of *Avancemos* subsidies, with approximately $25.6 million (12,767,101,000 *colones*) awarded to 42,485 students across 25,330 households. However, reports indicate that the program has experienced a reduction in its budget since 2021, leading to insufficient resources to fulfill the annual demand from the population.

Working Minor (Persona Trabajadora Menor de Edad):† The Working Minor Conditional Cash Transfer program was established through collaboration between the Ministry of Labor and IMAS to mitigate child labor by bolstering the formal education of economically disadvantaged adolescents, thus preventing school dropout. IMAS supplements family incomes based on continued school attendance. The program targets vulnerable communities, with joint efforts held in indigenous regions for training on child labor issues. OATIA provided direct assistance to 412 working minors in 2023 through the Working Minor Conditional Cash Transfer program, with the government investing approximately $520,296 into this initiative.

For information about USDOL's projects to address child labor around the world, visit ***dol.gov/ILABprojects***
For references, please visit ***dol.gov/ChildLaborReports***

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

MINIMAL ADVANCEMENT – *Efforts Made but Continued Practice that Delayed Advancement*

In 2023, the Dominican Republic made minimal advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. The government enacted Resolution 10-2023, which added 14 additional dangerous and unhealthy categories of prohibited activities for persons under 18 years of age to the country's hazardous work list, including domestic work. The Ministry of Labor and the Attorney General's Office also signed an inter-institutional agreement to increase their coordination to address child labor. However, despite these new initiatives to address child labor, the Dominican Republic is assessed as having made only minimal advancement because school administrators continued to deny access to education to a significant number of children who were without identity or residency documents. Barriers to education access increase children's vulnerability to child labor. Children without identity or residency documents, most of whom are of foreign origin or descent, were also being prevented from receiving social services, including access to the government's poverty reduction and vocational training programs. In addition, significant enforcement gaps remain, including limited human and financial resources for labor and criminal enforcement agencies, and the lack of authority for labor inspectors to directly assess penalties for labor law violations. The Dominican Republic's legal prohibitions related to child trafficking are also insufficient because they require threats, the use of force, or coercion for the crime of child trafficking to have occurred.

PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Statistics on Children's Work and Education

Children	Age	Percent of Population
Working	5 to 14	6.3% (Unavailable)
Hazardous Work by Children	15 to 17	Unavailable
Attending School	5 to 14	96.4%
Combining Work and School	7 to 14	9.2%

Children in the Dominican Republic are subjected to the worst forms of child labor, including in commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking. Children also perform dangerous tasks in agriculture.

Overview of Children's Work by Sector and Activity

Agriculture

Working in agriculture, including producing coffee, rice, and tomatoes. Clearing land for sugarcane production, planting and harvesting sugarcane, and collecting cut cane. Farming.† Fishing.†

Industry

Producing baked goods. Mining.† Construction.†

Services

Domestic work.† Street work, including vending,† begging,† washing cars,† shining shoes,† and transporting packages in markets. Scavenging in landfills. Working in woodworking shops, car washes, auto repair shops,† blacksmith workshops, and in convenience store deliveries.†

Categorical Worst Forms of Child Labor‡

Forced labor in domestic work, construction, street vending, begging, and agriculture, sometimes as a result of human trafficking. Commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking. Use in illicit activities, including drug trafficking, 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 is 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 the Dominican Republic's implementation of its international commitments to eliminate the worst forms of child labor.

Legal Framework
Ensure that laws prohibiting child trafficking do not require threats, the use of force, or coercion as elements of the crime.
Criminally prohibit the recruitment of children under age 18 by non-state armed groups.
Enforcement
Increase the number of labor inspectors from 207 to 331 to provide adequate coverage of the labor force of approximately 4.9 million people, especially in remote rural areas.
Ensure that the number of inspections conducted by each inspector is appropriate to guarantee the quality and scope of inspections.
Improve case tracking so that labor inspectors are able to promptly follow up on violations and refer children to remediation services.
Establish a system to verify the age of young workers to better protect children without birth certificates or other legal documentation from exploitation.
Ensure that labor inspectors interview workers in a safe environment and that they are able to communicate with Creole-speaking workers, including those who may be underage.
Provide additional training to labor and criminal law enforcement officials on child labor issues, case documentation, re-inspection protocols, how to use inspection data to enable prosecution, on indicators of human trafficking, and on standard operating procedures on referral of trafficking survivors to services.
Increase human and financial resources to ensure adequate criminal and labor law enforcement related to child labor.
Improve coordination between the Ministry of Labor and the Office of the Attorney General to ensure that violations are adequately investigated, sanctioned, and prosecuted.
Provide legal authorization to allow labor inspectors to conduct inspections in the informal sector.
Government Policies
Take steps to implement the Roadmap Toward the Elimination of Child Labor and Its Worst Forms and Education Pact and publish information about efforts to implement these policies on an annual basis.
Social Programs
Collect and publish data on the extent and nature of child labor to inform policies and programs.
Increase efforts to issue identity documents to all children and ensure that children without documentation, including children of Haitian descent and migrant children, can access education and social programs as provided by Dominican law.
Increase school infrastructure and teacher availability, especially in rural areas, remove supply- and school-related fees, and expand efforts to reduce discrimination on the basis of national origin in schools.
Ensure that children are not denied access to education based on their national or ethnic origin, immigration status, or lack of identity documents, and update all Ministry of Education school manuals to align with Dominican law guaranteeing that children without birth certificates or identity documents are able to enroll in schools and receive diplomas certifying school completion.
Expand social protection programs and specialized services for trafficking survivors as applicable, particularly for child survivors of commercial sexual exploitation, agricultural labor exploitation, and forced labor, and ensure that programs also provide services to vulnerable children who are without identity documents or regular migration status.
Ensure that the National Council for Children and Adolescents has sufficient resources and facilities to provide the necessary care for survivors of child labor and child trafficking.

CHILDREN AT HIGHER RISK

Many Dominican-born persons of Haitian descent, including children, continue to remain in undocumented status because of a Constitutional Court decision in 2013 that retroactively revoked birthright citizenship of all persons born after 1929 to non-citizens in the Dominican Republic, almost all of whom were children of Haitian descent. In general, undocumented children and children of undocumented parents are particularly vulnerable to labor exploitation because they may lack birth or residency documents. This increases the likelihood that these children may be denied access to education or engage in child labor, including its worst forms, in part because labor inspectors may not be able to verify their ages. In addition, children in tourist locations are particularly vulnerable to commercial sexual exploitation, especially in major urban and coastal resort areas.

BARRIERS TO EDUCATION ACCESS

According to Dominican law, education should be free and compulsory until age 14 and accessible to all children, including those lacking identity documents. However, numerous reports indicate that a significant number of children without identity documents were prevented from accessing education in 2023 due to time-consuming processes and extensive documentation requirements, such as notarized and translated copies of birth certificates, and school transcripts or proof of past school enrollment certified by several Dominican and Haitian government ministries and entities. Moreover, despite a July 2023 Ministry of Education (MOE) directive to public schools noting that all children must be allowed to attend school regardless of their identity documentation, the MOE Operations Manual of Public Education Centers incorrectly instructs school administrators to request identity documents for school enrollment. This contradictory guidance has been used by some school officials to explicitly deny migrant children and Dominican children lacking documentation access to schools. While there is a process for appealing cases of education enrollment denial, sources indicate that government officials responsible for managing the appeals process were not responsive and that case resolution could last up to 2 years. Teacher and school infrastructure shortages also create barriers to education access in the Dominican Republic. In addition, a high percentage of students drop out at the primary and secondary levels. These issues particularly affect children living in rural areas and in communities predominantly of Haitian descent. Sources indicate that some children of Haitian descent face discrimination by teachers and peers, travel long distances to schools, and are unable to afford costs related to schooling.

LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR CHILD LABOR

The Dominican Republic has ratified all key international conventions concerning child labor. However, the Dominican Republic's laws do not meet international standards on the prohibition of child trafficking.

Child Labor Laws and Regulations	Meets International Standards	Legislation
Minimum Age for Work, **16 Years**	✓	Article 245–247 and 249–253 of the Labor Code; Article 40 of the Code for the Protection System and Fundamental Rights of Boys, Girls, and Adolescents; Article 56.1 of the Constitution
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work, **18 Years**	✓	Sections 1 and 3 of the Resolution Modifying the List of Hazardous Work for Persons Under Age 18; Articles 251, 720, and 721 of the Labor Code
Identification of Hazardous Occupations or Activities Prohibited for Children	✓	Section 3 of the Resolution Modifying the List of Hazardous Work for Persons Under Age 18; Articles 246, 249, 252, and 253 of the Labor Code

Legal Framework for Child Labor (Cont.)

Child Labor Laws and Regulations	Meets International Standards	Legislation
Prohibition of Slavery, Debt Bondage, and Forced Labor	✓	Articles 1, 3, and 7 of the Law Against Migrant Smuggling and Trafficking in Persons; Articles 25 and 409 of the Code for the Protection System and Fundamental Rights of Boys, Girls, and Adolescents; Articles 40, 41, and 62.2 of the Constitution
Prohibition of Child Trafficking	✗	Articles 1, 3, and 7 of the Law Against Migrant Smuggling and Trafficking in Persons; Articles 25, 406, and 409–411 of the Code for the Protection System and Fundamental Rights of Boys, Girls, and Adolescents; Article 41 of the Constitution
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children	✓	Articles 25 and 408–411 of the Code for the Protection System and Fundamental Rights of Boys, Girls, and Adolescents; Articles 1, 3, and 7 of the Law Against Migrant Smuggling and Trafficking in Persons; Article 24 of the Law on Technological Crime; Article 56.1 of the Constitution
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities	✓	Article 85 of the Law on Drugs and Controlled Substances
Minimum Age for Voluntary State Military Recruitment, **18 Years**	✓*	Articles 26, 29, 96, and 97 of the Organic Armed Forces Law
Prohibition of Compulsory Recruitment of Children by (State) Military	✓*	Articles 4, 96, 97, 231, and 232 of the Organic Armed Forces Law
Prohibition of Military Recruitment by Non-state Armed Groups	✗	
Compulsory Education Age, **14 Years‡**	✓	Article 63 of the Constitution; Articles 33, 35, 37, and 40 of the Organic Law of Education
Free Public Education	✓	Article 63 of the Constitution; Articles 33, 35, 37, and 40 of the Organic Law of Education; Ministry of Education Circular No. 18 of 2011; Articles 45 and 46 of the Code for the Protection System and Fundamental Rights of Boys, Girls, and Adolescents

** Country has no conscription*
‡ Age calculated based on available information

In 2023, the government enacted the Ministry of Labor's Resolution 10-2023, which modified the list of dangerous and unhealthy jobs for persons under 18 years of age and repealed Resolution 52-04 of August 13, 2004. The new resolution expanded from 26 to 40 the number of specific types of work prohibited to minors under 18 years of age, including the employment of minors in domestic work. Despite this effort, prohibitions against child trafficking are insufficient because they require threats, the use of force, or coercion to be established for the crime of child trafficking under the 2003 Law on Human Smuggling and Trafficking (Law 137-03). Although the Code for the Protection System and Fundamental Rights of Boys, Girls, and Adolescents criminally prohibits accepting, offering, or transferring children without requiring threats, the use of force, or coercion as an element, it does not criminally prohibit the recruitment or harboring of children.

ENFORCEMENT OF LAWS ON CHILD LABOR

In 2023, labor and criminal law enforcement agencies in the Dominican Republic took actions to address child labor. However, the lack of authority of labor inspectors to assess penalties and an insufficient allocation of financial resources hindered enforcement efforts.

Agencies Responsible for Child Labor Law Enforcement

Ministry of Labor (MT): Leads efforts to prevent and eliminate child labor, supervises compliance with labor regulations, conducts labor inspections, and oversees the Directorate of Policies for the Prevention and Eradication of Child Labor. Refers children found in exploitative conditions to the National Council for Children and Adolescents (CONANI) for social services. However, the labor inspectorate lacks sufficient financial and human resources to carry out adequate inspections and inspectors do not have authority to assess labor penalties, instead writing infraction reports that are sent to prosecutors in the Office of the Attorney General for enforcement action. In 2023, MT acquired 12 new vehicles to assist them in carrying out inspections.

Office of the Attorney General (AG): Prosecutes crimes involving children, including criminal violations related to the commercial sexual exploitation of children and other worst forms of child labor. Oversees the Special Prosecutor for Migrant Smuggling and Human Trafficking, which receives notifications of alleged violations related to the worst forms of child labor through a hotline. Reports indicate that some cases referred to the AG by the MT are not investigated and prosecuted by the AG due to a lack of coordination between these two entities. In 2023, the AG signed an agreement with the MT to increase coordination on efforts related to addressing child labor, as well as developing new avenues of collaboration. As part of the agreement, the AG agreed to establish specialized prosecutor's offices throughout the country, particularly in provinces in which there is a greater presence of child labor and its worst forms, and permitted the use of its hotline to receive reports from members of the public about child labor, which would then be referred to the MT.

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, **207** labor inspectors conducted **52,706** worksite inspections, finding **264** child labor violations. It is **unknown** whether investigations into suspected cases of the worst forms of child labor were conducted, although **59** prosecutions were initiated.

COORDINATION, POLICIES, AND PROGRAMS

Key Mechanism to Coordinate Government Efforts on Child Labor The Dominican Republic established a mechanism to coordinate its efforts to address child labor.	***National Steering Committee to Eliminate Child Labor:*** Develops policies, approves programs, and coordinates, monitors, and evaluates efforts to address child labor in the Dominican Republic. Meets every 2 months, overseen by the MT, and comprises ministerial representatives, labor unions, private sector representatives, NGOs, more than 30 other institutions, and local steering committees in each province. Oversees the system for referring children found during inspections to appropriate social services. In 2023, the committee held six meetings, during which it developed the annual operating plan to coordinate government actions to address child labor.

Coordination, Policies, and Programs (Cont.)

Key Policies Related to Child Labor

The Dominican Republic established policies related to child labor. However, it is uncertain if the Education Pact policy implemented activities addressing child labor during the reporting period.

Roadmap Toward the Elimination of Child Labor and Its Worst Forms in the Dominican Republic (2010–2025): Serves as the national strategic framework to achieve the goals established in the Hemispheric Agenda on Decent Work related to child labor. Aims to prevent and eliminate child labor and its worst forms, and sets targets and indicators for poverty reduction, health, education, institutional coordination, awareness raising, and information sharing. Reporting indicates this policy continued to be implemented in 2023.

National Development Strategy (2010–2030): Aims to reduce poverty and inequality, and includes programs to address child labor, provide universal education to all children, and expand access to secondary school, including for students without identity documents. In 2023, for the eleventh consecutive year, the government committed to allocating 4 percent of the nation's GDP to primary and secondary education as indicated by the National Development Strategy. However, reporting indicates that, in 2023, they actually allocated only 3.88 percent. The purpose of this continued funding is to improve the national education system.

Education Pact (2014–2030): Includes strategies to address child labor and seeks to improve the quality of, and access to, primary and secondary education by increasing attendance and graduation rates and enrolling more students in the Extended School Day Program. Implemented by the Ministry of Education (MOE) and supported by the World Bank. Research was unable to determine whether activities to address child labor were undertaken during the reporting period to implement the Education Pact.

Key Social Programs to Address Child Labor

In 2023, the Dominican Republic 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 address the problem of child labor in all sectors, including in agriculture and commercial sexual exploitation, and are inaccessible to individuals who are without documentation.

† Program is funded by the Government of the Dominican Republic.
‡ The government had other social programs that may have included the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor.

SUPERATE:† Aims to reduce poverty by providing low-income families with social protection interventions, including conditional cash transfers, socio-educational support, educational inclusion, housing, food security, and referrals to other government programs and services. One of the goals of this program is to increase children's school attendance and reduce child labor. Nonetheless, research indicates that SUPERATE is not available to families who are without documentation, including migrants and Dominicans who lack documentation. In 2023, the government continued carrying out cash transfers and joined efforts with NGOs to address hunger in the country.

Oportunidad 14–24:† Supports high-risk and socially vulnerable adolescents and young people between ages 14 and 24 who have limited resources by providing access to technical professional training, scholarships, a monthly provision of raw food, and transportation to study centers. However, research indicates that individuals without documentation, including migrants and Dominicans who lack documentation, are ineligible to participate in the program. In 2023, over 22,500 youths were registered in this program throughout 119 centers, with over 3,000 youths having graduated from it during the year.

Extended School Day Program (Jornada Escolar Extendida):† MOE program to extend school hours to a full day (8 a.m. to 4 p.m.) to improve educational achievement and reduce child labor. This program was still active in 2023, and according to reports, over 1 million students throughout the country were enrolled in it during the reporting year.

*For information about USDOL's projects to address child labor around the world, visit **dol.gov/ILABprojects***
*For references, please visit **dol.gov/ChildLaborReports***

ECUADOR

SIGNIFICANT ADVANCEMENT

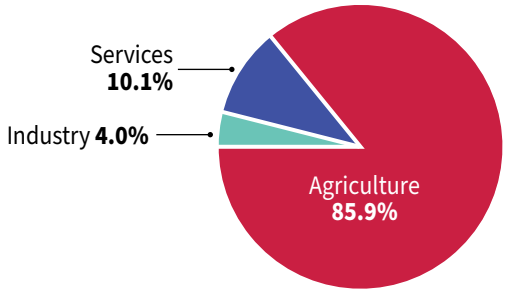
In 2023, Ecuador made significant advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. The government passed the Law Against Human Trafficking and Illicit Trafficking of Migrants, which tasks the Ministry of Interior with leading Ecuador's inter-institutional committee against trafficking in persons and defines government prevention and protection actions. In addition, all 160 labor inspectors received training on topics pertaining to the prevention and elimination of child labor and national and international legal standards. As part of the National Action Plan to Combat Trafficking in Persons, the government distributed to all border checkpoints new guidelines to help identify and prevent trafficking in persons crimes. The Ministry of Social and Economic Inclusion also signed cooperative agreements with municipal and provincial governments, civil society organizations, and religious organizations to implement programs to eliminate child labor and referred 12,160 children and adolescents vulnerable to child labor to social services. However, despite these efforts, the Ministry of Labor reported that the resources allocated to the labor inspectorate—including the number of inspectors, transportation, and equipment—are insufficient to conduct inspections in the informal sector. The government also has not conducted a nationwide child labor survey since 2012, and social programs are needed to address the vulnerability of migrant, LGBTQI+, indigenous, and Afro-Ecuadorian children to the worst forms of child labor. Furthermore, the Ministry of Labor has not registered certain industry-wide trade unions, including the Trade Union Association of Agricultural and Peasant Workers. As labor unions are integral to reporting and advocacy on the identification and prevention of child labor, violations of child labor laws and other labor abuses in the agriculture sector may go undetected as a result.

PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Statistics on Children's Work and Education

Children	Age	Percent of Population
Working	5 to 14	7.0% (260,567)
Hazardous Work by Children	15 to 17	Unavailable
Attending School	5 to 14	95.5%
Combining Work and School	7 to 14	7.5%

Working Children by Sector, Ages 5-14



Children in Ecuador are subjected to the worst forms of child labor, including in commercial sexual exploitation. Children also perform dangerous tasks in agriculture.

Overview of Children's Work by Sector and Activity

Agriculture

Working in agriculture, including with the use of chemical products† and machetes,† and in the production of bananas, rice, and flowers. Fishing. Raising poultry, hogs, and bovines.†

Industry

Mining, including gold† and small-scale mining.† Construction† and brickwork. Working in the production of bricks.†

Services

Domestic work† and street work† in vending and begging. Working in auto repair garages, including hazardous work involved with using heavy machinery. Working in food service, including working as waiters and kitchen staff. Scavenging in landfills.

Categorical Worst Forms of Child Labor‡

Commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking. Use in illicit activities, including drug trafficking and robbery, sometimes as result of human trafficking. Forced labor in agriculture, mining, domestic work, street vending, and begging. Use in the production of pornography. Recruitment of children by Colombian non-state armed groups for use in armed conflict, 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 Ecuador's implementation of its international commitments to eliminate the worst forms of child labor.

Enforcement
Strengthen referral mechanisms to social services for survivors of child labor, especially for those found in the informal sector.
Increase the number of labor inspectors from 160 to 556 to ensure adequate coverage of the labor force of approximately 8.3 million workers.
Ensure that the labor inspectorate is properly funded so that inspectors receive sufficient resources, including transportation and equipment, to carry out their duties adequately.
Publish data on criminal investigations related to the worst forms of child labor, including the number of prosecutions initiated and perpetrators convicted.
Ensure that laws and regulations governing child labor, especially hazardous labor, are enforced consistently throughout the country, including in rural areas and family-run businesses. Ensure that inspections sufficiently cover sectors in which child labor has been reported, including the informal sector.
Ensure that industry-wide unions, including the Trade Union Association of Agricultural and Peasant Workers, are registered by the Ministry of Labor.
Ensure that labor inspectors have sufficient knowledge of existing laws and receive adequate training in victim identification to conduct inspections and refer survivors to social services.
Ensure that criminal investigators receive sufficient resources, such as additional investigators, to investigate cases of suspected child labor crimes and refer victims to social services consistently.
Provide specialized shelters for children that have been victimized by labor or sex trafficking and ensure that funds are distributed to shelters in a timely manner.
Publish child labor data collected through the Unified System of Registering Child Labor.
Government Policies
Take steps to implement the Prevent and Eradicate Child Labor policy and National Development Plan and publish information about these efforts on an annual basis.
Social Programs
Conduct a comprehensive child labor survey to ensure sufficient and current data to inform government actions to eliminate child labor.
Ensure that students without identity documents are able to graduate.
Develop social programs to address the vulnerability of migrant and refugee children to exploitative labor practices and establish programs to address child labor where it is most prevalent, including the informal and agricultural sectors.
Eliminate barriers to and make education accessible for all children, including indigenous and refugee children and children from rural areas, by increasing classroom space and teachers, addressing teen pregnancy issues, providing adequate transportation, and easing the economic burden of buying school supplies.
Provide quality services to survivors of human trafficking in all provinces of Ecuador, including to migrant children.
Update the social registry—which contains information on low-income families and informs the provision of social assistance—to include families most vulnerable to child labor.
Ensure that social programs address the vulnerability of migrants, LGBTQI+ individuals, and indigenous and Afro-Ecuadorian girls at risk of human trafficking.

CHILDREN AT HIGHER RISK

Migrant and refugee children from Colombia and Venezuela are vulnerable to street work, forced begging, and exploitative labor practices in the fishing sector, in artisanal mining, and in agriculture. The Ecuadorian government, UN, and civil society organizations (CSOs) agree that Venezuelans with irregular migration status are especially vulnerable to trafficking, along with LGBTQI+, indigenous, and Afro-Ecuadorian girls. Indigenous and Afro-Ecuadorian children are also vulnerable to child labor. In addition, some indigenous children are recruited under false promises of employment and are subjected to forced begging, domestic servitude, or forced labor in sweatshops and commercial vending.

BARRIERS TO EDUCATION ACCESS

Vulnerable children in Ecuador face numerous barriers to accessing education, including lack of space and teachers, economic difficulty in buying uniforms and school supplies, inadequate school infrastructure, teen pregnancy, and a lack of transportation for children who must attend schools far from their homes. Reporting also indicates that many school-age Venezuelan refugee and migrant children are not enrolled in Ecuador's educational system due to non-institutional barriers like a lack of resources and local discrimination. In addition, undocumented students face difficulties graduating from secondary school as national authorities are unable to grant diplomas without identity documents.

LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR CHILD LABOR

Ecuador has ratified all key international conventions concerning child labor. In addition, Ecuador's laws and regulations are in line with relevant international standards.

Child Labor Laws and Regulations	Meets International Standards	Legislation
Minimum Age for Work, **15 Years**	✓	Article 46 of the Constitution; Articles 82 and 95 of the Childhood and Adolescence Code
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work, **18 Years**	✓	Articles 2 and 87 of the Childhood and Adolescence Code
Identification of Hazardous Occupations or Activities Prohibited for Children	✓	Articles 5, 6, and 8 of Resolution No. 016 of 2008; Article 5 of Ministerial Accord MDT-2015-0131
Prohibition of Slavery, Debt Bondage, and Forced Labor	✓	Articles 82, 91, 105, and 213 of the Integral Penal Code
Prohibition of Child Trafficking	✓	Articles 47, 91, and 92 of the Integral Penal Code; Article 117 of the Organic Law on Human Mobility
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children	✓	Articles 91 and 100–104 of the Integral Penal Code
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities	✓	Articles 47, 219, and 220 of the Integral Penal Code
Minimum Age for Voluntary State Military Recruitment, **18 Years**	✓	Article 57 of the Childhood and Adolescence Code; Article 161 of the Constitution
Prohibition of Compulsory Recruitment of Children by (State) Military	N/A*	
Prohibition of Military Recruitment by Non-state Armed Groups	✓	Article 127 of the Integral Penal Code; Article 57 of the Childhood and Adolescence Code; Article 161 of the Constitution

Legal Framework for Child Labor (Cont.)

Child Labor Laws and Regulations	Meets International Standards	Legislation
Compulsory Education Age, **15 Years**	✓	Articles 38, 42, and 43 of the Organic Intercultural Education Law
Free Public Education	✓	Article 4 of the Organic Intercultural Education Law; Chapter 5, Article 28 of the Constitution

**Country has no conscription*

ENFORCEMENT OF LAWS ON CHILD LABOR

In 2023, labor and criminal law enforcement agencies in Ecuador took actions to address child labor. However, insufficient human resource allocation and a lack of specialized shelters for boys who are survivors of human trafficking hindered enforcement efforts. The Ministry of Labor has also not registered certain industry-wide trade unions, including the Trade Union Association of Agricultural and Peasant Workers. As labor unions are integral to reporting and advocacy on the identification and prevention of child labor, violations of child labor laws and other labor abuses in the agriculture sector may go undetected.

Agencies Responsible for Child Labor Law Enforcement

Ministry of Labor (MOL): Enforces child labor laws in the formal sector through the Directorate for the Attention to Priority Groups. Monitors and identifies cases of child labor, assesses penalties, promotes public awareness campaigns to prevent child labor, provides technical assistance to local governments on child labor, and identifies victims of child labor for the Ministry of Economic and Social Inclusion (MIES) to provide special services. MIES is also responsible for conducting routine inspections in the informal sector. Using the Unified System of Registration of Child Labor, MOL collects information on child laborers and refers children to appropriate government services.

Attorney General's Office: Enforces criminal laws against child labor and hazardous child labor, including the prosecution of cases. The Attorney General's Specialized Victim Witness Protection Program provides immediate support and shelter to survivors and witnesses willing to press charges and testify against their abusers, and coordinates referrals for further assistance with other government agencies. In 2023, 2 individuals were sentenced to 10 years in prison for commercial sexual exploitation of a minor. A separate individual was also sentenced to 10 years in prison for the commercial sexual exploitation of a minor 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	**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, **160** labor inspectors conducted **11,371** worksite inspections of which **663** were specifically for child labor, finding **5** child labor violations. The government also conducted **332** investigations into suspected worst forms of child labor crimes; however, it is **unknown** how many prosecutions were initiated. In addition, **2** perpetrators were convicted of worst forms of child labor crimes.

