

In 2018, Guinea-Bissau made a moderate advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. The government implemented the Code of Conduct Against Sexual Exploitation in Tourism by conducting various awareness raising campaigns on the commercial sexual exploitation of children for hotel and night club owners, and throughout Bissau and the Bijagós Archipelago. The government also hired 13 additional labor inspectors and, in conjunction with NGO partners, provided more than 150 child victims of human trafficking for forced begging with reintegration, medical assistance, and shelter. However, children in Guinea-Bissau engage in the worst forms of child labor in forced begging. Children also engage in child labor in agriculture. In addition, the government has not determined the types of hazardous work prohibited for children and law enforcement officials do not receive the appropriate training and resources to adequately conduct inspections and prosecute cases of child labor. Furthermore, social programs do not fully address the extent of the problem in the country.



I. PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Children in Guinea-Bissau engage in the worst forms of child labor in forced begging. (1,2) Children also engage in child labor in agriculture. (1) According to a national child labor survey, more than 169,200 children ages 5 to 17 work; 85 percent of these children work in agriculture. (3) Table 1 provides key indicators on children’s work and education in Guinea-Bissau. 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	57.4 (Unavailable)
Attending School (%)	5 to 14	68.1
Combining Work and School (%)	7 to 14	48.4
Primary Completion Rate (%)		64.3

Source for primary completion rate: Data from 2010, published by UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2019. (4)

Source for all other data: International Labor Organization’s analysis of statistics from Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 5, 2014. (5)

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 (1,3,6)
	Fishing, activities unknown (1,3)
Services	Domestic work (1,3,7)
	Street work, including car washing, shoe shining, and vending (1,2,8)
Categorical Worst Forms of Child Labor‡	Commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking (1,2,9)
	Forced labor in domestic work, agriculture, and street work, including begging, each sometimes as a result of human trafficking (1,2,9-11)

‡ 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 human traffickers affiliated with Koranic schools force boys to beg within the country and in The Gambia, Guinea, Mali, and Senegal. Although many Koranic school teachers provide

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religious education as traditionally intended, some force the students, known as *talibés*, to beg on the streets for money and food. (1,2) Most *talibés* originate from the predominantly Muslim areas of Bafatá and Gabú in the eastern region of the country. (1,2)




Boys are forced to work in street vending in Guinea-Bissau; they also are trafficked for forced labor in agriculture, mining, and street vending in Senegal. Boys from Guinea-Bissau and boys from neighboring countries are forced to beg and harvest cashews. (2,6) Girls are subjected to forced labor in street vending and domestic work in Guinea-Bissau and Senegal. Girls also are engaged in commercial sexual exploitation in the Bijagós Archipelago of Guinea-Bissau, on mainland Guinea-Bissau in bars and hotels, and in Senegal. (2,7,9)

In 2018, the government became more politically stable, with Parliament reopening in April. However, due to the previous years of instability, the government's ability to address child labor may have been affected during the reporting period. (12-14)

II. LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR 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 (Table 4). However, gaps exist in Guinea-Bissau's legal framework to adequately protect children from the worst forms of child labor, including with regard to the minimum age for work.

Table 4. Laws and Regulations on Child Labor

Standard	Meets International Standards	Age	Legislation
Minimum Age for Work	No	14	Article 146 of the General Labor Law (15)
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work	Yes	18	Article 148 of the General Labor Law (15)
Identification of Hazardous Occupations or Activities Prohibited for Children	No		Article 148 of the General Labor Law (15)
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 (16,17)
Prohibition of Child Trafficking	Yes		Articles 2, 4, and 15 of the Law to Prevent and Combat Human Trafficking (17)
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 (16,17)
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities	Yes		Articles 3 and 7 of the Decree on Narcotic Substances (18)
Minimum Age for Voluntary State Military Recruitment	Yes	17	Article 31 of Law No. 4/99 (19)
Prohibition of Compulsory Recruitment of Children by (State) Military	Yes		Article 2 of Law No. 4/99 (19)

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

Standard	Meets International Standards	Age	Legislation
Prohibition of Military Recruitment by Non-state Armed Groups	No		
Compulsory Education Age	Yes	15‡	Articles 12–13 of the Education System Law (20)
Free Public Education	No		Article 12 (2) of the Education System Law (20)

‡ Age calculated based on available information (20,21)

The minimum age for work is not in compliance with international standards, as the law's minimum age protections do not apply to children working without a work contract. (15,21) The government has not determined by national law or regulation the types of hazardous work prohibited for children. (15)

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 through nine without access to free basic education. (20) 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 compulsory education. (15,20)

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 Public Administration that may hinder adequate enforcement of their child labor laws.

