

In 2016, Oman made a moderate advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. The Government published a report on child labor and issued regulations outlining the types of products children can legally sell. Although the problem does not appear to be widespread, children in Oman engage in the worst forms of child labor, including in commercial sexual exploitation. The Government does not publish information on the enforcement of child labor laws and lacks a reciprocal mechanism between the labor inspectorate and social services.

I. PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Although the problem does not appear to be widespread, children in Oman engage in the worst forms of child labor, including in commercial sexual exploitation.⁽¹⁾ Table 1 provides key indicators on children's work and education in Oman. 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 (%)		105.2

Source for primary completion rate: Data from 2015, published by UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2016.⁽²⁾
Data were unavailable from Understanding Children's Work Project's analysis, 2016.⁽³⁾

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, activities unknown (1, 4, 5)
	Fishing, activities unknown (1, 4-6)
Services	Selling items, including fish [†] and grilled meat [†] (4, 5)
	Begging [†] (1, 7)
Categorical Worst Forms of Child Labor [‡]	Commercial sexual exploitation (1, 8)

[†] 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.

The Ministry of Social Development released the country's first major report on child labor. The report indicates that an estimated 330 children, mostly boys, are working, primarily on farms or in subsistence fishing.^(1, 4, 5) The majority of these children were ages 16 or 17, with 24 percent between ages 10 and 15.⁽⁵⁾

Limited evidence suggests that the children of migrant workers and children with disabilities may face barriers to accessing education.^(1, 8)



II. LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR THE WORST FORMS OF CHILD LABOR

Oman 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 legal framework in Oman appears to be sufficient to address and protect children from child labor (Table 4).

Table 4. Laws and Regulations on Child Labor

Standard	Meets International Standards: Yes/No	Age	Legislation
Minimum Age for Work	Yes	16	Article 46 of the Child Law (9)
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work	Yes	18	Article 76 of the Labor Law; Article 45 of the Child Law (9, 10)
Identification of Hazardous Occupations or Activities Prohibited for Children	Yes		Article 76 of the Labor Law; Ministry of Manpower Order 217/2016 (10, 11)
Prohibition of Forced Labor	Yes		Articles 1, 2, and 9 of the Law to Combat Human Trafficking; Article 3bis of the Labor Law (10, 12)
Prohibition of Child Trafficking	Yes		Articles 1, 2, and 9 of the Law to Combat Human Trafficking (12)
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children	Yes		Articles 1, 2, and 9 of the Law to Combat Human Trafficking; Articles 220, 221, and 224 of the Penal Code (12, 13)
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities	Yes		Articles 99 and 229 of the Penal Code; Article 58 of the Child Law (9, 13)
Minimum Age for Military Recruitment			
State Compulsory	Yes*		Article 55 of the Child Law (9)
State Voluntary	Yes	16	Article 55 of the Child Law (9)
Non-State Compulsory	Yes	18	Article 55 of the Child Law (9)
Compulsory Education Age	Yes	16 [‡]	Article 36 of the Child Law (9)
Free Public Education	Yes		Article 13 of the Basic Law; Article 36 of the Child Law (9, 14)

* No conscription (15)

‡ Age calculated based on available information (16)

In 2016, the Ministry of Manpower issued an order prohibiting children from being employed in any sector except for the ones that it noted, and it listed sales as a main sector in which children are permitted to work.(11)

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
Ministry of Manpower	Monitor and enforce child labor laws, conduct labor inspections, and share information with the Royal Oman Police on labor and criminal law violations when penalties are pursued.(1)
Ministry of Social Development	Enforce the Child Law, including receiving complaints and referring cases to the Royal Oman Police and Public Prosecution.(1)
Royal Oman Police	Monitor and enforce the Child Law, including its provisions related to child labor; refer cases to Public Prosecution.(1)
Public Prosecution	Prosecute human trafficking and sexual exploitation cases in court with assistance from the Royal Oman Police.(1, 17)
Child Protection Committee	Protect children from exploitation, receive complaints and reports of child labor, and investigate reported cases to determine whether children are engaged in prohibited activities or whether working has negative effects on their health or education.(1, 4)

