

In 2016, Guinea-Bissau made a moderate advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. The Government approved a Code of Conduct against Sexual Exploitation in Tourism and the National Committee to Prevent and Combat Trafficking in Persons developed proposals to support the reintegration of repatriated talibé children. In addition, the Education and Justice Ministries worked together and developed a pilot to introduce birth registration services in 45 primary schools. However, children in Guinea-Bissau are engaged in the worst forms of child labor, including in forced begging. The Government has not determined the types of hazardous work prohibited for children. In addition, law enforcement officials do not receive the appropriate training and resources to effectively conduct inspections and prosecute cases of child labor.



## I. PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Children in Guinea-Bissau engage in the worst forms of child labor, including in forced begging.(1-3) According to a 2015 national child labor survey, 39 percent of children ages 5 to 17 engage in child labor, with a high prevalence in the Cacheu region; however, the full survey results have not been published.(4, 5) Table 1 provides key indicators on children's work and education in Guinea-Bissau.

**Table 1. Statistics on Children's Work and Education**

Children	Age	Percent
Working (%)	5 to 14	57.4
Attending School (%)	5 to 14	68.1
Combining Work and School (%)	7 to 14	48.4
Primary Completion Rate (%)		62.2

Source for primary completion rate: Data from 2010, published by UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2016.(6)

Source for all other data: Understanding Children's Work Project's analysis of statistics from Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 5, 2014.(7)

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	Farming, including the production of cashews (2, 8)
	Fishing, activities unknown (9)
Services	Domestic work (2)
	Street work, including car washing and shoe shining (9)
Categorical Worst Forms of Child Labor <sup>‡</sup>	Commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking (1, 10, 11)
	Forced labor in domestic work, agriculture, and street work, including begging, each sometimes as a result of human trafficking (1-3, 11)

<sup>‡</sup> Child labor understood as the worst forms of child labor *per se* under Article 3(a)–(c) of ILO C. 182.

In Guinea-Bissau, organized networks of traffickers affiliated with Koranic schools force boys to beg within the country and in Guinea, Mali, and Senegal.(1) Although many Koranic school teachers provide religious education as traditionally intended, some force the students, known as *talibés*, to beg on the streets for money and food.(9) Most *talibés* originate from the predominantly Muslim areas of Bafatá and Gabú in the east of the country.(11)

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Boys are forced to work in street vending in Guinea-Bissau; they are trafficked for forced labor in agriculture and mining in Senegal.(1, 11) Boys from neighboring countries are forced to beg and harvest cashews in Guinea-Bissau.(11) Girls are subjected to forced labor in street vending and domestic work in Guinea and Senegal.(1) Girls are engaged in commercial sexual exploitation in the Bijagós Archipelago of Guinea-Bissau, on mainland Guinea-Bissau in bars and hotels, and in Senegal.(1, 10, 11)

Continued Government instability may have impacted the Government's ability to address the worst forms of child labor.(12)

## II. LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR THE WORST FORMS OF CHILD LABOR

Guinea-Bissau 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, including its worst forms (Table 4). However, gaps exist in Guinea-Bissau's legal framework to adequately protect children from child labor.

**Table 4. Laws and Regulations on Child Labor**

Standard	Meets International Standards: Yes/No	Age	Legislation
Minimum Age for Work	No	14	Article 146 of the General Labor Law (13)
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work	Yes	18	Article 148 of the General Labor Law (13)
Identification of Hazardous Occupations or Activities Prohibited for Children	Yes		Article 148 of the General Labor Law (13)
Prohibition of Forced Labor	Yes		Articles 2, 4, and 15 of the Law to Prevent and Combat Human Trafficking; Article 106 of the Penal Code; Child Code (1, 14, 15)
Prohibition of Child Trafficking	Yes		Articles 2, 4, and 15 of the Law to Prevent and Combat Human Trafficking; Child Code (1, 15)
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children	Yes		Articles 3–5 of the Law to Prevent and Combat Human Trafficking; Articles 134 and 136 of the Penal Code (14, 15)
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities	Yes		Articles 3 and 7 of the Decree on Narcotic Substances (16)
Minimum Age for Military Recruitment			
State Compulsory	Yes	18	Article 1 of Law No. 3/80 (17)
State Voluntary	Yes	17	Article 31 of Law No. 4/99 (18)
Non-state Compulsory	No		
Compulsory Education Age	Yes	15 <sup>‡</sup>	Articles 12 and 13 of the Education System Law (19, 20)
Free Public Education	No		Article 12(2) of the Education System Law (19)

<sup>‡</sup> Age calculated based on available information(19, 20)

The law's minimum age protections do not apply to children who are self-employed.(13, 20)

The General Labor Law prohibits children under age 18 from conducting heavy work, work in unhealthy or dangerous conditions, and underground work; however, the types of hazardous work prohibited for children do not cover street work, an area of work where there is evidence of exposure to physical, psychological, or sexual abuse.(13)

The Education System Law states that basic education is compulsory and lasts 9 years; however, it only makes basic education free through grade six, leaving children in grades seven to nine without access to free basic education.(19)

Research did not uncover a public version of the Child Code for review.

