

In 2016, Lebanon made a moderate advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. The Ministry of Labor released a guide for implementing Decree No. 8987 on hazardous work. The National Steering Committee on Child Labor developed a National Awareness Raising Strategy to increase public awareness and help enforce the hazardous work decree. In addition, the Ministry of Education and Higher Education launched a program to further expand children's access to education. However, children in Lebanon engage in the worst forms of child labor, including in forced labor in agriculture and commercial sexual exploitation. Labor law enforcement needs further improvement, particularly an increase in resources for personnel and transportation to conduct labor inspections. Programs and services to address the extent of child labor, specifically domestic service and commercial sexual exploitation, remained insufficient.



## I. PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Children in Lebanon engage in the worst forms of child labor, including in the forced labor in agriculture and commercial sexual exploitation.(1-5) Table 1 provides key indicators on children's work and education in Lebanon. Data on some of these indicators are not available from the sources used in this report.

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

Children	Age	Percent
Working (% and population)	5 to 14	Unavailable
Attending School (%)	5 to 14	Unavailable
Combining Work and School (%)	7 to 14	Unavailable
Primary Completion Rate (%)		71.9

Source for primary completion rate: Data from 2015, published by UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2016.(6)

Data were unavailable from Understanding Children's Work Project's analysis, 2016.(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 picking potatoes, cucumbers, almonds, plums, olives, citrus fruit, beans, figs, and grapes (1, 8-13)
	Production of tobacco† (8, 14-17)
	Fishing, activities unknown (4, 18)
Industry	Construction,† including carpentry and welding† (4, 8, 12, 16, 18-20)
	Working in cement factories† (19, 21)
	Painting furniture† and making handicrafts, including soap, souvenirs, and fishing nets (4, 8, 18)
	Working in textile factories (22, 23)
Services	Street work,† including begging, street vending, portering, washing cars, scavenging garbage,† and shining shoes (1, 8, 9, 12, 18, 24, 25)
	Maintenance and repair of motor vehicles,† including painting† (8, 12, 18, 23, 26)
	Domestic work† (8, 12, 27, 28)

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**Table 2. Overview of Children’s Work by Sector and Activity (cont)**

Sector/Industry	Activity
Services	Cleaning sewage <sup>†</sup> (1, 4)
	Food service <sup>†</sup> (4, 12, 17, 24)
	Working in cemeteries, including covering bodies in shrouds, cleaning graves, and assisting with rituals (29, 30)
	Cleaning marketplaces (1, 16, 18)
	Working in slaughterhouses <sup>†</sup> and butcheries (4, 15, 18)
	Working in small shops (4, 18, 24)
Categorical Worst Forms of Child Labor <sup>‡</sup>	Use in illicit activities, including drug trafficking, sometimes as a result of human trafficking, and arms dealing (3, 4, 20, 25, 30-32)
	Forced begging, sometimes as a result of human trafficking (3, 32, 33)
	Commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking (1-4, 23, 31, 34)
	Forced labor in agriculture, sometimes as a result of human trafficking (3-5, 27, 32)
	Forced recruitment of children by non-state armed groups for use in armed conflict (4, 35)

<sup>†</sup> Determined by national law or regulation as hazardous and, as such, relevant to Article 3(d) of ILO C. 182.

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

Child labor has increased, and its conditions have worsened since the influx of Syrian refugees into Lebanon, affecting Lebanese and Syrian children.(4, 36, 37) As of December 2016, over one million Syrian refugees in Lebanon were registered with UNHCR, and more than half of them were children.(38) Child labor is also prevalent in other refugee communities in Lebanon, including the Palestinian and Iraqi communities.(39)