Labor Law Enforcement

In 2016, labor law enforcement agencies in Oman 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 (1)
Number of Labor Inspectors	160 (18)	Unknown (1)
Inspectorate Authorized to Assess Penalties	Unknown (18)	Unknown (1)
Training for Labor Inspectors		
Initial Training for New Employees	Unknown	Unknown (1)
Training on New Laws Related to Child Labor	Unknown	Unknown (1)
Refresher Courses Provided	Unknown	Unknown (1)
Number of Labor Inspections	Unknown (18)	Unknown (1)
Number Conducted at Worksite	Unknown (18)	Unknown (1)
Number Conducted by Desk Reviews	Unknown	Unknown (1)
Number of Child Labor Violations Found	Unknown (18)	Unknown (1)
Number of Child Labor Violations for Which Penalties Were Imposed	Unknown	Unknown (1)
Number of Penalties Imposed That Were Collected	Unknown	Unknown (1)
Routine Inspections Conducted	Unknown (18)	Unknown (1)
Routine Inspections Targeted	Unknown	Unknown (1)
Unannounced Inspections Permitted	Yes (18)	Yes (1)
Unannounced Inspections Conducted	Yes (18)	Yes (1)
Complaint Mechanism Exists	Yes (18)	Yes (1)
Reciprocal Referral Mechanism Exists Between Labor Authorities and Social Services	No (18)	No (1)

Criminal Law Enforcement

In 2016, criminal law enforcement agencies in Oman 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 (18)	Unknown (1)
Training on New Laws Related to the Worst Forms of Child Labor	No (18)	Unknown (1)
Refresher Courses Provided	No (18)	Unknown (1)
Number of Investigations	Unknown	Unknown* (1)
Number of Violations Found	Unknown	Unknown* (1)
Number of Prosecutions Initiated	Unknown	Unknown* (1)

Table 7. Criminal Law Enforcement Efforts Related to the Worst Forms of Child Labor (cont)

Overview of Criminal Law Enforcement	2015	2016
Number of Convictions	Unknown	Unknown* (1)
Reciprocal Referral Mechanism Exists Between Criminal Authorities and Social Services	No (18)	Unknown (1)

* The Government does not publish this information.

The Royal Oman Police electronically tracks reports of criminal activity and investigations.(4) Research found no evidence of formal mechanisms or procedures to proactively identify children engaged in the worst forms of child labor.

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 Committee on Implementing the UN CRC	Led by the Ministry of Social Development to oversee implementation of the UN CRC, including its provisions related to child labor and its worst forms. There are subcommittees in all 11 governorates.(1) Other members include three other state agencies. The Ministry of Labor is not represented.(1)
National Committee for Combating Human Trafficking	Oversees the National Plan for Combating Human Trafficking. Includes the Royal Oman Police and 10 other state agencies.(1)

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 Plan for Combating Human Trafficking	Establishes roles and responsibilities of governmental organizations involved in combating child trafficking and describes procedures for applying the Law to Combat Human Trafficking.(17) Research was unable to determine whether activities were undertaken to implement this policy during the reporting period.

Although the Government of Oman had adopted the National Plan for Combating Human Trafficking, research found no evidence of a policy to address all forms of child labor, including in farming and fishing.

VI. SOCIAL PROGRAMS TO ADDRESS CHILD LABOR

In 2016, the Government funded 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

Program	Description
Programs of the National Plan for Combating Human Trafficking†	Implements awareness-raising activities on human trafficking in schools and among the general population and provides social services for trafficking victims.(17)
Social Security Cash Transfer Program†	Provides assistance to children in low-income families, including educational services.(4)

† Program is funded by the Government of Oman.

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 Oman (Table 11).

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

Area	Suggested Action	Year(s) Suggested
Enforcement	Collect and publish data on labor inspectorate funding, the number of inspectors, whether inspectors are authorized to assess penalties, the types of training for the labor inspectorate, the number of inspections and whether they were conducted at the worksite or by desk review only, the number of violations, the penalties imposed and collected, and whether routine and targeted inspections were conducted.	2013 – 2016
	Establish a referral mechanism between law enforcement and social services.	2014 – 2016
	Publish data on the types of training for investigators; the number of criminal investigations, violations, prosecutions, and convictions; and whether there is a reciprocal referral mechanism between criminal authorities and social services.	2013 – 2016
	Develop formal mechanisms and procedures to proactively identify victims of the worst forms of child labor.	2011 – 2016
Coordination	Ensure the Ministry of Labor's participation in the National Committee on Implementing the UN CRC.	2016
Government Policies	Implement the National Plan for Combating Human Trafficking.	2016
	Develop a national policy to address all worst forms of child labor.	2013 – 2016
Social Programs	Ensure that all children have equal access to education, including the children of migrant workers and children with disabilities.	2011 – 2016

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