

Congo, Democratic Republic of the

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In 2014, the Democratic Republic of the Congo made a moderate advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. The Government took steps to implement a UN-backed action plan to end the recruitment and use of child soldiers, including by convening national and provincial working groups, appointing a presidential adviser on sexual violence and child recruitment, and arresting several individuals on charges of recruiting and using child soldiers. However, children in the Democratic Republic of the Congo continue to engage in child labor, including in domestic work, and in the worst forms of child labor, including in the forced mining of gold, cassiterite (tin ore), coltan (tantalum ore), and wolframite (tungsten ore). The Government failed to prosecute or convict any individual of child labor violations, and the prescribed penalties for forced or compulsory labor remain low and do not serve as a deterrent. There are few social programs to assist child laborers, and laws and regulations mandating free primary education are not enforced.



I. PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Children in the Democratic Republic of the Congo are engaged in child labor, including in agriculture. Children are also engaged in the worst forms of child labor, including in forced mining of gold, cassiterite (tin ore), coltan (tantalum ore), and wolframite (tungsten ore).⁽¹⁻⁵⁾ Children are also forcibly recruited by armed groups, including through abduction, for use in armed conflict.^(2, 3, 6-8) Table 1 provides key indicators on children's work and education in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Table 1. Statistics on Children's Work and Education

Children	Age	Percent
Working (% and population)	5-14 yrs.	16.9 (3,327,806)
Attending School (%)	5-14 yrs.	67.1
Combining Work and School (%)	7-14 yrs.	16.2
Primary Completion Rate (%)		72.8

Source for primary completion rate: Data from 2012, published by UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2014.⁽⁹⁾

Source for all other data: Understanding Children's Work Project's analysis of statistics from Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 4, 2010.⁽¹⁰⁾

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	Production of manioc,* corn,* peanuts,* cassava leaves,* and other vegetables* (1, 11)
	Animal husbandry* (1)
Industry	Mining,† including sifting, cleaning, sorting, transporting, and digging of diamonds, copper, heterogenite (cobalt ore), gold, cassiterite (tin ore), coltan (tantalum ore), and wolframite (tungsten ore) (1, 4, 12-19)
	Work in quarries,† breaking stone into gravel* (16, 20)
Services	Domestic work (1, 2, 18, 20-22)
	Work in bars* and restaurants* (23)
	Street work, including vending, carrying packages, and unloading vehicles (1, 18, 24, 25)
Categorical Worst Forms of Child Labor‡	Forced mining of gold, cassiterite, coltan, and wolframite (1, 4, 23, 26-28)
	Commercial sexual exploitation (1, 2, 4, 24, 29-31)

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

Sector/Industry	Activity
Categorical Worst Forms of Child Labor†	Forced domestic work* (32)
	Hereditary servitude in forestry and agriculture (20, 33, 34)
	Used in illicit activities, including for spying, smuggling minerals, and distributing drugs (1, 18, 35)
	Used as child soldiers, sometimes as a result of forced recruitment by armed groups (2, 3, 8, 36-39)

* Evidence of this activity is limited and/or the extent of the problem is unknown.

† 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.

In 2014, members of indigenous and foreign armed groups—including Rayia Mutomboki, Allied Democratic Forces (ADF), *Forces Democratiques de Liberation du Rwanda* (FDLR), *Nduma Defense du Congo* (NDC/Cheka), *Union des Congolais Patriotes pour la Paix* (UPCP), *Force de Résistance Patriotique en Ituri* (FRPI), the Lord’s Resistance Army (LRA), *Forces populaires congolaises* (FPC/AP), and various Mayi Mayi groups (Nyatura, Shetani, Simba “Morgan,” Kifuafua, Kata Katanga, Yakutumba, Cheka, *Alliance des patriotes pour un Congo libre et souverain* (APCLS), *Forces de defense des droits humains* (FDDH), and *Forces de defense Congolaise* (FDC)—continued to abduct and recruit children in North Kivu, South Kivu, and Orientale Provinces to be used in their units; the recruitment of children in Katanga Province is assessed to be largely underreported.(3, 8, 38-40) Children associated with armed groups serve as combatants and bodyguards for army commanders, as well as porters of ammunition, cooks, spies, miners, domestic workers, and sex slaves. Children also monitor military check points, cultivate crops, transmit messages, and loot villages after attacks.(3, 18, 23, 39, 41-46) The LRA abducted Congolese children for use by the group in the country, as well as in Sudan, South Sudan, and Central African Republic.(2, 3, 45, 47) The ADF kidnapped children, known as *bazana* or slaves, from areas peripheral to their control, who then became the personal property of the group’s leader.(39) The UN confirmed one case of child recruitment by the Congolese National Army (FARDC) in 2014—a 17-year-old in Rutshuru Territory in January 2014 who participated in combat against Mayi Mayi Nyatura before being demobilized in April 2014—which marks a significant reduction from previous years.(1, 3, 8, 48)