Table 5. Agencies Responsible for Child Labor Law Enforcement

Organization/Agency	Role
Ministry of Labor and Public Administration	Enforces child labor legislation in collaboration with the ministries of Interior and Justice, and the National Institute for Women and Children (IMC). (22)
Ministry of Interior's Public Order Police and National Guard	Combat child labor through the prevention of child trafficking. (8,23)
Judicial Police's Women and Children Brigade	Investigates the worst forms of child labor and refers cases to the IMC and NGOs. The brigade comprises nine officers. (1)

Labor Law Enforcement

In 2018, labor law enforcement agencies in Guinea-Bissau took actions to combat child labor (Table 6). However, gaps exist within the operations of the Ministry of Labor and Public Administration that may hinder adequate labor law enforcement, including training for labor inspectors.

Table 6. Labor Law Enforcement Efforts Related to Child Labor

Overview of Labor Law Enforcement	2017	2018
Labor Inspectorate Funding	Unknown	Unknown
Number of Labor Inspectors	17 (24)	30 (1)
Inspectorate Authorized to Assess Penalties	Unknown	Unknown
Initial Training for New Labor Inspectors	No (24)	No (1)
Training on New Laws Related to Child Labor	N/A	N/A (1)
Refresher Courses Provided	No (24)	No (1)
Number of Labor Inspections Conducted	49 (24)	121 (1)
Number Conducted at Worksite	49 (24)	121 (1)
Number of Child Labor Violations Found	0 (24)	0 (1)
Number of Child Labor Violations for Which Penalties Were Imposed	N/A	N/A
Number of Child Labor Penalties Imposed that Were Collected	N/A	N/A
Routine Inspections Conducted	No (24)	No (1)

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Table 6. Labor Law Enforcement Efforts Related to Child Labor (Cont.)

Overview of Labor Law Enforcement	2017	2018
Routine Inspections Targeted	No (24)	No (1)
Unannounced Inspections Permitted	Yes (24)	Yes (1)
Unannounced Inspections Conducted	Yes (24)	Yes (1)
Complaint Mechanism Exists	No (24)	No (1)
Reciprocal Referral Mechanism Exists Between Labor Authorities and Social Services	No (24)	No (1)

In 2018, although the number of inspectors increased, the government reported that the number of labor inspectors was insufficient to target the scope of the problem. In addition, enforcement of child labor laws remains challenging due to the lack of resources for inspections. (1)

Criminal Law Enforcement

In 2018, criminal law enforcement agencies in Guinea-Bissau took actions to combat child labor (Table 7). However, gaps exist within the operations of the criminal enforcement agencies that may hinder adequate criminal law enforcement, including financial resources.

Table 7. Criminal Law Enforcement Efforts Related to Child Labor

Overview of Criminal Law Enforcement	2017	2018
Initial Training for New Criminal Investigators	Yes (24)	No (1)
Training on New Laws Related to the Worst Forms of Child Labor	N/A	N/A
Refresher Courses Provided	Yes (24)	No (1)
Number of Investigations	26 (24)	Unknown
Number of Violations Found	75 (24,25)	7‡ (1)
Number of Prosecutions Initiated	Unknown	Unknown
Number of Convictions	0 (24)	Unknown
Imposed Penalties for Violations Related to The Worst Forms of Child Labor	No (24)	No (1)
Reciprocal Referral Mechanism Exists Between Criminal Authorities and Social Services	No (24)	No (1)

‡ Data are from January 2018 to August 2018.

The National Institute for Women and Children (IMC) identified 159 child victims of human trafficking for forced begging. The IMC, in partnership with NGO stakeholders, assisted these children with reintegration, medical assistance, and shelter. (14)

During the reporting period, the UNODC trained 23 law enforcement officials on conducting human trafficking investigations. In addition, the IOM conducted several training sessions on human trafficking prevention, victim assistance and implementation of child referral monitoring mechanisms for government and law enforcement officials. (14,26) However, the government reported that training for criminal law enforcement officials and resources for criminal investigations were insufficient. (1)

IV. COORDINATION OF GOVERNMENT EFFORTS ON CHILD LABOR

The government has established mechanisms to coordinate its efforts to address child labor (Table 8). However, gaps exist that may hinder the adequate coordination of efforts to address child labor, including efficacy in accomplishing mandates.

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

Coordinating Body	Role & Description
Inter-Ministerial Commission to Fight Child Labor	Coordinates the government's efforts to prevent and eliminate child labor; established in 2010. (1,24) In 2018, conducted awareness-raising campaigns, two regional conferences in Bafatá and Gabú, and a national conference in Bissau. (14)

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

Coordinating Body	Role & Description
National Committee to Prevent and Combat Trafficking in Persons	Coordinates government efforts to combat human trafficking. Led by the IMC. (1,27) In 2018, with the support of the International Organization for Migration, implemented awareness-raising activities in Gabú, Bafatá, Cacheu and Bissau. (1)
National Institute for Women and Children (IMC)	Coordinates with NGOs and other partner organizations to rehabilitate and reintegrate child victims of exploitation. (8) In 2018, concluded and disseminated the Code of Conduct Against Sexual Tourism in the Bijagós Islands, São Domingos, Cacheu and Bissau. In addition, with the assistance of the Ministry of Tourism, trained various hotel owners and managers on the prevention of sexual tourism. (14)

V. GOVERNMENT POLICIES ON CHILD LABOR

The government has established policies related to child labor (Table 9). However, policy gaps exist that may hinder efforts to address child labor, including funding and implementation.

