

Egypt

The Government of Egypt passed a comprehensive anti-trafficking law that expands the definition of trafficking crimes as well as the rights of victims. The Government also conducted a comprehensive nationwide child labor survey during the year. Significant gaps remain, however, in the legal and enforcement framework to protect children, especially in the agriculture and domestic service sectors, where worst forms of child labor are known to occur. It is not yet known how the recent political changes will affect Egypt's efforts to combat child labor.

Statistics on Working Children and School Attendance

Children	Age	Percent
Working	5-14 yrs.	6.7*
Attending School	6-14 yrs.	88.1
Combining Work and School	5-14 yrs.	6.3

* Population of working children: 993,417



Prevalence and Sectoral Distribution of the Worst Forms of Child Labor

Children in Egypt are engaged in the worst forms of child labor, particularly in agriculture and domestic service.¹⁸⁹⁰ An estimated two-thirds of working children are in the agriculture sector.¹⁸⁹¹ Such children may work seasonally or year-round and often rotate between various crops throughout the year.¹⁸⁹² In particular, seasonal child labor is common in cotton fields, where children remove pests and harvest the crops.¹⁸⁹³ Children working on farms are reported to work long hours in extreme temperatures, may not receive promised wages and may be threatened or physically abused by their employers.¹⁸⁹⁴ Children's work in agriculture may involve the use of dangerous machinery and tools and exposure to pesticides.

Children are also exploited in domestic service. While reliable data is not available on the number of child domestic workers across Egypt, qualitative studies suggest that it is common and has the

potential to expose children to long hours of work, dangerous activities and physical, psychological and sexual exploitation by their employer.¹⁸⁹⁵

Limited evidence suggests that the worst forms of child labor are used in the production of bricks, glass and leather.¹⁸⁹⁶ Children are also engaged in dangerous occupations, such as fishing, blacksmithing, construction, carpentry, mechanical repair and mining.¹⁸⁹⁷ In addition, children work in limestone quarrying, where they risk serious injury or death from rock cutting machines, respiratory ailments from limestone dust and intense heat.¹⁸⁹⁸

Many children work on the streets and are exposed to a variety of hazards that may include exposure to severe weather, criminal elements, as well as involvement in traffic accidents. Street children are at particular risk of forced begging or prostitution.¹⁸⁹⁹ They survive by peddling on the streets, begging, shoe-shining, collecting garbage and carrying goods.¹⁹⁰⁰

Children are victims of commercial sexual exploitation. Child sex tourism exists in Cairo, Alexandria and Luxor.¹⁹⁰¹ In return for payments, some parents sell girls into brief “summer” marriages to wealthy foreign men.¹⁹⁰²

Egyptian children are trafficked internally, often to urban centers and tourist destinations. Street children are especially vulnerable to internal trafficking for forced begging or prostitution. Internal child trafficking also occurs for domestic service, agricultural labor, temporary marriages and child sex tourism.¹⁹⁰³

Laws and Regulations on Child Labor

The Child Law, Law No. 126 of the Year 2008, sets the minimum age for regular employment at 15, and at age 12 for seasonal employment.¹⁹⁰⁴ The Labor Law, Law No. 12 of the Year 2003,

14 as the minimum age for work. The Labor Law protects working children by limiting working hours and mandating shift breaks. However, it explicitly excludes domestic work, work in family businesses, and children working in agriculture from minimum age and other restrictions.¹⁹⁰⁶

Children under age 18 are barred from 44 specific hazardous occupations under the Ministry of Manpower and Migration’s (MOMM) Decree 118, article 1.¹⁹⁰⁷ These prohibited occupations include working underground in mines and quarries, welding, working in tanneries and lifting heavy objects.¹⁹⁰⁸ However, some dangerous tasks that children perform are missing from this legislation, particularly in the sectors of agriculture and domestic service. For instance, while children are prohibited from preparing or spraying pesticides, they are not prohibited from working in the crops just after pesticides have been applied.

Decree 118, article 2 prohibits children younger than age 16 that from work that exposes them to physical, psychological or sexual exploitation, or to chemical, biological or mechanical dangers, but it does not define these terms.¹⁹⁰⁹ Children between age 16 and 18 are not protected from these forms of danger and exploitation.