Armed conflict hinders children’s access to education in the eastern region of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Some children are forcibly recruited from schools to serve as child soldiers, and some are victims of sexual violence on their way to and from school.(8, 25, 35, 49) Some schools have closed or have been destroyed because of armed conflict.(8, 23, 38, 40, 49, 50) Some schools are also physically occupied by armed forces and used as barracks and operations bases, which places children in the vicinity at risk of engaging in the worst forms of child labor.(8, 37, 38, 40, 49, 50) In addition, the dearth of schools and long travel distances to get to schools prevent some children from receiving an education.(51)

Article 43 of the Constitution establishes the right to free education in all public establishments. President Kabila’s August 2010 declaration and circular of September 2010—under which all direct costs of primary education are to be waived outside of Kinshasa and Lubumbashi—are not being universally implemented.(27, 51-53) In practice, schools generally require payment of tuition and additional fees, including funds to cover teachers’ salaries, for all grades.(1) Even in areas where free primary education is provided, it is often oversubscribed and under-resourced.(54) Children engage in various kinds of work, such as artisanal mining, to pay their school fees.(13) The cost of uniforms may also deter children’s enrollment.(55) In addition, because the compulsory education law is not systematically enforced, children – including those below the minimum age of employment – may enter the workforce and engage in the worst forms of child labor.(56)

Access to education may also be constrained by the lack of birth registration. Unable to prove citizenship, nonregistered children may have difficulty accessing services, such as education, and are more vulnerable to being recruited into armed conflict and other forms of child labor.(44) According to the Government’s 2010 Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey, only 29 percent of children in rural areas and 24 percent of children in urban areas are registered at birth.(57) UNICEF noted that only 25 percent of attended births in medical facilities were registered by the Government between 2013 and 2014; in certain provinces, the percentage of children under age 10 who were not registered was nearly 90 percent.(3) Moreover, lack of identification documents makes age verification difficult during FARDC recruitment campaigns and also hinders efforts to identify and separate children associated with armed groups.(48) Approximately 2.6 million people were internally displaced in the Democratic Republic of the Congo in 2014.(58) Internally displaced children may have difficulty accessing education, which puts them at increased risk of engaging in child labor.

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A comprehensive, stand-alone child labor survey has never been conducted in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.(42)

II. LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR THE WORST FORMS OF CHILD LABOR

The Democratic Republic of the Congo 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).

Table 4. Laws and Regulations Related to Child Labor

Standard	Yes/No	Age	Related Legislation
Minimum Age for Work	Yes	16	Article 6 of the Labor Code; Article 50 of the Child Protection Code (33, 59)
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work	Yes	18	Article 10 of Ministerial Order No. 12 (60)
Prohibition of Hazardous Occupations or Activities for Children	Yes		Ministerial Order No. 68/13; Articles 10-16 of Ministerial Order No. 12; Article 26 of the Mining Code (60-62)
Prohibition of Forced Labor	Yes		Article 2 of the Labor Code; Article 53 of the Child Protection Code; Articles 16 and 61 of the Constitution; Article 8 of Ministerial Order No. 12 (33, 52, 59, 60)
Prohibition of Child Trafficking	Yes		Article 3 of the Labor Code; Articles 53 and 162 of the Child Protection Code; Article 174 of the Penal Code; Article 8 of Ministerial Order No. 12 (33, 59, 60, 63)
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children	Yes		Article 3 of the Labor Code; Articles 53 and 61 of the Child Protection Code; Article 174 of the Penal Code; Article 8 of the Ministerial Order No. 12 (33, 59, 60, 63)
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities	Yes		Article 3 of the Labor Code; Article 8 of Ministerial Order No. 12; Article 53 of the Child Protection Code (33, 59, 60)
Minimum Age for Compulsory Military Recruitment	Yes	18	Article 7 of the Defense and Armed Forces Act (64)
Minimum Age for Voluntary Military Service	Yes	18	Articles 7 and 10 of Act No. 04/23; Article 71 of the Child Protection Code (59, 64, 65)
Compulsory Education Age	Yes	15	Act No. 86/005 (56, 66)
Free Public Education	Yes		Article 43 of the Constitution (52)