COORDINATION, POLICIES, AND PROGRAMS

Key Mechanism to Coordinate Government Efforts on Child Labor Ecuador established a mechanism to coordinate its efforts to address child labor.	***Directorate for the Attention to Priority Groups:*** Serves as the primary coordinating mechanism for the elimination of child labor. During the reporting period, MOL approved Ministerial Regulation No. MDT-2023-112, delegating to the Directorate the responsibility to prevent, promote, and protect the labor rights of priority attention groups. The Directorate is also tasked with contributing to the elimination of child labor through the application and strengthening of public policies, regulations, and national and international instruments with a gender focus.

Key Policies Related to Child Labor Ecuador established policies related to child labor. However, Ecuador lacks an active and permanent policy to address child labor.	***Prevent and Eradicate Child Labor (2021–2025):*** Promotes employment for parents and the prevention of child labor through inspections. Developed through the National Council for Intergenerational Equity's National Agenda for Intergenerational Equity, which was created as a technical planning instrument for the formulation of public policies at the national and local levels. Although the Noboa administration continued to support the Prevent and Eradicate Child Labor policy during the reporting period, research was unable to determine whether activities were carried out under this policy during the reporting period.
	National Action Plan to Combat Trafficking in Persons (2019–2030): Aims to prevent, investigate, and impose legal sanctions against human trafficking, with a focus on human rights, mobility, and gender, as the majority of victims in Ecuador are women. The Action Plan includes U.S.-funded support through the International Organization for Migration and is the government's first multisectoral plan on human trafficking that establishes goals for every public sector institution to address human trafficking. As part of the Action Plan, the Government of Ecuador trained 580 public officials in Tulcan, Lago Agrio, Huaqillas, and Macara. These public officials came from migrant control units, Ecuador's Red Cross chapter, the Ministry of Women and Human Rights, MIES, and the Ministry of Health. The Government of Ecuador also developed several guides and internal procedures that would assist in the training of border police officers in trafficking in persons crime identification and prevention.
	National Development Plan (Plan de Creación de Oportunidades) (2021–2025): Creates employment opportunities for Ecuadorians and aims to establish a plan for future policy areas. These include economic, social, integral security, ecological transition, and institutional policy areas. In the social axis listed in the plan, the Ecuadorian government lays out its objective to protect families, guarantee their rights and services, eradicate poverty, and promote social inclusion. In order to meet this objective, Ecuador has set a goal of decreasing the percentage of children between the ages of 5 and 14 who engage in child labor. This plan aims to reach the goal of decreasing child labor from 6.1 percent to 4.4 percent and increase the number of child labor inspections to 504 by 2025. During the reporting period, the number of child labor inspections conducted was 663, surpassing the target number.
Key Social Programs to Address Child Labor Ecuador funded and participated in programs that include the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor. However, these social programs do not address the worst forms of child labor in all relevant sectors.	***Child Labor Eradication Service:†*** MIES program that aims to provide social and educational inclusion of children and adolescents in situations of child labor. Currently serves as the primary government-funded social program that is tasked with eliminating child labor in Ecuador. The program seeks to restore the rights of children in situations of child labor through sustained individual, family, and community interventions. During the reporting period, the Child Labor Eradication Service assisted 12,160 children and adolescents and referred them to the appropriate social services. MIES signed cooperative agreements with municipal and provincial governments, CSOs, and religious organizations to implement this program.

Coordination, Policies, and Programs (Cont.)

Key Social Programs to Address Child Labor	
	Service for the Protection of Vulnerable Migrant Population in Host Cities:*† MIES service that aims to provide access to public or private social protection services to vulnerable migrant populations, with emphasis on girls, boys, adolescents, and their families. Also delivers services to migrant pregnant women, people with critical illnesses, people with disabilities, victims of violence, and LGBTQI+ individuals. MIES provides orientation and information for the regularization of participants' immigration and refugee status, and raises awareness about irregular practices such as begging, child labor, domestic violence, human trafficking, migrant smuggling, xenophobic conduct, and other rights violations, through inter-institutional coordination and socio-cultural integration with host communities. This program was implemented during the reporting period.
** Program was launched during the reporting period.* *† Program is funded by the Government of Ecuador.* *‡ The government had other social programs that may have included the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor.*	***Rights with Dignity:*†*** MIES program that aims to prevent begging and child labor through the implementation of awareness-raising campaigns and containment actions. This program is carried out within the framework of the National Intersectoral Table for the Prevention of Begging and Child Labor, with the support of 24 state institutions and 6 NGOs. The program's containment actions include a mechanism in which a citizen or state institution can report a case of begging or child labor, and in response, a technical team will be deployed to verify the case and provide government services. Donations of clothing, non-perishable food, and toys are also made to vulnerable families as part of the program.

*For information about USDOL's projects to address child labor around the world, visit **dol.gov/ILABprojects***

WORKER RIGHTS SPOTLIGHT

The government puts restrictions on unions, including allowing only Ecuadorian citizens to hold leadership roles and permitting the government to dissolve unions that engage in political activities. In addition, the Ministry of Labor is not permitted to register industry-wide trade unions, including the Trade Union Association for Agricultural and Peasant Workers. As labor unions are integral to reporting and advocacy on the identification and prevention of child labor, violations of child labor laws and other labor abuses may go undetected.

*For references, please visit **dol.gov/ChildLaborReports***

EGYPT

MINIMAL ADVANCEMENT

In 2023, Egypt made minimal advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. The government conducted a national child labor survey and launched a referral mechanism that uses a whole-of-government approach to identify victims of trafficking, refer them to necessary services, investigate cases, and provide rehabilitation and reintegration services. However, the government did not publish data on its efforts to enforce its child labor laws, including labor inspectorate resources, number of child labor violations found, and penalties imposed for child labor violations. The minimum age for voluntary state military recruitment also does not meet international standards as it is below age 16. In addition, programs to address child labor are insufficient to adequately address the extent of the problem, particularly the lack of targeted programming to prevent the commercial sexual exploitation of children and child labor in limestone quarrying. Moreover, reports indicate that victims are unwilling to interact with state entities, hindering the government's ability to refer them to appropriate services.

PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Statistics on Children's Work and Education

Children	Age	Percent of Population
Working	5 to 14	3.6% (Unavailable)
Boys		4.8%
Girls		2.4%
Urban		2.1%
Rural		4.6%

Children	Age	Percent of Population
Hazardous Work by Children	15 to 17	12.1% (Unavailable)
Boys		13.7%
Girls		10.4%
Urban		8.1%
Rural		15.0%
Attending School	5 to 14	94.0%
Combining Work and School	7 to 14	3.8%

Children in Egypt are subjected to the worst forms of child labor, including in commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking, and forced begging.

Overview of Children's Work by Sector and Activity

Agriculture
Farming, including the production of cotton, feeding chickens, collecting and packaging eggs, and fishing.

Industry
Quarrying† limestone, making bricks, construction, and working in carpentry workshops.

Services
Street work, including selling goods and collecting garbage, repairing automobiles and heavy machinery, driving *tuktuks*, and domestic work.

Categorical Worst Forms of Child Labor‡
Use in illicit activities, including the trafficking of drugs and commercial sexual exploitation, each sometimes as a result of human trafficking. Forced domestic work 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 Egypt's implementation of its international commitments to eliminate the worst forms of child labor.

Legal Framework
Provide criminal penalties for recruitment of children by non-state armed groups.
Prohibit school fees for the first 9 years of education.
Establish age 16 as the minimum age for voluntary recruitment by the state military with safeguards for voluntariness.
Enforcement
Publish information on civil child labor law enforcement, including labor inspectorate funding, the number of child labor violations found, and the number of penalties collected.
Establish a mechanism for the labor inspectorate to assess civil penalties for violations of child labor laws.
Employ at least 1,897 labor inspectors to ensure adequate coverage of the labor force of approximately 28.5 million people.
Social Programs
Ensure universal access to free public education, especially for girls and refugee children, by addressing the cost of school fees and supplies, violence in schools, lack of documentation, and other barriers to education.
Expand programs to address the full scope of the child labor problem, particularly targeted programming to prevent and address child commercial sexual exploitation and limestone quarrying.
Institute programs to encourage migrants and victims of trafficking to make use of government reporting mechanisms so that they can be referred to the proper services.

CHILDREN AT HIGHER RISK

Children from poor families are most likely to engage in child labor, with some families forcing their children into street work and domestic work. Some Egyptian girls are at risk of commercial sexual exploitation under the pretext of temporary marriage, sometimes called "summer marriage," to wealthy foreign men, mostly from Persian Gulf countries. Some migrant and refugee girls are subjected to sex trafficking. Additionally, unaccompanied migrant children are at risk of being forced to sell drugs by criminal gangs.

BARRIERS TO EDUCATION ACCESS

Children in Egypt face barriers to education, including lack of access to identity documentation and their families' inability to pay the associated costs of attending school, such as school fees. Enrolling in public school requires a certified birth certificate, which some children born out of wedlock or born to parents of differing religions lack. Children also drop out of school because of school-related costs, such as educational supplies, transportation, and uniforms. A lack of qualified teachers, poorly maintained schools, sanitation issues, classroom density, insufficient infrastructure, and bullying in schools prevent some children from attending school. In rural communities, children face difficulties getting to school due to long commuting distances. In addition, girls face additional barriers to education, including harassment on the way to school, as well as cultural constraints. The government offers some refugee children access to the public education system; however, refugee children face language barriers and are subjected to racism and bullying. In response, some non-Egyptians residing in the country, such as those from Sudan, have organized independent school systems unaffiliated with the government for their children.

LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR CHILD LABOR

Egypt has ratified all key international conventions concerning child labor. However, Egypt's laws do not criminally prohibit military recruitment by non-state armed groups and the minimum age for voluntary state military recruitment is below the age of 16.

Child Labor Laws and Regulations	Meets International Standards	Legislation
Minimum Age for Work, **15 Years**	✓	Articles 64 and 74 of the Child Law
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work, **18 Years**	✓	Articles 1 and 3 of Ministry of Manpower's Decree 215; Articles 1 and 3 of the Child Law
Identification of Hazardous Occupations or Activities Prohibited for Children	✓	Articles 1 and 3, and Table 1 of Ministry of Manpower's Decree 215
Prohibition of Slavery, Debt Bondage, and Forced Labor	✓	Article 89 of the Constitution; Article 291 of the Penal Code; Articles 2,3, 5, and 6 of the Law on Combating Human Trafficking
Prohibition of Child Trafficking	✓	Article 89 of the Constitution; Article 291 of the Penal Code; Articles 2,3, 5, and 6 of the Law on Combating Human Trafficking
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children	✓	Article 116-*bis*(a) of the Child Law; Article 291 of the Penal Code; Articles 2,3, 5, and 6 of the Law on Combating Human Trafficking; Articles 1–4 and 6 of the Law on the Combating of Prostitution
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities	✓	Article 34 of the Law on Narcotics; Article 65 of the Child Law; Article 3 of Ministry of Manpower's Decree 215
Minimum Age for Voluntary State Military Recruitment, **15 Years**	✗	Ministry of Defense Guidelines on Youth Volunteers in the Armed Forces
Prohibition of Compulsory Recruitment of Children by (State) Military	✓	Article 1 of the Law on Military and National Service
Prohibition of Military Recruitment by Non-state Armed Groups	✗	Article 7-*bis*(b) of the Child Law
Compulsory Education Age, **15 Years**	✓	Article 59(1) of the Child Law; Articles 19, 80, and 238 of the Constitution
Free Public Education	✗	Article 54 of the Child Law

‡ Age calculated based on available information

The minimum age for voluntary state military recruitment does not meet international standards as it is below age 16. Additionally, the law does not criminally prohibit military recruitment by non-state armed groups. While public education is free by law, there are still fees for attending school which, if not met, disqualify students from sitting for final exams; not completing final exams results in a failing grade.

ENFORCEMENT OF LAWS ON CHILD LABOR

In 2023, labor and criminal law enforcement agencies in Egypt took actions to address child labor. However, an insufficient number of inspectors and insufficient financial resources allocated to law enforcement bodies hindered enforcement efforts.

Agencies Responsible for Child Labor Law Enforcement

Ministry of Manpower: Enforces child labor laws and regulations through its inspection department, including receiving and investigating child labor complaints. Inspectors conduct labor inspections and report violations to the police, who operate under the Ministry of Interior. If police investigations confirm criminal activity, cases are subsequently sent to the Prosecutor General›s Office (PGO), which operates under the Ministry of Justice.

Ministry of Interior: Investigates cases of human trafficking and commercial sexual exploitation of children. Reports violations to the Public Prosecution Office under the PGO. Also receives reports of violations from the Administrative Control Authority, which investigates government corruption and human trafficking.

Enforcement Mechanisms and Efforts

Has a Labor Inspectorate	**Yes**	Has a Complaint Mechanism	**Yes**
Able to Assess Civil Penalties	**No**	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	**Unknown**

In 2023, **1,500** labor inspectors conducted **14,600** worksite inspections, finding an **unknown** number of child labor violations. It is **unknown** how many investigations into suspected cases of the worst forms of child labor were conducted, prosecutions initiated, or perpetrators convicted.

COORDINATION, POLICIES, AND PROGRAMS

Key Mechanism to Coordinate Government Efforts on Child Labor Egypt established a mechanism to coordinate its efforts to address child labor.	***National Steering Committee for the National Action Plan to Eliminate the Worst Forms of Child Labor and Supporting Families:*** Coordinates efforts to implement the National Action Plan for Combating the Worst Forms of Child Labor and Supporting Family. Membership includes the Ministries of Manpower, Social Solidarity, Education, Agriculture, Interior, Planning, Finance, Investment and International Cooperation, Trade, Justice, Health, Local Development, and *Awqaf (religious endowments,)* in addition to the National Council for Childhood and Motherhood (NCCM), the National Council of Women, the Central Agency for Population and Statistics, the National Media Agency, and Al Azhar University. Active in 2023.
Key Policies Related to Child Labor Egypt established policies related to child labor.	***National Action Plan for Combating the Worst Forms of Child Labor and Supporting Family (2018–2025):*** Aims to eliminate the worst forms of child labor by 2025 and identify roles of government agencies responsible for assisting child laborers. Other objectives include expanding the child labor knowledge base; capacity building of agencies providing support; providing social protection, with links to existing programs; enhancing education, including vocational education for children; and advocacy and awareness raising. Active in 2023.

Coordination, Policies, and Programs (Cont.)

Key Policies Related to Child Labor	***National Strategy for Combating and Preventing Trafficking in Persons (2022–2026):*** Aims to address trafficking in persons through prevention, prosecution, protection, and partnership. Includes goals such as empowering households to combat poverty and illiteracy, preventing school dropouts, and reducing child labor. In 2023, the government launched a referral mechanism that uses a whole-of-government approach to identify victims of trafficking, refer them to necessary services, investigate cases, and provide rehabilitation and reintegration services. However, reports indicate that victims may be unwilling to interact with the state, hindering the government's ability to refer them to appropriate services. Active in 2023.
	National Strategy for Childhood and Motherhood (2018–2030): Includes a chapter on child labor that aims to promote dialogue on child labor legislation, including updating the hazardous work list; building the capacity of relevant government agencies, such the Ministry of Manpower and NCCM; developing programs to address child labor; and expanding educational and vocational training opportunities. Active in 2023.
Key Social Programs to Address Child Labor Egypt funded and participated in programs that include the goal of eliminating child labor. However, these social programs are inadequate to address the full scope of the problem, including in forced begging. *† Program is funded by the Government of Egypt.*	***Ministry of Social Solidarity (MoSS) Centers for Combating Child Labor:†*** MoSS-run centers, operated by partner NGOs, to provide services to children and their families. Consisting of 17 centers across 14 governorates. Active in 2023.
	Accelerating Action for the Elimination of Child Labor in Supply Chains in Africa (ACCEL Africa) (2018–2024): Aims to eliminate child labor in the cotton, textiles, and ready-made-garments sectors; implemented by the ILO and funded by the Dutch government. ACCEL Africa- Egypt partners with the Ministries of Manpower, Education, and Agriculture, as well as MoSS and NCCM, to improve policy, legal, and institutional frameworks. In 2023, worked with the Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics to conduct a national child labor survey.
	Solidarity and Dignity Program (Takaful and Karama):† Funded by MoSS, this program promotes school attendance and health monitoring for children by providing income supplements to poor families. This partnership between the government and the World Food Program, the UN Development Program, UNICEF, and the World Bank offers income supplements to poor families provided that household children maintain at least an 80 percent attendance record in school and mothers and children under age 6 provide demonstrable evidence of having been seen at health clinics four times per year. Active in 2023.

*For information about USDOL's projects to address child labor around the world, visit **dol.gov/ILABprojects***

WORKER RIGHTS SPOTLIGHT

Egyptian authorities dissolved over 1,000 unions in 2018 and mandated all unions re-register. As of 2023, only 122 were successfully registered. The government also imposed a single, state-controlled trade union federation and arrested union leaders. The suppression of workers' rights and the lack of genuine collective bargaining have contributed to labor rights violations in the country and hindered workers' ability to report child labor, particularly in agriculture and the informal economy.

*For references, please visit **dol.gov/ChildLaborReports***

EL SALVADOR

MODERATE ADVANCEMENT

In 2023, El Salvador made moderate advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. The Government of El Salvador introduced the National Plan of Action against Trafficking in Persons, which included sections on detection, investigation, comprehensive care, and specialized training. The government also conducted several trainings covering topics related to investigating and prosecuting trafficking in persons cases, which emphasized the protection of childhood and adolescent rights and reached over 3,000 government officials, including employees of the Attorney General's Office and the National Civilian Police. The National Council for Early Infancy, Childhood, and Adolescence also announced the organizations that will make up the Network of Child and Adolescent Care Entities. The objective of this network will be to align the various programs and projects of its members with national guidelines, with the intention of expanding the range of services available to vulnerable children and adolescents. However, despite these efforts, criminal and civil enforcement agencies continue to lack sufficient resources to enforce child labor laws. Gaps also remain related to the lack of publicly available, comprehensive information on the government's criminal law enforcement efforts. Finally, social programs do not adequately address the full scope of the child labor problem in the country, particularly in the informal and service sectors.

PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Statistics on Children's Work and Education

Children	Age	Percent of Population
Working	5 to 14	2.6% (26,962)
Boys		3.4%
Girls		1.8%
Urban		1.7%
Rural		3.8%
Hazardous Work by Children	15 to 17	19.3% (55,095)
Boys		28.8%
Girls		9.9%
Urban		14.0%
Rural		27.2%
Attending School	5 to 14	92.7%
Combining Work and School	7 to 14	2.7%

Children in El Salvador are subjected to the worst forms of child labor, including in commercial sexual exploitation and in illicit activities, sometimes as a result of human trafficking. Children also perform dangerous tasks in the harvesting of coffee.

Overview of Children's Work by Sector and Activity

Agriculture
Harvesting sugarcane† and coffee,† and production of cereal grains. Working in cattle-raising† and fishing,† including harvesting shellfish.†

Industry
Working in construction,† manufacturing fireworks,† and production of baked goods.

Services
Domestic work and street work, including in street begging,† washing cars, and vending.† Garbage scavenging.†

Categorical Worst Forms of Child Labor‡
Forced begging, domestic work, agricultural labor, construction, and work in textiles. Commercial sexual exploitation, 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 El Salvador's implementation of its international commitments to eliminate the worst forms of child labor.

Legal Framework
Ensure that the legal light work provisions specify the activities in which light work may be undertaken by those under age 16.
Enforcement
Provide sufficient funding and resources to the Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare and criminal law enforcement agencies to fully enforce child labor laws and investigate cases involving the worst forms of child labor, including in the informal sector.
Increase the number of labor inspectors from 100 to 193 to ensure adequate coverage of the labor force of approximately 2.9 million workers.
Collect and publish information on labor law enforcement efforts, including whether law enforcement personnel received training on child labor.
Improve coordination between law enforcement agencies in the investigation and prosecution of criminal cases related to the worst forms of child labor, including by developing electronic information-sharing capabilities.
Ensure that there is a sufficient number of criminal law enforcement officials to carry out criminal investigations on the worst forms of child labor.
Screen for indicators of the worst forms of child labor among children apprehended for illicit activity in connection with organized criminal groups and ensure that they are provided with adequate social services.
Social Programs
Ensure that social programs address adolescent girls' vulnerability to forced domestic work and human trafficking.
Remove barriers to education, such as birth registration, and ensure access for all children, including students of indigenous descent and LGBTQI+ youth.
Ensure that schools have proper infrastructure and sanitation systems to support students.
Ensure that adequate services are available for all human trafficking survivors, including boys and LGBTQI+ youth.
Implement programs that direct support to child laborers who may not be living with their parents, including child domestic workers.
Ensure that annual surveys providing data on child labor include information on specific child labor work sectors and the worst forms of child labor.
Report on specific activities taken to implement the Sustainable Families Program.

CHILDREN AT HIGHER RISK

Children living in rural and economically disadvantaged areas are particularly vulnerable to child labor. According to the results of the 2022 Annual Multipurpose Household Survey, 60.9 percent of children engaged in child labor live in rural communities. Children living in families that lack economic stability and educational opportunities are vulnerable to the worst forms of child labor, including commercial sexual exploitation. According to El Salvador's Trafficking in Person's Special Prosecutor and local NGOs, adolescent girls with limited education are among the most at risk of being trafficked. The National Council for Early Infancy, Childhood, and Adolescence (CONAPINA) reported that trafficking crimes perpetuated by gangs occur on a much smaller scale than in previous years due to the government's crackdown on gangs via a state of exception, which remained active throughout the reporting period.

BARRIERS TO EDUCATION ACCESS

Children in El Salvador face numerous barriers to education including precarious school infrastructure, leaving many schools in the country unprepared to face natural disasters and epidemics. Furthermore, schools around the country do not have adequate sanitation systems, and many do not have access to drinking water. Communities in which indigenous populations are concentrated disproportionately lack educational infrastructure. The NGO COMCAVIS TRANS reported that 33.4 percent of LGBTQI+ youth discontinued their education before high school, compared with 21.2 percent of children nationwide. According to the *Crecer Juntos* law, which came into effect in 2023, a lack of identity documents should not prevent school enrollment. However, research indicates that children are, in practice, being required to have birth certificates to enroll in schools.

LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR CHILD LABOR

El Salvador has ratified all key international conventions concerning child labor. However, gaps exist in El Salvador's legal framework to adequately protect children from the worst forms of child labor, including a light work framework that is inconsistent with international standards.

Child Labor Laws and Regulations	Meets International Standards	Legislation
Minimum Age for Work, **16 Years**	✓	Articles 114, 116, and 627 of the Labor Code; Article 38.10 of the Constitution
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work, **18 Years**	✓	Articles 105 and 627 of the Labor Code; Article 38 of the Constitution; Article 2 of Agreement 241 of 2011
Identification of Hazardous Occupations or Activities Prohibited for Children	✓	Article 1 of Agreement 241 of 2011
Prohibition of Slavery, Debt Bondage, and Forced Labor	✓	Articles 3, 5, 54, and 55 of the Special Law Against Trafficking in Persons; Article 13 of the Labor Code; Articles 4 and 9 of the Constitution
Prohibition of Child Trafficking	✓	Articles 3, 5, 54, and 55 of the Special Law Against Trafficking in Persons
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children	✓	Articles 3, 5, 54, and 55 of the Special Law Against Trafficking in Persons; Articles 169–173 of the Penal Code
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities	✓	Articles 3, 5, 54, and 55 of the Special Law Against Trafficking in Persons; Articles 214 and 345 of the Penal Code
Minimum Age for Voluntary State Military Recruitment, **16 Years**	✓	Articles 2 and 6 of the Military Service Law
Prohibition of Compulsory Recruitment of Children by (State) Military	✓*	Article 215 of the Constitution; Articles 2 and 11 of the Decree No. 298
Prohibition of Military Recruitment by Non-state Armed Groups	✓	Article 345 of the Penal Code; Article 1 of the Law Prohibiting Gangs and Criminal Organizations; Article 7 of the Constitution
Compulsory Education Age, **16 Years**‡	✓	Articles 5, 18, 20, and 22 of the General Education Law
Free Public Education	✓	Articles 5, 18, 20, and 22 of the General Education Law; Article 56 of the Constitution

** Country has no conscription*
‡ Age calculated based on available information

The light work framework for work of children under age 16 is inconsistent with international standards because it does not specify the activities permitted.

ENFORCEMENT OF LAWS ON CHILD LABOR

In 2023, labor and criminal law enforcement agencies in El Salvador took actions to address child labor. However, insufficient financial resource allocation hindered enforcement efforts.

Agencies Responsible for Child Labor Law Enforcement

Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare: Inspects worksites for labor violations, including child labor, and monitors working conditions for adolescents who are granted work authorization. Maintains a child labor unit dedicated to child labor law enforcement issues and refers cases of the worst forms of child labor to the Attorney General's Office. During the reporting period, the government provided additional informational regarding the number of inspectors and the number of inspections conducted in the sugarcane and coffee sectors.

Ministry of Justice and Public Security: Together with the Attorney General's Office, enforces criminal laws related to the worst forms of child labor through the National Civilian Police. The National Civilian Police maintains a special trafficking in persons unit to investigate and prosecute human trafficking, including child trafficking.

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	**No**

In 2023, **100** labor inspectors conducted an **unknown** number of worksite inspections. However, labor inspectors conducted **506** inspections focused child labor violations, finding **1** child labor violation. In addition, there were also **10** investigations into suspected worst forms of child labor crimes, with **20** prosecutions initiated.

COORDINATION, POLICIES, AND PROGRAMS

Key Mechanism to Coordinate Government Efforts on Child Labor El Salvador established a mechanism to coordinate its efforts to address child labor. ** Mechanism to coordinate efforts to address child labor was created during the reporting period.*	***CONAPINA:**** Collaborates with law enforcement agencies taking action on child labor cases, coordinates the work of institutions working on children's issues, and provides services to children rescued during law enforcement operations. CONAPINA is responsible for formulating, evaluating, and updating national policy; accrediting and supervising programs for children and adolescents; issuing guidelines for the implementation of public programs in line with national policy; and providing technical assistance for Early Childhood Care Centers. In 2023, CONAPINA coordinated with the Office of Human Rights Ombudsperson, the National Civilian Police, the Attorney General's Office, and local governments to conduct inspections at nightclubs, bars, and brothels to verify that no minors were employed.

Coordination, Policies, and Programs (Cont.)