### III. ENFORCEMENT OF LAWS ON THE WORST FORMS OF CHILD LABOR

The Government has established institutional mechanisms for the enforcement of laws and regulations on child labor, including its worst forms (Table 5). However, gaps in labor law and criminal law enforcement remain and some enforcement information is not available.

**Table 5. Agencies Responsible for Child Labor Law Enforcement**

Organization/Agency	Role
Inspectorate General of Labor and Social Security	Enforce child labor legislation in collaboration with the Ministries of Interior and Justice, and the National Institute for Women and Children (INMC).(12)
Ministry of Interior's Public Order Police and National Guard	Combat child labor through the prevention of child trafficking.(8, 9)
Judicial Police's Women and Child Brigade	Investigate the worst forms of child labor and refer cases to INMC and NGOs; brigade comprises 10 officers.(12)

#### *Labor Law Enforcement*

In 2016, labor law enforcement agencies in Guinea-Bissau took actions to combat child labor, including its worst forms (Table 6).

**Table 6. Labor Law Enforcement Efforts Related to Child Labor**

Overview of Labor Law Enforcement	2015	2016
Labor Inspectorate Funding	Unknown (21)	Unknown
Number of Labor Inspectors	22 (12)	22 (12)
Inspectorate Authorized to Assess Penalties	Unknown	Unknown
Training for Labor Inspectors		
Initial Training for New Employees	No (21)	No (22)
Training on New Laws Related to Child Labor	N/A (21)	N/A
Refresher Courses Provided	No (21)	No (22)
Number of Labor Inspections	Unknown	103 (12)
Number Conducted at Worksite	Unknown	103 (12)
Number Conducted by Desk Reviews	Unknown	0 (12)
Number of Child Labor Violations Found	0 (21)	4 (22)
Number of Child Labor Violations for Which Penalties Were Imposed	N/A	0 (12)
Number of Penalties Imposed that Were Collected	N/A	N/A (12)
Routine Inspections Conducted	Unknown	Yes (22)
Routine Inspections Targeted	Unknown	Yes (22)
Unannounced Inspections Permitted	Unknown	Yes (12)
Unannounced Inspections Conducted	Unknown	Yes (12)
Complaint Mechanism Exists	Unknown	No (12)
Reciprocal Referral Mechanism Exists Between Labor Authorities and Social Services	Unknown	No (12)

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In 2016, the Government reported that the number of labor inspectors was insufficient. In addition, enforcement of child labor laws remains challenging due to the lack of resources for inspections and insufficient training for labor inspectors.(12)

During the reporting period, the Government conducted 10 child labor specific inspections. Four children were removed from child labor as a result of labor inspections; however, these children did not receive social services.(12)

### *Criminal Law Enforcement*

In 2016, criminal law enforcement agencies in Guinea-Bissau took actions to combat the worst forms of child labor (Table 7).

**Table 7. Criminal Law Enforcement Efforts Related to the Worst Forms of Child Labor**

Overview of Criminal Law Enforcement	2015	2016
Training for Investigators		
Initial Training for New Employees	No (21)	Yes (22)
Training on New Laws Related to the Worst Forms of Child Labor	N/A (21)	N/A
Refresher Courses Provided	No (21)	Yes (22)
Number of Investigations	1 (23)	0 (22)
Number of Violations Found	Unknown (21)	0 (22)
Number of Prosecutions Initiated	0 (21)	0 (12)
Number of Convictions	0 (21)	0 (12)
Reciprocal Referral Mechanism Exists Between Criminal Authorities and Social Services	Unknown	No (12)

In 2016, the Government reported that training for criminal law enforcement officials and resources for criminal investigations was insufficient.(12)

## IV. COORDINATION OF GOVERNMENT EFFORTS ON THE WORST FORMS OF CHILD LABOR

Although the Government has established the National Committee to Prevent and Combat Trafficking in Persons, research found no evidence of mechanisms to coordinate its efforts to address child labor, including all its worst forms (Table 8).