The Child Law and Penal Code criminalize some worst forms of child labor, including child trafficking, sexual exploitation and pornography.¹⁹¹⁰ A 2008 amendment to the Civil Status Law sets the minimum age for marriage at 18 to prevent young girls from the sexual exploitation of temporary marriages.¹⁹¹¹

In April 2010, the Government adopted Law No. 64 of 2010 Regarding Combating Human Trafficking, which criminalizes trafficking and mandates more severe penalties for those convicted of trafficking of children than previous legislation. The Trafficking Law broadly defines trafficking to cover all forms of exploitation, including child prostitution and pornography, begging and forced servitude, and it recognizes

	C138, Minimum Age	✓
	C182, Worst Forms of Child Labor	✓
	CRC	✓
	CRC Optional Protocol on Armed Conflict	✓
	CRC Optional Protocol on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution, and Child Pornography	✓
	Palermo Protocol on Trafficking in Persons	✓
	Minimum Age for Work	15
	Minimum Age for Hazardous Work	18
	Compulsory Education Age	15
	Free Public Education	Yes

allows children as young as age 12 to work as apprentices.¹⁹⁰⁵ The lower minimum ages for seasonal employment and apprenticeship programs fall below the international standard of

a trafficked person as a victim and mandates State responsibility to provide protection and assistance.¹⁹¹²

Military conscription is mandatory for men in Egypt at age 18, according to the Constitution of Egypt and the 1980 Military and National Service Act.¹⁹¹³

The Constitution of Egypt guarantees the right to education, and the Child Law makes it compulsory and free at the primary and preparatory stages.¹⁹¹⁴ Compulsory education is mandated for a total of nine years, from approximately ages 6 to 15, depending when a child starts school.¹⁹¹⁵ However, in practice, the costs of teacher fees, books and uniforms are prohibitive for many families, and some children are not sent to school.¹⁹¹⁶

Institutional Mechanisms for Coordination and Enforcement

MOMM maintains a national committee to coordinate government efforts to combat the worst forms of child labor and develop a National Action Plan.¹⁹¹⁷ The Ministry of State for Family and Population's (MSFP) General Committee for Child Protection coordinates the National Protection Program, which identifies and monitors children at risk of exploitative labor.¹⁹¹⁸ This Committee is comprised of representatives from the Ministries of Justice, Interior, Education and Health.¹⁹¹⁹ Child protection committees are organized at the governorate level, with subcommittees at each police station.¹⁹²⁰

The new Law 64 of 2010 Regarding Combating Human Trafficking gives the Prime Minister a mandate to establish a National Committee to Combat Human Trafficking to coordinate the national policies, plans and programs.¹⁹²¹ Research has not confirmed whether the jurisdiction and structure of this Committee have been established or whether the Committee is active.

MOMM is responsible for enforcing child labor laws and regulations. Labor inspectors from

MOMM have the authority to inspect businesses, industrial facilities and commercial agricultural enterprises for legal compliance with child labor regulations.¹⁹²² Research has not identified the number or result of labor inspections in 2010. There is no evidence that labor inspections are conducted on noncommercial farms.¹⁹²³ This presents a serious potential gap in enforcement, since the majority of working children are found in agriculture. In addition, there are no monitoring or enforcement mechanisms to protect children working in domestic service.¹⁹²⁴

During the reporting period, MOMM institutionalized a child labor monitoring system database and began to mainstream it at the national level, and provided training for both the technology support staff and the child labor unit staff.¹⁹²⁵ The system manages information on the work and education status of children, their needs and services received.

The Ministry of the Interior (MOI) and the Public Prosecutor's Office enforce laws and regulations prohibiting trafficking and commercial sexual exploitation of children. MOI has established a special unit to combat child trafficking.¹⁹²⁶ In early 2010, the Government investigated and charged five suspects for facilitating the temporary marriage of an under-aged girl to an older foreign man.¹⁹²⁷

Government Policies on the Worst Forms of Child Labor

The Government of Egypt continues to implement the "First National Strategy for the Elimination of Child Labor," which is to be operationalized through a National Action Plan. Research has not identified whether the National Action Plan was drafted or finalized by the MOMM committee during the reporting period.¹⁹²⁸

During the year, MOMM and ILO conducted a comprehensive survey of child labor in Egypt. The survey was implemented by the Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics, the

government statistical agency.¹⁹²⁹ It will provide statistics on the nature and prevalence of child labor in Egypt to guide policies and programs to address the problem. Although complete, this study has not yet been published.