Key Policies Related to Child Labor El Salvador established policies related to child labor. However, it is unclear whether certain policies were implemented during the reporting period. *† 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.*	***National Policy to Support Early Childhood Development 2020–2030 (Crecer Juntos):*** Seeks to ensure that children reach their maximum potential during early childhood by guaranteeing the necessary conditions to provide them with education, health, nutrition, and environments that protect their rights. Also aims to eradicate child labor for children between the ages of 5 and 7 by 2030. During the reporting period, the government introduced the Early Childhood Care Centers, which will be responsible for promoting comprehensive care for girls and boys. These centers provide personal care services, education, and monitoring of growth and development.
	National Policy for Early Infancy, Childhood, and Adolescence:† Establishes and guides the framework for state and private action to guarantee the full enjoyment of the rights of girls, boys, and adolescents. Introduced during the reporting period with the enactment of the *Crecer Juntos* law.
	National Plan of Action Against Trafficking in Persons:† Aims to prevent and detect crimes related to human trafficking in El Salvador. Consists of four strategic pillars: promote a comprehensive legal framework, implement awareness campaigns to facilitate identification of human trafficking cases, improve the state's ability to investigate and prosecute crimes, and provide care and services with the aim of long-term reintegration and well-being.
Key Social Programs to Address Child Labor El Salvador funded and participated in programs that include the goal of eliminating child labor. However, these social programs are inadequate to address the problem of all worst forms of child labor, including forced domestic labor and human trafficking. *† Program is funded by the Government of El Salvador.* *‡ The government had other social programs that may have included the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor.*	***Public Awareness Campaigns for At-Risk Populations:†*** Government public awareness campaigns implemented by CONAPINA and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to raise awareness about the dangers of human trafficking. These include the "Protection Starts at Home" awareness program and the "Call 1 2 3" hotline, both of which promote respect toward the physical, psychological, and sexual integrity of children and adolescents. The hotline offers children and adults the ability to consult specialists in emergency situations. During the reporting period, the Migration Directorate provided 47 awareness-raising sessions to different sectors of the population on topics pertaining to human trafficking and forms of human exploitation.
	Sustainable Families Program:† Focused on improving health, education, productivity, and security, and eliminating poverty through inclusive and sustainable economic growth and access to public services. Includes Health and Education Bonus Programs that assist families with cash transfers conditioned on children's school attendance and health checkups. Although research indicates that this program was active during the reporting period, the government did not report specific activities conducted to implement the program.
	School Prevention and Security Plan:† Programs implemented by the Ministry of Education and Public Security and the National Civil Police in schools with high levels of violence. Includes activities such as provision of psychological help, online classes, skills workshops for youth, and increased police patrols. During the reporting period, the National Civilian Police increased and maintained constant patrols in schools around the country as preventative measures against violence.

*For information about USDOL's projects to address child labor around the world, visit **dol.gov/ILABprojects***
*For references, please visit **dol.gov/ChildLaborReports***

GUATEMALA

MODERATE ADVANCEMENT

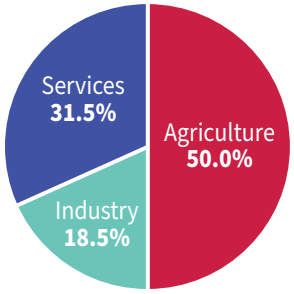
In 2023, Guatemala made moderate advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. The government hired 15 new labor inspectors and created an electronic child labor referral case management platform to improve the systematic recording of information about children found in situations of child labor and improve their access to social programs. It also approved the new Roadmap for the Prevention and Eradication of Child Labor in all its Forms; and the Protection of Adolescent Workers, a policy designed to improve inter-institutional coordination and strengthen actions and mechanisms to prevent and eradicate child labor in the country. However, an insufficient number of labor inspectors limits the Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare's ability to address child labor. In addition, existing social programs are insufficient to reach all children engaged in exploitative labor, particularly those engaged in domestic work or agriculture.

PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Statistics on Children's Work and Education

Children	Age	Percent of Population
Working	10 to 14	16.3% (306,555)
Boys		22.2%
Girls		10.4%
Urban		10.0%
Rural		19.6%
Hazardous Work by Children	15 to 17	31.7% (320,730)
Boys		47.2%
Girls		16.8%
Urban		21.4%
Rural		38.5%
Attending School	10 to 14	88.0%
Combining Work and School	10 to 14	11.8%

Working Children by Sector, Ages 5-14



Children in Guatemala are subjected to the worst forms of child labor, including in commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking. Children also perform dangerous tasks in agriculture, including in the production of coffee.

Overview of Children's Work by Sector and Activity

Agriculture
Working in agriculture, including in planting and harvesting coffee, broccoli, corn, and sugarcane. Ranching, forestry, and fishing.

Industry
Construction. Manufacturing gravel (crushed stone)† and fireworks.†

Services
Domestic work and house-sitting. Street work,† including vending,† performing,† cleaning windshields and windows,† begging and shoe shining.† Making corn tortillas. Working as store clerks in small family-owned corner stores (*abarroterías*) and as servers in restaurants (*comedores*). Vehicle and motorcycle repair. Garbage scavenging† and working in garbage dumps.†

Categorical Worst Forms of Child Labor‡
Forced labor in agriculture, domestic work, street begging and vending, and manufacturing food products. Commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking. Use in illicit activities, including drug trafficking, and stealing and transporting contraband as a result of criminal and gang recruitment, each 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 Guatemala's implementation of its international commitments to eliminate the worst forms of child labor.

Legal Framework
Criminally prohibit the recruitment of children under age 18 into non-state armed groups.
Eliminate the exception allowing some children under age 14 to work, or establish a light work framework for children aged 12 to 14 outlining restrictions on working conditions, type of work, and number of hours of work permitted.
Clarify whether Ministerial Agreement 260-2019 raises the minimum working age to 15, if it did not then raise the minimum age for work from age 14 to 15 to align with the compulsory education age.
Enforcement
Ensure that inspectors conduct more on-site investigations of worksites, including in the informal sector, an area in which child labor is known to occur.
Improve the quality of inspections by ensuring that inspectors receive effective training, dedicate the necessary time to carry out more comprehensive inspections, routinely carry out unannounced labor inspections, and can communicate with indigenous language speakers, including those who may be underage.
Increase the number of labor inspectors from 169 to 478 to ensure adequate coverage of the labor force of approximately 7.2 million workers.
Collect fines for labor violations and ensure that conciliations are properly conducted and in accordance with the labor code.
Improve effectiveness of child labor complaint and referral mechanisms to ensure timely responses to complaints.
Ensure that hearings and trials addressing human trafficking and gender-based violence in specialized courts are scheduled in a timely manner and that judges and officials are trained in trafficking in persons concepts.
Ensure that criminal investigators have sufficient resources and staff to conduct quality criminal investigations in all geographical areas of the country, such as assigning a budget specifically to the Special Prosecutor's Office Against Human Trafficking.
Coordination
Institutionalize relationships between civil society representatives and government agencies that provide services to survivors of child labor.
Ensure that the Secretariat Against Sexual Violence, Exploitation, and Trafficking in Persons has the resources, authority, and political support necessary to combat human trafficking countrywide.
Social Programs
Remove barriers to education for all children, including girls and indigenous children, children with disabilities, and children living in rural areas, by recruiting and training more qualified teachers, providing instruction in indigenous languages, building additional schools with appropriate facilities, increasing security, providing textbooks to all public schools, and removing school fees and transportation costs.
Provide children removed from child labor situations with adequate social services and provide high standards of safety and care for children in government-run shelters.
Ensure that social programs are implemented, well-funded, able to carry out their objectives, reach populations outside urban centers, address child labor in agriculture and domestic work, focus on vulnerable groups such as girls, LGBTQIA+ persons, and indigenous individuals, and report on yearly activities.
Regularly monitor the effectiveness and impact of social programs such as awareness campaigns beyond the number of citizens reached.
Ensure the safety of NGO officials, human rights workers, judges, and labor activists so they can continue their work to implement social programs that address and prevent child labor.

CHILDREN AT HIGHER RISK

Reports indicate that indigenous, Afro-descendant, Garifuna, and migrant children are particularly vulnerable to child labor due to experiencing higher levels of poverty, language barriers, and poor quality and lack of coverage of public education. Indigenous children account for more than half of child laborers in Guatemala, and children in rural areas are more likely to work than children in urban areas. Most of these children are engaged in agricultural activities. Girls, LGBTQIA+ persons, and indigenous Guatemalans are particularly vulnerable to human trafficking. Departments with high numbers of commercial sexual exploitation victims include Alta Verapaz, Escuintla, Guatemala, Huehuetenango, Quiche, and Quetzaltenango. In addition, some children are forced to engage in street begging and vending in Guatemala City and along the border with Mexico.

BARRIERS TO EDUCATION ACCESS

Although education is free in Guatemala, there is an insufficient number of primary and secondary schools to accommodate all children. A lack of teachers, transportation, textbooks, and sanitary facilities at public schools, as well as the long distances some children must travel to get to school, also create barriers to education. Other barriers to education include sexual violence, insecurity, crime and violence in the school's surrounding areas, and the risk of suffering violence during travel to school. The education system is unable to address the needs of students with disabilities, and the few existing education programs for children with disabilities rely mainly on non-profit support. In addition, girls in rural areas have lower enrollment rates in secondary school than boys, while indigenous children in general have lower enrollment rates compared to other children. Furthermore, there are not enough qualified teachers to provide instruction in the predominant native languages, and classroom materials available in these languages are insufficient.

LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR CHILD LABOR

Guatemala has ratified all key international conventions concerning child labor. In addition, Guatemala has established laws and regulations related to child labor. However, its legal framework lacks sufficient light work protections for children.

Child Labor Laws and Regulations	Meets International Standards	Legislation
Minimum Age for Work, **14 Years**	✓	Articles 31, 148 and 272 of the Labor Code; Article 6 of Government Accord 112-2006; Ministerial Agreement Number 260-2019
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work, **18 Years**	✓	Article 148 of the Labor Code; Article 1 of Government Accord 250-2006; Article 32 of Government Accord 112-2006
Identification of Hazardous Occupations or Activities Prohibited for Children	✓	Article 4 of Ministerial Accord 154-2008
Prohibition of Slavery, Debt Bondage, and Forced Labor	✓	Article 202 and 202 *ter* and *quater* of the Penal Code; Articles 2 and 51 of the Law of Integral Protection of Children and Adolescents
Prohibition of Child Trafficking	✓	Article 202 *ter* and *quater* of the Penal Code
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children	✓	Articles 191–194, 193 *bis* and *ter*, and 195 *bis* and *ter* of the Penal Code
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities	✓	Articles 27, 306, and 307 of the Penal Code
Minimum Age for Voluntary State Military Recruitment, **18 Years**	✓	Articles 2 and 57 of the Law of Integral Protection of Children and Adolescents
Prohibition of Compulsory Recruitment of Children by (State) Military	✓	Articles 68 and 69 of the Constitutive Law of the Guatemalan Army
Prohibition of Military Recruitment by Non-state Armed Groups	✗	Article 57 of the Law of Integral Protection of Children and Adolescents; Article 245 of the Constitution

Suggested Government Actions to Eliminate Child Labor (cont.)

Child Labor Laws and Regulations	Meets International Standards	Legislation
Compulsory Education Age, **15 Years‡**	✓	Article 74 of the Constitution; Article 33 of the National Education Law; Ministerial Agreement 1055-2009
Free Public Education	✓	Article 74 of the Constitution; Article 1 of Government Agreement 226-2008; Article 33 of the National Education Law

‡ Age calculated based on available information.

Although Articles 32 and 150 of the Labor Code allow the Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare (MTPS) to authorize children under age 14 to work under exceptional circumstances—including if MTPS determines that children must work to support their family due to poverty—the law does not define the total number of hours, kinds of tasks, or age range applicable for this exception, which is inconsistent with international standards on light work. Nonetheless, the MTPS indicated that no such exceptions have been granted since 2016. In addition, the MTPS previously approved Ministerial Agreement Number 260-2019, "Procedure for the effective application of Convention 138 of the International Labor Organization, regarding the Convention on the Minimum Age for Admission of Employment," which sets forth procedures for protecting adolescents between ages 15 and 18 from the worst forms of child labor. However, the agreement does not explicitly cover children aged 14, who are allowed to work under Guatemala's Labor Code or children under age 14 who are allowed to work in exceptional circumstances. Therefore, it is unclear if this mechanism effectively raises the minimum age for work to age 15. In addition, as the minimum age for work is lower than the compulsory education age, children may be encouraged to leave school before the completion of their compulsory education.

ENFORCEMENT OF LAWS ON CHILD LABOR

In 2023, labor and criminal law enforcement agencies in Guatemala took actions to address child labor. However, insufficient inspection planning and training of criminal investigators hindered enforcement efforts.

Agencies Responsible for Child Labor Law Enforcement

Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare's (MTPS) Inspection Division (IGT): Enforces child labor laws, including prohibitions on the worst forms of child labor, by inspecting businesses and responding to child labor complaints. Refers children found engaged in child labor to government social services, complaints of child labor to the MTPS Adolescent Workers Protection Unit, cases of the worst forms of child labor to the Secretariat Against Sexual Violence, Exploitation, and Trafficking in Persons (SVET), and unresolved cases to labor courts for review and sanctions, as appropriate. However, reports indicate labor inspectors do not routinely conduct unannounced inspections, rarely inspect informal workplaces, where child labor violations are most likely to occur, and conduct site visits in Spanish only, which may hinder the effectiveness of inspections when encountering indigenous language speakers. In 2023, the MTPS created a child labor referral electronic case management platform to improve the systematic recording of information about children found in situations of child labor and improve their access to services by referring them to available public and private social programs.

Public Ministry, Special Prosecutor's Office: Receives cases of the worst forms of child labor from labor inspectors. Investigates cases of human trafficking and forced labor through the Special Prosecutor's Office Against Trafficking in Persons. However, law enforcement agencies lack sufficient resources to carry out investigations, such as vehicles, fuel, training, and criminal investigators, particularly outside Guatemala City. Reports also indicate judges are often unable to schedule hearings and trials in a timely manner, and officials often lack sufficient training to properly identify human trafficking cases and file criminal charges.

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, **169** labor inspectors conducted **29,080** worksite inspections, finding **36** child labor violations. The government also conducted **195** investigations into suspected cases of the worst forms of child labor, initiated **202** prosecutions, and convicted **34** perpetrators.

COORDINATION, POLICIES, AND PROGRAMS

Key Mechanism to Coordinate Government Efforts on Child Labor Guatemala established a mechanism to coordinate its efforts to address child labor. However, there remains a lack of coordination between government agencies and civil society organizations that work on child labor issues. *‡ The government had other mechanisms that may have addressed child labor issues or had an impact on child labor.*	***Inter-Institutional Coordinating Entity Against Labor Exploitation and Child Labor (CICELTI):*** Coordinates efforts to address child labor and aims to identify victims of human trafficking, make anti-trafficking in persons institutions more effective, and provide support to survivors to prevent them from being targeted again. Reports indicate that challenges remain related to the provision of social services for children due to the lack of coordination between government agencies and a lack of coverage outside the Department of Guatemala. In 2023, CICELTI received 202 complaints, of which 94 were related to trafficking in persons and 7 to the worst forms of child labor. This led to CICELTI participating in 24 operations resulting in the rescue of 30 children.
Key Policies Related to Child Labor Guatemala established policies related to child labor. *† Policy was approved during the reporting period.*	***Roadmap for the Prevention and Eradication of Child Labor in all its Forms and the Protection of Adolescent Workers (2022–2025):†*** Established in January 2023. Serves as the national strategic framework to guide government action aimed at preventing and eradicating child labor and its worst forms in the country. In 2023, under this policy the government carried out diverse activities to raise awareness about child labor, provided training to labor inspectors, and created the electronic child labor referral case management platform.
	Comprehensive Health Care Protocol with Cultural Relevance for Children and Adolescents in Situations of Child Labor and its Worst Forms: Requires public health workers to enter information into a database about any child whose injuries may have been labor related. Implemented by the Ministry of Public Health and Social Assistance (MSPAS). In 2023, the government continued implementing this policy.
	Public Policy on Human Trafficking and the Comprehensive Protection of Victims (2014–2024): Aims to guarantee protection for and comprehensive attention to human trafficking survivors, and promote prevention, detection, prosecution, and sanction of this crime. Includes a National Plan of Strategic Action that directs the government's actions on preventing and addressing human trafficking. In 2023, as part of this policy the government provided services to 212 child trafficking victims, referring 164 of them to shelters, and continued to operate one specialized shelter for child trafficking victims.

Coordination, Policies, and Programs (Cont.)

Key Social Programs to Address Child Labor	
In 2023, Guatemala funded and participated in programs that include the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor. However, these programs do not address the problem of child labor in all sectors, including in agriculture and domestic work.	***Business Network for the Prevention and Elimination of Child Labor in Guatemala (Red Empresarial):*** Aims to promote the prevention and eradication of child labor. Members include the Ministries of Education and Agriculture, MTPS, the Thematic Working Group for the Prevention and Eradication of Child Labor, the ILO, UNICEF, the UN Food and Agriculture Organization, and representatives from the private sector. Reports indicate that this program was active in 2023, and continued to implement a variety of health, nutrition, education, and awareness programs in agricultural sectors.
	Ministry of Development's Social Poverty Reducing Programs:† Conditional Cash Transfer for Education and Health Program (*Mi Bono Social*) that provides cash assistance to families with school-age children, conditioned on children's school attendance. Similarly, the Conditional Cash Transfers for Food Assistance Program (*Mi Bolsa Social*) provides food assistance to poor families, with the requirement that their children attend school. Social Dining Hall (*Mi Comedor Social*) provides access to food for people in situations of poverty, crisis, and emergency, including children. In 2023, the Ministry of Education spent about $405 million to continue the school feeding program through the distribution of fresh and non-perishable food to over 3.1 million public school students.
	Mobile Units for the Prevention of Sexual Violence, Exploitation and Human Trafficking (UNIVET): Established by SVET, with support from the UN Refugee Agency. Consists of a fleet of seven vehicles that travel to areas in the country with little national government presence, with the aim of preventing and creating awareness about crimes related to exploitation, trafficking in persons, and sexual violence. Carries out detection and awareness trainings on trafficking in persons within rural and often remote communities and provides information to survivors of crimes of trafficking in persons but does not have authority to accept complaints or make referrals. In 2023, UNIVET continued to carry out awareness trainings on trafficking in persons with rural communities.

† Program is funded by the Government of Guatemala.
‡ 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***

WORKER RIGHTS SPOTLIGHT

In Guatemala, trade unions faced administrative obstacles imposed by the Ministry of Labor to approve agreements and update their membership, and the law restricted union leadership to citizens. The government has also failed to investigate and prosecute cases of murder and other violent crimes against workers and trade unionists, creating a climate of fear that hinders workers' ability to organize, advocate for their rights, and report labor abuses, including child labor.

*For references, please visit **dol.gov/ChildLaborReports***

INDIA

MODERATE ADVANCEMENT

In 2023, India made moderate advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. The government extended its Fast Track Special Courts, which expedite the trial process for sexual offense cases, including the commercial sexual exploitation of children. The Railway Protection Force and Government Railway Police rescued 858 children from railway platforms, preventing them from being exploited for labor exploitation or sex trafficking. Several states provided rehabilitation and financial assistance to 654 adult bonded labor survivors and their immediate families. However, despite these efforts, the government's existing hazardous work prohibitions do not include all occupations in which children work in unsafe and unhealthy environments, and penalties for illegally employing children are insufficient to deter violations. Prosecution rates for crimes related to the worst forms of child labor, including child trafficking, remain low and the mistreatment of child labor victims by the police remains a concern. Through the enhanced enforcement of the Foreign Contribution Regulation Act, the government continued to revoke the licenses of nongovernmental organizations and civil society organizations, some of which work to address the worst forms of child labor.

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% (2,119,846)
Hazardous Work by Children	15 to 17	Unavailable
Attending School	5 to 14	90.7%
Combining Work and School	7 to 14	0.4%

Children in India are subjected to the worst forms of child labor, including commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking. Children also perform dangerous tasks in garment production, stone quarrying, and brickmaking.

Overview of Children's Work by Sector and Activity

Agriculture

Producing hybrid cottonseed, cultivating cotton, harvesting and processing sugarcane, transplanting rice seedlings, and performing peripheral work on farms, such as removing weeds.

Industry

Manufacturing garments, weaving silk fabric and carpets,† producing raw silk thread (sericulture), spinning cotton thread and yarn, and embellishing textiles with silver and gold (*zari*).† Quarrying and breaking stone and sandstone,† producing bricks,† recovering metals from electronic waste (e-waste),† and mining and collecting mica.† Polishing gems† and manufacturing glass bangles,† locks,† and brassware.† Rolling cigarettes (*bidis*)† and manufacturing incense sticks (*agarbatti*), fireworks,† and matches.† Manufacturing footwear; producing leather goods and accessories,† and stitching soccer balls.

Services

Domestic work.† Working in restaurants, hotels, food service, and tourism services. Street work, including scavenging, sorting garbage, selling trinkets, and organized begging. Working in automobile workshops and repairing vehicles.

Categorical Worst Forms of Child Labor‡

Forced labor in agriculture, including producing hybrid cottonseed, making bricks, quarrying stones, and in rice mills. Forced labor in garments, embroidering silver and gold into textiles *(zari)*, domestic work, and begging. Commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking. Recruitment of children by non-state armed groups for use in armed conflict.

† 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 India's implementation of its international commitments to eliminate the worst forms of child labor.

Legal Framework
Include in the list of hazardous work prohibited for all children all sectors in which children work in unsafe and unhealthy conditions, such as spinning mills, garment production, carpet making, and domestic work.
Amend child trafficking laws so they do not require threats, the use of force, or coercion to be established for the crime of child trafficking.
Publish the legal instrument that establishes the minimum age for voluntary recruitment into India's armed forces.
Encourage all states and union territories to enact rules to implement the Occupational, Safety, Health, and Working Conditions Code to ensure protection of children from hazardous forms of work.
Enforcement
Employ at least 35,668 labor inspectors to ensure adequate coverage of the labor force of approximately 535 million people, and publish national data related to labor law enforcement.
Provide adequate training to labor inspectors and criminal investigators on child labor in all states and union territories, including on the new Occupational, Safety, Health, and Working Conditions Code.
Fast track bonded labor cases and consistently impose penalties for violations.
Provide states and union territories with dedicated and sufficient funding, staff, and infrastructure to establish anti-human trafficking units.
Ensure that all cases under the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act and Fast Track Special Courts adhere to their mandated 1-year timeline for prosecution, that backlogs of Protection of Children from Sexual Offences cases are adjudicated with priority, and that judges and prosecutors at these courts are adequately trained to handle child sex crimes.
Hold accountable public officials who facilitate, participate in, or hinder efforts to address the worst forms of child labor, including officials who accept bribes, hold children in bonded labor in agriculture and in brick kilns, and who delay registering human trafficking cases or mistreat human trafficking survivors.
Prosecute and hold accountable perpetrators of the *Jogini* system to protect girls from lower castes from being sold to local deities for sexual exploitation in return for in-kind payments or cash allowances.
Government Policies
Ensure that activities are undertaken to implement the National Plan of Action for Children and State Action Plans on Child Labor and publish results from activities undertaken to implement these plans annually.
Encourage states and territories that do not currently have action plans for the elimination of child labor to establish such plans.
Social Programs
Reduce barriers and promote access to education for all children, including for low-caste Hindus, members of tribal communities, religious minorities, and other disadvantaged communities by providing sufficient training for teachers, providing separate and sanitary washrooms for girls, and increasing the number of available schools, especially in urban slums in which inadequate infrastructure options limit access to education.
Collect and make available to the public data on exploitative child labor in every state, including findings from district-level bonded labor surveys and raw data from the national census.
Ensure that state governments issue release certificates and provide financial assistance for bonded labor victims, including full compensation for those freed from bonded labor, through the Central Sector Scheme for Rehabilitation of Bonded Laborers.
Provide rescued child labor victims with adequate social services to prevent their re-entry to the labor market, including through educational re-entry programs.
Ensure that the Foreign Contribution Regulation Act is not used to prevent child labor-focused nongovernmental organizations from obtaining international funding or preserving their licenses to operate in the country.
Provide all states and union territories with funding for human trafficking shelters in a timely and consistent manner.
Develop and implement social programs to address child labor, bonded child labor, and child trafficking among vulnerable populations in India, including religious minorities and migrant children.

CHILDREN AT HIGHER RISK

In India, migrant children, low-caste children, and religious minorities are vulnerable to child labor, commercial sexual exploitation, and familial debt bondage. Girls from such disadvantaged communities are vulnerable to forced and bonded labor in the home-based garment sector. Caste-based discrimination and poverty renders Dalit children especially vulnerable to child labor. Children are vulnerable to labor exploitation in sectors in which adults from marginalized castes face labor exploitation, such as shrimp processing in Adhra Pradesh, where children reportedly accompany their families in debt bondage. In some cases, girls from the Dalit community are particularly vulnerable to exploitation. Furthermore, climate change in India is pushing more children into child labor as children drop out of school to help their parents make up livelihoods lost to extreme weather events. Maoist groups reportedly forcibly recruit children in Chhattisgarh and Jharkhand to handle weapons, serve as human shields, and for use as cooks, porters, and informants in armed conflict. Reports indicate that some non-state armed groups recruit girls for sexual exploitation, including practices indicative of sexual slavery.

BARRIERS TO EDUCATION ACCESS

In India, school budgetary constraints, inadequate transportation for children in rural areas, a lack of separate and sanitary washrooms for female students, and inadequate infrastructure in existing schools present barriers to education access. Limited direct recruitment for teaching jobs and a cumbersome teacher recruitment process has led to high pupil-teacher ratios, severe teacher vacancies, and a non-availability of teachers with subject matter expertise, adversely impacting quality of education. Lower-caste Hindu children, members of tribal communities, and religious minorities face discrimination and harassment by education officials. Lower-caste children in some schools are segregated from other students, given less food than higher-caste students, relegated to seats in the back of classrooms, and assigned tasks like cleaning toilets during the school day.

LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR CHILD LABOR

India has ratified all key international conventions concerning child labor. However, India's legal framework regarding the prohibition of child trafficking does not meet international standards because the law requires the use of force, fraud, or coercion to establish child trafficking offenses.

Child Labor Laws and Regulations	Meets International Standards	Legislation
Minimum Age for Work, **14 Years**	✓	Section 3(1) of the Child and Adolescent Labor (Prohibition and Regulation) Amendment Act
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work, **18 Years**	✓	Section 3A of the Child and Adolescent Labor (Prohibition and Regulation) Act
Identification of Hazardous Occupations or Activities Prohibited for Children	✓	Schedule to the Child and Adolescent Labor (Prohibition and Regulation) Act; The Occupational Safety, Health and Working Conditions Code
Prohibition of Slavery, Debt Bondage, and Forced Labor	✓	Sections 2(g), 4, and 16–19 of the Bonded Labor System (Abolition) Act; Sections 138(4), 141, 143, and 144 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita; Section 79 of the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act
Prohibition of Child Trafficking	✗	Sections 139 and 141 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita; Sections 2, 5, 5A, and 5B of the Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act; Article 23 of the Constitution

Legal Framework for Child Labor (Cont.)