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

Coordinating Body	Role & Description
National Committee to Prevent and Combat Trafficking in Persons	Coordinate Government efforts to combat human trafficking. Led by the National Institute for Women and Children (INMC).(24) In 2016, developed funding proposals to support the reintegration of repatriated <i>talibé</i> children to their families.(12)
INMC	Coordinate with NGOs and other partner organizations to rehabilitate and reintegrate child victims of exploitation.(9) In 2016, conducted awareness campaigns to encourage the Attorney General to conduct the appropriate follow-up for violations of the worst forms of child labor.(12)

## V. GOVERNMENT POLICIES ON THE WORST FORMS OF CHILD LABOR

The Government has established policies related to child labor, including its worst forms (Table 9).

**Table 9. Key Policies Related to Child Labor**

Policy	Description
National Action Plan on Human Trafficking	Guides the Government's efforts to prevent and combat trafficking in persons.(24)
Code of Conduct Against Sexual Exploitation in Tourism†	Seeks to raise awareness on commercial sexual exploitation of children and child trafficking in Guinea-Bissau, particularly in the Bijagós Archipelago.(25)
UN Country Partnership Framework	Aims to assist in promoting free and universal birth registration, enforcing human trafficking provisions, and implementing the National Strategy for Social Protection of Children.(26)
UNDAF (2013–2017)	Aims to assist in implementing a national action plan against child labor.(27)

† Policy was approved during the reporting period.

In 2016, the Government began drafting a new National Strategy for Social Protection.(22) Although the Government has adopted the National Action Plan on Human Trafficking, research found no evidence of a policy on other worst forms of child labor.

## VI. SOCIAL PROGRAMS TO ADDRESS CHILD LABOR

In 2016, the Government participated in programs that include the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor, including its worst forms (Table 10).

**Table 10. Key Social Programs to Address Child Labor<sup>‡</sup>**

Program	Description
UNICEF Country Program	UNICEF-funded program in collaboration with the Government to prevent and combat child trafficking in the most disadvantaged communities through education and social protection mechanisms.(28)
Friends of the Child ( <i>Amigos da Criança</i> ) Shelters <sup>†</sup>	Donor-funded program, with Government support, implemented by an NGO that provides social services to vulnerable children, including victims of the worst forms of child labor. Research found that the two shelter facilities lack the financial and human resources needed to adequately assist victims.(1, 29)

<sup>†</sup> Program is funded by the Government of Guinea-Bissau.

<sup>‡</sup> The Government had other social programs that may have included the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor, including its worst forms.(30)

In 2016, the National Children's Parliament, which receives support from the Government, conducted a child sex trafficking awareness campaign in the Bijagós Archipelago.(25) Although Guinea-Bissau has programs that target child labor, the scope of these programs is insufficient to fully address the extent of the problem.

## VII. SUGGESTED GOVERNMENT ACTIONS TO ELIMINATE THE WORST FORMS OF CHILD LABOR

Based on the reporting above, suggested actions are identified that would advance the elimination of child labor, including its worst forms, in Guinea-Bissau (Table 11).

**Table 11. Suggested Government Actions to Eliminate Child Labor, Including its Worst Forms**

Area	Suggested Action	Year(s) Suggested
Legal Framework	Ensure that all children are protected by law, including children who are self-employed.	2015 – 2016
	Ensure that the hazardous occupations and activities prohibited for children are comprehensive.	2009 – 2016
	Ensure that the law criminally prohibits the recruitment of children under 18 by non-state armed groups.	2016
	Ensure that all 9 years of basic education are free.	2015 – 2016
	Make the Child Code publicly available.	2014 – 2016
Enforcement	Publish law enforcement data, including information on the labor inspectorate funding and the ability of the inspectorate to assess penalties.	2009 – 2016
	Ensure that a sufficient number of law enforcement officials receive proper training and resources to inspect, investigate, and prosecute cases of child labor.	2009 – 2016
	Establish a mechanism to receive child labor complaints.	2016
	Establish referral mechanisms to ensure children found during labor inspections and criminal investigations are referred to social service providers.	2016
Coordination	Establish coordinating mechanisms to combat child labor, including in all its worst forms.	2016
Government Policies	Adopt a policy that addresses all relevant worst forms of child labor, such as forced begging.	2016
Social Programs	Publish the complete results of the national child labor survey.	2013 – 2016
	Ensure facilities have adequate resources to assist victims of the worst forms of child labor.	2015 – 2016
	Expand existing programs to address the scope of the child labor problem.	2009 – 2016

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