Lebanon

The Government of Lebanon has increased investment in its children, which is apparent from the number and nature of recent social and education interventions. However, the worst forms of child labor continue to exist in tobacco farming, street work, domestic servitude and other informal sector jobs. Legal gaps and limited information on the nature and extent of the problem hinder government efforts to find solutions.

Statistics on Working Children and School Attendance

Children	Age	Percent
Working	5-14 yrs.	Unavailable
Attending School	5-14 yrs.	Unavailable
Combining Work and School	7-14 yrs.	Unavailable

Prevalence and Sectoral Distribution of the Worst Forms of Child Labor

Children in Lebanon are engaged in the worst forms of child labor[3297] in tobacco production.[3298] Common hazards in this sector include the risk of injury from needles, thread, and pesticide use as well as exhaustion and body aches caused by the rigorous process of planting tobacco seedlings.[3299]

Child labor is also predominant in many of the informal sectors of Lebanon's economy. Children are engaged in the worst forms of child labor in mechanical workshops, carpentry, construction, manufacturing, industrial sites, welding, artisanal design and fisheries.[3300]

Children also work on the streets in tasks such as vending, washing car windshields and trash picking.[3301] Although evidence is limited, there have been reported cases of children forced to work on the streets by "employers" who take the child's earnings at the end of the day.[3302] Some street children are also forced by their parents to beg, but the majority of them are forced into street work and prostitution by organized gangs.[3303] Children working on the streets may be exposed to multiple dangers, including severe weather, vehicle accidents and criminal elements.

The worst forms of child labor are commonly found in Palestinian refugee camps and surrounding areas. Non-Lebanese children, including Syrian and Palestinian boys living in these camps, constitute more than 80 percent of children working on the street.[3304]

Children in Lebanon may also be engaged in domestic servitude.[3305] Child domestic labor commonly involves long hours of work and hazardous activities, while often exposing children to physical and sexual exploitation by their employer.

There is little evidence of the extent and nature of child trafficking in Lebanon. The Government says that children have been trafficked to Lebanon potentially to work in the labor market.[3306] Further reports claim that Lebanese children are trafficked internally for commercial sexual exploitation and forced labor.[3307]

There are reports that children living in Palestinian refugee camps in Lebanon might

be engaged in combat activities and involved in providing logistical support for these activities.[3308]

Laws and Regulations on the Worst Forms of Child Labor

The Labor Code sets the minimum age for employment at 14 and contains a list of industrial, arduous or unhealthy work prohibited for children below the age of 16.[3309] The Labor Code requires children ages 14 and above to have a medical certificate proving they are fit for their designated job. For all working children, the Labor Code provides basic protections, such as limiting the work day to a maximum of seven hours per day, with one hour of rest after every four hours worked.[3310] A draft list of work hazardous for all children under age 18 was formulated by the Government in 2008. Until it is finalized, however, children ages 16 and 17 may be legally exposed to the hazards the list seeks to prohibit.[3311]

	C138, Minimum Age	✓
	C182, Worst Forms of Child Labor	✓
	CRC	✓
	CRC Optional Protocol on Armed Conflict	No
	CRC Optional Protocol on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution, and Child Pornography	✓
	Palermo Protocol on Trafficking in Persons	✓
	Minimum Age for Work	14
	Minimum Age for Hazardous Work	16
	Compulsory Education Age	12
	Free Public Education	Yes

Lebanon has no laws that address human trafficking.[3312] Various other laws in the penal code are used to address trafficking-related offences such as abduction.[3313] Lebanon's cabinet approved a draft human trafficking law during the reporting period, but it awaits parliamentary approval.[3314] Lebanon's Criminal Code provides protection of children from all forms of sexual abuse and stipulates penalties on perpetrators of sex crimes.[3315] Lebanese law also prohibits the use of children in illicit activities.[3316]

The Penal Code prohibits forced labor and involuntary servitude.[3317] It also prohibits the commercial sexual exploitation of children and financial gain from the prostitution of others.[3318]

The minimum age for voluntary recruitment into the Armed Forces is 18 for soldiers, noncommissioned personnel and officers. Military service is not compulsory in Lebanon.[3319]

Education in Lebanon up to age 12 is free and compulsory for most by law. However, the law denies free education to children born to foreign national fathers, regardless of the mother's nationality.[3320] These children face increased risk of engagement in dangerous forms of child labor.

A bill to raise the age of compulsory education to 15 is pending.[3321] Until the compulsory education age is raised, 13-year-old children are 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.