Child Labor Laws and Regulations	Meets International Standards	Legislation
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children	✓	Sections 93, 94, 96, 97, 139, and 142 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita; Sections 4–6 of the Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act; Sections 13 and 14 of the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act; Section 67B of the Information Technology Act
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities	✓	Sections 76, 78, and 83(2) of the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act; Sections 15–18, 20–23, and 32B(c) of the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substance Act; Section 93 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita
Minimum Age for Voluntary State Military Recruitment, **16 Years**	✓	Codified Military Rules
Prohibition of Compulsory Recruitment of Children by (State) Military	N/A*	
Prohibition of Military Recruitment by Non-state Armed Groups	✓	Section 1(2) and 83 of the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act
Compulsory Education Age, **14 Years**	✓	Section 3 of the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act
Free Public Education	✓	Section 3 of the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act

** Country has no conscription*

India's new criminal code, the *Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita*, went into effect in 2024. India's hazardous work regulations for children ages 14 to 18—established in the country's Occupational, Safety, Health, and Working Conditions (OSH) Code—do not include all sectors in which children are known to work, including spinning mills, garment production, and carpet making, which expose children to dangerous machinery and difficult working conditions, including long hours. The OSH Code has not been universally adopted at the state level and the deadline for state-level adoption remains unknown, rendering children in some states vulnerable to child labor. The OSH Code only applies to institutions with 10 or more employees, leaving workers in smaller workplaces unprotected. India's child trafficking laws do not meet international standards as they require the use of force, fraud, or coercion to establish child trafficking offenses. Although sources report that the minimum age for voluntary recruitment into India's Armed Forces is age 16 and that individuals must be age 18 to be deployed, these legal provisions are not publicly available and could not be verified.

ENFORCEMENT OF LAWS ON CHILD LABOR

In 2023, labor and criminal law enforcement agencies in India took actions to address child labor. However, alleged corruption in state police forces, a lack of training of enforcement personnel, and the absence of standard operating procedures in certain states hindered enforcement efforts.

Agencies Responsible for Child Labor Law Enforcement

State Government Labor Ministries: Each state has its own labor ministry that employs labor inspectors responsible for the enforcement of labor laws. State ministries conduct labor inspections, including inspections for child labor, and assess penalties for violations. Ministries refer children to child welfare committees for protection and rehabilitation services when child workers are identified and removed from work.

Criminal Law Enforcement Agencies: Enforce laws pertaining to the worst forms of child labor. State and local police submit information to District Magistrates to determine whether a case should be prosecuted in District Court. Police refer children found in child labor situations to child welfare committees for protection and rehabilitation services. Anti-Human Trafficking Units, which are reportedly not fully operational or established in all states, function under district police headquarters and provide intelligence gathering on human trafficking cases. Cases that fall under the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act, including the commercial sexual exploitation of children, are referred to Fast Track Special Courts (FTSCs), which are mandated to prosecute offenders within 1 year. A backlog of cases and insufficient training of personnel, however, prevents the courts from complying with this timeline. Reportedly, some police do not follow protocol in child trafficking investigations and state authorities have ordered police to register these cases as kidnapping or missing persons cases to reduce the number of human trafficking cases in official statistics.

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	**Yes**
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. In addition, although investigations into suspected cases of the worst forms of child labor were conducted, the total number of investigations is **unknown**. However, the Government of India reported that **609** prosecutions were initiated, and **181** perpetrators—including cases pending from previous years—were convicted for suspected worst forms of child labor crimes.

COORDINATION, POLICIES, AND PROGRAMS

Key Mechanism to Coordinate Government Efforts on Child Labor India established a mechanism to coordinate its efforts to address child labor.	***Child Labor Coordinating Bodies***: Led by the Ministry of Labor and Employment (MOLE), the Task Force to Implement the Child Labor Act (CLA) comprises 12 officials from the federal and state governments. In 2023, the task force met three times and instructed states to closely monitor child labor issues to ensure the implementation of the CLA. The Central Advisory Board on Child and Adolescent Labor monitors the implementation of existing legislation and programs related to child labor. The board met once during the reporting period; the outcome of the meeting, however, is unknown. In 2023, MOLE released a standard operating procedure to assign responsibilities to different government departments to tackle child labor and bonded labor concerns.
Key Policies Related to Child Labor India established policies related to child labor. However, states have not uniformly established action plans to eliminate child labor, and reporting on actions undertaken to implement policies is limited.	***National Policy on Child Labor:*** Overseen by MOLE and the Ministry of Women and Child Development. Aims to address child labor and includes activities for the provision of assistance to children. Under the policy, the Platform for Effective Enforcement for No Child Labor (PENCIL) Portal was developed and implemented. The PENCIL Portal incorporates a child tracking filing system to enhance enforcement of child labor laws, including the Child Labor Act, and provides a complaint mechanism for citizens to report child labor violations. Since 2017, The PENCIL portal has removed 144,021 children from child labor.
	National Plan of Action for Children: Identifies priority actions for achieving the objectives set out in the National Policy for Children, including age-appropriate classes for children released from child labor and child trafficking. Also seeks to develop community-based prevention, identification and release procedures, victim services, and reintegration mechanisms, as well as strengthen institutions to address the worst forms of child labor. Research was unable to identify specific activities carried out under this policy during the reporting period.

Coordination, Policies, and Programs (Cont.)

Key Policies Related to Child Labor	***State Action Plans on Child Labor:*** State- and union territory-specific plans to address and eliminate child labor. Exist in only 11 out of 28 states. In 2023, the Government of Odisha published actions undertaken to implement its Plan, which included child labor prevention trainings for employers, publishing data on inspections conducted under the Child and Adolescent Labor Act, and collaborative activities with NGOs. The Delhi government collaborated with local resident welfare associations to address child labor in the state's domestic sector. In addition, Bihar's State Child Labor Commission rescued 795 children from child labor through effective coordination and enforcement mechanisms. States do not uniformly report on actions undertaken to implement action plans.
Key Social Programs to Address Child Labor India funded and participated in programs that include the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor. However, shelters providing assistance to victims of the worst forms of child labor lack financial and human resources. *† Program is funded by the Government of India.*	***National Child Labor Project (NCLP) Scheme and Special Training Centers (STCs):†*** MOLE program operating at the district level to identify working children, remove them from work, and provide them with education and vocational training. Comprises approximately 3,000 NCLP STCs that provide children with support including stipends, meals, and health checkups. From April 2022 to March 2023, the NCLP STC program removed 13,761 children from child labor and provided services to victims. Observers note that since the merging of the NCLP with the *Samagara Shiksha Abhiyan* scheme—a program focused on achieving universal elementary education—many children have re-entered the labor market as local schools cannot accommodate all released children and do not provide the services that former child laborers require.
	Central Sector Scheme for Rehabilitation of Bonded Laborers:† MOLE program that provides released bonded laborers with financial assistance and social protection services, and funds district-level surveys on bonded labor prevalence. In 2022–2023, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, and Tamil Nadu cumulatively provided rehabilitation assistance to 654 survivors. Although reporting did not indicate how many of these survivors were children, intergenerational debt bondage is common in India—thus, removing parents from bonded labor likely protects their children from bonded labor as well. Research did not yield information on the remainder of the states' efforts to rehabilitate bonded labor survivors. Some state governments lack standard operating procedures to implement this scheme and failed to issue release certificates, and some failed to provide adequate financial assistance to bonded labor victims without significant support from NGOs.
	Anti-Human Trafficking Activities:† Government-operated anti-trafficking shelters, run in collaboration with NGOs and state governments. Shelters include government-run juvenile justice homes and government-run women and children's homes. The Ministry of Women and Child Development-funded *Ujjawala* and *Swadhar Greh* schemes provide services to and repatriate human trafficking survivors, including children. In 2023, the *Ujjawala* and *Swadhar Greh* schemes merged to create the *Shakti Sadan* scheme, an integrated relief and services program. The scheme provides shelter, food, clothing, and primary health for female and child victims of human trafficking. Although government-supported shelters were active during the reporting period, observers reported that the shelters have not received adequate funding in over 2 years, and many operated at a deficit in 2023.

*For information about USDOL's projects to address child labor around the world, visit **dol.gov/ILABprojects***

WORKER RIGHTS SPOTLIGHT

In India, workers face obstacles forming and maintaining unions. These obstacles include provisions requiring at least 100 workers or 10 percent of the workforce (whichever is lower) is represented in the union; a lack of collective bargaining rights for civil servants; the illegality of strikes in Kerala; and the illegality of strikes regarding essential services in Tamil Nadu.

*For references, please visit **dol.gov/ChildLaborReports***

MEXICO

SIGNIFICANT ADVANCEMENT

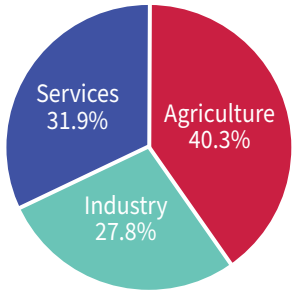
In 2023, Mexico made significant advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. The government approved amendments to the Federal Labor Law and Social Security Law to further safeguard workers' rights and ensure social security, written contracts, and access to essential services, such as childcare. The government also issued a resolution related to prohibiting the importation of goods manufactured with forced or compulsory labor, including forced child labor. In addition, the state secretaries of labor, the federal commission for addressing child labor, and the network of state-level commissions signed a national pact–*Pacto del Mayab*–that established high-level, shared objectives to combat child labor and forced labor in Mexico. Furthermore, the federal commission for addressing child labor issued a guide for employers on general working conditions, regulation compliance, and benefits for legal working adolescents, and a digital handbook to inform adolescents aged 15 to 17 about their labor rights. Lastly, the government published the results of the 2022 National Child Labor Survey. Despite these efforts, some state-level labor inspectors carry out inspections in the informal sector only in response to formal complaints. Further, the 529 federal labor inspectors are insufficient to cover the country's more than 59.2 million workers. Finally, the Secretariat of Labor and Social Welfare lacks an internal system to track child labor violations.

PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Statistics on Children's Work and Education

Children	Age	Percent of Population
Working	5 to 14	4.3% (924,176)
Boys		5.9%
Girls		2.6%
Urban		2.8%
Rural		8.4%
Hazardous Work by Children	15 to 17	20.1% (1,409,953)
Boys		27.3%
Girls		12.8%
Urban		16.0%
Rural		32.4%
Attending School	5 to 14	96.9%
Combining Work and School	7 to 14	4.2%

Working Children by Sector, Ages 5-14



Children in Mexico are subjected to the worst forms of child labor, including in commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking, and in the production and trafficking of drugs. Children also perform dangerous tasks in agriculture, including in the production of chile peppers, coffee, sugarcane, and tomatoes.

Overview of Children's Work by Sector and Activity

Agriculture
Working in agriculture,† including in the production of beans (green beans), chile peppers, coffee, cucumbers, eggplants, melons, onions, sugarcane, tobacco,† and tomatoes. Cattle raising.

Industry
Manufacturing† garments and leather goods. Construction.† Mining.†

Services
Street work† as vendors, shoe shiners, beggars, car washers, and porters. Working in auto repair garages and bars.† Scavenging in landfills and recycling. Domestic work.

Categorical Worst Forms of Child Labor‡
Forced labor in domestic work, street vending, and begging. Commercial sexual exploitation, including in the production of pornography, sometimes as a result of human trafficking. Use by cartels to perform illicit activities, including the production of poppies for heroin, drug trafficking, stealing fuel, and carrying out armed attacks, 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 Mexico's implementation of its international commitments to eliminate the worst forms of child labor.

Legal Framework
Raise the minimum age for work from 15 to 18 to align with the compulsory education age.
Enforcement
Increase the number of federal labor inspectors from 529 to 3,947 to ensure adequate coverage of the labor force of approximately 59.2 million workers.
Expand access to trainings for federal and state-level labor inspectors on child labor protocols and ensure that guidelines related to identifying, sanctioning, and referring for criminal investigation of child labor violations are followed.
Ensure that the Secretariat for Labor and Social Welfare and state-level labor inspectorates conduct targeted routine and unannounced labor inspections in all sectors, including in the informal sector and in rural areas.
Improve coordination and information sharing between federal and state-level labor inspectorates and among officials in different states.
Publish information at the federal and state levels on the number of child labor violations identified; fines for child labor violations that were collected; and worst forms of child labor investigations, prosecutions, and convictions.
Equip the Secretariat of Labor and Social Welfare with a case tracking system to identify disaggregated data for child labor violations.
Ensure that criminal law enforcement agencies and government service providers receive sufficient funding to conduct investigations and prosecutions related to alleged child labor crimes and to provide services to survivors.
Increase coordination and data sharing among government ministries to ensure adequate criminal prosecutions of suspected perpetrators of child labor crimes.
Increase training for enforcement officials and prosecutors on territorial jurisdictions and on how to perform prosecutorial and police investigative functions. In addition, train prosecutors and judges on prosecuting human trafficking crimes.
Coordination
Ensure the active participation and continued engagement of all states and relevant stakeholders within the framework of the Inter-Institutional Commission for Prevention and Eradication of Child Labor and the Protection of Adolescent Workers of the Permitted Age in Mexico.
Government Policies
Adopt policies that address all worst forms of child labor, including the use of children in illicit activities.
Social Programs
Expand access to education by increasing funding to schools, extending school schedules, improving school infrastructure, providing education materials and instruction in native languages, ensuring migrant children have access to birth documentation, and fostering internet access for learning purposes.
Ensure that migrant children are screened for indicators of human trafficking and that children used by organized criminal groups are placed in child protection centers instead of detention centers, provided with adequate social services, and receive access to education.
Provide additional support to indigenous, migrant, internally displaced, and refugee children, and fund social programs to increase their access to education and reduce their risk for child labor.
Ensure that the Benito Juarez Wellbeing Scholarship Program provides sufficient cash transfers to vulnerable students. Also fully monitor and evaluate the This School is Ours program and all other educational programs to reduce mismanagement and increase transparency and prosecute those engaged in corrupt practices.
Expand social protection programs throughout the country for victims of child labor in all relevant sectors, including in commercial sexual exploitation and illicit activities.

CHILDREN AT HIGHER RISK

Indigenous and Afro-descendant children, migrant and refugee children, children from rural communities, and children with disabilities are particularly vulnerable to child labor in Mexico, as they are more likely to face conditions of extreme poverty, homelessness, discrimination, and abuse, and have less access to education and social protection services. Girls in Mexico are particularly vulnerable to commercial sexual exploitation, as they make up 80 percent of victims. Migrant children traveling by themselves can be exposed to mistreatment and violence, pushing them into informal child labor while they seek sources of income. In addition, children from indigenous populations are more likely to work across all sectors than non-indigenous children. Organized criminal groups also force Mexican children to carry out assassinations, serve as lookouts, and produce, transport, and sell drugs, including opium poppies; an estimated 30,000 children have joined criminal groups in Mexico.

BARRIERS TO EDUCATION ACCESS

Mexico has committed to providing free and compulsory education for children. However, 5 million students, primarily from rural areas, dropped out of school from 2022 to 2023 due to the lack of schools and internet connectivity and/or computers for virtual learning. In addition, there are not enough schools in rural agricultural states, which has prevented children of agricultural workers, who are mostly migrants and/or of indigenous origin, from receiving an education. Indigenous children are also less likely to attend school due to the lack of schools near their homes, lack of educational materials and instruction in native languages, and the presence of organized crime at schools.

LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR CHILD LABOR

Mexico has ratified all key international conventions concerning child labor. In addition, Mexico's laws and regulations are in line with relevant international standards.

Child Labor Laws and Regulations	Meets International Standards	Legislation
Minimum Age for Work, **15 Years**	✓	Article 123 of the Constitution; Article 22 *bis* of the Labor Code; Article 47 of the Law on the Rights of Children and Adolescents; Article 6 of the General Education Law
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work, **18 Years**	✓	Articles 23 and 175 of the Labor Code
Identification of Hazardous Occupations or Activities Prohibited for Children	✓	Articles 175 and 176 of the Labor Code
Prohibition of Slavery, Debt Bondage, and Forced Labor	✓	Articles 1 and 5 of the Constitution; Articles 11, 12, and 22 of the Trafficking in Persons Law; Article 47 of the Law on the Rights of Children and Adolescents
Prohibition of Child Trafficking	✓	Article 10 of the Trafficking in Persons Law; Article 47 of the Law on the Rights of Children and Adolescents
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children	✓	Articles 200–205-*bis* of the Federal Penal Code; Articles 13 and 18 of the Trafficking in Persons Law; Article 47 of the Law on the Rights of Children and Adolescents
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities	✓	Articles 196 and 201 of the Federal Penal Code; Article 24 of the Trafficking in Persons Law; Articles 2, 4, and 5 of the Law on Organized Crime
Prohibition of Compulsory Recruitment of Children by (State) Military	✓	Article 5 of the Military Service Law

Legal Framework for Child Labor (Cont.)

Child Labor Laws and Regulations	Meets International Standards	Legislation
Minimum Age for Voluntary State Military Recruitment, **18 Years**	✓	Article 24 of the Military Service Law
Prohibition of Military Recruitment by Non-state Armed Groups	✓	Articles 123 and 201 of the Federal Penal Code; Articles 16 and 47 of the Law on the Rights of Children and Adolescents
Compulsory Education Age, **18 Years**	✓	Articles 6 and 129 of the General Education Law
Free Public Education	✓	Article 3 of the Constitution; Article 7, Section IV of the General Education Law

In 2023, the Mexican Congress passed amendments to the Federal Labor Law and Social Security Law that include significant fines for non-compliance. These amendments mandate that workers receive social security; written copies of their signed work contracts; access to food, water, and healthcare during the workday; safe transportation for workers residing at the workplace; and childcare services. However, Mexico's minimum age for work at age 15 is lower than the compulsory education age of 18, which could encourage children to leave school before the completion of compulsory education.

ENFORCEMENT OF LAWS ON CHILD LABOR

In 2023, labor and criminal law enforcement agencies in Mexico took actions to address child labor. However, the lack of unannounced labor inspections in all sectors, as well as insufficient financial resources, hindered enforcement efforts.

Agencies Responsible for Child Labor Law Enforcement

Secretariat for Labor and Social Welfare (STPS): Responsible for labor law enforcement in 22 industrial sectors under federal jurisdiction (including the sugar and tobacco industries), three types of enterprises, and labor matters affecting two or more states. The state-level labor inspectorates are responsible for labor law enforcement in all other situations. The STPS conducts unannounced inspections in the informal sector for child labor violations in response to complaints, and child labor inspections must be coordinated with representatives from the Secretariat of Health's National System for Integral Family Development (SNDIF) and the local Office of the Attorney General of Mexico. The Federal Attorney for the Defense of Labor, a decentralized unit of the STPS, receives and prosecutes cases involving workers under age 18. Mexico's Secretariat of Economy issued a resolution on February 23, 2023, prohibiting imports produced with forced labor. That resolution, which identifies the STPS as the agency responsible for investigating allegations of forced labor in imports, went into effect on May 18, 2023.

Office of the Attorney General of the Republic (FGR): The FGR's Specialized Unit for Crimes against Women and Trafficking in Persons (FEVIMTRA) and the Specialized Unit on Trafficking in Minors, People, and Organs are responsible for investigating and prosecuting human trafficking cases at the federal level, while the Specialized Office for Organized Crime investigates and prosecutes cases linked to commercial sexual exploitation of children. In addition, all 32 states have specialized trafficking in persons prosecutors, who are responsible for cases of human trafficking at the state level. Federal and state trafficking in persons units also receive referrals from the National Institute of Migration and the Mexican Commission for Refugee Assistance. In August 2023, FEVIMTRA held its seventh national-level meeting for prosecutors and specialized units on trafficking in persons. In 2023, two individuals were sentenced to 15 years in prison for exploiting an indigenous child in forced labor. The government also rescued 82 victims of child pornography and arrested 93 sexual offenders. One of the highest sentences imposed was 82 years and 6 months in prison.

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, **665** labor inspectors conducted **48,180** worksite inspections, finding an **unknown** number of child labor violations at the federal level. However, the state of Chihuahua labor inspectorate identified **42†** child labor violations. While the government conducted investigations into suspected cases of the worst forms of child labor and convicted perpetrators of crimes, the total number of investigations, prosecutions, and convictions is unknown.

† Data reported is state level data and does not reflect federal level information.

COORDINATION, POLICIES, AND PROGRAMS

Key Mechanism to Coordinate Government Efforts on Child Labor

Mexico established a mechanism to coordinate its efforts to address child labor. However, inconsistent levels of participation by state authorities in coordinating mechanisms diminishes their effectiveness.

Inter-Institutional Commission for Prevention and Eradication of Child Labor and the Protection of Adolescent Workers of the Permitted Age in Mexico (CITI): Coordinates Mexico's efforts to eliminate child labor. Meets on a quarterly basis and is chaired by the STPS. There are also state-level (CITI *Estatales*) and municipal-level committees. In October 2023, the first formal convening was held in Merida Yucatan between the federal and state commissions on child labor. During the 3-day event, the National Conference of Labor Secretaries and the ILO signed a national pact (known as the *Pacto del Mayab*) that established high-level, shared objectives to combat child labor and forced labor. In June 2023, CITI also issued a guide for employers on general working conditions, regulation compliance, and benefits for legal working adolescents, and a digital handbook to inform adolescents aged 15 to 17 about their labor rights. However, some states do not have active CITI committees, and not all states collaborated with CITI at the federal level. The Federal CITI has a Plan of Action on Child Labor (2021–2024), which requires the CITI Secretariat to conduct monitoring activities on a quarterly basis, but it lacks an accompanying budget for activities.

Key Policies Related to Child Labor

Mexico established policies related to child labor. However, these policies do not cover all worst forms of child labor.

National Program for the Secretariat of Labor and Social Welfare (2020–2024): Seeks to strengthen workers' rights and increase the participation of workers in the formal sector. The program prioritizes addressing child labor as part of the STPS's social inclusion strategy. Between September 2022 and June 2023, the program carried out 31 actions in 68 agricultural centers, addressing issues such as recruitment and child labor prevention, benefiting 30,555 agricultural workers.

National Program for Children and Adolescents (PRONAPPINA) (2021–2024): Aims to guarantee the rights of children by establishing mechanisms to support their growth and development. Has an accompanying action plan, as well as a Strategy for the Prevention of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children and Adolescents. In September 2023, the Comprehensive Systems for the Promotion and Protection of Children and Adolescents (SIPPINNA) co-sponsored the program's fourth Inter-American forum. In their yearly report, PRONAPPINA highlighted several key achievements for 2023: Promoted proper nutrition, healthy lifestyles, water consumption, and physical activity; ensured access to and completion of compulsory education, including tailored plans for indigenous, disabled, Afro-descendant, and multilingual children and adolescents; designed and implemented programs to protect vulnerable children and adolescents, such as migrants, refugees, street children, child laborers, and adolescents in conflict with the law; and promoted discrimination-free and violence-free environments, training federal personnel on children's rights and cybersecurity for minors.

Coordination, Policies, and Programs (Cont.)

Key Policies Related to Child Labor *‡ The government had other policies that may have addressed child labor issues or had an impact on child labor.*	***National Action Plan on Trafficking in Persons (PNTdP) (2022–2024):*** Published by the Secretariat of the Interior (SEGOB), guides the government's public policy on human trafficking. The PNTdP has five key objectives: (1) strengthening the legal framework, (2) outlining coordination efforts, (3) strengthening services to survivors, (4) conducting research to inform actions and public policies, and (5) promoting the human rights of survivors. Also directs the work of the Interagency Commission to Prevent, Sanction, and Eradicate Crimes of Human Trafficking and for the Protection and Assistance to Victims of Human Trafficking. In 2023, the PNTdP proposed a reform of the general law on human trafficking, which is pending approval; established state-level coordination committees (CIES) mirroring the national Inter-Ministerial Commission to ensure consistent policy implementation, supported by training and national projects; enhanced victim care and reintegration via updated instruments and training programs, including the issuance of an operating manual for shelters and halfway houses that provide assistance to trafficked persons; disseminated new annual informational materials and collaborated with various sectors to raise awareness and promote reporting of trafficking; and created the Crime Prevention Group, where crime prevention actions with a territorial approach are promoted and carried out.
Key Social Programs to Address Child Labor Mexico funded and participated in programs that include the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor. However, there is a lack of programs to address child labor in all sectors and in all states. *† Program is funded by the Government of Mexico.* *‡ The government had other social programs that may have included the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor.*	***Benito Juarez Wellbeing National Scholarship Program:†*** A $39.3 million Secretariat of Public Education cash transfer program that offers scholarships for families living in poverty and students at risk of school desertion. The scholarship provides bimonthly payments of $92 per household for all children under age 15 who are enrolled in school. Although the program reached over 10 million students in 2023, it has been criticized for providing insufficient cash transfers, lacking monitoring and evaluation, and having implementation issues.
	Education Programs:† Managed by the National Institute of Indigenous Peoples, the Indigenous Education Support Program (PAEI) promotes access to public education for children from indigenous and Afro-Mexican communities through scholarships, lodging, and nutritional assistance. With funding close to $110 million, the program helped 81,944 students in 2023. The School is Ours (LEEN) program serves to build and improve educational infrastructure and provide meal services. However, an audit of the program's 2021 expenses found instances of funds sent to deceased beneficiaries and accounts not registered in the database. It also discovered that support meant for a school committee in Chiapas was deposited into a different bank account, leading to its misuse. In addition, treasurers in 75 schools took resources without returning them. As a result, the audit recommended administrative sanctions and investigations into the irregularities by public servants involved in managing the program.
	Assistance for At-Risk Children and Adolescents Program (PAMAR):† Implemented by SNDIF at the state and municipal levels to assist youth at risk for child labor by providing shelters, psychosocial assistance, and training. PAMAR also provides educational assistance that allows participants to complete their schooling, vocational training such as cosmetology, guitar workshops, and sports and recreational activities. In 2023, four new centers were established in the State of Hidalgo in the neighborhoods of La Militar, PRI-Chacón, Campestre Villas del Álamo, and Colinas de Plata.

*For information about USDOL's projects to address child labor around the world, visit **dol.gov/ILABprojects***
*For references, please visit **dol.gov/ChildLaborReports***

PAKISTAN

MODERATE ADVANCEMENT

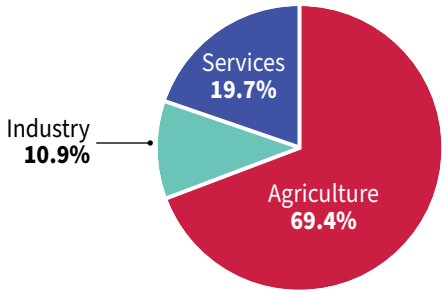
In 2023, Pakistan made moderate advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. Punjab's provincial assembly passed the Punjab Home-Based Workers Act of 2023, which prohibits the employment of children under 15 years in home-based work. Labor inspectors in Punjab also conducted over 85,000 child labor inspections, yielding 87 arrests, and carried out 8,580 inspections in brick kilns, finding 771 child labor violations, resulting in 34 arrests. Further, Child Protection and Welfare Bureaus across Pakistan rescued around 10,000 children from child labor and reunited them with families or placed them in shelters. In addition, in January 2024, the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa labor department released the results of its 2022–2023 child labor survey and the government's Child Protection Helpline 1121 received 1,292 calls, leading to the rescue of 600 children. Pakistan's federal and provincial laws do not meet international standards for minimum age for work or hazardous work, as they both do not extend to all children in the country. Furthermore, Pakistan has neither federal nor provincial laws prohibiting the use of children in illicit activities. In addition, provincial labor inspectorates lack sufficient human and financial resources, and national enforcement data are unavailable. Finally, police corruption, particularly the taking of bribes from suspected perpetrators to ignore child labor crimes, and a lack of willingness to conduct criminal investigations, hindered Pakistan's ability to address child labor throughout the country.

PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Statistics on Children's Work and Education

Children	Age	Percent of Population
Working	10 to 14	9.8% (2,261,704)
Hazardous Work by Children	15 to 17	Unavailable
Attending School	10 to 14	78.0%
Combining Work and School	10 to 14	0.8%

Working Children by Sector, Ages 5-14



Children in Pakistan are subjected to the worst forms of child labor, including commercial sexual exploitation, domestic work, and brick manufacturing.

Overview of Children's Work by Sector and Activity

Agriculture
Farming, including planting, harvesting, and tending crops such as cotton, sugarcane, wheat, and rice. Fishing, including deep-sea fishing,† sorting, and peeling fish. Livestock farming, including raising bovines.

Industry
Manufacturing glass bangles† and surgical instruments.† Weaving carpets,† producing garments and textiles, and tanning leather.† Producing furniture, bricks, baked goods, and dairy products. Mining coal† and gemstones, and crushing stone.† Construction.

Services
Domestic work. Working in hotels, wedding venues, food stalls, small shops, restaurants, gas stations. Automobile repair, and shoe shining. Scavenging† and sorting garbage and recyclables, begging, and street vending.

Categorical Worst Forms of Child Labor‡
Forced labor in brickmaking, carpet weaving, and coal mining. Forced domestic work. Commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking. Forced begging. Recruitment of children by non-state armed groups for use in armed conflict. Use in illicit activities, including the trafficking and production of drugs.

† 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 Pakistan's implementation of its international commitments to eliminate the worst forms of child labor.

Legal Framework
Extend minimum age protections to all sectors, including the informal economy, at the federal level as well as in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Sindh Provinces.
Prohibit the employment of children under age 18 in hazardous work, such as brickmaking and mining, at the federal level and in Balochistan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Punjab, and Sindh Provinces; and domestic work at the federal level and in Balochistan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, and Sindh Provinces.
Criminally prohibit the use of children in illicit activities, including the production and trafficking of drugs, at the federal level and in Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Provinces.
Criminally prohibit the recruitment and use of children under age 18 by non-state groups, including at the federal level and in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan Provinces.
Raise the minimum age for work from 15 to 16 to align with the compulsory education age.
Establish a minimum age for voluntary recruitment by the state military in accordance with international standards.
Enforcement
Ensure that there are at least 4,388 labor inspectors to provide adequate coverage of the labor force of approximately 65.8 million people, and that provincial labor inspectorates have enough financial and human resources to conduct inspections, including funding for travel outside of major cities.
Establish District Vigilance Committees in Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Provinces and ensure that they can conduct public outreach and report and file bonded labor cases.
Create a centralized repository for enforcement data and a mechanism for reporting enforcement data, including information about funding for provincial labor inspectorates; the number of labor inspectors, worksite inspections conducted, child labor violations found, and unannounced inspections conducted; and whether penalties were imposed and collected.
Establish a referral mechanism between law enforcement authorities and social service providers in all provinces.
Conduct unannounced inspections, hold accountable individuals preventing labor inspectors from accessing worksites, and provide labor inspectors with regular training on child labor issues.
Ensure that criminal law enforcement agencies have adequate human and financial resources and training to carry out investigations and prosecute perpetrators. Publish information about investigations conducted, prosecutions initiated, convictions achieved, and sentences imposed.
Establish sufficient laws to end police corruption, particularly the taking of bribes from suspected perpetrators to ignore alleged human trafficking crimes and not to pursue criminal cases against released bonded laborers.
Ensure that workers, including workers in rural areas, can formally register their employment at brick kilns with the government and access social welfare benefits under provincial laws. Prosecute and penalize those who employ bonded laborers and ensure that survivors are protected from future retaliation for bringing their cases to court.
Investigate, prosecute, and when appropriate, convict and sentence members of non-state armed groups complicit in facilitating child labor, including the recruitment of children.
Coordination
Establish an adequate number of Child Protection Units in all provinces and ensure they receive sufficient human and financial resources.
Social Programs
Improve and expand existing programs to address the scope of Pakistan's child labor problem, including providing adequate protection and rehabilitation services for child domestic workers, bonded child laborers, children working and begging in the streets, and other children working in the informal sector.
Provide rehabilitation and reintegration services for children who were kidnapped or forcibly recruited from *madrassas* by non-state militant groups.
Establish programs that ensure children are protected from sexual abuse in schools, including *madrassas.*
Ensure that all children, including children from minority ethnic groups, children with disabilities, and undocumented stateless children, have access to free and compulsory education, as required by law, by implementing programs to address teacher absenteeism, inadequate facilities, school fees, lack of transportation, lack of classes in minority languages, unreliable internet access in rural areas–especially in the former Federally Administered Tribal Areas and in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province–and the use of corporal punishment.

CHILDREN AT HIGHER RISK

Some children from Pakistan are kidnapped or sold into organized begging rings, domestic servitude, gangs, and sex trafficking in Iran. Traffickers also force Afghan, Iranian, and Pakistani children into drug trafficking, drug and contraband production, and smuggling of goods in the border areas. Climate-related disasters have increased Pakistani children's vulnerability to child labor. In the aftermath of the nationwide flooding that occurred in July 2022, more children entered domestic work to pay for food and to service family loans. Stateless children, many of whom are ethnic Bengali born in Pakistan, as well as Afghan and Rohingya refugee children, are vulnerable to child labor in the fishing industry near coastal areas due to a lack of identity documents that limits their access to government services. Afghan refugee children engage in scavenging, whereas Pakistani children with disabilities are used for begging, exposing them to criminal organizations. Moreover, non-state armed groups reportedly kidnap children as young as age 12, coerce parents with threats, and recruit children forcibly from *madrassas*—Islamic religious schools that provide free education and meals to Pakistan's poorest children—to spy, fight, and carry out suicide attacks.

BARRIERS TO EDUCATION ACCESS

In 2022, an estimated 22.8 million children in Pakistan were out of school. Insufficient internet coverage in rural areas, especially in the newly merged tribal districts of the former Federally Administered Tribal Areas, hampers children's access to learning. Many other children face barriers to education, including teacher absenteeism, inadequate facilities, lack of transportation, school fees, corporal punishment, and sexual abuse, all of which may deter them from attending school. Children from minority ethnic groups, including native speakers of Sindhi, Pashtun, Saraiki, Baloch, and others, have difficulty accessing education, which is offered in Urdu and English. Non-Muslim and Ahmadi Muslims are sometimes denied enrollment in schools because of their religious identity. For cultural and religious reasons, some parents do not send girls or transgender children to school, and some schools may deny them enrollment. Most schools in Pakistan are not accessible to children with disabilities. Stateless children, including ethnic Bengali children born in Pakistan and Afghan and Rohingya refugee children, cannot access school due to lack of identity documents. Sexual abuse of children in *madrassas* is also of significant concern. The 2022 floods further affected children's access to schools, particularly in rural areas, where 27,000 schools were severely damaged. Schools in Pakistan are also vulnerable to attacks by armed groups, disrupting children's learning.

LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR CHILD LABOR

Pakistan has ratified all key international conventions concerning child labor. However, its laws do not meet international standards on the minimum age for work because the federal law and the laws in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Sindh Provinces do not extend to informal employment; minimum age for hazardous work as the age at the federal level and in Balochistan Province is less than age 18; and the use of children in illicit activities because federal and provincial laws in Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa do not prohibit the use of children in drug production and drug trafficking.

Child Labor Laws and Regulations	Meets International Standards	Legislation
Minimum Age for Work, **15 Years**	✗	Section 50 of the Factories Act; Sections 2, 20, and 27 of the West Pakistan Shops and Establishments Ordinance; Sections 2 and 26 of the Mines Act; Sections 3 and 11 of the Road Transport Workers Ordinance; Sections 2, 3, 7, and 14 of the Pakistan Employment of Children Act
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work, **14 Years**	✗	Sections 2 and 3 of the Employment of Children Act
Identification of Hazardous Occupations or Activities Prohibited for Children	✓	Parts 1 and 2 of the Schedule of the Employment of Children Act
Prohibition of Slavery, Debt Bondage, and Forced Labor	✓	Sections 2, 3, 4, and 7 of the Prevention of Trafficking in Persons Act; Sections 2, 4, 11-12 of the Bonded Labor System (Abolition) Act; Sections 367, 370, and 374 of the Penal Code

Legal Framework for Child Labor (Cont.)

Child Labor Laws and Regulations	Meets International Standards	Legislation
Prohibition of Child Trafficking	✓	Sections 2, 3, 4, and 7 of the Prevention of Trafficking in Persons Act; Sections 366A, 366B, 370, 371, 371A, and 371B of the Penal Code
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children	✓	Sections 366A, 366B, 371A, 371B, and 377A-B of the Penal Code; Sections 2, 3, 4, and 7 of the Prevention of Trafficking in Persons Act
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities	✗	
Minimum Age for Voluntary State Military Recruitment	N/A*	
Prohibition of Compulsory Recruitment of Children by (State) Military	N/A*	
Prohibition of Military Recruitment by Non-state Armed Groups	✗	
Compulsory Education Age, **16 Years**	✓	Section 3 of the Right to Free and Compulsory Education Act
Free Public Education	✓	Section 3 of the Right to Free and Compulsory Education Act

** Country has no conscription*

In January 2023, Punjab Province enacted the Punjab Home-Based Workers Act of 2023 that, among other things, prohibits the employment of children under 15 years in home-based work. However, the federal and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Sindh provincial minimum age for work laws do not extend to informal employment, such as domestic work. In addition, the minimum age for hazardous work at the federal level and in Balochistan Province is less than age 18, which does not meet international standards. While the federal government and the four provinces have identified hazardous occupations and activities for children, hazardous work prohibitions do not cover brickmaking, for which there is evidence that children are exposed to environmental health hazards, or child domestic work, for which there is evidence that children are exposed to physical abuse. Punjab limits domestic work for children ages 15 to 18 to part-time work that is not likely to harm their health, safety, and education, but does not prevent children under age 18 from engaging in this work. Although laws in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Punjab, and Sindh Provinces prohibit children under age 18 from working in underground mines or above-ground quarries, federal law—which also applies in Balochistan—does not prohibit children ages 15 to 18 from working in mines, and there is evidence that children in Balochistan are engaged in coal mining, where they are exposed to hazardous substances, underground work, and lethal accidents.

Research was unable to locate laws explicitly establishing a minimum age for voluntary state military recruitment or prohibiting the compulsory recruitment of children by the state military. The federal and provincial governments in Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa have not enacted laws that prohibit the recruitment and use of children in armed conflict by non-state groups. In addition, federal and provincial laws in Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Provinces do not prohibit the use of children in drug production and drug trafficking. Moreover, as the minimum age for work is lower than the compulsory education age, children may be encouraged to leave school before the completion of compulsory education.

ENFORCEMENT OF LAWS ON CHILD LABOR

In 2023, labor and criminal law enforcement agencies in Pakistan took actions to address child labor. However, insufficient human and financial resources, as well as corruption, hindered enforcement efforts.

Agencies Responsible for Child Labor Law Enforcement

Provincial and Regional Labor and Criminal Law Enforcement Agencies: Pakistan's provinces are responsible for enforcing labor laws. Provincial labor inspectors inspect industrial areas and markets to identify child labor violations, pursue legal action against employers, collect enforcement data at the district level, and refer children taken into custody to Child Protection Officers. Provincial labor courts assess penalties for labor violations. In addition, provincial and regional police enforce violations of federal and provincial criminal laws concerning child labor.

Federal Investigation Agency (FIA), Anti-Trafficking Unit: Operates under the Ministry of Interior and enforces transnational human trafficking-related laws, particularly the Prevention of Trafficking in Persons Act. Oversees the implementation of the National Action Plan to Combat Human Trafficking and Migrant Smuggling (2021–2025) and publishes an "Annual Red Book" of the government's most wanted human traffickers and smugglers.

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	**Yes**
Unannounced Inspections Permitted	**Yes**	Imposed Penalties for Worst Forms of Child Labor Crimes	**Unknown**

In 2023, it is **unknown** how many labor inspectors conducted worksite inspections or whether child labor violations were found at the federal level or in Balochistan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, or Sindh Provinces. It is also **unknown** how many investigations into suspected child labor crimes were conducted, prosecutions were initiated, or perpetrators were convicted either at the national or provincial levels. However, Punjab inspectors conducted **85,188** child labor inspections under the Punjab Restriction on Employment of Children Act and **8,580** inspections under the Punjab Prohibition of Child Labor at Brick Kiln Act 2016, finding **1,585** violations, filing **1,562** First Investigation Reports, making **121** arrests, and initiating **47** prosecutions.

COORDINATION, POLICIES, AND PROGRAMS

Key Mechanism to Coordinate Government Efforts on Child Labor Pakistan established a mechanism to coordinate its efforts to address child labor. However, there is inadequate funding and human resources at the provincial level for Child Protection Units to initiate interventions against child labor.	***Child Coordination Bodies:*** Provincial Child Protection Units (CPUs) coordinate interventions at the provincial level; take into custody at-risk children, including those rescued from exploitative labor situations; provide case management services; and present cases to the Child Protection Court or other authorities. There are 14 CPUs in Balochistan, Sindh, and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, with additional CPUs in Punjab. In addition, Pakistan has several provincial child protection commissions, bureaus, and authorities in each province with different mandates related to enhancing safety and rights of children, such as Child Protection and Welfare Bureaus (CPWBs) and Child Protection Institutes (CPIs). In 2023, the CPWBs across Pakistan rescued around 10,000 children from child labor and reunited them with families or placed them in shelters.
Key Policies Related to Child Labor Pakistan established policies related to child labor.	***Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Labor Policy:*** Seeks to eradicate child labor, collect child labor statistics, enforce the compulsory education law, assist children through referral mechanisms, and educate families and other stakeholders about the negative effects of child labor. In January 2024, the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Labor Department released the results of its 2022–2023 child labor survey.
	Punjab Labor Policy: Seeks to improve working conditions; eradicate child and bonded labor, including in brick kilns; and establish social safety nets for workers and their families. Implemented by independent monitoring groups that include members of government, police, and civil society and are responsible for carrying out inspections, victim identification, and rehabilitation of survivors. In 2023, the Punjab Labor Department hired 10 new inspectors, established "Helpline 1314," and referred 472 child laborers to 9 CPIs across the province.

Coordination, Policies, and Programs (Cont.)

Key Policies Related to Child Labor	***Sindh Labor Policy:*** Seeks to protect vulnerable workers by enforcing hazardous child labor laws, extending the minimum age for employment to domestic and home-based work, ensuring minimum wages for working children, and increasing access to education and training. In 2023, the Sindh government released funds to continue its child labor survey, undertaken since 2021, with door-to-door canvassing scheduled for January 2024.
Key Social Programs to Address Child Labor Pakistan funded and participated in programs that include the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor. However, these programs do not address the problem in all sectors where child labor has been identified, including providing services for child victims of bonded labor and domestic work. *† Program is funded by the Government of Pakistan.*	***Bait-ul-Mal Programs:†*** Aim to remove children from child labor and increase access to education. Includes the Schools for the Rehabilitation of Child Labor, which enrolled over 17,000 children in 159 schools. In 2023, the program provided social protection and education to orphaned girls, including cash transfers of $21 to $42 (PKR 6,000 to PKR 12,000) to each family per fostered orphaned girl.
	Hotlines: Ministry of Human Rights-operated helpline for reporting human rights violations, including child labor, and for providing referrals to legal aid and a network of NGOs. The ministry also operates the Zainab Alert mobile application, used by district police stations to track missing children and child labor cases. In 2023, this application received over 2,000 complaints, including reports of child labor. The FIA also operates a 24/7 hotline to address human trafficking. The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government has a dedicated helpline for child protection and labor issues. In 2023, government's Child Protection Helpline 1121 received 1,292 calls and referred cases to the CPWBs, leading to the rescue of 600 children.

*For information about USDOL's projects to address child labor around the world, visit **dol.gov/ILABprojects***

WORKER RIGHTS SPOTLIGHT

Pakistan imposes restrictions on unions, authorities often fail to register unions within the legally required timeframe, and the government has failed to investigate and prosecute cases of anti-union discrimination. This can create a climate of fear that hinders workers' ability to organize, advocate for their rights, and report labor abuses, including child labor.

*For references, please visit **dol.gov/ChildLaborReports***

PERU

MODERATE ADVANCEMENT

In 2023, Peru made moderate advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. The government increased its labor inspectorate budget from $49 million to $61 million and issued resolution No. 236-2023, which allows for the creation of child labor and forced labor inspection regulations. The government also committed to using a referral protocol at the national, regional, and local levels to help with the detection of child labor and referral of survivors to social services. Further, the Ministry of Labor publicly accredited a seal that companies can use to certify their agricultural products as child labor-free. Lastly, the government carried out a review of its Forced Labor Survey database in preparation of releasing the full survey report. Although the government made meaningful efforts in all relevant areas during the reporting period, it did not provide information on whether it imposed penalties for violations related to the worst forms of child labor. In addition, Peruvian law allows children ages 12 to 14 to do light work without specifying the activities in which children may work. Labor law enforcement agencies in Peru still lack a sufficient number of inspectors to adequately address child labor throughout the country, and existing social programs do not fully address the problem of child labor in Peru.

PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Statistics on Children's Work and Education

Children	Age	Percent of Population
Working	5 to 14	18.7% (1,213,785)
Hazardous Work by Children	15 to 17	Unavailable
Attending School	5 to 14	83.0%
Combining Work and School	7 to 14	18.0%

Children in Peru are subjected to the worst forms of child labor, including in mining, commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking, and in illicit activities, such as the production and trafficking of drugs. Children also preform dangerous tasks in agriculture, fishing, brick making, and logging.

Overview of Children's Work by Sector and Activity

Agriculture
Fishing,† logging,† and clearing forestland for mining.

Industry
Mining† gold. Production of bricks† and fireworks,† construction, and metal manufacturing.

Services
Street work,† including vending, begging, shoe shining, carrying loads, selling goods in kiosks and markets, collecting fares on public buses,† and washing cars. Treating leather, repairing shoes, and tailoring. Repairing motor vehicles.† Garbage scavenging.† Working in restaurants, domestic work,† and cleaning offices and hotels.

Categorical Worst Forms of Child Labor‡
Forced labor in mining and logging, street vending, and begging. Forced domestic work. Commercial sexual exploitation, including in bars, nightclubs, brothels, and logging and mining camps, each sometimes as a result of human trafficking. Growing and processing coca (stimulant plant) and transporting drugs. Counterfeiting lightbulbs. Recruitment of children by non-state armed groups for use in armed conflict.

† 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 Peru's implementation of its international commitments to eliminate the worst forms of child labor.

Legal Framework
Criminally prohibit the recruitment of children younger than age 18 by non-state armed groups.
Ensure that light work provisions determine the activities in which light work may be permitted.
Enforcement
Publish information on child labor violations found for which penalties were imposed, whether they were collected, and the number of labor inspections conducted at worksite.
Increase funding and resources for labor and criminal law enforcement agencies.
Conduct inspections in the informal sector.
Increase training for enforcement personnel on child labor and forced labor issues and share information about the training program for labor inspectors and criminal investigators.
Increase the number of labor inspectors from 832 to about 1,235 to ensure adequate coverage of the labor force of approximately 18.5 million workers.
Review and streamline the process required for auxiliary/junior inspectors to attain full authority in order to increase efficiency in the labor inspection process and allow inspectors to conduct follow-up inspections at any time.
Ensure that criminal law enforcement officials conduct adequate investigations in mining areas and bars, and initiate prosecutions when violations are found to deter perpetrators of the worst forms of child labor.
Coordination
Ensure that Regional Commissions for the Prevention and Eradication of Child Labor develop action plans to address child labor and allocate sufficient funding to implement these plans.
Social Programs
Enhance efforts to make education accessible for all children, including migrant and refugee children, by addressing barriers such as limited class sizes, long distances to schools, and lack of necessary documentation.
Publish information on activities taken under all social programs that address child labor.
Expand social programs to reach a greater number of children who perform dangerous tasks in agriculture; and initiate social programs to address child commercial sexual exploitation, child labor in mining, child labor in logging, and child domestic work.
Ensure that there are sufficient shelters, including shelters for boys, and specialized services available for survivors of human trafficking.
Collect and publish data on the extent and nature of child labor to inform policies and programs.

CHILDREN AT HIGHER RISK

Indigenous and migrant children from Colombia, Ecuador, and Venezuela are especially vulnerable to commercial sexual exploitation, domestic work, organized begging, and forced labor, particularly in the mining regions of Peru. Reporting also identified undocumented migrants, asylum seekers, children in poverty, workers in the informal economy, and members of marginalized racial and ethnic communities as groups at increased risk of sex trafficking or forced labor. Additionally, children who work in illicit activities such as drug trafficking are at increased risk of forced labor and may be exposed to hazardous chemicals used to process coca leaf into coca paste or cocaine. Media and civil society reports also suggest that the Militarized Communist Party of Peru, led by remnants of the Shining Path, continued to use local children to engage in narco-terrorist activities in the Valley of the Rivers Apurimac, Ene, and Mantaro regions.

BARRIERS TO EDUCATION ACCESS

Estimates suggest that the number of school closures in Peru were the highest among Latin American countries. Additionally, over $20.9 million dollars ($80 million Peruvian soles) is needed to address infrastructure gaps in 30,000 schools, with over 1,000 schools at risk of collapsing and some schools lacking basic services such as electricity or water. Problems such as limited class sizes, long distances to schools, and lack of necessary documentation such as birth certificates or passports continue to hinder education access for many children. This includes refugee and migrant children, who have increased vulnerability to child labor and human trafficking. While education is free, school retention of Venezuelan migrant and refugee children was often impacted by their families' lack of economic resources, limited access to social protection, xenophobia, and displacement, among other factors.

LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR CHILD LABOR

Peru has ratified all key international conventions concerning child labor. However, Peru lacks legislation to sufficiently prohibit the recruitment of children by non-state armed groups.

Child Labor Laws and Regulations	Meets International Standards	Legislation
Minimum Age for Work, **17 Years**	✓	Articles 1, 51, 56, 69, 70, and 73 of the Child and Adolescent Code; Articles 4 and 5 of Law No. 29981 on SUNAFIL
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work, **18 Years**	✓	Articles 1, 56, 57, 58, 69, 70, and 73 of the Child and Adolescent Code; Articles 4 and 5 of Law No. 29981 on SUNAFIL
Identification of Hazardous Occupations or Activities Prohibited for Children	✓	Articles 1 and 2 of the Supreme Decree No. 009-2022-MIMP and its Annex; Article 58 of the Child and Adolescent Code
Prohibition of Slavery, Debt Bondage, and Forced Labor	✓	Articles 2 and 23 of the Constitution; Article 4 of the Child and Adolescent Code; Article 129-O of the Penal Code
Prohibition of Child Trafficking	✓	Article 4 of the Child and Adolescent Code; Articles 129-A and 129-B of the Penal Code
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children	✓	Article 4 of the Child and Adolescent Code; Articles 129-A, 129-B, 129-H–129-J, 129-L, 129-M, 179–181-B, and 183 of the Penal Code
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities	✓	Articles 46-D, 128, 296, 296-A, and 297 of the Penal Code
Minimum Age for Voluntary State Military Recruitment, **18 Years**	✓	Articles 2 and 23 of Law No. 29248 Military Service

Legal Framework for Child Labor (Cont.)

Child Labor Laws and Regulations	Meets International Standards	Legislation
Prohibition of Compulsory Recruitment of Children by (State) Military	✓	Articles 2 and 6 of Law No. 29248 Military Service
Prohibition of Military Recruitment by Non-state Armed Groups	✗	
Compulsory Education Age, **17 Years**‡	✓	Article 17 of the Constitution; Articles 12 and 36 of the General Education Law; Article 61 of Supreme Decree No. 011-2012-ED
Free Public Education	✓	Article 17 of the Constitution; Article 4 of the General Education Law

‡ Age calculated based on available information

In 2023, the government issued resolution No. 236-2023, which allows for the creation of child labor and forced labor inspection regulations. However, the Child and Adolescent Code includes a light work exception for children as young as age 12 without specifying the activities in which light work may be permitted. In addition, Peru also lacks legislation to prohibit the recruitment of children by non-state armed groups.

ENFORCEMENT OF LAWS ON CHILD LABOR

In 2023, labor and criminal law enforcement agencies in Peru took actions to address child labor. However, insufficient human and financial resources for the Ministry of Labor and Promotion of Employment (MTPE) and for criminal enforcement agencies hindered enforcement efforts.

Agencies Responsible for Child Labor Law Enforcement

MTPE: Responsible for supporting the National Labor Inspection Superintendency (SUNAFIL), which enforces labor laws by inspecting workplaces with more than 10 registered workers and referring cases of child labor to the Ministry of Women and Vulnerable Populations (MIMP) and the Public Ministry (MPFN), as appropriate. SUNAFIL has a unit of 10 inspectors who target forced labor and child labor violations, and who train other inspectors on these topics. SUNAFIL also has regional offices in Apurímac, Ucayali, Huancavelica, and Tacna, covering all 26 subnational entities of Peru. MIMP has 1,890 offices that work collaboratively with MTPE and local officials, including police, to use a referral protocol to ensure that adolescents who are removed from hazardous work receive appropriate social services called the Municipal Model for the Detection and Eradication of Child Labor. In 2023, an agreement was reached among national entities, including MTPE, SUNAFIL, and others, to use this referral protocol at the national, regional, and local levels. MTPE also worked with officials from the regional governments of Ayacucho and Cajamarca to improve the quality and coverage of service provisions, promote decent and productive employment, and ensure compliance with labor and fundamental rights.

Ministry of the Interior (MININTER): Investigates child trafficking cases and maintains a hotline to receive reports of human trafficking. Provides survivors and the public with information on human trafficking, refers cases to relevant government offices, and coordinates services for survivors. Within MININTER, the Peruvian National Police (PNP) enforce criminal laws related to the worst forms of child labor and maintain the Office to Address Human Trafficking and Illicit Migrant Smuggling (DIRCTPIM), which investigates cases of child trafficking for labor and sexual exploitation. MININTER coordinates with MPFN and MIMP to place survivors with family members or state social services. DIRCTPIM has approximately 150 investigators. In 2023, in Miraflores, a joint operation by DIRCTPIM-PNP led to the arrest of 8 women for alleged human trafficking and the rescue of 15 minors from the streets, who were reportedly being exploited for begging on various avenues in the district. Additionally, PNP conducted a successful operation in the district of Río Tambo (Junín), rescuing three minors who were victims of child labor in clandestine bars and canteens. The operation shed light on the country's pervasive child labor issues, with the highest concentration found in mountainous areas (22.1 percent), followed by the jungle (17.3 percent) and the coastal region (4.3 percent).

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	**Unknown**

In 2023, **832** labor inspectors conducted **70,776** worksite inspections, finding **118** violations related to child labor. At least **2** investigations into suspected cases of the worst forms of child labor were conducted, but it is **unknown** if prosecutions were initiated or perpetrators were convicted.