The laws of the Democratic Republic of the Congo are not completely consistent with international standards regarding child labor. Penalties prescribed for the use of forced or compulsory labor in Article 326 of the Labor Code—a maximum penalty of up to 6 months' imprisonment and/or a fine—are low and do not deter violations.(32, 43, 50, 67)

Children are required to attend school only up to age 15. This standard makes children who are 15 years of age who do not have an apprenticeship particularly vulnerable to the worst forms of child labor, as they are not required to be in school but are not legally permitted to work either.(59, 66) In addition, the Government did not pass the necessary implementing decree for the Child Protection Code, which contains many relevant protections for children.(25)

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In April 2014, the Council of Ministers approved a draft law to establish specialized mixed chambers to try war crimes and crimes against humanity, including the recruitment and use of child soldiers, and presented it to the National Assembly for adoption and enactment in May. Citing technical concerns, Parliament rejected the legislation and awaits resubmission of corrected text.(68)

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).

Table 5. Agencies Responsible for Child Labor Law Enforcement

Organization/Agency	Role
Ministry of Labor and Social Insurance (MOL)	Investigate cases related to child labor, including its worst forms.(3, 18, 46)
Ministry of Gender, Family and Children (MOGFC)	Oversee and investigate cases related to the commercial sexual exploitation of children.(3, 27, 46) Provide social services to vulnerable populations, including street children and child soldiers.(3) Receive referrals of child workers found during inspections, and work with NGOs to reintegrate them into communities and reunite them with their families.(3, 7, 18) Sensitize communities to welcoming and reintegrating former child soldiers.(3) A technical team within the Ministry's Secretary General's office is responsible for overseeing and investigating child trafficking cases.(3) In the case of the Department of Child Protection, operate a database to monitor and coordinate children's rights activities and implement programs targeting orphans and vulnerable children.(69, 70)
Ministry of Justice and Human Rights (MOJ)	Enforce criminal laws related to forced labor, human trafficking, commercial sexual exploitation, and the use of children in illicit activities.(18, 46)
National Police	Enforce laws related to the worst forms of child labor.(7)
Special Police Commissariats in Kinshasa, Kisangani, and Goma	Run by female police officers, these units protect victims of rape, assist children abandoned by their families after being denounced as witches, help abandoned women, and pursue husbands who have abandoned their families.(45)
Ministry of Defense	Investigate and use military courts to prosecute military officials suspected of recruitment and use of child soldiers or forced labor of civilians. Implement the UN-backed action plan to end the recruitment and use of child soldiers.(3)

Criminal law enforcement agencies in the Democratic Republic of the Congo took actions to combat child labor, including its worst forms. However, research found no evidence that labor law enforcement agencies took such actions.

Labor Law Enforcement

In 2014, the Ministry of Labor (MOL) employed 200 labor inspectors, 75 percent of whom were posted in Kinshasa.(1, 3) There are also 20 labor controllers in the Katanga mining region.(7) According to the Government, the number of labor inspectors is not sufficient given the size and remoteness of the country.(1, 3, 7) Labor inspectors often do not have adequate funding, staff, facilities, communications infrastructure, and means of transportation to conduct inspections.(1, 3, 7, 46, 71) Labor inspectors did not receive training on the worst forms of child labor during 2014.(18) The MOL does not have a system to track child labor complaints and did not keep records of child labor investigations during the reporting period.(1) Research did not find information regarding the type of inspections conducted, the quality of inspections, or the number of unannounced inspections made. Each inspector is required to prepare one annual inspection report, but this report does not necessarily include information on child labor.(27) Information on the number of complaints, inspections, citations, and prosecutions related to child labor is not publicly available.(11, 18) The Government does not facilitate cooperation between inspection services and the justice system, resulting in a lack of information on whether penalties were applied to labor violations.(71, 72) In 2012, the last date for which information is available, the Department of Child Protection within the Ministry of Social Affairs, Humanitarian Action and National Solidarity (MINAS) employed 57 people at the national level and 8 at the provincial level.(70) Research found no information on whether MINAS investigated cases of child trafficking or whether there were any trafficking prosecutions or convictions during the year.(3) Research was also unable to uncover whether MINAS employees received training. In December 2014, MINAS was eliminated as a ministry in a government reshuffle and its responsibilities were assumed by the Ministry of Gender, Family, and Children (MOGFC).(73)