Some children are subjected to forced begging and commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking.(3) In particular, Syrian girls are trafficked into Lebanon for commercial sexual exploitation under the guise of marriage.(3, 20) Some boys are also subject to commercial sexual exploitation, particularly Kurdish boys from Syria.(20) Working on the streets is especially common among refugee children from Syria, including Palestinians from Syria.(25) Syrian children are also subjected to forced labor in agriculture.(3-5, 39) Some Syrian refugee children, with their families, are kept in bonded labor in agriculture in the Bekaa Valley to pay for makeshift dwellings provided by landowners.(4, 5, 32, 36)




UNICEF reported that Lebanese children were involved in armed violence within Lebanon, while some Syrian refugee children joined armed groups and left for Syria to engage in armed conflict.(4)

The Government has waived fees for public primary schools and opened second shifts in about 240 schools.(16) Yet, the public school system in Lebanon lacks the capacity to accommodate the large number of school-age Syrian refugee children.(40) Approximately 250,000 Syrian refugee children in Lebanon, half of the school-age population in this group, are out of school.(16) Barriers to accessing education for Lebanese children include the cost of transportation and supplies.(4) Syrian children face additional barriers, including bullying, corporal punishment, different curriculum in Lebanon than in their country of origin, use of schools by armed groups or as shelters, and fear of passing checkpoints or of violence.(16, 17, 41-44) Likewise, Iraqi refugee children may not be enrolled in school due to school-related costs and discrimination.(45) In Lebanon, many classes are taught in French or English, but Syrian and Iraqi children do not speak these languages.(42, 45) Children who work in agriculture, including Lebanese children, often do not attend school during harvesting and planting seasons.(46, 47)

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

Lebanon has ratified most 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 Lebanon'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	Yes	14	Article 22 of the Labor Code (48)
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work	Yes	18	Article 1 of Decree No. 8987 (49)
Identification of Hazardous Occupations or Activities Prohibited for Children	Yes		Annex 1 of Decree No. 8987 (49)
Prohibition of Forced Labor	No		Article 8.3(a) of Decree No. 3855; Articles 586.1, 586.5, and 569 of the Penal Code (50, 51)
Prohibition of Child Trafficking	Yes		Articles 586.1 and 586.5 of the Penal Code (50)
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children	Yes		Articles 507-510, 523-527, 586.1 and 586.5 of the Penal Code (50)
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities	Yes		Articles 586.1, 586.5, and 618 of the Penal Code (50)
Minimum Age for Military Recruitment			
State Compulsory	N/A*		
State Voluntary	Yes	18	Article 30 of the National Defense Law (52)
Non-state Compulsory	Yes	18	Articles 586.1 of the Penal Code; Annex 1 of Decree No. 8987 (49, 50)
Compulsory Education Age	Yes	15 <sup>‡</sup>	Article 49 of the Education Law (53)
Free Public Education	Yes		Article 49 of the Education Law (53)

\* No conscription (54)

‡ Age calculated based on available information (39)

Laws related to forced labor are not sufficient because it is not clear that there are criminal penalties for the exaction of forced labor and debt bondage is not criminally prohibited.(50, 55, 56) Government officials clarified that although Article 610 of the Penal Code criminalizes begging, Article 26 of the Delinquent Juveniles Law, which takes precedence over the Penal Code, stipulates that in cases of begging, the child is considered in danger and entitled to receive protective measures.(50, 57, 58) Yet, children engaged in begging have been arrested in a limited number of cases.(25)

### 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.

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

Organization/Agency	Role
Ministry of Labor	Enforce child labor laws through desk review and workplace inspections. Maintain a hotline to receive complaints of child labor. Act as government focal point for child labor issues and host the National Steering Committee on Child Labor.(39, 58, 59)
Internal Security Forces	Enforce laws regarding the worst forms of child labor through the Anti-Human Trafficking and Morals Protection Bureau.(39)
Ministry of Justice	Prosecute violations of the Penal Code in coordination with the Internal Security Forces. Maintain general data and statistics on criminal violations involving the worst forms of child labor.(60) Refer at-risk children to shelters and protection services.(39) The Ministry has signed agreements with civil society organizations to provide social workers to the Ministry to oversee court proceedings involving juveniles and deliver services to them, including children engaged in begging.(39)
Ministry of Social Affairs	Refer children identified by the Internal Security Forces and the Ministry of Justice to protective institutions, such as health centers. Refer children to shelters through its Higher Council for Childhood.(39)