Social Programs to Eliminate or Prevent the Worst Forms of Child Labor

MSFP, through the National Protection Program and the National Council for Childhood and Motherhood (NCCM), have implemented pilot projects to withdraw children from exploitative child labor and increase family income.¹⁹³⁰ NCCM manages a 24-hour child help hotline and has implemented awareness-raising campaigns against the worst forms of child labor.¹⁹³¹

The Government is participating in a USDOL-funded \$5.5 million project from 2006 to 2011, which provides educational and other social services to 10,900 children targeted to be withdrawn or prevented from exploitative labor, primarily in the informal sector. This project has created 97 community schools and developed an innovative apprenticeship program for older youth to safely learn a craft.¹⁹³² The project has also provided livelihood support to families of child laborers, including take-home food rations and income-generation training for mothers. The project also developed a system to monitor child labor and a tracking database, both of which have been rolled out nationally under MOMM.¹⁹³³

In addition, the Government is participating in a new USDOL-funded \$9.5 million project from

2010 to 2014 to prevent and withdraw 16,000 children from the worst forms of child labor in agriculture in Upper Egypt and the Delta region through access to education and apprenticeship opportunities and through livelihood support to households.¹⁹³⁴

While these programs serve an important demonstration effect, they are not sufficient to meet the needs of the large number of children engaged in the worst forms of child labor across Egypt, especially those working in agriculture and domestic service.

The Government of Egypt is implementing a number of social, education and poverty reduction programs, such as food subsidies, pilot conditional cash transfers, targeted support to the poorest 1000 Villages and nonformal education through the Girls Education Initiative.¹⁹³⁵ The question of whether each of these programs has had an impact on child labor does not appear to have been addressed.

NCCM's anti-trafficking unit is mandated to increase awareness about trafficking in Egypt and to provide services to child victims of forced labor and trafficking.¹⁹³⁶ MSFP also launched a second awareness-raising campaign to address the commercial sexual exploitation of girls through temporary summer marriages in Lower Egypt.¹⁹³⁷ However, these programs do not appear to be sufficient to curb the sexual exploitation of girls, especially through the practice of temporary marriages.

Based on the reporting above, the following actions would advance the reduction of the worst forms of child labor in Egypt:

IN THE AREA OF LAWS AND REGULATIONS:

- Establish a minimum age of work for children involved in family businesses, domestic service and agriculture.
- Amend legislation to raise the minimum age for children's seasonal labor or apprenticeships.
- Amend Decree 118 to prohibit all children under age 18 from involvement in work activities that expose them to physical, psychological or sex exploitation, or to physical, chemical, biological or mechanical dangers; and expand the current list of 44 hazardous occupations to include specific dangerous tasks in agriculture and other sectors for which there is evidence of worst forms of child labor.
- Ensure that all children have access to free education.

IN THE AREA OF COORDINATION AND ENFORCEMENT:

- Create mechanisms to protect child domestic servants, and children working on farms.
- Activate the National Committee to Combat Human Trafficking.
- Publish and publicly disseminate enforcement data on labor exploitation of children.

IN THE AREA OF POLICIES:

- Draft, publish and implement the National Action Plan to eliminate child labor.
- Publish and widely distribute the results of the SIMPOC national survey on child labor.

IN THE AREA OF PROGRAMS:

- Building on the lessons learned and best practices of past and current projects, develop or expand programs addressing the worst forms of child labor to protect a greater number of affected children, with a special focus on children involved in agriculture and domestic service.
- Assess the impact that existing social, education and poverty reduction programs may have on child labor.
- Expand awareness-raising campaigns and programs to prevent or protect girls from sexual exploitation.

¹⁸⁹⁰ Data provided in the chart at the beginning of this country report are based on UCW analysis of ILO SIMPOC, UNICEF MICS, and World Bank surveys, Child Economic Activity, School Attendance, and Combined Working and Studying Rates, 2005-2010. Data provided are from 2005. Reliable data on the worst forms of child labor are especially difficult to collect given the often hidden or illegal nature of the worst forms. As a result, statistics on children's work are reported here, which may or may not include the worst forms of child labor. For more information on sources used for these statistics, the definition of working children, and other indicators used in this report, please see the "Children's Work and Education Statistics: Sources and Definitions" section.

¹⁸⁹¹ U.S. Department of State, "Egypt," in *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices- 2010*, Washington, DC, April 8,

2011, 36; available from <http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/160456.pdf>.

¹⁸⁹² Dan McDougall, "Working flat out - the child labour behind your Egyptian cotton sheets," *The Observer*, June 8, 2008; available from <http://www.guardian.co.uk/society/2008/jun/08/childprotection.humanrights>.

¹⁸⁹³ Ibid.

¹⁸⁹⁴ Ibid. See also Gamal Nkrumah, "Picking on cotton," *Al-Ahram Weekly*, July 16, 2008; available from <http://weekly.ahram.org.eg/2008/905/feature.htm>. See also U.S. Department of State, "Egypt," in *Trafficking in Persons Report- 2010*, Washington, DC, June 14, 2010; available from <http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/142982.pdf>.