Criminal Law Enforcement

Research found no information on whether the Ministry of Justice (MOJ) and MOGFC investigated cases involving the worst forms of child labor. The justice system faces major challenges with regard to independence, resources, and training, which leads to impunity for crimes committed in the country.(3, 18) Investigators in the MOGFC and the MOJ were not trained on the worst forms of child labor during the reporting period.(18) In 2012, the last date for which information is available, the MOJ was allocated a budget of less than 2 percent of the national budget, an increase of 1 percent from 2011.(70, 74) The Government lacks procedures for identifying victims of the worst forms of child labor and referring them to social services.(44)

Military courts have failed to prosecute any individual for suspected recruitment and use of child soldiers since 2006, despite holding numerous individuals in custody based, in part, on allegations of such crimes.(48) The Government did, however, take steps to initiate criminal proceedings in several cases during the reporting period. Following an arrest warrant issued by the Military Prosecutor in November 2013, former rebel group Nyatura Commander Sieru Muchomba Bahani—accused of recruitment and use of children—was arrested in Equateur Province in February 2014 and awaits trial.(40) In 2014, FARDC Brigadier General Goda Supka Emery was indicted by the High Military Court in Kinshasa with crimes against humanity and war crimes, including the recruitment of children.(8) In April 2014, suspected child recruiter Mahanganiko Kasai (alias “Manga”), of the armed group *Patriotes Résistants Mayi Mayi* (PRM) was arrested and awaits trial in Ndolo military prison.(75) In August 2014, Colonel Habarugira Rangira Marcel, a senior Nyatura commander accused of recruitment and use of children, was arrested by the FARDC in North Kivu.(40) After years of delay, the trial against Lieutenant Colonel Bedi Mobuli Engangela commenced in August 2014 in the Military Court of South Kivu. In December 2014, he was charged with and convicted of crimes against humanity, but not with child recruitment, despite existing evidence and advocacy by the UN Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO).(40)

Some children associated with armed groups were detained, interrogated, and beaten, despite the enactment of a directive that requires that all children in detention for their association with armed groups be immediately transferred to the UN.(8, 38, 46) For example, in March 2014, the Commander of FARDC’s Kamina Camp refused to hand over 44 children identified as associated with Mayi Mayi groups that surrendered to the FARDC. In April 2014, in response to a letter from the Vice Prime Minister requesting the FARDC to facilitate UNICEF and its partners’ efforts to demobilize and reintegrate children, 24 children were separated, but 20 remained at a military base for an additional period of time.(38, 46) In another documented case, a 17-year-old boy formerly associated with FRPI was severely beaten by a FARDC soldier.(40) In 2014, the UN and Congolese partners secured the release of 121 children from government detention centers; many of these children were detained because of alleged association with armed groups.(3, 8)

In 2014, MONUSCO trained 183 members of the Congolese National Police, as well as 1,514 FARDC soldiers, on child protection and the UN-backed action plan to end the recruitment and use of child soldiers.(3) A foreign government provided training on human rights law, including human trafficking, to 121 police officials, who were subsequently deployed to the mining, border, and territorial police; the foreign government also trained more than 585 FARDC members on the issue of child soldiers.(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 6).