### *Labor Law Enforcement*

In 2016, labor law enforcement agencies in Lebanon 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	Unknown
Number of Labor Inspectors	Unknown (39)	45 (36)
Inspectorate Authorized to Assess Penalties	No (61)	No (61)
Training for Labor Inspectors		
Initial Training for New Employees	Unknown	Unknown
Training on New Laws Related to Child Labor	N/A	N/A
Refresher Courses Provided	Yes (39)	Unknown
Number of Labor Inspections	Unknown	Unknown
Number Conducted at Worksite	Unknown	Unknown
Number Conducted by Desk Reviews	Unknown	Unknown
Number of Child Labor Violations Found	Unknown	Unknown
Number of Child Labor Violations for Which Penalties Were Imposed	Unknown	Unknown
Number of Penalties Imposed that Were Collected	Unknown	Unknown
Routine Inspections Conducted	Unknown	Unknown
Routine Inspections Targeted	Unknown	Unknown
Unannounced Inspections Permitted	Yes (62)	Yes (4)
Unannounced Inspections Conducted	Unknown	Unknown
Complaint Mechanism Exists	Yes (39)	Yes (4)
Reciprocal Referral Mechanism Exists Between Labor Authorities and Social Services	Unknown	Yes (4)

In 2016, inadequate resources, including necessary transportation and the number of personnel, hamper the Ministry's capacity to enforce child labor laws.(4, 59) Inspections of child labor are either a result of a complaint or response to a case that was observed in the course of other work of inspectors.(4) The number of labor inspectors is insufficient for the size of Lebanon's workforce, which includes over 1.6 million workers.(63) According to the ILO recommendation of 1 inspector for every 15,000 workers in developing economies, Lebanon should employ about 109 inspectors.(64, 65)

In 2016, the Ministry of Labor, in cooperation with the ILO, launched a Guide on Decree No. 8987 on hazardous work, to help implement the Decree by state agencies, and help private institutions, employers, and

workers better understand hazardous work for children.(4, 37) The Government, in cooperation with the ILO, established a child labor monitoring and referral mechanism in Ouzai, the southern suburbs of Beirut, and in Kahale, Mount Lebanon. The orientation and training sessions for this mechanism were held in 2016.(4) The Government, in cooperation with NGOs and the ILO, updated an agreement with the Farmers' Union to not allow Syrian refugee children under age 16 to work in agriculture. UNICEF worked with farmers to allow children to attend school, reduce working hours, and improve working conditions.(4)

### *Criminal Law Enforcement*

In 2016, criminal law enforcement agencies in Lebanon 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	Unknown	Unknown
Training on New Laws Related to the Worst Forms of Child Labor	N/A	N/A
Refresher Courses Provided	Yes (39)	Yes (4)
Number of Investigations	3 (39)	Unknown
Number of Violations Found	Unknown	10 (4)
Number of Prosecutions Initiated	Unknown	5 (4)
Number of Convictions	1 (32)	3 (66)
Reciprocal Referral Mechanism Exists Between Criminal Authorities and Social Services	Yes (39)	Yes (4)

In 2016, the Anti-Human Trafficking and Morals Protection Bureau of the Internal Security Forces employed 31 officers responsible for criminal enforcement of child labor laws. The Internal Security Forces provided specialized training for its staff on human trafficking and investigation techniques of cases involving children.(4) Five individuals were prosecuted for the use of children in illicit activities, and five children were referred to social services. Based on available information, at least some of these trials were ongoing at the end of the reporting period.(4)

Some child victims of human trafficking were subject to arrest, detention, and deportation and prosecution for crimes committed as a direct result of being trafficked.(3)

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

The Government has established mechanisms to coordinate its efforts to address child labor, including its worst forms (Table 8).