¹⁸⁹⁵ Yasmine M. Ahmed and Ray Jureidini, *An Exploratory Study on Child Domestic Workers in Egypt*, Report, Terre des hommes, American University of Cairo Center for Migration and Refugee Studies, Cairo, June 2010, page 1. See

also U.S. Embassy- Cairo, *reporting, February 16, 2010*, 211, section 2B.

¹⁸⁹⁶ WFP, *Rapid Assessment: Identification of Worst Forms of Child Labor in Beni Sweif, Assiut, Sohag and Red Sea*, Report, Cairo, May 2007. See also Waleed Abu al-Khair, “Child Labour in Egypt a Growing Problem,” Al-Shorfa.com, [online], October 14, 2010 [cited April 19, 2011]; available from http://www.al-shorfa.com/cocoon/meii/xhtml/en_GB/features/meii/features/main/2010/10/14/feature-02. See also The Associated Press, “Egypt: child workers a growing problem as food prices rise,” *International Herald Tribune*, [online], April 3, 2008 [cited April 19, 2011]; available from <http://www.crin.org/resources/infoDetail.asp?ID=17211>. See also L. and N. Koseleci Guarcello, *A profile of Cairo street children*, Report, Understanding Children’s Work, November 2009, page 5; available from http://www.ucw-project.org/Pages/bib_details.aspx?id=12225&Pag=0&Year=-1&Country=65&Author=-1. See also U.S. Department of State, “Country Reports- 2010: Egypt.”

¹⁸⁹⁷ WFP, *Rapid Assessment*. See also Integrated Regional Information Networks, “Egypt: Focus on child labour,” IRINnews.org, [online], June 28, 2010 [cited April 19, 2011]; available from <http://www.irinnews.org/Report.aspx?Reportid=89653>. See also Abu al-Khair, “Child Labour in Egypt a Growing Problem.”

¹⁸⁹⁸ Daily Star Egypt, “Children of the quarries,” *Daily News Egypt*, [online], April 10, 2006 [cited April 19, 2011]; available from <http://www.dailystaregypt.com/article.aspx?ArticleID=1153>.

¹⁸⁹⁹ U.S. Department of State, “Trafficking in Persons Report- 2010: Egypt.” See also U.S. Department of State, “Country Reports- 2010: Egypt,” 36.

¹⁹⁰⁰ Guarcello, *A profile of Cairo street children*, 1.

¹⁹⁰¹ U.S. Department of State, “Trafficking in Persons Report- 2010: Egypt.”

¹⁹⁰² Ibid. See also Y. Admon and L. Azuri, “In Egypt and Saudi Arabia, Conflict Escalates over Child Bride Marriages,” *The Middle East Media Research Institute*, [online], March 10, 2010 [cited April 19, 2011]; available from <http://www.freerepublic.com/focus/f-news/2469455/posts>. See also Heba El-Sherif, “Ministry starts campaign against underage, summer marriages,” *Daily News Egypt*, [online], July 15, 2010 [cited April 19, 2011]; available from http://www.thedailynewsegypt.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=121050&catid=1&Itemid=183. See also United Nations Human Rights Council, *Report of the Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons, especially women and children, Joy Ngozi Ezeilo, Egypt, Fourteenth Session*, May 20, 2010; available from <http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/hrcouncil/docs/14session/A.HRC.14.32.Add5.pdf>.

¹⁹⁰³ United Nations Human Rights Council, *Report of the Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons*. See also The Protection Project at The Johns Hopkins University School of Advanced International Studies, *A Human Rights Report on Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children: Egypt*, September 2010; available from <http://www.protectionproject.org/wp-content/uploads/2010/09/Egypt.pdf>. See also U.S. Department of State, “Trafficking in Persons Report- 2010: Egypt.”

¹⁹⁰⁴ Government of Egypt, *Law on Amending Provisions of the Child Law*, Law No. 126 of the Year 2008, (2008), article 3. See also Government of Egypt, *Child Law*, Law No. 12 of the Year 1996, (1996), article 64(18).

¹⁹⁰⁵ Government of Egypt, *Labor Law*, No. 12 of 2003, (2003), Chapter 3, article 99; available from www.egypt.gov.eg/english/laws/pdf/Book2.pdf. See also Government of Egypt, *Ministry of Manpower and Migration Decree 220 of the Year 2003*, (August 31, 2003).