COORDINATION, POLICIES, AND PROGRAMS

Key Mechanism to Coordinate Government Efforts on Child Labor Peru established a mechanism to coordinate its efforts to address child labor. However, it is unknown whether all regional commissions created child labor action plans as required.	***Multisectoral Permanent Commission for the Follow-up to the Implementation of the Multisectoral Policy for Children Towards 2030:*** Led by MIMP through its Vice Ministry for Vulnerable Populations (Chair) and Directorate-General for Children (Secretariat), and comprises 22 government officials from 16 different agencies. Its three main duties include a) monitoring the Multisectoral National Policy for Children towards 2030 (PNMNNA), b) publishing reports on urgent measures to be adopted by service providers, and c) issuing an annual technical report. Throughout 2023, the Commission held seven working sessions to coordinate actions and monitor the implementation of PNMNNA, prioritizing issues related to violence against children and adolescents, particularly sexual violence, adolescent pregnancy, and anemia prevalence, and issues concerning migrant children and adolescents. Although some regional commissions under the National Steering Committees for the Prevention and Eradication of Child Labor created action plans to address child labor as required by their operating rules, research could not confirm whether all had done so during the reporting period. Additionally, most regional commissions lacked the funding to carry out these action plans.
Key Policies Related to Child Labor Peru established policies related to child labor. However, these policies do not cover all worst forms of child labor, including child trafficking, the use of children in commercial sexual exploitation, and the use of children in illicit activities.	***PNMNNA:*** Aims to eliminate the worst forms of child labor by improving the livelihoods of low-income families, providing better working conditions for adolescents, raising awareness of child labor, increasing law enforcement efforts, and collecting child labor data. In 2023, the Ministry of Transportation and Communication, the Ministry of Housing, Construction and Sanitation, the Ministry of Health, and the Ministry of Women and Vulnerable Populations committed to implement PNMNNA, and training was provided at the regional and national levels.

Coordination, Policies, and Programs (Cont.)

Key Policies Related to Child Labor	***National Policy Against Trafficking in Persons and its Forms of Exploitation (2022–2030):*** Led by MININTER and serves as the roadmap to prevent, control, reduce, and prosecute human trafficking crimes at all levels. Under this policy, the government operates 7 specialized shelters exclusively for girls exploited in sex trafficking in the regions of Cusco, Lima, Loreto, Madre de Dios, and Puno, with a capacity for approximately 130 survivors. In a December 2023 meeting in Madre Dios, supported by the American Bar Association's Rule of Law Initiative, MININTER engaged key representatives from regional governments, law enforcement, and the media to assess the progress and challenges in tackling human trafficking. The General Directorate of Democratic Security highlighted significant achievements, including the handling of over 40 percent of trafficking cases by specialized provincial prosecutors, successful rescue operations, and the reintegration of 59 percent of affected children and adolescents. MININTER also established the Regional Network and Multisectoral Committee to Combat Trafficking in Persons and Smuggling of Migrants in order to combat human trafficking in the Amazonas region, and disseminated information about human trafficking in Chachapoyas and Condorcanqui. Furthermore, MININTER provided training sessions to law enforcement personnel to enhance their capacity in investigating and prosecuting trafficking-related crimes, which are crucial in areas vulnerable to illegal economies.
Key Social Programs to Address Child Labor Peru funded and participated in programs that include the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor. However, there is a lack of programs to address the problem in all sectors and in all states where child labor has been identified, including in commercial sexual exploitation and in illicit activities. *† Program is funded by the Government of Peru.*	***Secondary Tutorial Program:†*** Rural basic education program supported by the Ministry of Education that includes school meal plans (*Qali Warma*) for rural students throughout the country, including hard-to-reach indigenous communities. Research was unable to determine whether activities were undertaken to implement this program during the reporting period. ***Learn Program (Yachay):†*** MIMP program to increase access to social services for children subjected to street work, begging, and commercial sexual exploitation. The Street Educators *(Educadores de Calle)†* program is part of the broader *Yachay* program and provides counseling and training to children engaged in child labor, begging, and street work. In 2023, the Street Educators program assisted 7,154 children, providing them with education, healthcare, and other protective services to get children off the streets and resorting their rights. The broader *Yachay* Program operates 68 centers at the national level for educational activities, parent training, and workshops. The program also connects working children and their families to educational and social services to withdraw them from exploitative work and improve family welfare. Research was unable to determine whether activities were undertaken to implement this program during the reporting period. ***Together Program (Juntos):†*** Ministry of Development and Social Inclusion program that provides cash transfers to low-income households in 15 of the country's 25 regions. In 2023, *Juntos* provided approximately $6.3 million dollars ($24 million Peruvian soles) to 40,000 households with children under 5 to help address food insecurity.

*For information about USDOL's projects to address child labor around the world, visit **dol.gov/ILABprojects***
*For references, please visit **dol.gov/ChildLaborReports***

AUTHENTICATED
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GPO

Public Law 109–164
109th Congress

An Act

Jan. 10, 2006
[H.R. 972]

To authorize appropriations for fiscal years 2006 and 2007 for the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000, and for other purposes.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

Trafficking Victims Protection Reauthorization Act of 2005.
Women.
Children and youth.
22 USC 7101 note.

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE; TABLE OF CONTENTS.

(a) SHORT TITLE.—This Act may be cited as the "Trafficking Victims Protection Reauthorization Act of 2005".

(b) TABLE OF CONTENTS.—The table of contents for this Act is as follows:

Sec. 1. Short title; table of contents.
Sec. 2. Findings.

TITLE I—COMBATTING INTERNATIONAL TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS

Sec. 101. Prevention of trafficking in conjunction with post-conflict and humanitarian emergency assistance.
Sec. 102. Protection of victims of trafficking in persons.
Sec. 103. Enhancing prosecutions of trafficking in persons offenses.
Sec. 104. Enhancing United States efforts to combat trafficking in persons.
Sec. 105. Additional activities to monitor and combat forced labor and child labor.

TITLE II—COMBATTING DOMESTIC TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS

Sec. 201. Prevention of domestic trafficking in persons.
Sec. 202. Establishment of grant program to develop, expand, and strengthen assistance programs for certain persons subject to trafficking.
Sec. 203. Protection of juvenile victims of trafficking in persons.
Sec. 204. Enhancing State and local efforts to combat trafficking in persons.
Sec. 205. Report to Congress.
Sec. 206. Senior Policy Operating Group.
Sec. 207. Definitions.

TITLE III—AUTHORIZATIONS OF APPROPRIATIONS

Sec. 301. Authorizations of appropriations.

22 USC 7101 note.

SEC. 2. FINDINGS.

Congress finds the following:

(1) The United States has demonstrated international leadership in combating human trafficking and slavery through the enactment of the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000 (division A of Public Law 106–386; 22 U.S.C. 7101 et seq.) and the Trafficking Victims Protection Reauthorization Act of 2003 (Public Law 108–193).

(2) The United States Government currently estimates that 600,000 to 800,000 individuals are trafficked across international borders each year and exploited through forced labor and commercial sex exploitation. An estimated 80 percent of such individuals are women and girls.

(3) Since the enactment of the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000, United States efforts to combat trafficking

in persons have focused primarily on the international trafficking in persons, including the trafficking of foreign citizens into the United States.

(4) Trafficking in persons also occurs within the borders of a country, including the United States.

(5) No known studies exist that quantify the problem of trafficking in children for the purpose of commercial sexual exploitation in the United States. According to a report issued by researchers at the University of Pennsylvania in 2001, as many as 300,000 children in the United States are at risk for commercial sexual exploitation, including trafficking, at any given time.

(6) Runaway and homeless children in the United States are highly susceptible to being domestically trafficked for commercial sexual exploitation. According to the National Runaway Switchboard, every day in the United States, between 1,300,000 and 2,800,000 runaway and homeless youth live on the streets. One out of every seven children will run away from home before the age of 18.

(7) Following armed conflicts and during humanitarian emergencies, indigenous populations face increased security challenges and vulnerabilities which result in myriad forms of violence, including trafficking for sexual and labor exploitation. Foreign policy and foreign aid professionals increasingly recognize the increased activity of human traffickers in post-conflict settings and during humanitarian emergencies.

(8) There is a need to protect populations in post-conflict settings and humanitarian emergencies from being trafficked for sexual or labor exploitation. The efforts of aid agencies to address the protection needs of, among others, internally displaced persons and refugees are useful in this regard. Nonetheless, there is a need for further integrated programs and strategies at the United States Agency for International Development, the Department of State, and the Department of Defense to combat human trafficking, including through protection and prevention methodologies, in post-conflict environments and during humanitarian emergencies.

(9) International and human rights organizations have documented a correlation between international deployments of military and civilian peacekeepers and aid workers and a resulting increase in the number of women and girls trafficked into prostitution in post-conflict regions.

(10) The involvement of employees and contractors of the United States Government and members of the Armed Forces in trafficking in persons, facilitating the trafficking in persons, or exploiting the victims of trafficking in persons is inconsistent with United States laws and policies and undermines the credibility and mission of United States Government programs in post-conflict regions.

(11) Further measures are needed to ensure that United States Government personnel and contractors are held accountable for involvement with acts of trafficking in persons, including by expanding United States criminal jurisdiction to all United States Government contractors abroad.

TITLE I—COMBATTING INTERNATIONAL TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS

SEC. 101. PREVENTION OF TRAFFICKING IN CONJUNCTION WITH POST-CONFLICT AND HUMANITARIAN EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE.

(a) AMENDMENT.—Section 106 of the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000 (22 U.S.C. 7104) is amended by adding at the end the following new subsection:

"(h) PREVENTION OF TRAFFICKING IN CONJUNCTION WITH POST-CONFLICT AND HUMANITARIAN EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE.—The United States Agency for International Development, the Department of State, and the Department of Defense shall incorporate anti-trafficking and protection measures for vulnerable populations, particularly women and children, into their post-conflict and humanitarian emergency assistance and program activities.".

(b) STUDY AND REPORT.—

(1) STUDY.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of State and the Administrator of the United States Agency for International Development, in consultation with the Secretary of Defense, shall conduct a study regarding the threat and practice of trafficking in persons generated by post-conflict and humanitarian emergencies in foreign countries.

(B) FACTORS.—In carrying out the study, the Secretary of State and the Administrator of the United States Agency for International Development shall examine—

(i) the vulnerabilities to human trafficking of commonly affected populations, particularly women and children, generated by post-conflict and humanitarian emergencies;

(ii) the various forms of trafficking in persons, both internal and trans-border, including both sexual and labor exploitation;

(iii) a collection of best practices implemented to date to combat human trafficking in such areas; and

(iv) proposed recommendations to better combat trafficking in persons in conjunction with post-conflict reconstruction and humanitarian emergencies assistance.

(2) REPORT.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of State and the Administrator of the United States Agency for International Development, with the concurrence of the Secretary of Defense, shall transmit to the Committee on International Relations and the Committee on Armed Services of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Foreign Relations and the Committee on Armed Services of the Senate a report that contains the results of the study conducted pursuant to paragraph (1).

SEC. 102. PROTECTION OF VICTIMS OF TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS.

(a) ACCESS TO INFORMATION.—Section 107(c)(2) of the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000 (22 U.S.C. 7105(c)(2)) is amended by adding at the end the following new sentence: "To the extent practicable, victims of severe forms of trafficking shall

have access to information about federally funded or administered anti-trafficking programs that provide services to victims of severe forms of trafficking.".

(b) ESTABLISHMENT OF PILOT PROGRAM FOR RESIDENTIAL REHABILITATIVE FACILITIES FOR VICTIMS OF TRAFFICKING.— 22 USC 7105 note.

(1) STUDY.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Administrator of the United States Agency for International Development shall carry out a study to identify best practices for the rehabilitation of victims of trafficking in group residential facilities in foreign countries. Deadline.

(B) FACTORS.—In carrying out the study under subparagraph (A), the Administrator shall—

(i) investigate factors relating to the rehabilitation of victims of trafficking in group residential facilities, such as the appropriate size of such facilities, services to be provided, length of stay, and cost; and

(ii) give consideration to ensure the safety and security of victims of trafficking, provide alternative sources of income for such victims, assess and provide for the educational needs of such victims, including literacy, and assess the psychological needs of such victims and provide professional counseling, as appropriate.

(2) PILOT PROGRAM.—Upon completion of the study carried out pursuant to paragraph (1), the Administrator of the United States Agency for International Development shall establish and carry out a pilot program to establish residential treatment facilities in foreign countries for victims of trafficking based upon the best practices identified in the study.

(3) PURPOSES.—The purposes of the pilot program established pursuant to paragraph (2) are to—

(A) provide benefits and services to victims of trafficking, including shelter, psychological counseling, and assistance in developing independent living skills;

(B) assess the benefits of providing residential treatment facilities for victims of trafficking, as well as the most efficient and cost-effective means of providing such facilities; and

(C) assess the need for and feasibility of establishing additional residential treatment facilities for victims of trafficking.

(4) SELECTION OF SITES.—The Administrator of the United States Agency for International Development shall select 2 sites at which to operate the pilot program established pursuant to paragraph (2).

(5) FORM OF ASSISTANCE.—In order to carry out the responsibilities of this subsection, the Administrator of the United States Agency for International Development shall enter into contracts with, or make grants to, organizations with relevant expertise in the delivery of services to victims of trafficking. Contracts. Grants.

(6) REPORT.—Not later than one year after the date on which the first pilot program is established pursuant to paragraph (2), the Administrator of the United States Agency for International Development shall submit to the Committee on International Relations of the House of Representatives and

the Committee on Foreign Relations of the Senate a report on the implementation of this subsection.

(7) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There are authorized to be appropriated to the Administrator of the United States Agency for International Development to carry out this subsection $2,500,000 for each of the fiscal years 2006 and 2007.

SEC. 103. ENHANCING PROSECUTIONS OF TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS OFFENSES.

(a) EXTRATERRITORIAL JURISDICTION OVER CERTAIN TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS OFFENSES.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Part II of title 18, United States Code, is amended by inserting after chapter 212 the following new chapter:

"CHAPTER 212A—EXTRATERRITORIAL JURISDICTION OVER CERTAIN TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS OFFENSES

"Sec.
"3271. Trafficking in persons offenses committed by persons employed by or accompanying the Federal Government outside the United States.
"3272. Definitions.

"§ 3271. Trafficking in persons offenses committed by persons employed by or accompanying the Federal Government outside the United States

"(a) Whoever, while employed by or accompanying the Federal Government outside the United States, engages in conduct outside the United States that would constitute an offense under chapter 77 or 117 of this title if the conduct had been engaged in within the United States or within the special maritime and territorial jurisdiction of the United States shall be punished as provided for that offense.

"(b) No prosecution may be commenced against a person under this section if a foreign government, in accordance with jurisdiction recognized by the United States, has prosecuted or is prosecuting such person for the conduct constituting such offense, except upon the approval of the Attorney General or the Deputy Attorney General (or a person acting in either such capacity), which function of approval may not be delegated.

"§ 3272. Definitions

"As used in this chapter:

"(1) The term 'employed by the Federal Government outside the United States' means—

"(A) employed as a civilian employee of the Federal Government, as a Federal contractor (including a subcontractor at any tier), or as an employee of a Federal contractor (including a subcontractor at any tier);

"(B) present or residing outside the United States in connection with such employment; and

"(C) not a national of or ordinarily resident in the host nation.

"(2) The term 'accompanying the Federal Government outside the United States' means—

"(A) a dependant of—

"(i) a civilian employee of the Federal Government; or

"(ii) a Federal contractor (including a subcontractor at any tier) or an employee of a Federal contractor (including a subcontractor at any tier);

"(B) residing with such civilian employee, contractor, or contractor employee outside the United States; and

"(C) not a national of or ordinarily resident in the host nation.".

(2) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of chapters at the beginning of such part is amended by inserting after the item relating to chapter 212 the following new item:

"212A. Extraterritorial jurisdiction over certain trafficking in persons offenses ..... 3271".

(b) LAUNDERING OF MONETARY INSTRUMENTS.—Section 1956(c)(7)(B) of title 18, United States Code, is amended—

(1) in clause (v), by striking "or" at the end;

(2) in clause (vi), by adding "or" at the end; and

(3) by adding at the end the following new clause:

"(vii) trafficking in persons, selling or buying of children, sexual exploitation of children, or transporting, recruiting or harboring a person, including a child, for commercial sex acts;".

(c) DEFINITION OF RACKETEERING ACTIVITY.—Section 1961(1)(B) of title 18, United States Code, is amended by striking "1581–1591" and inserting "1581–1592".

(d) CIVIL AND CRIMINAL FORFEITURES.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Chapter 117 of title 18, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following new section:

"§ 2428. Forfeitures

"(a) IN GENERAL.—The court, in imposing sentence on any person convicted of a violation of this chapter, shall order, in addition to any other sentence imposed and irrespective of any provision of State law, that such person shall forfeit to the United States—

"(1) such person's interest in any property, real or personal, that was used or intended to be used to commit or to facilitate the commission of such violation; and

"(2) any property, real or personal, constituting or derived from any proceeds that such person obtained, directly or indirectly, as a result of such violation.

"(b) PROPERTY SUBJECT TO FORFEITURE.—

"(1) IN GENERAL.—The following shall be subject to forfeiture to the United States and no property right shall exist in them:

"(A) Any property, real or personal, used or intended to be used to commit or to facilitate the commission of any violation of this chapter.

"(B) Any property, real or personal, that constitutes or is derived from proceeds traceable to any violation of this chapter.

"(2) APPLICABILITY OF CHAPTER 46.—The provisions of chapter 46 of this title relating to civil forfeitures shall apply to any seizure or civil forfeiture under this subsection.".

(2) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of sections at the beginning of such chapter is amended by adding at the end the following new item:

"2428. Forfeitures.".

SEC. 104. ENHANCING UNITED STATES EFFORTS TO COMBAT TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS.

(a) APPOINTMENT TO INTERAGENCY TASK FORCE TO MONITOR AND COMBAT TRAFFICKING.—Section 105(b) of the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000 (22 U.S.C. 7103(b)) is amended—

(1) by striking "the Director of Central Intelligence" and inserting "the Director of National Intelligence"; and

(2) by inserting ", the Secretary of Defense, the Secretary of Homeland Security" after "the Director of National Intelligence" (as added by paragraph (1)).

(b) MINIMUM STANDARDS FOR THE ELIMINATION OF TRAFFICKING.—

(1) AMENDMENTS.—Section 108(b) of the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000 (22 U.S.C. 7106(b)) is amended—

(A) in paragraph (3), by adding at the end before the period the following: ", measures to reduce the demand for commercial sex acts and for participation in international sex tourism by nationals of the country, measures to ensure that its nationals who are deployed abroad as part of a peacekeeping or other similar mission do not engage in or facilitate severe forms of trafficking in persons or exploit victims of such trafficking, and measures to prevent the use of forced labor or child labor in violation of international standards"; and

(B) in the first sentence of paragraph (7), by striking "persons," and inserting "persons, including nationals of the country who are deployed abroad as part of a peacekeeping or other similar mission who engage in or facilitate severe forms of trafficking in persons or exploit victims of such trafficking,".

22 USC 7106 note.

(2) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by subparagraphs (A) and (B) of paragraph (1) take effect beginning two years after the date of the enactment of this Act.

(c) RESEARCH.—

(1) AMENDMENTS.—Section 112A of the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000 (22 U.S.C. 7109a) is amended—

(A) in the first sentence of the matter preceding paragraph (1)—

(i) by striking "The President" and inserting "(a) In General.—The President"; and

(ii) by striking "the Director of Central Intelligence" and inserting "the Director of National Intelligence";

(B) in paragraph (3), by adding at the end before the period the following: ", particularly HIV/AIDS";

(C) by adding at the end the following new paragraphs:

"(4) Subject to subsection (b), the interrelationship between trafficking in persons and terrorism, including the use of profits from trafficking in persons to finance terrorism.

"(5) An effective mechanism for quantifying the number of victims of trafficking on a national, regional, and international basis.

"(6) The abduction and enslavement of children for use as soldiers, including steps taken to eliminate the abduction and enslavement of children for use as soldiers and recommendations for such further steps as may be necessary to

rapidly end the abduction and enslavement of children for use as soldiers."; and

(D) by further adding at the end the following new subsections:

"(b) ROLE OF HUMAN SMUGGLING AND TRAFFICKING CENTER.—The research initiatives described in subsection (a)(4) shall be carried out by the Human Smuggling and Trafficking Center (established pursuant to section 7202 of the Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act of 2004 (Public Law 108–458)).

"(c) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

"(1) AIDS.—The term 'AIDS' means the acquired immune deficiency syndrome.

"(2) HIV.—The term 'HIV' means the human immunodeficiency virus, the pathogen that causes AIDS.

"(3) HIV/AIDS.—The term 'HIV/AIDS' means, with respect to an individual, an individual who is infected with HIV or living with AIDS.".

(2) REPORT.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—Not later than one year after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Human Smuggling and Trafficking Center (established pursuant to section 7202 of the Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act of 2004 (Public Law 108–458)) shall submit to the appropriate congressional committees a report on the results of the research initiatives carried out pursuant to section 112A(4) of the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000 (as added by paragraph (1)(C) of this subsection).

(B) DEFINITION.—In this paragraph, the term "appropriate congressional committees" means—

(i) the Committee on International Relations and the Committee on the Judiciary of the House of Representatives; and

(ii) the Committee on Foreign Relations and the Committee on the Judiciary of the Senate.

(d) FOREIGN SERVICE OFFICER TRAINING.—Section 708(a) of the Foreign Service Act of 1980 (22 U.S.C. 4028(a)) is amended—

(1) in the matter preceding paragraph (1), by inserting ", the Director of the Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking," after "the International Religious Freedom Act of 1998";

(2) in paragraph (1), by striking "and" at the end;

(3) in paragraph (2), by striking the period at the end and inserting "; and"; and

(4) by adding at the end the following:

"(3) instruction on international documents and United States policy on trafficking in persons, including provisions of the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000 (division A of Public Law 106–386; 22 U.S.C. 7101 et seq.) which may affect the United States bilateral relationships.".

(e) PREVENTION OF TRAFFICKING BY PEACEKEEPERS.—

(1) INCLUSION IN TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS REPORT.—Section 110(b)(1) of the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000 (22 U.S.C. 7107(b)(1)) is amended—

(A) in subparagraph (B), by striking "and" at the end;

(B) in subparagraph (C), by striking the period at the end and inserting "; and"; and

(C) by adding at the end the following new subparagraph:

"(D) information on the measures taken by the United Nations, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and, as appropriate, other multilateral organizations in which the United States participates, to prevent the involvement of the organization's employees, contractor personnel, and peacekeeping forces in trafficking in persons or the exploitation of victims of trafficking.".

22 USC 7111.

(2) REPORT BY SECRETARY OF STATE.—At least 15 days prior to voting for a new or reauthorized peacekeeping mission under the auspices of the United Nations, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, or any other multilateral organization in which the United States participates (or in an emergency, as far in advance as is practicable), the Secretary of State shall submit to the Committee on International Relations of the House of Representatives, the Committee on Foreign Relations of the Senate, and any other appropriate congressional committee a report that contains—

(A) a description of measures taken by the organization to prevent the organization's employees, contractor personnel, and peacekeeping forces serving in the peacekeeping mission from trafficking in persons, exploiting victims of trafficking, or committing acts of sexual exploitation or abuse, and the measures in place to hold accountable any such individuals who engage in any such acts while participating in the peacekeeping mission; and

(B) an analysis of the effectiveness of each of the measures referred to in subparagraph (A).

22 USC 7112.

SEC. 105. ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES TO MONITOR AND COMBAT FORCED LABOR AND CHILD LABOR.

(a) ACTIVITIES OF THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE.—

(1) FINDING.—Congress finds that in the report submitted to Congress by the Secretary of State in June 2005 pursuant to section 110(b) of the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000 (22 U.S.C. 7107(b)), the list of countries whose governments do not comply with the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking and are not making significant efforts to bring themselves into compliance was composed of a large number of countries in which the trafficking involved forced labor, including the trafficking of women into domestic servitude.

(2) SENSE OF CONGRESS.—It is the sense of Congress that the Director of the Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking of the Department of State should intensify the focus of the Office on forced labor in the countries described in paragraph (1) and other countries in which forced labor continues to be a serious human rights concern.

(b) ACTIVITIES OF THE DEPARTMENT OF LABOR.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of Labor, acting through the head of the Bureau of International Labor Affairs of the Department of Labor, shall carry out additional activities to monitor and combat forced labor and child labor in foreign countries as described in paragraph (2).

(2) ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES DESCRIBED.—The additional activities referred to in paragraph (1) are—

(A) to monitor the use of forced labor and child labor in violation of international standards;

(B) to provide information regarding trafficking in persons for the purpose of forced labor to the Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking of the Department of State for inclusion in trafficking in persons report required by section 110(b) of the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000 (22 U.S.C. 7107(b));

(C) to develop and make available to the public a list of goods from countries that the Bureau of International Labor Affairs has reason to believe are produced by forced labor or child labor in violation of international standards; Public information.

(D) to work with persons who are involved in the production of goods on the list described in subparagraph (C) to create a standard set of practices that will reduce the likelihood that such persons will produce goods using the labor described in such subparagraph; and Standards.

(E) to consult with other departments and agencies of the United States Government to reduce forced and child labor internationally and ensure that products made by forced labor and child labor in violation of international standards are not imported into the United States.

TITLE II—COMBATTING DOMESTIC TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS

SEC. 201. PREVENTION OF DOMESTIC TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS. 42 USC 14044.

(a) PROGRAM TO REDUCE TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS AND DEMAND FOR COMMERCIAL SEX ACTS IN THE UNITED STATES.—

(1) COMPREHENSIVE RESEARCH AND STATISTICAL REVIEW AND ANALYSIS OF INCIDENTS OF TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS AND COMMERCIAL SEX ACTS.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—The Attorney General shall use available data from State and local authorities as well as research data to carry out a biennial comprehensive research and statistical review and analysis of severe forms of trafficking in persons, and a biennial comprehensive research and statistical review and analysis of sex trafficking and unlawful commercial sex acts in the United States, and shall submit to Congress separate biennial reports on the findings. Reports.

(B) CONTENTS.—The research and statistical review and analysis under this paragraph shall consist of two separate studies, utilizing the same statistical data where appropriate, as follows:

(i) The first study shall address severe forms of trafficking in persons in the United States and shall include, but need not be limited to—

(I) the estimated number and demographic characteristics of persons engaged in acts of severe forms of trafficking in persons; and

(II) the number of investigations, arrests, prosecutions, and incarcerations of persons

engaged in acts of severe forms of trafficking in persons by States and their political subdivisions.

(ii) The second study shall address sex trafficking and unlawful commercial sex acts in the United States and shall include, but need not be limited to—

(I) the estimated number and demographic characteristics of persons engaged in sex trafficking and commercial sex acts, including purchasers of commercial sex acts;

(II) the estimated value in dollars of the commercial sex economy, including the estimated average annual personal income derived from acts of sex trafficking;

(III) the number of investigations, arrests, prosecutions, and incarcerations of persons engaged in sex trafficking and unlawful commercial sex acts, including purchasers of commercial sex acts, by States and their political subdivisions; and

(IV) a description of the differences in the enforcement of laws relating to unlawful commercial sex acts across the United States.