Table 6. Mechanisms to Coordinate Government Efforts on Child Labor

Coordinating Body	Role & Description
National Committee to Combat the Worst Forms of Child Labor (NCCL)	Coordinate activities that include compiling data on the nature and extent of child labor, preventing and withdrawing children from engaging in the worst forms of child labor, conducting public awareness campaigns, and building the capacity of Government officials and civil society to combat exploitative child labor.(27, 70) Led by the MOL and composed of members from the Ministry of Social Affairs, Humanitarian Action and National Solidarity (MINAS); MOJ; local NGOs; and civil society.(18)
Ministry of Defense’s Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration Commission (UEPNDDR)	Coordinate the identification, verification, and release of child soldiers by collaborating with the UN Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, UNICEF, and NGOs.(3, 46) Refer identified children to these partners. U.S. Embassy contacts report, however, that coordination is not led by UEPNDDR, but by international and local partners in the field.(3) Provide a signed “attestation” stating the demobilized children have completed a reintegration program.(3)

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Table 6. Mechanisms to Coordinate Government Efforts on Child Labor (cont)

Coordinating Body	Role & Description
Joint Technical Working Group (JTWG) on the Implementation of the UN-backed Action Plan	Coordinate implementation of the UN-backed action plan to end the recruitment and use of child soldiers. Led by Ministry of Defense and includes representatives from the Ministry of Interior, MOJ, MINAS, MOL, and MOGFC, among others. Held 12 meetings and was replicated on the provincial level in three provinces in 2014.(3)
Provincial Worst Forms of Child Labor Committees in Kasai Oriental, Kolwezi, and Mongbwalu	Coordinate activities to combat child labor at the provincial level.(70)
Provincial JTWG on the implementation of the UN-backed Action Plan	Coordinate implementation of the UN-backed action plan to end the recruitment and use of child soldiers at the provincial level. Established in North Kivu, South Kivu, and Orientale in 2014.(3)

During the reporting period, the National Committee to Combat the Worst Forms of Child Labor (NCCL) neither met nor received funding from the central Government.(1, 11, 18) In 2010, the MOL issued a decree nominating members for the NCCL's permanent secretariat. However, research found no evidence demonstrating that this decree had been implemented.(27, 70) In October 2013, the Government published a decree authorizing the creation of committees to combat child labor at the provincial level and extending applicable MOL activities to the provinces.(3, 18) However, the Government has not funded the three existing provincial committees and did not establish additional committees during the reporting period; research found no evidence that the existing committees were operational in 2014.(11, 70)

The national Joint Technical Working Group (JTWG) that oversees implementation of the UN-backed action plan to end the recruitment and use of child soldiers held 12 meetings during the year and appointed two FARDC officers to serve as child protection focal points in North Kivu.(3) In March 2014, the Ministry of Interior and Security issued a letter to provincial governors requesting they put in place provincial JTWGs in order to ensure the implementation of the action plan.(40) Provincial JTWGs were established in South Kivu in June, in North Kivu in August, in Orientale in September, and in Katanga in October.(3, 40) In July 2014, President Kabila appointed Jeanine Mabunda Liyoko as presidential adviser on sexual violence and child recruitment, and provided funding for the establishment of her office.(1, 3, 8, 68)

V. GOVERNMENT POLICIES ON THE WORST FORMS OF CHILD LABOR

The Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo has established policies related to child labor, including its worst forms (Table 7).

Table 7. Policies Related to Child Labor

Policy	Description
National Action Plan to Combat the Worst Forms of Child Labor (2012 – 2020)	Aims to eliminate the worst forms of child labor in the Democratic Republic of the Congo by 2020. Promotes the enforcement of legislation on the worst forms of child labor, awareness raising, education, prevention and reintegration services, and monitoring and evaluation efforts.(27, 36)
UN-Backed Action Plan to End the Recruitment and Use of Child Soldiers	Seeks to end the recruitment and use of child soldiers within the Government's security services, including the armed forces. Implemented by the Ministry of Defense, the four components of this action plan include identifying children serving in the armed forces, providing reintegration services to those children, establishing accountability measures against the perpetrators, and creating a partnership framework for the UN and the Government.(3, 18, 37, 46, 76, 77)
National Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration Plan	Established in December 2013; amended in July 2014 to revise the process of disarmament and demobilization to require the verification and separation of children associated with armed groups as soon as their armed groups surrender or they are captured.(3, 40)
Human Rights Due Diligence in Mineral Supply Chains	In 2011, the Government, representatives of artisanal miners, mineral buyers and traders, and civil society groups signed a code of conduct to increase transparency and prohibit the employment of children in mines.(70, 78) The Ministry of Mines established a multi-stakeholder validation process to provide baseline certification of artisanal sites as free of illegal taxation by armed groups or criminal Congolese National Army (FARDC) elements, dangerous work conditions, and child labor. Of the more than 175 sites that had been assessed by the end of 2014, well over 100 mines received a "green" or acceptable rating following the baseline assessment, indicating, among other things, that child labor was not present.(3, 79) The initiative does not include protocols for assisting child victims of forced labor on the inspected sites.(79)

