

Iraq

Selected Statistics and Indicators on Child Labor

Percent of children 5-14 estimated as working in 2000:	11.6% ²¹⁹⁶
Minimum age for admission to work:	15 ²¹⁹⁷
Age to which education is compulsory:	12 ²¹⁹⁸
Free public education:	Yes ^{2199*}
Gross primary enrollment rate in 2004:	98% ^{2200**}
Net primary enrollment rate in 2004:	88% ²²⁰¹
Percent of children 5-14 attending school in 2000:	60.5% ²²⁰²
As of 2003, percent of primary school entrants likely to reach grade 5:	77% ²²⁰³
Ratified Convention 138:	2/13/1985 ²²⁰⁴
Ratified Convention 182:	7/9/2001 ²²⁰⁵
ILO-IPEC participating country:	No ²²⁰⁶
* Must pay for school supplies and related items.	
** It is unclear how the conflict in Iraq is affecting children's participation in work and schooling.	

Incidence and Nature of Child Labor

In 2000, approximately 14.7 percent of boys and 8.3 percent of girls ages 5 to 14 were working in Iraq.²²⁰⁷ In urban areas, many children work on the streets shining shoes, begging, scavenging through garbage, carrying loads, and selling items such as food, cigarettes, newspapers, and DVDs. Children are found working in shops and markets, on delivery trucks, and as ticket

²¹⁹⁶ UCW analysis of ILO SIMPOC, UNICEF MICS, and World Bank surveys, *Child Economic Activity and School Attendance Rates*, March 1, 2007.

²¹⁹⁷ Coalition Provisional Authority, *Coalition Provisional Authority Order 89*, art. 90.1; available from http://www.iraqcoalition.org/regulations/20040530_CPAORD89_Amendments_to_the_Labor_Code-Law_No.pdf.

²¹⁹⁸ U.S. Department of State, "Iraq," in *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices- 2006*, Washington, DC, March 6, 2007, Section 5; available from <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2006/78853.htm>.

²¹⁹⁹ Government of Iraq, *Constitution of Iraq*, (October 15, 2005); available from <http://www.iraqgovernment.org>. See U.S. Department of State, "Country Reports- 2006: Iraq," section 5. See Ministry of Planning and Development Cooperation, *Iraq Living Conditions Survey 2004, Volume II: Analytical Report*, Baghdad, , 2005, 104; available from <http://www.iq.undp.org/ILCS/PDF/Analytical%20Report%20-%20English.pdf>.

²²⁰⁰ UNESCO Institute for Statistics, *Gross Enrolment Ratio. Primary. Total*, accessed December 20, 2006; available from <http://stats.uis.unesco.org/>.

²²⁰¹ UNESCO Institute for Statistics, *Net Enrolment Rate. Primary. Total*, accessed December 20, 2006; available from <http://stats.uis.unesco.org/>.

²²⁰² UCW analysis of ILO SIMPOC, UNICEF MICS, and World Bank surveys, *Child Economic Activity and School Attendance Rates*.

²²⁰³ UNESCO Institute for Statistics, *Survival Rate to Grade 5. Total*, accessed December 18, 2006; available from <http://stats.uis.unesco.org/>.

²²⁰⁴ ILO, *Ratifications by Country*, accessed June 16, 2006; available from <http://www.ilo.org/ilolex/english/newratframeE.htm>.

²²⁰⁵ Ibid.

²²⁰⁶ ILO, *IPEC Action against Child Labour: Highlights 2006*, Geneva, October 2006; available from http://www.ilo.org/iloroot/docstore/ipcc/prod/eng/20061018_Implementationreport_eng.pdf.

²²⁰⁷ UCW analysis of ILO SIMPOC, UNICEF MICS, and World Bank surveys, *Child Economic Activity and School Attendance Rates*.

collectors on buses.²²⁰⁸ Children are known to work long hours and under hazardous conditions in automobile repair shops and construction sites.²²⁰⁹ In rural areas, children are found tending livestock and performing seasonal manual labor.²²¹⁰

There are reports of children being exploited as prostitutes and working in the drug trade.²²¹¹ Girls may also be trafficked to Gulf States.²²¹² Young boys have been targeted by gangs for sexual exploitation. Girls may be targeted by staff at private orphanages to be sold into prostitution or trafficked out of Iraq for sexual exploitation.²²¹³ Armed political groups have recruited children as informers, messengers, and as child soldiers.²²¹⁴

Child Labor Laws and Enforcement

The minimum age for employment is 15 years.²²¹⁵ The employment of anyone under 16 years in work detrimental to the worker's health, safety, or morals is prohibited.²²¹⁶ Additional legal requirements regarding the employment of children under 18 include a maximum 7-hour workday, a pre-employment medical examination, a daily rest period of 1 hour after 4 hours of work, and a 30-day paid vacation per year. Employers must maintain a register of names of employees under 18, post a copy of the labor provisions protecting children, and keep minors' medical fitness certificates on file. However, youth 15 or older who are employed in family enterprises are excluded from most of these provisions.²²¹⁷

The law prohibits the worst forms of child labor, defined as slavery and similar practices including forced labor, child trafficking, and compulsory recruitment of minors for use in armed conflict; child prostitution; illicit activities such as drug trafficking; and work likely to harm the health, safety, or morals of children. Promoting, assisting, or benefiting from the aforementioned

²²⁰⁸ U.S. Department of State, "Country Reports- 2006: Iraq," section 6d. See also Craig Davis, *Working Paper: Child Labor in Iraq*, November 2, 2004. See also IRINnews, "Children work instead of going to school", IRINnews.org, [online], September 16, 2004 [cited April 2, 2007]; available from http://www.irinnews.org/report.asp?ReportID=43204&SelectRegion=Iraq_Crisis&SelectCountry=IRAQ. See also IRINnews, "IRAQ: Street children face hunger and abuse", IRINnews.org, [online], December 26, 2005 [cited October 18, 2006]; available from <http://www.irinnews.org>.