¹⁹⁰⁶ Government of Egypt, *Labor Law*, articles 4, 101, 103.

¹⁹⁰⁷ Government of Egypt, *Ministry of Manpower and Migration Decree 118 of the Year 2003*, (June 30, 2003).

¹⁹⁰⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹⁰⁹ Ibid.

¹⁹¹⁰ Government of Egypt, *Child Law*, articles 65(19, 20), 291. See also Government of Egypt, *Law No. 126 of the Year 2008*, articles 96, 116.

¹⁹¹¹ Government of Egypt, *Child Law*, article 31-bis.

¹⁹¹² Government of Egypt, *Law Regarding Combating Human Trafficking*, No. 64 of the Year 2010, (2010). See also The Protection Project at The Johns Hopkins University School of Advanced International Studies, *A Human Rights Report on Trafficking in Persons*.

¹⁹¹³ Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers, “Egypt,” in *Child Soldiers Global Report 2008*, London, 2008; available from <http://www.child-soldiers.org/document/get?id=1352>.

¹⁹¹⁴ Government of Egypt, *The Constitution of the Arab Republic of Egypt*, (May 22, 1980), article 18. See also U.S. Department of State, “Country Reports- 2010: Egypt,” 30.

¹⁹¹⁵ Government of Egypt, *Constitution*, article 18. See also U.S. Department of State, “Country Reports- 2010: Egypt,” 30.

¹⁹¹⁶ Ronald G. Sultana, *The Girls’ Education Initiative in Egypt*, Report, UNICEF, January 2008, 13-14; available from http://www.unicef.org/arabic/publications/files/Unicef_English_Education_Book_10.pdf.

¹⁹¹⁷ U.S. Embassy- Cairo, *reporting, February 16, 2010*, 209, section 2C.1 and 2E.1.

¹⁹¹⁸ Ibid., sections 2C.1

¹⁹¹⁹ Ibid.

¹⁹²⁰ Ibid. See also Government of Egypt, *Law No. 126 of the Year 2008*, article 97.

¹⁹²¹ Government of Egypt, *Law on Human Trafficking*, article 28.

¹⁹²² U.S. Embassy- Cairo, *reporting, February 16, 2010*, section 2C.1.4-14. See also U.S. Department of State, “Country Reports- 2010: Egypt,” 36. See also ILO Committee of Experts, *Individual Observation concerning Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (No. 138) Egypt (ratification: 1999) Published: 2010*, April 19, 2011; available from <http://www.ilo.org/ilolex/english/iloquery.htm>.

¹⁹²³ ILO Committee of Experts, *Individual Observation C138: Egypt (2010)*.

¹⁹²⁴ United Nations Human Rights Council, *Report of the Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons*, para 11.

¹⁹²⁵ WFP, *Combating Exploitative Child Labor through Education in Egypt*, Technical Progress Report, Cairo, September 30, 2010, 11.

¹⁹²⁶ U.S. Embassy- Cairo, *reporting, February 16, 2010*, section II.1.

¹⁹²⁷ U.S. Department of State, “Trafficking in Persons Report- 2010: Egypt.”

¹⁹²⁸ U.S. Embassy- Cairo, *reporting, February 16, 2010*, section III.2E.1 and 2G.1.

¹⁹²⁹ Ibid.

¹⁹³⁰ Ibid., section 2C.1. See also ILO Committee of Experts, *Individual Observation C138: Egypt (2010)*.

¹⁹³¹ United Nations Human Rights Council, *Report of the Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons*. See also U.S. Embassy- Cairo, *reporting, January 22, 2009*, section 6.

¹⁹³² WFP, *Technical Progress Report*, 2, 3, 9, 11, 13, 19.

¹⁹³³ Ibid., 2, 3, 9, 11, 13, 19.

¹⁹³⁴ U.S. Department of Labor, *Technical Cooperation Project Summary: Combating Worst Forms of Child Labor by Reinforcing Policy Response and Promoting Sustainable Livelihoods and Educational Opportunities in Egypt*, April 20, 2011, *ibid*.

¹⁹³⁵ The Ministry of Economic Development and United Nations Development Program, *Egypt’s Progress towards Achieving the Millennium Development Goals (2010)*, Report, 2010, 26-27; available from http://www.undp.org.eg/Portals/0/MDG/2010%20MDGR_English_R5.pdf. See also Sultana, *The Girls’ Education Initiative in Egypt*.

¹⁹³⁶ U.S. Embassy- Cairo, *reporting, February 16, 2010*, section 2B.

¹⁹³⁷ El-Sherif, “Ministry starts campaign against underage, summer marriages”.