

In 2015, Guinea-Bissau made a minimal advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. The Government began investigating a potential case of child trafficking and eliminated school registration fees. However, children in Guinea-Bissau are engaged in child labor, including in agriculture, and in the worst forms of child labor, including in forced begging. The Government has not determined the types of hazardous work prohibited for children. Law enforcement officials do not receive the appropriate training and resources to effectively conduct inspections or investigate and prosecute cases of child labor. In addition, the Government did not make any efforts to implement the National Action Plan on Trafficking.



I. PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Children in Guinea-Bissau are engaged in child labor, including in agriculture. Children are also engaged in the worst forms of child labor, including in forced begging.(1-6) Research did not find information on whether the full results of the national child labor survey conducted by the Ministry of Civil Service and Labor have been published.(7) However, in February 2015, the Government announced the survey had revealed that 39 percent of children ages 5 to 17 are engaged in child labor; with a high prevalence of child labor in the Cacheu region in the north.(8) Table 1 provides key indicators on children’s work and education in Guinea-Bissau.

Table 1. Statistics on Children’s Work and Education

Children	Age	Percent
Working (% and population)	5-14 yrs.	47.3 (219,734)
Attending School (%)	5-14 yrs.	56.9
Combining Work and School (%)	7-14 yrs.	34.6
Primary Completion Rate (%)		62.2

Source for primary completion rate: Data from 2010, published by UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2015.(9)

Source for all other data: Understanding Children’s Work Project’s analysis of statistics from Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 3, 2006.(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	Farming, including the production of cashews* (1, 4, 6, 11)
	Fishing,* activities unknown (1, 2)
Industry	Mining* (1)
Services	Domestic work* (2, 6)
	Street work, including car washing and shoe shining* (2)
Categorical Worst Forms of Child Labor†	Commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking*(3, 6)
	Forced labor in domestic and street work, including begging, each sometimes as a result of human trafficking* (5, 6)

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

† Child labor understood as the worst forms of child labor per se under Article 3(a)–(c) of ILO C. 182.

In Guinea-Bissau, organized networks of former male trafficking victims affiliated with Koranic schools traffic boys to Guinea, Mali, and Senegal, where they are forced to beg for money.(2, 5) Boys are also forced to beg in Guinea-Bissau.(5) It is tradition for

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parents to send their children to be educated by Koranic teachers, called *marabouts*. Although many teachers carry out the intended tradition of providing religious education, some instead force the students, known as *talibés*, to beg on the streets for money and food, and to then surrender their earnings to their teachers.(2) Teachers who force *talibés* to beg typically set a daily quota; if the students do not meet the quota, they may be beaten. Most *talibés* originate from the predominantly Muslim areas of Bafatá and Gabú in the east of the country.(2) Research found that politicians in Guinea-Bissau do not confront Koranic teachers for trafficking boys because of the teachers' influence on the Muslim electorate.(12)

Boys are forced to work in street vending in Guinea-Bissau; they are trafficked for forced labor in agriculture, mining, and street vending in Senegal, particularly in the southern cities of Kolda and Ziguinchor.(5, 12) Girls are subjected to forced labor in street vending and domestic work in Guinea and Senegal. Some girls may also be subjected to commercial sexual exploitation in these countries.(5) Research found limited evidence that European tourists traffic boys and girls for sexual exploitation on islands in the Bijagos Archipelago.(7)




Although the Government eliminated school registration fees for the 2014–2015 school year, hidden fees may still exist.(13, 14) Lack of birth registration can result in denial of education; however, authorities generally waive the birth certificate requirement for primary school enrollment.(6) Some children left school to work with their families in the 3-to-4-months long annual cashew harvest.(6, 15, 16)

In October 2015, a new Government was established, overthrowing the one elected in 2014; this may impact the Government's ability to address the worst forms of child labor.(17)

II. LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR THE WORST FORMS OF CHILD LABOR

Guinea-Bissau 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	14	Article 146 of the General Labor Law (18)
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work	Yes	18	Article 148 of the General Labor Law (18)
Prohibition of Hazardous Occupations or Activities for Children	No		
Prohibition of Forced Labor	Yes		Articles 2, 4, and 15 of the Law to Prevent and Combat Human Trafficking; Article 106 of the Penal Code; Child Code (19, 20)
Prohibition of Child Trafficking	Yes		Articles 2, 4, and 15 of the Law to Prevent and Combat Human Trafficking; Child Code (5, 20)
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children	Yes		Articles 3–5 of the Law to Prevent and Combat Human Trafficking; Articles 134 and 136 of the Penal Code (19, 20)

