

Lebanon

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

In 2000, the Government of Lebanon became a member of ILO-IPEC to cooperate in the elimination of child labor.¹⁴³⁴ The Ministry of Labor and UNICEF also have prepared a manual on the rights of the child and his/her rights at work, which currently is being distributed.¹⁴³⁵ In 1994, the Ministry of Social Affairs established the Higher Council for Childhood to coordinate efforts among government and NGO bodies concerning children. In October 1998, the Council developed a national strategy and plan of action to limit child labor in Lebanon.¹⁴³⁶

Incidence and Nature of Child Labor

In 2000, UNICEF estimated that 45 percent of children between the ages of 5 and 14 were working in Lebanon.¹⁴³⁷ Children are employed in the assembly of electrical and electronic equipment, in the production of textiles, in the preparation of food products, in the furniture trade, and in the fashion industry.¹⁴³⁸ Working children also serve as miners, stone cutters, fishermen, and agricultural laborers.¹⁴³⁹ There are no indications that children served in the government armed forces. However, before the Israeli withdrawal from South Lebanon in June 2000, the armed militias of both sides, Hezbollah and the South Lebanese Army, reportedly conscripted youth

¹⁴³⁴ ILO-IPEC, *International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour: Programme Countries*, at http://www.ilo.org/public/english/standards/ipec/about/countries/t_country.htm.

¹⁴³⁵ U.S. Embassy–Beirut, unclassified telegram no. 3532, September 2000 [hereinafter unclassified telegram 3532].

¹⁴³⁶ The National Plan focuses on preventing children from entering the labor market at an early age, protecting children who entered the labor market from exploitation and harm, and raising awareness of the issue. See UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, *Consideration of Reports Submitted by States Parties Under Article 44 of the Convention: Second Periodic Reports of States Parties Due in 1998, Addendum, Lebanon*, CRC/C/70/Add. 8 (Geneva, September 2000) [hereinafter *Second Periodic Reports*], at 54. See also unclassified telegram 3532, and ILO, *The Effective Abolition of Child Labour* (Geneva, 2000) [hereinafter *Effective Abolition of Child Labour*], 306.

¹⁴³⁷ *Preliminary Report on the Multiple Cluster Survey on the Situation of Children in Lebanon* (Lebanon: Central Bureau of Statistics and UNICEF, February 2001). See also *Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 2* at <http://www.ucw-project.org>.

¹⁴³⁸ *Second Periodic Reports*, 126.

¹⁴³⁹ The Union of Southern Tobacco Growers estimates that roughly 25,000 children ages 7 to 14 work in the tobacco fields during cultivation and harvesting. Ninety percent of these child agricultural laborers work for their families. See *Second Periodic Reports* at 118, 126.

under 18 as soldiers.¹⁴⁴⁰ There also have been reports of child prostitution,¹⁴⁴¹ as well as bonded child labor.¹⁴⁴²

On March 16, 1998, the Government of Lebanon adopted legislation providing compulsory primary school education, which is currently to the age of 12.¹⁴⁴³ The cost of education at the primary and secondary levels is problematic for the lower and middle classes in Lebanon. Tuition fees range from USD 40 to 80 per year for public schools, USD 500 in semi-private schools, and USD 1,000 to 6,000 in private schools.¹⁴⁴⁴ The Government of Lebanon provides poor families with an allowance of 10,000 Lebanese pounds (USD 7) to cover part of the public school fees.¹⁴⁴⁵ In 1996, the gross primary enrollment rate was 110.7 percent, and the net primary enrollment rate was 76.1 percent.¹⁴⁴⁶ Roughly 3 percent of Lebanese children aged 10 to 17 are illiterate, and 3 percent are semi-illiterate.¹⁴⁴⁷

¹⁴⁴⁰ The minimum age for official military service is 18. Hezbollah allegedly recruited children as young as 10 years old into its organization. Witnesses have stated that youth between ages 14 and 17 joined the South Lebanese Army (SLA) voluntarily or by force. Many families allegedly were expelled from South Lebanon when their children tried to desert the SLA. Since the Israeli withdrawal, the SLA has disbanded, and Hezbollah supposedly has ceased child recruitment. See Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers, *Global Report 2001: Lebanon* (London, May 2001), at <http://www.child-soldiers.org>. See also Human Rights Watch, *Persona Non Grata: The Expulsion of Civilians from Israeli-Occupied Lebanon* (New York, July 1999), at <http://www.hrw.org/reports/1999/lebanon/index.htm>.

¹⁴⁴¹ Between 1993 and 1996, Internal Security Forces reported 23 cases of solicitation and prostitution of minors under age 18. A report by *Deutsche Presse—Agentur* asserted that runaway Lebanese children, as young as 12 years old, were being forced into prostitution. See *Second Periodic Reports* at 148. See also *Human Rights Report on Trafficking of Women and Children, Lebanon*, The Protection Project Database [hereinafter *Human Rights Report*], at <http://www.protectionproject.org>.

¹⁴⁴² *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2000—Lebanon* (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of State, 2001) [hereinafter *Country Reports 2000*], Section 6c, at <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2000/nea/800.htm>.

¹⁴⁴³ Decree No. 686, as cited in *Second Periodic Reports* at 60.

¹⁴⁴⁴ Unclassified telegram 3532. See also *Second Periodic Reports* at 61.

¹⁴⁴⁵ Unclassified telegram 3532. Currency conversion at <http://www.carosta.de/frames/convert.htm> on 1/29/02.