(2) TRAFFICKING CONFERENCE.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—The Attorney General, in consultation and cooperation with the Secretary of Health and Human Services, shall conduct an annual conference in each of the fiscal years 2006, 2007, and 2008, and thereafter conduct a biennial conference, addressing severe forms of trafficking in persons and commercial sex acts that occur, in whole or in part, within the territorial jurisdiction of the United States. At each such conference, the Attorney General, or his designee, shall—

(i) announce and evaluate the findings contained in the research and statistical reviews carried out under paragraph (1);

(ii) disseminate best methods and practices for enforcement of laws prohibiting acts of severe forms of trafficking in persons and other laws related to acts of trafficking in persons, including, but not limited to, best methods and practices for training State and local law enforcement personnel on the enforcement of such laws;

(iii) disseminate best methods and practices for training State and local law enforcement personnel on the enforcement of laws prohibiting sex trafficking and commercial sex acts, including, but not limited to, best methods for investigating and prosecuting exploiters and persons who solicit or purchase an unlawful commercial sex act; and

(iv) disseminate best methods and practices for training State and local law enforcement personnel on collaborating with social service providers and relevant nongovernmental organizations and establishing trust of persons subjected to commercial sex acts or severe forms of trafficking in persons.

(B) PARTICIPATION.—Each annual conference conducted under this paragraph shall involve the participation of

persons with expertise or professional responsibilities with relevance to trafficking in persons, including, but not limited to—

(i) Federal Government officials, including law enforcement and prosecutorial officials;

(ii) State and local government officials, including law enforcement and prosecutorial officials;

(iii) persons who have been subjected to severe forms of trafficking in persons or commercial sex acts;

(iv) medical personnel;

(v) social service providers and relevant nongovernmental organizations; and

(vi) academic experts.

(C) REPORTS.—The Attorney General and the Secretary of Health and Human Services shall prepare and post on the respective Internet Web sites of the Department of Justice and the Department of Health and Human Services reports on the findings and best practices identified and disseminated at the conference described in this paragraph.

(b) TERMINATION OF CERTAIN GRANTS, CONTRACTS, AND COOPERATIVE AGREEMENTS.—Section 106(g) of the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000 (22 U.S.C. 7104) is amended—

(1) by striking "COOPERATIVE AGREEMENTS.—" and all that follows through "The President shall" and inserting "COOPERATIVE AGREEMENTS.—The President shall";

(2) by striking "described in paragraph (2)"; and

(3) by striking paragraph (2).

(c) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There are authorized to be appropriated—

(1) $2,500,000 for each of the fiscal years 2006 and 2007 to carry out the activities described in subsection (a)(1)(B)(i) and $2,500,000 for each of the fiscal years 2006 and 2007 to carry out the activities described in subsection (a)(1)(B)(ii); and

(2) $1,000,000 for each of the fiscal years 2006 through 2007 to carry out the activities described in subsection (a)(2).

SEC. 202. ESTABLISHMENT OF GRANT PROGRAM TO DEVELOP, EXPAND, AND STRENGTHEN ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS FOR CERTAIN PERSONS SUBJECT TO TRAFFICKING.

42 USC 14044a.

(a) GRANT PROGRAM.—The Secretary of Health and Human Services may make grants to States, Indian tribes, units of local government, and nonprofit, nongovernmental victims' service organizations to establish, develop, expand, and strengthen assistance programs for United States citizens or aliens admitted for permanent residence who are the subject of sex trafficking or severe forms of trafficking in persons that occurs, in whole or in part, within the territorial jurisdiction of the United States.

(b) SELECTION FACTOR.—In selecting among applicants for grants under subsection (a), the Secretary shall give priority to applicants with experience in the delivery of services to persons who have been subjected to sexual abuse or commercial sexual exploitation and to applicants who would employ survivors of sexual abuse or commercial sexual exploitation as a part of their proposed project.

(c) LIMITATION ON FEDERAL SHARE.—The Federal share of a grant made under this section may not exceed 75 percent of the total costs of the projects described in the application submitted.

(d) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There are authorized to be appropriated $10,000,000 for each of the fiscal years 2006 and 2007 to carry out the activities described in this section.

42 USC 14044b.

SEC. 203. PROTECTION OF JUVENILE VICTIMS OF TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS.

Deadline.

(a) ESTABLISHMENT OF PILOT PROGRAM.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Health and Human Services shall establish and carry out a pilot program to establish residential treatment facilities in the United States for juveniles subjected to trafficking.

(b) PURPOSES.—The purposes of the pilot program established pursuant to subsection (a) are to—

(1) provide benefits and services to juveniles subjected to trafficking, including shelter, psychological counseling, and assistance in developing independent living skills;

(2) assess the benefits of providing residential treatment facilities for juveniles subjected to trafficking, as well as the most efficient and cost-effective means of providing such facilities; and

(3) assess the need for and feasibility of establishing additional residential treatment facilities for juveniles subjected to trafficking.

(c) SELECTION OF SITES.—The Secretary of Health and Human Services shall select three sites at which to operate the pilot program established pursuant to subsection (a).

(d) FORM OF ASSISTANCE.—In order to carry out the responsibilities of this section, the Secretary of Health and Human Services shall enter into contracts with, or make grants to, organizations that—

(1) have relevant expertise in the delivery of services to juveniles who have been subjected to sexual abuse or commercial sexual exploitation; or

(2) have entered into partnerships with organizations that have expertise as described in paragraph (1) for the purpose of implementing the contracts or grants.

(e) REPORT.—Not later than one year after the date on which the first pilot program is established pursuant to subsection (a), the Secretary of Health and Human Services shall submit to Congress a report on the implementation of this section.

(f) DEFINITION.—In this section, the term "juvenile subjected to trafficking" means a United States citizen, or alien admitted for permanent residence, who is the subject of sex trafficking or severe forms of trafficking in persons that occurs, in whole or in part, within the territorial jurisdiction of the United States and who has not attained 18 years of age at the time the person is identified as having been the subject of sex trafficking or severe forms of trafficking in persons.

(g) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There are authorized to be appropriated to the Secretary of Health and Human Services to carry out this section $5,000,000 for each of the fiscal years 2006 and 2007.

SEC. 204. ENHANCING STATE AND LOCAL EFFORTS TO COMBAT TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS.

Intergovernmental relations.
42 USC 14044c.

(a) ESTABLISHMENT OF GRANT PROGRAM FOR LAW ENFORCEMENT.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Attorney General may make grants to States and local law enforcement agencies to establish, develop, expand, or strengthen programs—

(A) to investigate and prosecute acts of severe forms of trafficking in persons, and related offenses, which involve United States citizens, or aliens admitted for permanent residence, and that occur, in whole or in part, within the territorial jurisdiction of the United States;

(B) to investigate and prosecute persons who engage in the purchase of commercial sex acts;

(C) to educate persons charged with, or convicted of, purchasing or attempting to purchase commercial sex acts; and

(D) to educate and train law enforcement personnel in how to establish trust of persons subjected to trafficking and encourage cooperation with prosecution efforts.

(2) DEFINITION.—In this subsection, the term "related offenses" includes violations of tax laws, transacting in illegally derived proceeds, money laundering, racketeering, and other violations of criminal laws committed in connection with an act of sex trafficking or a severe form of trafficking in persons.

(b) MULTI-DISCIPLINARY APPROACH REQUIRED.—Grants under subsection (a) may be made only for programs in which the State or local law enforcement agency works collaboratively with social service providers and relevant nongovernmental organizations, including organizations with experience in the delivery of services to persons who are the subject of trafficking in persons.

(c) LIMITATION ON FEDERAL SHARE.—The Federal share of a grant made under this section may not exceed 75 percent of the total costs of the projects described in the application submitted.

(d) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There are authorized to be appropriated to the Attorney General to carry out this section $25,000,000 for each of the fiscal years 2006 and 2007.

SEC. 205. REPORT TO CONGRESS.

Section 105(d)(7) of the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000 (22 U.S.C. 7103(d)(7)) is amended—

(1) in subparagraph (F), by striking "and" at the end;

(2) by redesignating subparagraph (G) as subparagraph (H); and

(3) by inserting after subparagraph (F) the following new subparagraph:

"(G) the amount, recipient, and purpose of each grant under sections 202 and 204 of the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2005; and".

SEC. 206. SENIOR POLICY OPERATING GROUP.

42 USC 14044d.

Each Federal department or agency involved in grant activities related to combatting trafficking or providing services to persons subjected to trafficking inside the United States shall, as the department or agency determines appropriate, apprise the Senior Policy Operating Group established by section 105(f) of the Victims of Trafficking and Violence Protection Act of 2000 (22 U.S.C. 7103(f)),

under the procedures established by the Senior Policy Operating Group, of such activities of the department or agency to ensure that the activities are consistent with the purposes of the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000 (22 U.S.C. 7101 et seq.).

42 USC 14044e.

SEC. 207. DEFINITIONS.

In this title:

(1) SEVERE FORMS OF TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS.—The term "severe forms of trafficking in persons" has the meaning given the term in section 103(8) of the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000 (22 U.S.C. 7102(8)).

(2) SEX TRAFFICKING.—The term "sex trafficking" has the meaning given the term in section 103(9) of the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000 (22 U.S.C. 7102(9)).

(3) COMMERCIAL SEX ACT.—The term "commercial sex act" has the meaning given the term in section 103(3) of the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000 (22 U.S.C. 7102(3)).

TITLE III—AUTHORIZATIONS OF APPROPRIATIONS

SEC. 301. AUTHORIZATIONS OF APPROPRIATIONS.

Section 113 of the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000 (22 U.S.C. 7110) is amended—

(1) in subsection (a)—

(A) by striking "and $5,000,000" and inserting "$5,000,000";

(B) by adding at the end before the period the following: ", and $5,500,000 for each of the fiscal years 2006 and 2007"; and

(C) by further adding at the end the following new sentence: "In addition, there are authorized to be appropriated to the Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking for official reception and representation expenses $3,000 for each of the fiscal years 2006 and 2007.";

(2) in subsection (b), by striking "2004 and 2005" and inserting "2004, 2005, 2006, and 2007";

(3) in subsection (c)(1), by striking "2004 and 2005" each place it appears and inserting "2004, 2005, 2006, and 2007";

(4) in subsection (d), by striking "2004 and 2005" each place it appears and inserting "2004, 2005, 2006, and 2007";

(5) in subsection (e)—

(A) in paragraphs (1) and (2), by striking "2003 through 2005" and inserting "2003 through 2007"; and

(B) in paragraph (3), by striking "$300,000 for fiscal year 2004 and $300,000 for fiscal year 2005" and inserting "$300,000 for each of the fiscal years 2004 through 2007";

(6) in subsection (f), by striking "2004 and 2005" and inserting "2004, 2005, 2006, and 2007"; and

(7) by adding at the end the following new subsections:

"(h) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS TO DIRECTOR OF THE FBI.—There are authorized to be appropriated to the Director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation $15,000,000 for fiscal year 2006, to remain available until expended, to investigate severe forms of trafficking in persons.

"(i) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS TO THE SECRETARY OF HOMELAND SECURITY.—There are authorized to be appropriated to the Secretary of Homeland Security, $18,000,000 for each of the fiscal years 2006 and 2007, to remain available until expended, for investigations by the Bureau of Immigration and Customs Enforcement of severe forms of trafficking in persons.".

Approved January 10, 2006.

LEGISLATIVE HISTORY—H.R. 972:

HOUSE REPORTS: No. 109–317, Pt. 1 (Comm. on International Relations) and Pt. 2 (Comm. on the Judiciary).
CONGRESSIONAL RECORD, Vol. 151 (2005):
Dec. 14, considered and passed House.
Dec. 21, considered and passed Senate.
WEEKLY COMPILATION OF PRESIDENTIAL DOCUMENTS, Vol. 42 (2006):
Jan. 10, Presidential statement and remarks.

THAILAND

MODERATE ADVANCEMENT

In 2023, Thailand made moderate advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. The Royal Thai Government initiated prosecutions against 197 individuals for engaging or attempting to engage in the commercial sexual exploitation of children, a sharp increase compared to 67 individuals prosecuted in 2022. The government also passed a resolution that allows unregistered migrant workers and their children, who are particularly vulnerable to labor exploitation and trafficking, to be registered and remain in the country through February 2025. In addition, it created an *ad hoc* labor protection network on the popular Thai online messaging platform called Line, which connects 2,106 members across 33 provinces, to exchange and publish information about child labor. Thailand's Internet Crimes Against Children Task Force also implemented a new project to raise awareness of child trafficking and develop support and surveillance networks, targeting 600 students at public and private educational institutions. Although the government made meaningful efforts in all relevant areas during the reporting period, Thailand's minimum age protections do not meet international standards as the law does not grant protections to children working outside of formal employment relationships. Moreover, there remains a lack of available research and data on the prevalence of child labor in high-risk sectors, such as agriculture, garment manufacturing, domestic work, and construction.

PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Statistics on Children's Work and Education

Children	Age	Percent of Population
Working	5 to 14	13.0% (1,302,267)
Hazardous Work by Children	15 to 17	Unavailable
Attending School	5 to 14	96.3%
Combining Work and School	7 to 14	14.4%

Children in Thailand are subjected to the worst forms of child labor, including in commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking. Children also engage in child labor in the agriculture sector.

Overview of Children's Work by Sector and Activity

Agriculture

Working on farms, including animal farms, and planting and harvesting sugarcane; and working in fisheries and on sea vessels.†

Industry

Working in manufacturing, including garment production. Working in poultry factories. Also engaged in construction, including transporting building materials.

Services

Domestic work, restaurants, motor vehicle repair shops, gas stations, street work, including begging and vending, and *Muay Thai* fighting.

Categorical Worst Forms of Child Labor‡

Commercial sexual exploitation, including in the production of pornography, sometimes as a result of human trafficking. Forced labor in vending, begging, domestic work, and producing garments. Used in the production and trafficking of drugs, including narcotics.

† 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 Thailand's implementation of its international commitments to eliminate the worst forms of child labor.

Legal Framework
Extend the minimum age of work to apply to children who are working without monetary wages.
Criminally prohibit the recruitment of children under age 18 by non-state armed groups.
Raise the minimum age for work from 15 to 16 to align with the compulsory education age.
Update hazardous occupations and activities that are prohibited for children to include sectors in which child labor is known to occur, including paid participation in *Muay Thai*, in which there is evidence that children are exposed to physical dangers.
Enforcement
Publish information on criminal investigations and imposed penalties for worst forms of child labor crimes, as well as whether unannounced inspections were conducted.
Conduct unannounced inspections at remote workplaces, including in agriculture and domestic work, and ensure inspections occur without interference from business owners, local politicians, or authorities.
Provide interpretation services that enable labor inspectors to meaningfully interview foreign workers and ensure independence of the labor inspectorate from outside interests.
Ensure that fishing vessels employing children under age 18 to work as apprentices are fully complying with the protections required in the Ministerial Regulation on Protection of Fishery Work to prevent the increased risk of child labor for apprentices.
Fully implement the National Referral Mechanism and provide training for officials and multidisciplinary teams, including at the local levels.
Government Policies
Publish activities undertaken to implement key policies related to child labor, including the National Strategic Plan (2018–2037).
Social Programs
Publish activities undertaken to implement key social programs related to child labor, including Centers to Promote Child Advocacy and for Victims of Trafficking and Migrants.
Improve access to education, especially for ethnic minority and migrant children, including by clarifying to school officials the necessary documents non-Thai students need to submit for enrollment, raising awareness of migrant children's right to education, increasing language and instructional support for non-Thai speakers, including on public school applications, and ensuring that Migrant Learning Centers are accredited.
Conduct child labor prevalence surveys to ensure that there are sufficient social programs to address exploitation of children in the agriculture, garment manufacturing, domestic work, and construction sectors.
Provide sufficient funding for social programs to assist children from vulnerable groups, such as migrant children and LGBTQIA+ children, who face barriers to education and are at high risk of child labor.

CHILDREN AT HIGHER RISK

A widespread labor shortage, coupled with increased migration between Burma and Thailand due to the ongoing Burma military situation, resulted in increased numbers of underage migrant children engaging in child labor. These migrants are at higher risk of being exploited by recruitment agencies that falsify ages on official documents, resulting in children working while underage. In addition, an increased

number of children are reported to be exploited in forced labor and forced criminality in online scamming operations in Chinese-owned Special Economic Zones in neighboring countries. Thai children, as well as children from Burma, Laos, and Cambodia, are also subjected to commercial sexual exploitation in Thai massage parlors, bars, karaoke lounges, hotels, and private residences. In addition, children are increasingly being coerced into producing pornography and performing sexual acts through online social media platforms and private chat rooms.

BARRIERS TO EDUCATION ACCESS

While Thai law provides for 12 years of free education for all children, language barriers prevent some non-Thai speaking children from accessing basic education as public school instruction and school applications are only available in Thai. Furthermore, although Thailand law does not require that children provide identity documents or a registered address for school enrollment, research found that some schools request documentation of non-Thai students, which may prevent their access to education. Some migrant and refugee communities have formed unofficial educational learning centers, including Migrant Learning Centers (MLCs), to provide children with native-language education or assist children who have had difficulty enrolling in or accessing Thai schools. However, most MLCs lack accreditation, and some have been subject to visits by immigration police to verify the legal status of migrant teachers and workers. This practice intimidated some migrant children and their families, resulting in reduced attendance of children at the MLCs. Children identifying as LGBTQIA+ and those experiencing poverty, drug addiction, family problems, and teen pregnancy may also face additional barriers to education access due to harassment and bullying.

LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR CHILD LABOR

Thailand has ratified all key international conventions concerning child labor. However, Thailand's laws do not meet international standards on the minimum age for work because the labor code does not protect children working outside of employment relationships.

Child Labor Laws and Regulations	Meets International Standards	Legislation
Minimum Age for Work, **15 Years**	✗	Sections 5, 44, and 148/1 of the Labor Protection Act
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work, **18 Years**	✓	Sections 22, 47, 49, 50, 144, and 148/2 of the Labor Protection Act; Sections 26 and 78 of the Child Protection Act; Sections 20 and 45 of the Home Workers Protection Act; Section 56/1 of the Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act
Identification of Hazardous Occupations or Activities Prohibited for Children	✓	Chapter 4, Sections 49 and 50 of the Labor Protection Act; Clause 4 of the Ministerial Regulation concerning Labor Protection in Sea Fishery Work; Clause 2 of the Ministerial Regulation Identifying Tasks that may be Hazardous to the Health and Safety of Pregnant Women or Children Under the Age of Fifteen Years
Prohibition of Slavery, Debt Bondage, and Forced Labor	✓	Sections 312 and 312 *bis* of the Penal Code; Section 6, 8, 52, and 53 of the Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act
Prohibition of Child Trafficking	✓	Sections 282, 283, and 285 of the Penal Code; Sections 4 and 6 of the Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act (No. 3)
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children	✓	Sections 8 and 9 of the Prevention and Suppression of Prostitution Act; Section 4, 6, 6/1, 52 and 53 of the Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act; Sections 4 and 8 of the Royal Decree Amendments of the Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act; Sections 282, 283, 285, and 286 of the Penal Code; Section 26 of the Child Protection Act; Amendment to Section 84 of the Penal Code
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities	✓	Sections 4 and 26(5) of the Child Protection Act; Sections 93 and 93/2 of the Narcotics Act; Section 84 of the Penal Code; Section 22 of the Beggar Control Act
Minimum Age for Voluntary State Military Recruitment, **18 Years**	✓	Section 25 of the Military Service Act

Legal Framework for Child Labor (Cont.)

Child Labor Laws and Regulations	Meets International Standards	Legislation
Prohibition of Compulsory Recruitment of Children by (State) Military	✓	Section 16 of the Military Service Act
Prohibition of Military Recruitment by Non-state Armed Groups	✗	
Compulsory Education Age, **16 Years**	✓	Section 17 of the National Education Act
Free Public Education	✓	Section 10 of the National Education Act; Section 54 of the Thai Constitution

The minimum age for work in Thailand does not comply with international standards because the law does not grant protections to children working outside of wage employment but may otherwise receive non-monetary benefits (e.g. food, shelter) in exchange for their work. In addition, the minimum age for work is lower than the compulsory education age and, as a result, some children may leave school before the completion of compulsory education. Moreover, although Thailand has identified fishing on sea vessels as a form of hazardous labor—and research indicates that there is inadequate oversight of fishing vessels—the government implemented an amendment in 2022 to the Ministerial Regulation on Protection of Fishery Work 2014 allows owners of fishing boats to employ a relative as young as age 16 as an intern. The law does not prohibit the paid participation of children in *Muay Thai*, in which there is evidence that children who are participating for financial benefits are exposed to physical injury.

ENFORCEMENT OF LAWS ON CHILD LABOR

In 2023, labor and criminal law enforcement agencies in Thailand took actions to address child labor. However, a lack of inspections in informal sectors and sectors primarily employing migrant populations hindered enforcement efforts.

Agencies Responsible for Child Labor Law Enforcement

Department of Labor Protection and Welfare (DLPW): Enforces child labor laws through workplace inspections. Operates Hotline 1506, a phone number that the public can use to make labor abuse complaints. Staffs DLPW offices in each province in Thailand to answer questions about working conditions and receive child labor complaints from the public. Reports indicate some labor inspectors intentionally overlook instances of child labor among migrant children due to fear of reprisal from business owners and local politicians and authorities. In 2023, labor inspections resulted in the identification of 477 children between the ages of 15 and 17 who were working in agriculture, which is often seasonal. The government also provided training to 104 labor inspectors in central and provincial areas during the year. Nonetheless, there are reports of child labor inspections in informal sectors being insufficient due to labor inspectors' inability to access remote workplaces and safety concerns for inspectors.

Royal Thai Police (RTP): Operate the Anti-Trafficking in Persons Division (ATPD); the Thailand Internet Crimes Against Children Task Force (TICAC); and the Child Women Protection, Anti-Human Trafficking, and Fishery Industry Center (CWP). ATPD enforces laws related to forced labor, human trafficking, child pornography, and commercial sexual exploitation of children, and operates Hotline 1191 to receive complaints on human trafficking and violence against children. TICAC investigates and enforces laws against child trafficking and online commercial sexual exploitation of children, including the distribution and production of child pornography. During the reporting period, TICAC initiated 540 investigations. CWP is responsible for protecting children, young people, women, and other workers from human rights violations at both the national and international levels. However, there were reports that human trafficking may be underreported due to inconsistencies in the identification process and training gaps, including the lack of awareness of human trafficking crimes amongst police, prosecutors, and judges. In 2023, CWP collaborated with non-governmental organizations to hold training workshops focused on preventing child trafficking, which were presented in 33 schools.

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	**Unknown**

In 2023, **2,501** labor inspectors conducted **17,847** worksite inspections. Although the government prosecuted **114** cases related to the commercial sexual exploitation of children, it is **unknown** the number of investigations into suspected cases of the worst forms of child labor were conducted, prosecutions were initiated, or perpetrators were convicted.

COORDINATION, POLICIES, AND PROGRAMS

Key Mechanism to Coordinate Government Efforts on Child Labor

Thailand has established a mechanism to coordinate its efforts to address child labor.

National Committee to Eliminate the Worst Forms of Child Labor: Coordinates the implementation of child labor policies, facilitates cooperation among relevant ministries, and reports annually to the Thai Cabinet on child labor issues. Responsible for monitoring the National Policy and Plan to Eliminate the Worst Forms of Child Labor. During the reporting year, met and monitored the progress of a draft amendment to the Boxing Act B.E. 2542 (1999), which would introduce measures to strengthen protections and improve safety for children participating in *Muay Thai* boxing. Also reviewed guidelines to prevent and address child labor and forced labor issues in the shrimp, fish, sugarcane, and garment industries.

Key Policies Related to Child Labor

Thailand has established policies related to child labor. However, research was unable to determine whether activities were undertaken to implement the National Strategic Plan during the reporting period.

Fourth Action Plan for the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labor (2023–2027):† Seeks to operationalize an integrated, cooperative approach to eliminate the worst forms of child labor in Thailand, with five supporting sub-action plans focused on: (1) preventing all forms of child labor and providing public communication; (2) strong legal frameworks and effective enforcement; (3) providing assistance, protection, and rehabilitation to the victims of the worst forms of child labor; (4) promoting cooperation among government agencies in preventing and eliminating the worst forms of child labor; and (5) developing an administration, monitoring, and evaluation system for the action plan.

Cyber Tipline Remote Access Policy: Seeks to eliminate online sexual exploitation of children in Thailand by partnering with the U.S. National Center for Missing and Exploited Children. Supports TICAC by permitting the RTP to request warrants to search residences and electronic equipment for child pornography and initiate criminal prosecutions. In 2023, TICAC investigated 8,626 tips received through Cyber Tipline and a total of 358 victims were rescued.

National Strategic Plan (2018–2037): Seeks to improve education access, particularly for vulnerable and poor children in remote areas, by increasing transportation to school, reforming the school subsidy program for poor families, and providing scholarships for children who stay in school. Research could not determine what activities were undertaken during the reporting period.

† 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

Thailand funded and participated in programs that include the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor. However, a lack of research and data on child labor prevalence in high-risk sectors (including agriculture, garment manufacturing, domestic work, and construction) makes it difficult for the Government of Thailand to design programs to address these issues.

† Program is funded by the Government of Thailand.
‡ The government had other social programs that may have included the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor.

Centers to Promote Child Advocacy and for Victims of Trafficking and Migrants:† Migrant Learning Centers (MLCs) are non-governmental- and government-operated centers that provide basic education, life skills training, and vocational training to children in migrant communities along Thailand's borders. The government reported that 65 registered MLCs supporting 10,808 students were in operation in 2022. In addition, the Migrant Educational Coordination Center was created to improve access to education for migrant children, support increased coordination of MLCs, and develop the capacity of teachers in MLCs. Research could not determine what activities were undertaken during the reporting period.

Programs to Address the Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children:† The Ministry of Tourism and Sports initiated the Child Friendly Tourism project by signing a Memorandum of Understanding with 21 government agencies, private sector organizations, and NGOs to develop measures to prevent and reduce commercial sexual exploitation of children in the tourism industry. Moreover, the Thailand Safe Internet Coalition, a partnership led by the Ministry of Social Development and Human Security (MSDHS), UNICEF, and Thai telecommunications companies and internet service providers, was formed to strengthen reporting of online abuse, enhance coordination, improve service provision for survivors, and increase awareness of children, young people, and parents regarding online risks. During the reporting period, Child Friendly Tourism subcommittees met to discuss child-safe tourism, and the RTP also developed a Handbook for Child Safe and Friendly Tourism to support the subcommittee. Also organized a project to develop online and offline curricula to train tourism personnel to better protect child victims of human trafficking and sexual exploitation; the training was given to 690 people.

Ministry of Social Development and Human Security (MSDHS) Programs:† Implements anti-trafficking projects through the Anti-Trafficking in Persons Division (ATPD). Oversees Hotline 1300, which receives human trafficking and child labor complaints. Operates 77 temporary shelters, with one located in every province, and 9 long-term shelters for human trafficking survivors, including a shelter dedicated solely to boys. Monitors 76 Provincial Operation Centers for the Prevention and Suppression of Human Trafficking. Provides assistance and welfare protection to survivors of human trafficking. In 2023, launched a campaign to raise awareness about online sexual exploitation of children and implemented a project to help local communities support at-risk youths, which reached 834 people and 23 local communities. However, research found that temporary shelters for trafficking survivors managed by MSDHS employed inconsistent policies and provision of care to victims, including a lack of psychologists and staff trained on trauma-informed care.