Table 4. Laws and Regulations Related to Child Labor (cont)

Standard	Yes/No	Age	Related Legislation
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities	Yes		Articles 3 and 7 of the Decree on Narcotic Substances (21)
Minimum Age for Compulsory Military Recruitment	Yes	18	Law No. 3/80 and Decree No. 20/83 (22)
Minimum Age for Voluntary Military Service	Yes	17	Article 31 of Law No. 4/99 (23)
Compulsory Education Age	Yes	15	Articles 12 and 13 of the Education System Law (24)
Free Public Education	Yes		Article 12(2) of the Education System Law (24)

The law's minimum age protections do not apply to children who are self-employed and children in domestic work.(18, 25)

The General Labor Law prohibits children under age 18 from conducting heavy work, work in unhealthy or dangerous conditions, and underground work; it also states that complementary legislation will further specify prohibited occupations or activities.(18) However, the Government has not determined by national law or regulation the types of hazardous work prohibited for children.

Laws regarding the commercial sexual exploitation of children are not sufficient, as the possession and distribution of child pornography are not criminally prohibited.(19, 20)

The Education System Law states that basic education is compulsory and lasts 9 years; however, it only makes basic education free through grade six.(24) The Government's failure to provide for complete, free, basic education may increase the risk of children becoming involved in the worst forms of child labor.

Research did not uncover a public version of the Child Code, Law No. 3/80, Decree No. 20/83, and Law No. 4/99 for review.

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
Inspectorate General of Labor and Social Security	Monitor compliance with the provisions of the labor law, including child labor.(22)
Ministry of Interior's Public Order Police and National Guard; Ministry of Justice's Judicial Police	Conduct child labor prevention and enforcement, including preventing human traffickers from entering or exiting the country with children.(2, 4, 26)
Ministry of Justice and Ministry of Civil Service and Labor	Enforce child labor legislation in collaboration with the National Institute for Women and Children (INMC).(2)

Labor Law Enforcement

In 2015, labor law enforcement agencies in Guinea-Bissau did not take actions to combat child labor, including its worst forms (Table 6).

Table 6. Labor Law Enforcement Efforts Related to Child Labor

Overview of Labor Law Enforcement	2014	2015
Labor Inspectorate Funding	Unknown (11)	Unknown (17)
Number of Labor Inspectors	Unknown (11)	16 (17)
Inspectorate Authorized to Assess Penalties	Unknown	Unknown

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Table 6. Labor Law Enforcement Efforts Related to Child Labor (cont)

Overview of Labor Law Enforcement	2014	2015
Training for Labor Inspectors		
■ Initial Training for New Employees	Unknown	No (17)
■ Training on New Laws Related to Child Labor	Unknown	N/A (17)
■ Refresher Courses Provided	Unknown	No (17)
Number of Labor Inspections	Unknown (11)	Unknown
■ Number Conducted at Worksites	Unknown	Unknown
■ Number Conducted by Desk Reviews	Unknown	Unknown
Number of Child Labor Violations Found	0 (11)	0 (17)
Number of Child Labor Violations for Which Penalties Were Imposed	N/A	N/A
■ Number of Penalties Imposed That Were Collected	N/A	N/A
Routine Inspections Conducted	Unknown (11)	Unknown
■ Routine Inspections Targeted	Unknown (11)	Unknown
Unannounced Inspections Permitted	Unknown	Unknown
Unannounced Inspections Conducted	Unknown	Unknown
Complaint Mechanism Exists	Unknown	Unknown
Reciprocal Referral Mechanism Exists Between Labor Authorities and Social Services	Unknown (4)	Unknown

In 2015, the Government reported that the number of labor inspectors employed was insufficient. The Government also did not have the necessary resources to conduct proper labor inspections.(17)

Criminal Law Enforcement

In 2015, criminal law enforcement agencies in Guinea-Bissau took actions to combat the worst forms of child labor (Table 7).