Institutional Mechanisms for Coordination and Enforcement

The Child Labor Unit (CLU) of the Ministry of Labor (MOL) and the Ministry of Interior (MOI) coordinate the Government's efforts to combat the worst forms of child labor.[3322] These efforts include policy setting and awareness raising. The CLU implements a national policy and program framework for combating child labor in partnerships with other government and nongovernment stakeholders addressing the problem.[3323]

Presided over by the Minister of Social Affairs (MoSA), the Higher Council for Childhood (HCC) oversees the implementation of the overall principles of children's rights, including combating child labor.[3324]

The CLU enforces child labor laws through workplace inspection.[3325] Lebanon has provisions for enforcing laws in the informal sector. Two things need to occur before an investigation of child labor at an informal worksite is permitted: 1) a complaint of child labor must be filed and 2) the accused informal sector employer must fail to respond to a summons from the CLU.[3326] No mechanism exists to investigate complaints of child domestic labor since social workers—the only officials allowed to enter a private home—may only assess the overall welfare of the family and not working conditions for domestic laborers.[3327]

The MOL has 130 labor inspectors and assistant inspectors who conduct labor inspections, including child labor. The MOL maintains that the number of inspectors is inadequate.[3328] According to the ILO, inspectors' salaries are low and they lack facilities and financial and technical support to carry out their duties.[3329] The Government does not maintain statistics on the number of inspections carried out by the CLU, the number of violations, sanctions against violators or the number of children removed and assisted.[3330]

The Ministry of Interior's Internal Security Forces, MOL, the Ministry of Justice (MOJ), and the HCC are jointly charged with the enforcement of laws related to forced labor, the commercial sexual exploitation of children (CSEC) and the use of children in illicit activities.[3331]

Government Policies on the Worst Forms of Child Labor

The United Nations Country Team works to implement the social and education plans with the Government. The improvement of human rights is one of five identified goals for the Government.[3332]

The goal related to child labor calls for the MOL and other stakeholders to establish and activate alternative legal measures and protection networks (i.e., rehabilitation programs) for child laborers.[3333]

The elimination of child labor represents one of the key components of the Government's Social Action Plan: Toward Strengthening Social Safety Nets and Access to Basic Social Services.[3334] The plan promotes sustainable development, the elimination of poverty and the development of social safety nets. In addition, it aims at enhancing the education and health standards and reducing regional disparities.[3335] The question on whether this policy has an impact on child labor does not appear to have been addressed.

MoSA launched the National Social Development Strategy, which includes provisions on addressing the worst forms of child labor.[3336]

According to the United Nations, national policies that address poverty and disparities among social groups and regions are scant.[3337] In order to address these problems, an inter-ministerial committee led by the MoSA is developing Lebanon's first National Social Development Strategy. The strategy aims at securing better health standards, social protection, quality education, and safe and equitable employment.[3338] The strategy includes provisions for the elimination of the worst forms of child labor.[3339] The strategy has yet to be implemented, however, which leaves impoverished children vulnerable to dangerous forms of child labor.

In April 2010, the Government endorsed the Education Sector Development Plan (ESDP), a holistic approach focused on equality in education and education that contributes to a knowledgeable society, social integration and economic development.[3340] The question of whether this plan will have an impact on child labor does not appear to have been addressed.

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

MoSA, the MOI and the MOJ work with NGOs, such as the Lebanese Evangelical Institute for Social Work and Development, to provide shelter, healthcare, education, protection and rehabilitation services for children living and working on the street.[3341] The majority of the children at the Institute are non-Lebanese.[3342] Funding for these efforts is minimal compared to the need.[3343]

With MoSA support, British American Tobacco removes children working in tobacco plantations and enrolls them in schools. The company is working to further eliminate hazardous child labor through the introduction of leaf stringing machines, eliminating the hazardous nature of tobacco production.[3344]

During 2010, the Government continued to participate in phase three of the program, Strengthening National Action to Combat the Worst Forms of Child Labor in Lebanon (June 2009–June 2011). Building on phases one and two, phase three aims to reinforce national ownership of the project.[3345] The chief project objectives include the enforcement of international labor standards and national legislation on the worst forms of child labor, child labor awareness raising among the public and policymakers and the withdrawal and prevention of 1,000 children from the worst forms of child labor.[3346]

During the reporting period, the project targeted 365 children in North Lebanon and the Bekaa Valley to prevent their involvement in or to remove them from any form of child labor.[3347] Other notable activities included training the trainer workshops on the design of anti-child labor projects and action programs; the Supporting Children's Rights through Education program, the Art and Media (SCREAM) project; and capacity building on implementing the child labor monitoring system.[3348]

The Government's increased investment in Lebanon's children is apparent from the number and nature of recent social and education interventions. However, further research on the extent and nature of child labor in common sectors (tobacco production, street work and domestic servitude) would lead to a greater understanding of needed interventions.