*For information about USDOL's projects to address child labor around the world, visit **dol.gov/ILABprojects***

WORKER RIGHTS SPOTLIGHT

Thailand imposes limitations on freedom of association, such as minimum worker requirements for union formation, lack of protections against anti-union discrimination, and restrictions on the right to strike in certain sectors. In addition, as migrant workers are legally barred from forming their own unions, labor abuse and exploitation are endemic to the country's migrant-dominated labor sectors, such as agriculture, seafood processing and fishing.

*For references, please visit **dol.gov/ChildLaborReports***

Turkey

MODERATE ADVANCEMENT

In 2017, Turkey made a moderate advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. The government adopted a new five-year national action plan to combat child labor and created new bodies to coordinate government policy on child labor and oversee implementation of the new action plan. In coordination with international partners, the government continued to train labor inspectors on child labor and implement projects that provided assistance to more than 1,000 children working in seasonal agriculture. The Prime Ministry introduced a new circular instructing provincial governments to improve provision of educational and other services to the children of seasonal agricultural workers. However, children in Turkey perform dangerous tasks in seasonal agricultural work and in small and medium manufacturing enterprises. Gaps in the labor law and uneven enforcement resulted in insufficient protection of children employed by agricultural enterprises with fewer than 50 workers. Although the government made meaningful efforts in relevant areas during the reporting period, provisions related to the minimum age for work do not meet international standards. In addition, the government continued to make important progress in expanding access to education and other services for several hundred thousand Syrian refugee children, although high poverty rates and limited work opportunities for adult refugees left some refugee children vulnerable to exploitation in the worst forms of child labor.

I. PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

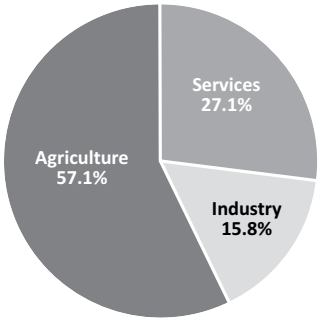
Children in Turkey perform dangerous tasks in seasonal agriculture and in small and medium manufacturing enterprises. (1; 2; 3; 4; 5) Table 1 provides key indicators on children's work and education in Turkey.

Table 1. Statistics on Children's Work and Education

Children	Age	Percent
Working (% and population)	6 to 14	2.6 (320,254)
Attending School (%)	6 to 14	92.4
Combining Work and School (%)	6 to 14	1.6
Primary Completion Rate (%)		92.5

Source for primary completion rate: Data from 2015, published by UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2018. (6)
Source for all other data: Understanding Children's Work Project's analysis of statistics from Child Labor Survey, 2006. (7)

Figure 1. Working Children by Sector, Ages 10-14



Based on a review of available information, Table 2 provides an overview of children's work by sector and activity.

Table 2. Overview of Children's Work by Sector and Activity

Sector/Industry	Activity
Agriculture	Production of cotton, hazelnuts, citrus fruits, sugar beets, cumin, peanuts, pulses, apricots, melons, and cherries (3; 4; 8; 9; 10; 11; 12; 5; 1; 2)
Industry	Production of furniture, bricks, shoes, leather goods, and textiles (3; 12; 13; 14; 15; 16) (17; 18; 19; 20; 21; 22)
	Construction (2; 23)
	Auto repair† (3; 24)
	Mining† (1; 25)
Services	Street work, including vending small items, carrying bundles in market areas, cleaning car windshields, collecting recyclable materials, and begging (1; 3; 26; 12; 13; 14; 15; 27) (24; 28; 29; 30)
	Working in restaurants and small shops (13; 12)
Categorical Worst Forms of Child Labor‡	Commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking (24; 31; 32; 33; 30)
	Recruitment of children by non-state armed groups for use in armed conflict (2; 30)

† 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.

Due to the seasonal nature of agricultural work throughout the country, children living in rural areas often migrate with their families and engage in agricultural work for up to seven months of the year. Significant numbers of these children have limited access to health care and education as a result of migration. (34; 35; 36; 4; 5; 24; 37; 2) Syrian refugee families working in agriculture tended to receive lower pay and live in worse conditions than Turkish workers, increasing the vulnerability of both Syrian adults and children to potential exploitation. (4; 12; 5; 2)

There were over 3.5 million refugees living in Turkey at the end of 2017. (38) Poverty and a lack of meaningful employment opportunities for adults contributed to an increase in child labor among refugee children. (5; 28; 29; 2) Syrian refugee children engaged in child labor in agriculture, street begging, the service sector, and small and medium manufacturing enterprises. (2; 3) Children in the manufacturing sector often worked long hours up to six days per week and earned wages as little as half of what an employer would pay an adult. (3; 15; 16; 19; 20; 21; 22; 2) Monitoring and collecting data on child labor in refugee communities remained a challenge. (2)

In 2017, the government alleged that the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK), a U.S.-designated terrorist organization, recruited and forcibly abducted children for conscription. Authoritative data on PKK youth recruitment was not available. (2)

Syrian refugee children faced financial barriers to receiving education, including the informal tuition or other fees charged for Syrian children as well as the cost of transportation. (3; 13; 20; 2) Up to one-third of Syrian children living in Turkey had an inconsistency with their registration documents, such as registration in a province other than the one they reside in. School administrators sometimes refuse admission to these children, despite Ministry of National Education instructions that schools should accept these children while registration issues are resolved. (2) In addition, many Syrian children who were able to register for school struggled to integrate into Turkish schools due to the language barrier and lack of access to programs in which they could learn Turkish as a second language. (3)

II. LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR CHILD LABOR

Turkey has ratified all key international conventions concerning child labor (Table 3).

Table 3. Ratification of International Conventions on Child Labor

	Convention	Ratification
	ILO C. 138, Minimum Age	✓
	ILO C. 182, Worst Forms of Child Labor	✓
	UN CRC	✓
	UN CRC Optional Protocol on Armed Conflict	✓
	UN CRC Optional Protocol on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography	✓
	Palermo Protocol on Trafficking in Persons	✓

The government has established laws and regulations related to child labor (Table 4). However, gaps exist in Turkey's legal framework to adequately protect children from the worst forms of child labor, including with regard to the application of the minimum age for work to all children.

Table 4. Laws and Regulations on Child Labor

Standard	Meets International Standards: Yes/No	Age	Legislation
Minimum Age for Work	No	15	Article 71 of the Labor Law (39)
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work	Yes	18	Articles 71–73 of the Labor Law; Annex 3 of the Regulation on Principles and Procedures Governing the Employment of Children and Young Workers (39; 40)

Table 4. Laws and Regulations on Child Labor (cont)

Standard	Meets International Standards: Yes/No	Age	Legislation
Identification of Hazardous Occupations or Activities Prohibited for Children	Yes		The Regulation on the Principles and Procedures Governing the Employment of Children and Young Workers (40)
Prohibition of Forced Labor	Yes		Articles 80 and 117 of the Penal Code (41)
Prohibition of Child Trafficking	Yes		Article 80 of the Penal Code (41)
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children	Yes		Articles 77, 103, 226, and 227 of the Penal Code (41)
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities	Yes		Articles 37, 38, and 188 of the Penal Code (41)
Prohibition of Military Recruitment			
State Compulsory	Yes	21	Article 2 of the Law on Military Service (42)
State Voluntary	N/A*		
Non-state	No		
Compulsory Education Age	Yes	17‡	Article 3 of the Primary Education Law; Education Reform Law (43; 44)
Free Public Education	Yes		Article 2 of the Primary Education Law; Article 42 of the Constitution of the Republic of Turkey (44; 45)

* No voluntary military service (46)
‡ Age calculated based on available information (43; 44)

Despite steps to institute additional protections for underage children engaged in agricultural work, gaps in the legal framework protecting children from hazardous child labor persisted. The National Program to Combat Child Labor identifies seasonal migratory agricultural work and work in small and medium industrial enterprises as worst forms of child labor. (2) However, the Regulation on the Principles and Procedures Governing the Employment of Children and Young Workers allows children to do fruit and vegetable picking as light work, and does not prohibit seasonal migratory agriculture. The regulation also allows children age 16 and older to participate in many manufacturing tasks, including manufacturing of clothing despite work in industrial enterprises being included as a worst form of child labor. (40) This inconsistency between national law and policy on child labor created confusion regarding the minimium age for work in the agriculture and manufacturing sectors, as well as the jobs within these sectors that are legally prohibited for children. (47; 48)

In addition, although Turkey has a list of activities in which light work may be permitted in the Regulation on the Principles and Procedures Governing the Employment of Children and Young Workers, it does not specify the conditions in which light work may be undertaken or limit the number of hours for light work. (39)

In addition, Article 4 of Turkey's Labor Law continued to exclude from its coverage agricultural enterprises employing fewer than 50 workers, which are the workplaces most likely to employ children, including in seasonal migratory work. (39) This gap in the law leaves children and other workers in agricultural enterprises with fewer than 50 workers vulnerable to exploitative conditions without legal protection. (11; 24)

III. ENFORCEMENT OF LAWS ON CHILD LABOR

The government has established institutional mechanisms for the enforcement of laws and regulations on child labor (Table 5). However, gaps exist within the operations of the Ministry of Labor and Social Services that may hinder adequate enforcement of their child labor laws.

Table 5. Agencies Responsible for Child Labor Law Enforcement

Organization/Agency	Role
Labor Inspection Board Presidency within the Ministry of Labor and Social Security (MOLSS)	Implement laws on child labor and hazardous child labor, including regulating work environments and conditions for children. Monitor the implementation of the Labor Law provisions in workplaces under its jurisdiction. (2) Receive complaints about labor law violations, including child labor, through a hotline. (2)
Mentoring and Inspection Presidency within MOLSS	Monitor compliance with laws related to social security of all workers, including child workers. Conduct joint inspections with the Labor Inspection Board Presidency to find children under legal working age who have dropped out of school and refer them to education services. (1)
Turkish National Police and Gendarmerie General Command (*Jandarma*)	Enforce the Penal Code, including criminal laws related to the worst forms of child labor. (1; 49) Increase efforts to identify and prevent trafficking of refugees through the Anti-Migrant Smuggling and Trafficking Bureau within the National Police. (30) The Gendarmerie General Command (*Jandarma*) enforces laws in rural areas that are outside of the jurisdiction of National Police. (12; 49)
Department for Protection of Victims of Human Trafficking within the Directorate General for Migration Management (DGMM)	Coordinate the identification of human trafficking victims, including victims of child trafficking. (33) Manage a hotline providing 24-hour, toll-free support in multiple languages for human trafficking victims. (50)
Ministry of Justice	Prosecute cases of child labor and child exploitation. (1)
Ministry of Family and Social Policy (MFSP)	Coordinate and provide services to children living or working on the street through the Directorate General of Child Services. Operate a hotline to receive complaints about child rights violations, including child labor. (1)

Labor Law Enforcement

In 2017, labor law enforcement agencies in Turkey took actions to combat child labor (Table 6). However, gaps exist within the operations of the Ministry of Labor and Social Security that may hinder adequate labor law enforcement, including human resource allocation (Table 6).

Table 6. Labor Law Enforcement Efforts Related to Child Labor

Overview of Labor Law Enforcement	2016	2017
Labor Inspectorate Funding	Unknown* (12)	Unknown* (2)
Number of Labor Inspectors	1002 (12)	1021 (2)
Inspectorate Authorized to Assess Penalties	Yes (12)	Yes (2)
Training for Labor Inspectors		
Initial Training for New Employees	Yes (12)	Yes (2)
Training on New Laws Related to Child Labor	Yes (12)	Yes (2)
Refresher Courses Provided	Yes (12)	Yes (2)
Number of Labor Inspections Conducted	21,329† (12)	14,204 (2)
Number Conducted at Worksites	21,329† (12)	14,204 (2)
Number of Child Labor Violations Found	Unknown* (12)	21 (2)
Number of Child Labor Violations for Which Penalties were Imposed	71 (12)	21 (2)
Number of Child Labor Penalties Imposed that were Collected	Unknown* (12)	Unknown
Routine Inspections Conducted	Yes (12)	Yes (2)
Routine Inspections Targeted	Yes (12)	Yes (2)
Unannounced Inspections Permitted	Yes (12)	Yes (2)
Unannounced Inspections Conducted	Yes (12)	Yes (2)
Complaint Mechanism Exists	Yes (12)	Yes (2)
Reciprocal Referral Mechanism Exists Between Labor Authorities and Social Services	Yes (12)	Yes (2)

* The government does not publish this information.
† Data are from January 1, 2016, to November 30, 2016.

Labor inspectors spend the first three years of their careers as assistant inspectors. They receive on-the-job training that includes modules to raise their awareness of child labor and of the legal provisions and enforcement mechanisms that exist to address it, as well as annual continuing education on new laws. (46; 2) In 2017, the number of labor inspectors was likely insufficient for the

size of Turkey's workforce, which includes over 30 million workers. According to the ILO's technical advice of a ratio approaching 1 inspector for every 15,000 workers in industrializing economies, Turkey would employ about 1,960 labor inspectors. (51; 52; 53) The number of inspections reported by the government decreased in 2017, however limited government statistics and a change in the methodology by which the labor inspectorate counted discrete site visits, rendered it difficult to assess trends regarding the overall number of worksites inspected in 2017 relative to 2016. (54)

In 2017, employers who illegally employed children were subject to administrative fines of approximately $430. Fine amounts are adjusted annually and have undergone small increases in recent years, but remain insufficient to deter violations. (2)

Although reciprocal referral mechanisms remain underutilized, research found that children discovered to be working illegally during the course of inspections were generally referred for social services. (1; 46) In 2017, UNICEF provided training on child labor to 400 labor inspectors with the aim of improving linkages between labor inspectors and social services. (2)

Criminal Law Enforcement

In 2017, criminal law enforcement agencies in Turkey took actions to combat the worst forms of child labor (Table 7). However, gaps exist within the operations of criminal law enforcement agencies that may hinder adequate enforcement.

Table 7. Criminal Law Enforcement Efforts Related to Child Labor

Overview of Criminal Law Enforcement	2016	2017
Training for Investigators		
Initial Training for New Employees	Unknown	Unknown
Training on New Laws Related to the Worst Forms of Child Labor	Unknown	N/A
Refresher Courses Provided	Unknown	Yes (30)
Number of Investigations	Unknown	Unknown
Number of Violations Found	Unknown	Unknown
Number of Prosecutions Initiated	Unknown	Unknown
Number of Convictions	Unknown	Unknown
Reciprocal Referral Mechanism Exists Between Criminal Authorities and Social Services	Yes (12)	Yes (2)

During the reporting period, the IOM provided training on preventing trafficking and managing irregular migration flows to 421 government staff responsible for migration-related criminal law enforcement and case management. (30) The Director General for Migration Management (DGMM) increased staff both at headquarters and its provincial offices, increasing capacity to identify human trafficking victims. Compared with the previous year, the government reported a 159 percent increase in potential victims interviewed and a 67 percent increase in victims identified during the reporting period. (30) Although the government continued to improve its efforts to identify victims of trafficking, identification of child trafficking victims remained low. (29; 55)

IV. COORDINATION OF GOVERNMENT EFFORTS ON CHILD LABOR

The government has established mechanisms to coordinate its efforts to address child labor (Table 8).

Table 8. Key Mechanisms to Coordinate Government Efforts on Child Labor

Coordinating Body	Role and Description
Child Labor Branch of the Employment Policies Directorate within MOLSS	Coordinate all child labor programs and efforts of the Ministry of National Education, the Child Services Directorate General in MFSP, the Ministry of the Interior, the Ministry of Justice, and NGOs. (1)
Monitoring and Evaluation Board for Child Labor*	Plan and monitor implementation of the National Program to Combat Child Labor, including through biannual meetings. Held inaugural meeting in December 2017. (2)
The Child Services Directorate General Within MFSP	Coordinate services for children living and working on the streets. (1)

Table 8. Key Mechanisms to Coordinate Government Efforts on Child Labor (cont)

Coordinating Body	Role and Description
DGMM	Coordinate the implementation of migration law, including laws related to irregular migration, refugees, and human trafficking. (56; 57) In 2017, the DGMM actively worked to increase the government's enforcement capacity. (30)
Anti-Trafficking Coordination Commission	Coordinate policy on human trafficking. This commission was founded to replace the National Task Force on Combatting Human Trafficking and met in March 2017. (30)

* Mechanism to coordinate efforts to address child labor was created during the reporting period.

In April 2017, the Prime Ministry issued the Circular on Seasonal Agricultural Workers No. 2017/6, developed in cooperation with the ILO. (58) The Circular aims to address the most critical issues facing seasonal agricultural workers, particularly in the hazelnut harvesting industry, and their families by directing provincial governments to develop annual action plans to mitigate problems experienced by seasonal agricultural workers and provide services to these workers and their families. (2; 59) Services required include providing housing and health screening for workers and their families, and providing education and monitoring of school attendance for children. The Circular also established a Monitoring and Evaluation Board to monitor implementation of these directives. (2)

V. GOVERNMENT POLICIES ON CHILD LABOR

The government has established policies that are consistent with relevant international standards on child labor (Table 9).

Table 9. Key Policies Related to Child Labor

Policy	Description
National Program to Combat Child Labor (2017–2023)†	Identifies seasonal migratory agriculture, street work, and work in small and medium industrial enterprises as priority sectors for government efforts to combat child labor. Outlines a series of nationwide interventions aimed at eliminating child labor. (2)
National Child Rights Strategic Document and Action Plan (2013–2017)	Sets out the framework and actions for promoting services for children in fields such as health care and education. (60) Includes a section addressing child labor issues. (61; 46)
Second National Action Plan on Combating Human Trafficking	Outlines Turkey's strategy for the prevention of human trafficking. Identifies children as an exceptionally vulnerable group and calls for special security precautions for children at shelters for victims, as well as increased international cooperation on preventing child trafficking. (50; 62)
National Employment Strategy (2014–2023)	Aims to identify and solve labor market issues, with the goal of job creation and sustained economic growth. Includes the prevention of child labor, especially hazardous work in agriculture, as a focus of the plan, and advocates for increased access to education and strengthened social services as a means of preventing child labor. (63) In 2017, the government adopted action plans for 2017 to 2019. Initiatives in the new action plans include requiring Provincial Employment and Occupational Education Boards to evaluate progress in combatting child labor locally and organizing activities to raise awareness about child labor in connection with the World Day Against Child Labor. (2)
Tenth Development Plan (2014–2018)	Identifies Turkey's strategy and goals for economic development. Includes the priorities of alleviating child poverty and increasing equal opportunity in education. (64) Includes provisions for the prevention of the worst forms of child labor. (46)

† Policy was approved during the reporting period.

VI. SOCIAL PROGRAMS TO ADDRESS CHILD LABOR

In 2017, the Government of Turkey funded and participated in programs that include the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor (Table 10). However, gaps exist in these social programs, including with regard to adequate funding of programs to address the full scope of the problem in seasonal agriculture and manufacturing.

Table 10. Key Social Programs to Address Child Labor

Program	Description
Conditional Education and Health Care Assistance Program†	Government program that aims to reduce poverty through cash transfers. (65) Provides milk to all primary school children and distributes books free of charge. (66) In 2017, the program reached nearly 190,000 children. (2)

Table 10. Key Social Programs to Address Child Labor (cont)

Program	Description
Improving Social Integration and Employability of Disadvantaged Persons†	$41.7 million project jointly funded by the EU and the Government of Turkey. Aims to promote an inclusive labor market with opportunities for disadvantaged persons, with a view to their sustainable integration into the labor force. (67; 68; 2) Also aims to combat all forms of discrimination in the labor market through service and grant components, including allocation of specific grant funds for projects targeting the Roma population. (12; 46; 67; 68) Includes the goal of combating child labor by supporting the entry of working children's parents into the labor market. (67; 68) In 2017, conducted a labor market tendency survey of families in which children were at risk of exploitation in child labor. (2)
Piloting the USDA Guidelines in the Hazelnut Supply Chain in Turkey	$4.87 million USDOL-funded, 31-month project implemented by the Fair Labor Association in partnership with the MOLSS, Nestle and two of its main hazelnut suppliers, Olam-Progida and Balsu, in Turkey. Pilots a sustainable program to implement the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Guidelines for Eliminating Child and Forced Labor in Agricultural Supply Chains in 1,000 hazelnut plantations in Duzce, Ordu, and Sakarya, with additional interventions implemented in the environs of Sanliurfa and Mardin, the sources of most seasonal agricultural labor in Turkey. (69) In 2017, the project established four Child Labor Monitoring and Referral Centers in Ordu, Duzce, and Sakarya provinces. (2) The project also worked with the Turkish Employment agency to develop a training module for labor contractors and facilitated dialogue between labor contractors and workers. (70)
Integrated Model for the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labor in Seasonal Agriculture in Hazelnut Harvesting (2012–2017)	ILO- and MOLSS-implemented project funded by the Association of Chocolate, Biscuit, and Confectionery Industries of Europe (CAOBISCO). Takes an integrated approach to preventing children from working by increasing access to education and improving living conditions of children vulnerable to the worst forms of child labor in hazelnut harvesting, building capacity of local and national institutions to prevent child labor, and raising awareness among industry stakeholders and the public. (1) In 2017, the program provided services to 1,125 children, of whom 1,064 were removed from work. (2)
Global Action Program on Child Labor Issues Project	USDOL-funded project implemented by the ILO in approximately 40 countries. Aims to improve the evidence base on child labor through data collection and research in Turkey. (71) Additional information is available on the USDOL website.
Programs for Syrian Refugee Children†	Government initiatives, in partnership with various international organizations and foreign governments, designed to fund schools for Syrian refugee children and provide Syrian refugee child laborers with additional educational and social services. (12)
Programs focused on Human Trafficking*†	EU-funded projects, both co-managed by the DGMM, that aim to improve human trafficking victim identification and protection through training and capacity-building. (33) The DGMM also began implementing a new UK-funded project on preventing, identifying, and combating trafficking of Syrian refugees. (30) The government also funds shelters for human trafficking victims that provide social services and legal help to victims. (50; 46; 30)

* Program was launched during the reporting period.
† Program is funded by the Government of Turkey.

Although the government implemented and collaborated on programs to address child labor in the hazelnut sector, it generally lacked significant, well-funded programs to address child labor in the other areas in which it was most prevalent, including other forms of migratory seasonal agriculture outside of the hazelnut sector, as well as in street work, and small and medium manufacturing enterprises.

VII. SUGGESTED GOVERNMENT ACTIONS TO ELIMINATE CHILD LABOR

Based on the reporting above, suggested actions are identified that would advance the elimination of child labor in Turkey (Table 11).

Table 11. Suggested Government Actions to Eliminate Child Labor

Area	Suggested Action	Year(s) Suggested
Legal Framework	Ensure the law effectively prohibits work the government has identified as hazardous for children, such as work in small and medium manufacturing enterprises.	2017
	Ensure that the law's light work provisions are specific enough to prevent children from involvement in child labor.	2017
	Ensure that the law provides explicit protections for children working in small agricultural enterprises.	2009 – 2017
	Ensure that the law criminally prohibits the recruitment of children under age 18 by non-state armed groups.	2015 – 2017
Enforcement	Publish information on the Labor Inspectorate's funding and on the number of child labor penalties imposed that were collected.	2015 – 2017

Table 11. Suggested Government Actions to Eliminate Child Labor (cont)

Area	Suggested Action	Year(s) Suggested
Enforcement	Increase the number of labor inspectors responsible for enforcing laws related to child labor to meet the ILO technical advice.	2014 – 2017
	Increase the penalties for violation of child labor laws to an amount sufficient to deter violations.	2014 – 2017
	Publish data relating to the criminal law enforcement of child labor laws including on the initial training for new employees, number of investigations, violations, prosecutions, and convictions.	2014 – 2017
	Ensure that laws prohibiting the trafficking of children are effectively enforced, including by taking steps to identify additional victims of child trafficking.	2015 – 2017
Social Programs	Continue to institute programs to increase access to education and health care for children working in migrant, seasonal agriculture, particularly outside the hazelnut sector.	2014 – 2017
	Continue to expand affordable education opportunities for Syrian refugee children, including by enforcing national directives affording Syrian children access to the Turkish school system at the local level.	2014 – 2017
	Continue to expand programs to address child labor in the sectors in which it is most prevalent, including migratory seasonal agriculture, street work, and small and medium manufacturing enterprises.	2015 – 2017

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CÔTE D'IVOIRE—COCOA SUPPLY CHAIN (PRODUCED WITH CÔTE D'IVOIRE COCOA)

- **Côte d'Ivoire—Cocoa Paste (produced with Côte d'Ivoire Cocoa, CL)**
- **Côte d'Ivoire—Cocoa Butter (produced with Côte d'Ivoire Cocoa, CL)**
- **Côte d'Ivoire—Cocoa Powder (produced with Côte d'Ivoire Cocoa, CL)**
- **Côte d'Ivoire—Chocolate (produced with Côte d'Ivoire Cocoa, CL)**

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- **Dominican Republic—Raw Sugar (produced with Dominican Republic Sugarcane, FL)**
- **Dominican Republic—Refined Sugar (produced with Dominican Republic Sugarcane, FL)**
- **Dominican Republic—Molasses (produced with Dominican Republic Sugarcane, FL)**
- **Dominican Republic—Rum (produced with Dominican Republic Sugarcane, FL)**
- **Dominican Republic—Bagasse (produced with Dominican Republic Sugarcane, FL)**
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GHANA—COCOA SUPPLY CHAIN (PRODUCED WITH GHANA COCOA)

- **Ghana—Cocoa Paste (produced with Ghana Cocoa, CL)**
- **Ghana—Cocoa Butter (produced with Ghana Cocoa, CL)**
- **Ghana—Cocoa Powder (produced with Ghana Cocoa, CL)**
- **Ghana—Chocolate (produced with Ghana Cocoa, CL)**

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- **Malawi—Cigarettes (tobacco) (produced with Malawi Tobacco, CL, FL)**

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MALAYSIA—PALM FRUIT SUPPLY CHAIN (PRODUCED WITH MALAYSIA PALM FRUIT)

- **Malaysia—Biofuel (palm) (produced with Malaysia Palm Fruit, CL, FL)**
- **Malaysia—Cooking Oil (palm oil blends) (produced with Malaysia Palm Fruit, CL, FL)**
- **Malaysia—Crude Palm Kernel Oil (produced with Malaysia Palm Fruit, CL, FL)**
- **Malaysia—Crude Palm Oil (produced with Malaysia Palm Fruit, CL, FL)**
- **Malaysia—Oleochemicals (produced with Malaysia Palm Fruit, CL, FL)**
- **Malaysia—Refined Palm Kernel Oil (produced with Malaysia Palm Fruit, CL, FL)**
- **Malaysia—Refined Palm Oil (produced with Malaysia Palm Fruit, CL, FL)**

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NETHERLANDS—COCOA SUPPLY CHAIN (PRODUCED WITH GHANA AND CÔTE D'IVOIRE COCOA)

- **Netherlands—Cocoa Paste (produced with Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire Cocoa, CL)**
- **Netherlands—Cocoa Butter (produced with Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire Cocoa, CL)**
- **Netherlands—Cocoa Powder (produced with Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire Cocoa, CL)**
- **Netherlands—Chocolate (produced with Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire Cocoa, CL)**

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