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

Coordinating Body	Role & Description
National Steering Committee on Child Labor	Raise awareness; coordinate efforts among Government agencies; establish standard practices; and develop, enforce, recommend changes, and ensure that Government agencies comply with the law.(39) Led by the Minister of Labor, includes representatives from six other ministries and other institutions and international organizations.(4)
National Steering Committee on Trafficking	Coordinate efforts against human trafficking, including child trafficking. Based at the Ministry of Labor and meets on a monthly basis.(58)
UNICEF and UNHCR	Coordinate efforts to address the needs of children affected by the Syrian refugee crisis in Lebanon and maintain interagency standards for child protection. The UN representatives identify crucial concerns, including factors that make children vulnerable to child labor, and make recommendations to the Government on the use of resources, including referral services.(40, 67)

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### 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<sup>‡</sup>**

Policy	Description
National Action Plan on the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labor (2013–2019)	Establishes strategies for addressing the worst forms of child labor, including improving enforcement of child labor laws and expanding access to education. In 2016, in order to help implement the National Action Plan, the National Steering Committee on Child Labor developed the National Awareness Raising Strategy to increase public awareness, help enforce Decree No. 8987 on hazardous work, and mobilize stakeholders in the private sector and labor unions.(68) During the reporting period, the Ministry of Labor, in cooperation with UN agencies, drafted an Annex to this National Action Plan, which was extended to 2019. The Annex outlines specific needs of refugee children such as lack of legal documentation and livelihood opportunities for their parents.(4)
Work Plan to prevent and respond to the association of children with armed violence in Lebanon	Provides the framework for the prevention of children involved in armed conflict.(44) In 2016, the Higher Council for Childhood held technical meetings with representatives of the Ministry of Justice and Internal Security Forces to develop procedures for the treatment of children associated with armed conflict.(4)

<sup>‡</sup> The Government had other policies that may have addressed child labor issues or had an impact on child labor.(58, 69)

In 2015, the Higher Council for Childhood, in cooperation with World Vision, finalized a sectoral action plan on child trafficking, which is still pending ministerial approval.(4)

### VI. SOCIAL PROGRAMS TO ADDRESS CHILD LABOR

In 2016, the Government funded and 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
Tackling Child Labor among Syrian Refugees and Their Host Communities in Jordan and Lebanon (2015–2016)	EU-funded, 1.5-year project, implemented by the ILO to conduct research on the hazards of child labor in certain sectors; build the technical capacity of governments, employers, and workers' organizations to improve referrals and respond to cases of child labor; and provide training on preventing and removing children from child labor and providing services.(70) In 2016, the project worked with the Ministry of Labor and held a workshop for policy-makers to identify ways of addressing child labor in Akkar, North Governorate, particularly children working in agriculture.(71)
Program to Support Children Working on the Street (2014–2016)	Joint UNHCR and International Rescue Committee (IRC) program to identify children engaged in child labor on the street, mitigate risks by providing psychosocial support and emergency services, and track incidents of violence.(39) Between January and June 2016, the program provided 289 children with psychosocial support and basic literacy classes; 59 children were enrolled in second shift schools, and 68 were approved to enter in the Accelerated Learning Program.(4) UNHCR helped in capacity-building of 300 officials of the Directorate of General Security and Lebanese Armed Forces on child protection and vulnerabilities of street children. UNHCR and the IRC also provided training to NGO social workers on the basics of the Lebanese child labor laws.(4)
Child Protection Program	Joint program by UNICEF and the Ministry of Social Affairs. Addresses the worst forms of child labor through interventions, including psychological counseling, raising awareness among employers, and working with employers to decrease working hours for children and to improve working conditions.(27) In 2016, UNICEF and the Ministry collaborated to raise awareness on child labor and its prevention among more than 37,000 children and 42,000 parents and community members. UNICEF also produced storybooks on risks of child labor in agriculture and street work.(4)
USDOL-funded projects for capacity building and research	USDOL projects that aim to build capacity of government law enforcement officials, improve policy implementation, and improve the evidence base on child labor. These projects include the <a href="#">Global Action Program on Child Labor Issues (GAP 11)</a> , implemented by the ILO in approximately 40 countries, and the <a href="#">Country Level Engagement and Assistance to Reduce Child Labor (CLEAR)</a> capacity-building project implemented by the ILO in at least 11 countries.(72, 73) For additional information, please visit our <a href="#">Web site</a> .