The Government and the World Bank initiated an education sector reform project to help implement Lebanon's newly-endorsed ESDP.[3349] The strategy focuses on quality learning for growth at the preschool, primary and secondary education levels. In addition, the plan builds the capacity of the MOE to manage their education system.[3350] The question of whether this program has an impact on child labor does not appear to have been addressed.

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

IN THE AREA OF LAWS AND REGULATIONS:

- Amend legislation to protect all children under age 18 from hazardous work, based on the draft list formulated in 2008.
- Amend legislation to include children born to Lebanese mothers as recipients of free and compulsory education, regardless of the nationality of the fathers.
- Obtain parliamentary approval of the draft human trafficking legislation.
- Adopt the pending legislation for raising the compulsory age of education from 12 to 15.

IN THE AREA OF COORDINATION AND ENFORCEMENT:

- Make publicly available the number of inspections carried out, with special attention to the incidence of the worst forms of child labor and any sanctions imposed as a result of such occurrences.
- Track the number of child trafficking, CSEC and illicit activities arrests and prosecutions.
- Create mechanisms to protect children employed as domestic servants.

IN THE AREA OF POLICIES:

- Create and implement adequate social policies to prevent and protect children from hazardous working conditions.
- Assess the impact that existing policies may have on addressing child labor.

IN THE AREA OF PROGRAMS:

- Increase programming and funding for street children programs and shelters.
- Conduct further research on the occurrence, population and conditions of child labor in prevalent sectors, including tobacco production, street work, child soldiering and domestic servitude.
- Develop more targeted interventions on child labor based on research into prevalent forms of child labor, best practices and lessons learned in Lebanon.
- Assess the impact that existing programs may have on child labor.

[3297] Data provided in the chart at the beginning of this country report are not available from the data sources that are used in this report. 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. 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.

[3298] U.S. Department of State, "Lebanon," in *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices- 2010*, Washington, DC, April 8, 2011, section 7d; available from http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2010/nea/154466.htm. See also Partners for Development- Civil Group, *Baseline Study on Education and Child Labour Risks on Tobacco Plantations*, July 2007, 4. See also U.S. Embassy- Beirut, *reporting, April 4, 2011*, para 1.1.

[3299] Partners for Development- Civil Group, *Education and Child Labour Risks on Tobacco Plantations*, 6. See also U.S. Embassy- Beirut, *reporting, April 4, 2011*.

[3300] U.S. Department of State, "Lebanon," in *Trafficking in Persons Report- 2010*, Washington, DC, June 14, 2010; available from http://www.state.gov/g/tip/rls/tiprpt/2010/142760.htm. See also ILO, *An ILO Post Conflict Decent Work Programme for Lebanon*, Beirut, September 2006. See also Menassat, "Child Labor in Lebanon: A breakdown", http://www.menassat.com, [online], July 6, 2009 [cited May 9, 2011]; available from http://www.menassat.com/?q=en/news-articles/6781-child-labor-lebanon. See also Mike Sergeant, "Lebanon's Vulnerable Child Workers", http://newsvote.bbc.co.uk, [online], March 12, 2008 [cited August

10, 2011]; available from http://newsvote.bbc.co.uk/mpapps/pagetools/print/news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/7289634.stm?ad=1. See also U.S. Embassy- Beirut, *reporting, April 4, 2011*, 1.1. See also U.S. Embassy- Beirut, *reporting, February 3, 2010*.

[3301] U.S. Department of State, "Country Reports- 2010: Lebanon," section 7d. See also Menassat, "Child Labor in Lebanon: A breakdown". See also Child Rights Information Network, *Lebanon: Children's Rights References in the Universal Periodic Review*, March 25, 2011, para 40; available from http://www.crin.org/resources/infodetail.asp?id=23510.

[3302] Ministry of Justice, *Measures to Prevent and Combat Trafficking in Human Beings: Lebanon Country Assessment*, UNODC, May 2008, 6; available from http://www.unodc.org/documents/human-trafficking/Lebanon-HTreport-Oct08.pdf. See also Menassat, "Child Labor in Lebanon: A breakdown".