¹⁴⁴⁶ *World Development Indicators 2001* (Washington, DC: World Bank, 2001) [CD-ROM]. The 1996 Survey of Population and Housing placed the gross primary enrollment rate at 97 percent, with intermediate and secondary gross enrollment figures at 88 percent and 58 percent, respectively. The net primary enrollment rate was 83 percent. In addition, the 1996 Survey and Population and Housing found that 25,354 children between ages 6 and 18 never attended school, including 11,953 children in the 6 to 11 age group. See also *Second Periodic Reports* at 62.

¹⁴⁴⁷ *Second Periodic Reports* at 69, 70.

Child Labor Laws and Enforcement

The Labor Code of 1996 sets the minimum age for employment at 13 years.¹⁴⁴⁸ Children under 15 are prohibited from working in industrial enterprises, which are physically demanding or detrimental to their health, and youth below the age of 16 may not participate in dangerous work or work which may endanger their life, health, or morals.¹⁴⁴⁹ Children under age 18 are not allowed to work more than 6 hours a day and are prohibited from working overtime.¹⁴⁵⁰ In addition, children under 18 may not work in the evenings, during daily or weekly rest periods, or during holidays.¹⁴⁵¹ Adolescents between ages 13 to 18 must pass a medical examination to ensure that they can undertake the work for which they are to be engaged, and the prospective employer must request the identity card of the child to verify his/her age.¹⁴⁵² The Penal Code bans the procurement of females under the age of 21 for prostitution, with a penalty of imprisonment for at least 1 year and a fine of no less than 200,000 Lebanese pounds (USD 137).¹⁴⁵³

¹⁴⁴⁸ Code du Travail [hereinafter Code du Travail], Titre Premier, Chapitre 2, Article 22, at <http://www.natlex.ilo.org/txt/F93LBN01.htm>.

¹⁴⁴⁹ Decree No. 700 of May 25, 1999, lists the types of work that could endanger adolescents' lives, health, or morals. Children under age 16 may not work in the following areas: cold storage factories; stove ash removal; storage and stowage in the maritime industry; textile industry; tapestry weaving; aluminum industry; and mechanical carpentry. All children under age 17 are banned from the following work: bomb manufacturing; power generation and transmission; reinforcements in railways; demolition; crystal or glass industry; match manufacturing; underground work in mines and stone quarries; tanneries; transportation; handling of poisoning material; working with firemen; using derricks and digging machines; working with dangerous or wild animals; and employment that entails working close to fire, such as in bakeries. Employment that could jeopardize the health of adolescents is in the following areas: tobacco manufacturing, manufacturing and use of agro-chemicals, papers and printing, the soap industry, and the rubber industry. In addition, work in the following sectors has been determined to be harmful to the morals of children: street commerce; courts and prisons; production or sale of alcoholic beverages; serving as a receptionist in night clubs; bars; criminal acts; household service; and service in entertainment venues such as nightclubs, casinos, circuses, and gambling. *See* Code du Travail at Titre Premier, Chapitre 2, Article 23. *See also* unclassified telegram 3532.

¹⁴⁵⁰ Decree No. 91 of June 14, 1999 amended Article 23 of the Labor Code. *See* unclassified telegram 3532. Also, per Decree No. 91, children under age 18 are not allowed to work between 7 p.m. and 7 a.m.

¹⁴⁵¹ Unclassified telegram 3532.

¹⁴⁵² Code du Travail at Titre Premier, Chapitre 2, Articles 22, 24.

¹⁴⁵³ Article 525 of the Penal Code further provides for imprisonment of from 2 months to 2 years and a fine from 50,000 to 500,000 pounds (USD 34 to 343) if an individual keeps a person against his/her will in a brothel or has coerced him/her to practice prostitution. Article 503 of the Penal Code calls for 5 years of forced labor for anyone using force or intimidation and thereby causing the victim to commit a sexual act before marriage; the penalty is 7 years of forced labor if the victim is under age 15. *See* Penal Code of Lebanon, Articles 503 and 524, as cited in "Legislation of Interpol Member States on Sexual Offences Against Children: Lebanon," Interpol, at <http://www.interpol.int/Public/Children/SexualAbuse/National>

The provisions of the Labor Code do not apply to domestic workers in private homes, workers in enterprises held by their family, agricultural unions with no ties to commerce and industry, and daily or temporary workers of government departments and municipal services.¹⁴⁵⁴ Forced labor is not prohibited by law.¹⁴⁵⁵ Employers and parents or guardians are to be held responsible for any violations of labor laws concerning children,¹⁴⁵⁶ and convictions of anyone violating such laws result in fines between 2,500 and 25,000 Lebanese pounds (USD 2 to 17).¹⁴⁵⁷ Lebanon has not ratified ILO Convention 138, but ratified ILO Convention 182 on September 11, 2001.¹⁴⁵⁸

Laws/csaLebanon.asp. *See also* Penal Code of Lebanon, Article 525, as cited in The Protection Project Database at <http://www.protectionproject.org>, and *Human Rights Report*. Currency conversion at <http://www.carosta.de/frames/convert.htm> on 1/29/02.

¹⁴⁵⁴ *Effective Abolition of Child Labour*, 303.

¹⁴⁵⁵ *Country Reports 2000* at Section 6c.

¹⁴⁵⁶ Sentences are usually light, as it is viewed as unrealistic to impose severe penalties on families who depend on income earned by children. However, efforts are being made to increase civil fines. *See* Code du Travail at Titre Premier, Chapitre 2, Article 30. *See also* unclassified telegram 3532.

¹⁴⁵⁷ U.S. Embassy–Beirut, unclassified telegram no. 2920, November 2001. Currency conversion at <http://www.carosta.de/frames/convert.htm> on 1/29/02.

¹⁴⁵⁸ ILOLEX database: Lebanon at <http://ilolex.ilo.ch:1567>.

NOTE: Hard copies of all Web citations are on file.