²²⁰⁹ Davis, *Working Paper: Child Labor in Iraq*. See also Coalition Provisional Authority, *Monthly Report, Social Welfare, South Iraq*, Coalition Provisional Authority, Basra, May 2004; available from <https://www422.sslldomain.com/uniraq/documents/Sitrep%20Social%20Affairs.pdf>. See also U.S. Department of State, "Country Reports- 2006: Iraq," section 6d.

²²¹⁰ Davis, *Working Paper: Child Labor in Iraq*. See also U.S. Department of State, "Country Reports- 2006: Iraq," section 6d.

²²¹¹ Coalition Provisional Authority, *Social Welfare, South Iraq*. See also Integrated Regional Information Networks, "IRAQ: Children Lured into Drugs and Prostitution", IRINnews.org, [online], February 12, 2007 [cited June 5, 2007]; available from <http://www.irinnews.org/print.asp?ReportID=70094>.

²²¹² U.S. Embassy - Baghdad, *reporting*, March 7, 2007. See also U.S. Department of State, "Country Reports- 2006: Iraq," section 5.

²²¹³ U.S. Department of State, "Country Reports- 2006: Iraq," section 5.

²²¹⁴ *Ibid.* See also Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers, "Iraq," in *Child Soldiers Global Report 2004*, London, 2004; available from http://www.child-soldiers.org/document_get.php?id=966.

²²¹⁵ Coalition Provisional Authority, *Order 89*, Article 90.1. See also Government of Iraq, *Act No. 71 Promulgating the Labour Code*, (July 27, 1987), Article 91.

²²¹⁶ Coalition Provisional Authority, *Order 89*, Articles 91.1 and 91.2.

²²¹⁷ *Ibid.*, Articles 92, 93, 94, 96.

worst forms of child labor is prohibited.²²¹⁸ Violations of Labor Code provisions pertaining to work performed by children, including the worst forms of child labor, may be penalized by imprisonment for 10 days to 3 months or fines.²²¹⁹ There is no compulsory conscription into the Iraqi armed forces, and the minimum voluntary recruitment age is 18.²²²⁰

The Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs (MOLSA) is responsible for overseeing labor inspections.²²²¹ According to the U.S. Department of State, MOLSA's Child Labor Unit is unable to enforce child labor laws and remove children from exploitive labor situations because of a lack of inspectors, a lack of resources, and the effects of the ongoing insurgency.²²²² The Ministry of Interior (MOI) is responsible for trafficking issues; however, according to the U.S. Department of State, trafficking is not considered a high priority given the security situation, and is not investigated.²²²³

Current Government Policies and Programs to Eliminate the Worst Forms of Child Labor

The Ministry of Public Works and Social Affairs (MOPWSA) has a program to provide stipends to ex-child laborers to keep them out of work and to support their schooling. MOPWSA also supports Mercy House in Baghdad, a facility providing support services to ex-street children and other vulnerable populations.²²²⁴ The MOI operates a program to address the issues of children living on the streets.²²²⁵ MOLSA operates shelters for orphans, some of whom may be at-risk of becoming involved in exploitive labor.²²²⁶

²²¹⁸ Ibid., Articles 91. See also ECPAT International CSEC Database, *Iraq* accessed October 18, 2006; available from <http://www.ecpat.net>. See also Government of Iraq, *Constitution of Iraq*, Article 37.

²²¹⁹ Coalition Provisional Authority, *Order 89*, Article 97.

²²²⁰ Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers, "Global Report 2004."

²²²¹ Government of Iraq, *Act No. 71 Promulgating the Labour Code*, Article 116.

²²²² U.S. Department of State, "Country Reports- 2006: Iraq," section 6d.

²²²³ Ibid. See also U.S. Embassy - Baghdad, *reporting, March 7, 2007*.

²²²⁴ IRINnews, "Focus on child labour", IRINnews.org, [online], May 9, 2005 [cited April 2, 2007]; available from http://www.irinnews.org/report.asp?ReportID=47022&SelectRegion=Middle_East&SelectCountry=IRAQ. See also IRINnews, "New social programme assists the poor and vulnerable", IRINnews.org, [online], March 31, 2005 [cited April 2, 2007]; available from

http://www.irinnews.org/report.asp?ReportID=46404&SelectRegion=Middle_East&SelectCountry=IRAQ.

²²²⁵ U.S. Department of State, "Country Reports- 2006: Iraq," section 5.

²²²⁶ U.S. Department of State, "Iraq," in *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices- 2005*, Washington, DC, March 8, 2006, Section 5; available from <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2005/61689.htm>. See also Integrated Regional Information Networks, "IRAQ: Ministry Copes with Rising Numbers of Orphaned Children", IRINnews.org, [online], October 18, 2006 [cited April 18, 2007]; available from <http://www.irinnews.org>.