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

Program	Description
Reaching All Children through Education (RACE II) (2017–2021)*	Funded by foreign donors and international NGOs, the Ministry of Education and Higher Education enrolled more than 400,000 Lebanese and refugee children in school during the 2015–2016 academic year.(4) In 2016, The Ministry launched RACE II, in cooperation with UN agencies and other institutions, to expand free access to education for all children in Lebanon ages 3-18. The Ministry and funders will cover the cost of registration, stationary supplies, and books.(74) RACE II aims to register 469,000 children in formal and non-formal education by 2022. For the academic year 2016–2017, 300 schools offered a second shift for non-Lebanese children.(74, 75) The Ministry is developing a policy to allow children who have been outside the formal education system for several years to catch up and reintegrate into formal education, building on the Accelerated Learning Program, piloted in 2015, for basic education (up to grade nine). The Government announced in 2016 that all children would be allowed to take their exams at the end of grade nine to continue on to secondary schools, even if they lack all necessary documentation.(75) Other non-formal education programs include Basic Literacy and Numeracy training and vocational training.(4)
National Poverty Alleviation Program†	Funded by the Government and foreign donors, this Ministry of Social Affairs program pays school tuition and book costs for 74,000 families living in extreme poverty.(39)

\* Program was launched during the reporting period.

† Program is funded by the Government of Lebanon.

‡ The Government had other social programs that may have included the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor, including its worst forms.(39, 76, 77)

The scarcity of shelters for child-trafficking victims results in some children being placed in juvenile detention centers.(47) The lack of shelters and resources to effectively handle child labor and trafficking cases puts children at a heightened risk of further exploitation.(32) Although Lebanon has programs that target child labor, the scope of these programs is insufficient to fully address the extent of the problem, including child labor for domestic work and commercial sexual exploitation.

## 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 Lebanon (Table 11).

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

Area	Suggested Action	Year(s) Suggested
Legal Framework	Accede to the CRC Optional Protocol on Armed Conflict, which the Government signed in 2002.	2013 – 2016
	Ensure that exaction of forced labor and debt bondage are criminally prohibited.	2015 – 2016
Enforcement	Track and publish information on the funding for the labor inspectorate and labor inspector's training system; the number of labor inspections, including those conducted at worksites and through desk reviews; the number of violations found and the penalties imposed and collected; and whether routine, targeted, and unannounced inspections were conducted.	2009 – 2016
	Authorize the labor inspectorate to assess penalties.	2015 – 2016
	Ensure proper funding for Ministry of Labor inspectors and necessary transportation.	2011 – 2016
	Increase the number of labor inspectors to meet the ILO recommendation.	2016
	Publish information on the training system for criminal investigators and the number of investigations and convictions.	2009 – 2016
	Ensure that child victims of human trafficking and children engaged in begging are treated under the law as victims, rather than as criminals.	2011 – 2016
	Social Programs	Build on current efforts to improve access to public education for all children.
	Increase the number of shelters for child victims of human trafficking and other worst forms of child labor.	2013 – 2016
	Institute programs to address child labor domestic service and commercial sexual exploitation.	2013 – 2016

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