Table 9. Key Policies Related to Child Labor

Policy	Description
National Policy for the Protection of Children and Adolescents (2018–2030)	Guides the government's policies for combating violence towards children, including child labor. (28) Research was unable to determine whether activities were undertaken to implement this policy during the reporting period.
National Action Plan on Human Trafficking (2015–2018)	Guided the government's efforts to prevent and combat trafficking in persons. (27) In 2018, policy was not implemented due to a lack of funding. (2)
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. (29) In December 2018, IMC conducted an awareness session with hotel and night club owners on the Code. Awareness campaigns also took place in Bissau and in the Bijagós Archipelago, where girls are known to be engaged in commercial sexual exploitation. (1)
UN Country Partnership Framework (2016–2020)	Aims to assist in promoting free and universal birth registration, and enforcing human trafficking and child labor provisions. (30) Since 2016, helped IMC reintegrate 132 talibés with their families; and provided access to shelter, schools, and psychological and medical assistance. (31) In 2018, conducted awareness raising activities on talibés to more than 1,500 people throughout Gabú and Bafatá. In addition, held capacity-building trainings on enhancing criminal justice response to trafficking in persons and strengthening the protection of victims to over 40 stakeholders, including judicial police, National Guard and NGOs working with human trafficking victims. (32)

VI. SOCIAL PROGRAMS TO ADDRESS CHILD LABOR

In 2018, the government participated in programs that include the goal of eliminating and preventing child labor (Table 10). However, gaps exist in these social programs, including the adequacy of programs to address the full scope of the problem.

Table 10. Key Social Programs to Address Child Labor

Program	Description
UNICEF Country Program (2016–2020)	UNICEF-funded program in collaboration with the government to prevent and combat child trafficking through education, social protection mechanisms, and capacity-building for law enforcement officials. (33) Active in 2018. (1)
Friends of the Child (Associação dos Amigos da Criança) Shelters	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. (14,34) In 2018, provided identification and reintegration services to 150 children. (14)

‡ The government had other social programs that may have included the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor. (35)

In June 2018, the Inter-Ministerial Commission to Fight Child Labor conducted awareness-raising activities, two regional conferences in Bafatá and Gabú, and a national conference in Bissau to promote the prevention and reporting of child trafficking. However, reports indicate that the government has not conducted any national public awareness-raising campaigns on human trafficking, including child trafficking. (14,36)

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Reports indicate that services provided by shelters do not meet international standards due to funding constraints. (14) In addition, 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 CHILD LABOR

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

Table I I. Suggested Government Actions to Eliminate Child Labor

Area	Suggested Action	Year(s) Suggested
Legal Framework	Ensure that all children are protected by law, including children without a work contract.	2015 – 2018
	Determine by national law or regulation the types of hazardous work prohibited for children, after consultation with employers' and workers' organizations.	2009 – 2018
	Ensure that the law criminally prohibits the recruitment of children under age 18 by non-state armed groups.	2016 – 2018
	Ensure that all 9 years of basic education are free.	2015 – 2018
	Raise minimum age for work to the age up to which education is compulsory.	2018
Enforcement	Publish law and criminal enforcement data, including information on labor inspectorate funding, the ability of the inspectorate to assess penalties, the number of prosecutions initiated, convictions secured, and imposed penalties for violations related to the worst forms of child labor.	2009 – 2018
	Impose penalties for convictions related to the worst forms of child labor.	2018
	Strengthen the labor inspectorate by initiating routine inspections rather than performing inspections solely based on complaints received, and by initiating targeted inspections based on the analysis of data related to risk-prone sectors and patterns of serious incidents.	2016 – 2018
	Establish a mechanism to receive child labor complaints.	2016 – 2018
	Establish referral mechanisms to ensure that children found during labor inspections and criminal investigations are referred to social services providers.	2016 – 2018
	Ensure that law and criminal enforcement officials receive adequate training and resources to inspect, investigate, and prosecute cases of child labor.	2009 – 2018
	Ensure that the number of law enforcement officials is sufficient to address the scope of the problem.	2018
Government Policies	Ensure implementation of key policies related to child labor, including the National Policy for the Protection of Children and Adolescents.	2017 – 2018
Social Programs	Ensure that facilities have adequate resources to assist victims of the worst forms of child labor.	2015 – 2018
	Expand existing programs to address the scope of the child labor problem.	2009 – 2018
	Significantly increase efforts to raise national awareness of human trafficking, including child trafficking.	2018

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