Table 7. Policies Related to Child Labor (cont)

Policy	Description
National Action Plan for Orphans and Vulnerable Children (2010 – 2014)*	Aims to provide orphans and vulnerable children with improved access to education and psychosocial, medical, and nutritional support.(69, 80)
Growth and Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (2011 – 2015)*	Seeks to improve living conditions and access to social services for vulnerable groups, including children, by 2015.(51)

* Child labor elimination and prevention strategies do not appear to have been integrated into this policy.

The National Action Plan to Combat the Worst Forms of Child Labor has not been comprehensively implemented, largely due to the Government’s failure to budget adequate funding. As a result, implementation is dependent on external support, which has not been received. In addition, Parliament has not passed legislation implementing the action plan, limiting the plan’s effectiveness.(1, 81) In addition, although three provincial committees have action plans to combat the worst forms of child labor, research was unable to obtain any information to assess the implementation of those plans.(27, 70)

UN sources reported that the Government cooperated fully and collaborated closely with the UN to identify and remove children from the FARDC, allowing frequent and often unfettered access to its bases. During the reporting period, FARDC commanders proactively requested that UN agencies and partners screen for children in certain locations.(3) The UN recorded the removal of at least 1,030 children from armed groups in 2014, largely as a result of surrenders following the FARDC’s military efforts against armed groups.(3) In February 2014, the FARDC issued a special edition of its newsletter dedicated to children and the actions taken to implement the UN-backed action plan.(40)

VI. SOCIAL PROGRAMS TO ADDRESS CHILD LABOR

In 2014, the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo funded and participated in programs that include the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor, including its worst forms (Table 8).

Table 8. Social Programs to Address Child Labor

Program	Description
Program to Demobilize, Disarm, and Reintegrate	Government program that receives support from USAID, the World Bank, Sweden, and Japan through the end of 2015; aims to reintegrate children associated with armed groups in North and South Kivu.(27) Throughout 2014, the Government worked with the UN and local partners to separate at least 1,030 children from armed groups and transport them to NGO-run centers for temporary housing, care, and vocational training prior to returning them to their home communities.(1, 3, 8) With USAID support, UNICEF provided services to 2,172 children who separated from armed groups during 2014.(82)
Global Action Program on Child Labor Issues Project	USDOL-funded project implemented by the ILO in approximately 40 countries to support the priorities of the Roadmap for Achieving the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labor by 2016, established by the Hague Global Child Labor Conference in 2010. Aims to build the capacity of the Government and develop strategic policies to address the elimination of child labor in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.(83)
Growth with Governance in the Mineral Sector Project‡	Government-implemented project that aims to eliminate child labor and the presence of children from mines in Kolwezi by raising awareness of child labor among parents and by providing children with extracurricular activities, school catch-up classes, school clubs, and income-generating activities for families.(84)
Street Children Project	\$10 million World Bank–funded, 5-year project to prevent children from engaging in street work and provide support services for street children.(69)
Decent Work Country Program (2013 – 2016)	\$44.5 million ILO-implemented program to contribute to the consolidation of peace and reconstruction in the Democratic Republic of the Congo by promoting decent work that integrates social protection in a context of broader social dialogue and respect for national and international labor standards. Prioritizes the promotion of decent work for girls and boys in a post-conflict context of sustainable development and improved labor productivity by promoting social dialogue, fundamental principles and rights at work, and social protection. Will provide advocacy for the adoption and the implementation by the Government of a National Action Plan to combat the worst forms of child labor.(85)
School Rehabilitation Project*‡	Government project that provided \$100 million to rehabilitate 1,000 schools across the country.(86)

* The impact of this program on child labor does not appear to have been studied.