[3303] Lebanon Street Kid News, "Street Children Becoming a New Problem on Lebanon's Streets", streetkidnews.blogsome.com, [online], March 17, 2008 [cited April 25, 2011]; available from http://streetkidnews.blogsome.com/category/1/europe-streetkid-news/lebanon-streetkid-news/. See also Menassat, "Child Labor in Lebanon: A breakdown".

[3304] Child Rights Information Network, *Lebanon: Children's Rights References in the Universal Periodic Review*, para 40. See also Integrated Regional Information Networks, "Lebanon: Government Could do More to Tackle Child Labour", IRINnews.org, [online], July 18, 2007 [cited April 25, 2011]; available from http://www.irinnews.org/Report.aspx?ReportId=73288.

[3305] U.S. Embassy- Beirut, *reporting, February 3, 2010*, para 2a.

[3306] Ministry of Justice, *Lebanon Country Assessment*, 2-3.

[3307] U.S. Department of State, "Trafficking in Persons Report- 2010: Lebanon."

[3308] Child Rights Information Network, *Lebanon: Children's Rights References in the Universal Periodic Review*, para 22. See also Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soliders, *Lebanon: The Vulnerability of Children to Involvement in Armed Conflict*, October 2007.

[3309] Government of Lebanon, *Code du travail (modifiée au 31 décembre 1993 et au 24 juillet 1996)*, (July 24, 1996), chapter 2, articles 22, 23; available from http://www.ilo.org/dyn/natlex/docs/WEBTEXT/39255/64942/F93LBN01.htm. See also U.S. Department of State, "Country Reports- 2010: Lebanon," section 7d.

[3310] Government of Lebanon, *Code du travail*, chapter 2, article 23.

[3311] Ministry of State official, E-mail communication to USDOL official, September 1, 2010.

[3312] U.S. Embassy- Beirut, *reporting, February 3, 2010*, section 2D, para 2.

[3313] Ibid., section 2D, para 4.

[3314] U.S. Embassy- Beirut, *reporting, April 4, 2011*, sections 6.2, 6.3.

[3315] Child Rights Information Network, *Lebanon: Children's Rights References in the Universal Periodic Review*, para 104.

[3316] Law Library of Congress, *Children's Rights: International and National Laws and Practices*, 2007, section 6; available from http://www.loc.gov/law/help/child-rights/pdfs/childrensrights-lebanon.pdf.

[3317] U.S. Embassy- Beirut, *reporting, April 4, 2011*, para 2.4.

[3318] Ministry of Justice, *Lebanon Country Assessment*, 14.

[3319] Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soliders, "Lebanon," in *Child Soldiers Global Report 2008*, London, 2008; available from http://www.childsoldiersglobalreport.org/content/lebanon.

[3320] Child Rights Information Network, *Lebanon: Children's Rights References in the Universal Periodic Review*, para 20.

[3321] Ibid., para 75.

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[3324] Child Rights Information Network, *Lebanon: Children's Rights References in the Universal Periodic Review*, 97.

[3325] U.S. Department of State, "Country Reports- 2010: Lebanon," section 7d.

[3326] U.S. Embassy- Beirut, *reporting, February 3, 2010*, section 2c, para 3.

[3327] Ibid., section 2c, para 3.

[3328] U.S. Embassy- Beirut, *reporting, April 4, 2011*, section 4.3.

[3329] Ibid., section 4.4.

[3330] U.S. Embassy- Beirut, *reporting, February 3, 2010*, section 2c, para 6.

[3331] Ibid., section 2d, para 1.

[3332] ILO-IPEC, *Combating the Worst Forms of Child Labor in Lebanon*, section 1.

[3333] Ibid., section 1.

[3334] Ibid., section 1.

[3335] Ibid., section 1.

[3336] Ibid.

[3337] United Nations, *Compilation prepared by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights in accordance with paragraph 15 (b) of the annex to Human Rights Council resolution 5/1*, compilation of reports, Geneva, November 1-12, 2010, para 43.

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[3345] ILO-IPEC, *Combating the Worst Forms of Child Labor in Lebanon*, section 2A.

[3346] Ibid., section 2A.

[3347] ILO-IPEC Geneva official, E-mail communication to USDOL official, March 25, 2011.

[3348] Ibid.

[3349] The World Bank, *Appraisal on Second Education Development Project in Lebanon*, p. 4, section B14.

[3350] Ibid., p. 4, section B14.