‡ Program is funded by the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

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The Government works with international partners to provide assistance and support to demobilized child soldiers, but the programs are not sufficient to fully address the extent of the problem. Reintegrated child soldiers remain vulnerable to re-recruitment, as stigmatization, threats from former colleagues, and lack of adequate rehabilitation services for children suffering severe psychological trauma may lead them to rejoin their old unit or to be recruited by another armed group. UNICEF partners report that nearly 10 percent of child soldiers who completed their programs are re-recruited by armed groups.(2, 3, 39) More than half of the child soldiers returning from armed conflict do not have access to reintegration services, and the programs available do not adequately respond to the medical, psychological, and economic needs of former child soldiers.(42) Limited evidence also suggests that girls do not enter Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration (DDR) programs because they fear being stigmatized and lack awareness about their rights and options.(35, 87) The UN and other organizations have called on the Government to make DDR more accessible and effective for girls.(42, 88)

Despite the Katanga Provincial Ministry of Interior's effort to manage a center for street children in Lubumbashi, children continued to live and work on the streets in Katanga and throughout the country. There is a need for the Government to strengthen its efforts to provide street children with food, shelter, and health care.(24, 25, 70, 73) Child labor in artisanal mining is prevalent in the provinces of Katanga, Eastern and Western Kasai, North and South Kivu, and Orientale.(1, 2). However, research did not find evidence of any social programs to protect these children. The existing multi-stakeholder validation process of artisanal mining sites does not include protocols for assisting child victims of forced labor identified on the inspected sites.(79)

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 the Democratic Republic of the Congo (Table 9).

Table 9. Suggested Government Actions to Eliminate Child Labor, Including its Worst Forms

Area	Suggested Action	Year(s) Suggested
Laws	Raise penalties for the use of forced or compulsory labor to deter violations.	2013 – 2014
	Raise the compulsory education age to 16 to be equivalent to the minimum age for work.	2013 – 2014
	Issue appropriate decrees to ensure that enacted laws are implemented.	2013 – 2014
Enforcement	Implement President Kabila's August 2010 declaration and Circular No. MINEPSP/CABMIN/008/2010 that provide for free and compulsory education.	2009 – 2014
	Ensure that the MOJ; MOGFC; and MOL have sufficient funding, staffing levels, communications infrastructure, facilities, transportation, and training to carry out their mandate and address the worst forms of child labor.	2011 – 2014
	Systematically collect, monitor, and make available information on child labor complaints, types and numbers of inspections conducted, citations issued, prosecutions undertaken, and the application of penalties.	2009 – 2014
	Facilitate increased cooperation between the inspection services and the justice system to enable appropriate law enforcement action to be carried to completion.	2014
	Establish procedures for identifying victims of the worst forms of child labor and referring them to social services.	2013 – 2014
	Bring to justice and hold accountable those individuals who have recruited and used child soldiers, including through timely and systematic investigation and prosecution.	2014
	Implement directive N05/00/CAG/ANR/195/2013, which requires that children in detention for their association with armed groups be handed over to UN child protection actors for reintegration.	2013 – 2014
Coordination	Implement the 2010 decree to nominate members of the NCCL's permanent secretariat and ensure that the NCCL meets on a regular basis.	2014
	Establish committees to combat the worst forms of child labor in all provinces and ensure that the committees and the NCCL are funded.	2012 – 2014
Government Policies	Continue to implement the code of conduct that prohibits the employment of children in mines through the multi-stakeholder validation process, which assesses mining sites for the presence of child labor.	2012 – 2014
	Provide funds for the implementation of local and national plans to combat the worst forms of child labor.	2011 – 2014

Table 9. Suggested Government Actions to Eliminate Child Labor, Including its Worst Forms (cont)

Area	Suggested Action	Year(s) Suggested
Government Policies	Integrate child labor elimination and prevention strategies into existing policies.	2014
	Ensure the full implementation of the action plan to end the recruitment and use of child soldiers, including at the provincial level.	2009 – 2014
Social Programs	Improve access to education by registering all children at birth, developing programs that assist internally displaced children, building additional schools, and ensuring that schools are safe.	2012 – 2014
	Conduct a stand-alone child labor survey.	2013 – 2014
	Assess the potential impact of existing social programs on addressing the worst forms of child labor.	2013 – 2014
	Ensure adequate medical, psychological, economic, and other support services for children demobilizing from armed groups and integrate stigmatization, gender, and re-recruitment concerns into programs to reintegrate such children.	2009 – 2014
	Raise awareness of relevant child labor laws to increase the likelihood of compliance.	2012 – 2014
	Expand efforts to address the needs of former child soldiers, children working in artisanal mining, and children working on the streets and in other informal settings.	2009 – 2014

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