Table 7. Criminal Law Enforcement Efforts Related to the Worst Forms of Child Labor

Overview of Criminal Law Enforcement	2014	2015
Training for Investigators		
■ Initial Training for New Employees	Unknown	No (17)
■ Training on New Laws Related to the Worst Forms of Child Labor	N/A	N/A (17)
■ Refresher Courses Provided	Unknown	No (17)
Number of Investigations	Unknown (11)	1 (5)
Number of Violations Found	Unknown	Unknown (17)
Number of Prosecutions Initiated	Unknown (11)	0 (17)
Number of Convictions	Unknown (11)	0 (17)
Reciprocal Referral Mechanism Exists Between Criminal Authorities and Social Services	Unknown (4)	Unknown

During the reporting period, the National Guard intercepted 22 children at the Senegalese border.(16, 27) Research did not find information on whether the children were referred to social service providers. In March 2015, the Judicial Police began investigating a potential case of child trafficking for labor exploitation.(5)

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 8).

Table 8. Mechanisms to Coordinate Government Efforts on Child Labor

Coordinating Body	Role & Description
The Inter-Ministerial Steering Committee on Trafficking	Coordinate government efforts to combat human trafficking. Led by INMC and includes representatives from various NGOs and from the Ministries of Interior, Justice, Health, Education, and Transportation.(26) Did not meet in 2015.(27)
National Institute for Women and Children (INMC)	Coordinate and monitor NGOs and activities of other rehabilitation partners to defend and protect children.(2)
Ministry of Civil Service and Labor	Implement and coordinate actions to combat child labor in Guinea-Bissau.(3)

V. GOVERNMENT POLICIES ON THE WORST FORMS OF CHILD LABOR

The Government of Guinea-Bissau has established policies related to child labor, including its worst forms (Table 9).

Table 9. Policies Related to Child Labor

Policy	Description
National Action Plan on Trafficking UNDAF (2013–2017)	Aims to guide implementation of the Law to Prevent and Combat Human Trafficking.(5) Strengthens the Government’s capacity to ensure respect, promotion, and protection of social rights. Aims to assist in the implementation of a national action plan against child labor within the framework of the Decent Work Country Program.(28)
EFA Action Plan (2000–2015)*	Facilitated interagency coordination to ensure universal access to free and compulsory education.(3, 29)
Political Letter for Educational Sector (2010–2020)*	Outlines actions to be developed for preschool, primary, and secondary school; technical and professional training; and university studies.(3)
National Strategy for Social Protection of Children	Guides the Government and national and international partners so they can adequately focus on providing social protection for vulnerable children, including orphans; HIV-positive children; working children; and children who have been exploited or trafficked for financial gain.(3)
National Action Plan for Birth Registration*	Provides free birth registration to children.(13) The Ministry of Justice partners with civil society organizations implement mobile birth registration units in rural and urban areas.(30)
National Strategy for Poverty Reduction (2011–2015)	Sought to reduce poverty from 69.3 percent in 2010 to 59 percent by 2015, and extreme poverty from 33 percent in 2010 to 20 percent by 2015, by improving access to basic services and generating income and employment opportunities. Strengthened government coordination and mechanisms to protect at-risk children, including those engaged in child labor.(31)

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

The Government did not implement the National Action Plan on Trafficking during the reporting period.(5, 7)

VI. SOCIAL PROGRAMS TO ADDRESS CHILD LABOR

In 2015, the Government of Guinea-Bissau participated in programs that include the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor, including its worst forms (Table 10).

Table 10. Social Programs to Address Child Labor

Program	Description
UNICEF Country Program	UNICEF-funded program in collaboration with the Government to prevent and combat child trafficking in the most disadvantaged communities through social safety nets, education, and other social protection mechanisms.(30)
Decent Work Country Program (2012–2015)	Targets the expansion of the social protection system, particularly for women in the informal economy and child victims of the worst forms of child labor. Specific objectives include adopting a national action plan against child labor and publishing results from the national survey on child labor.(15)
Friends of the Child (<i>Amigos da Criança</i>) Transit Shelter†	Government and donor-funded program implemented by an NGO that provides social services to victims of human trafficking through two shelters.(5, 16) Received approximately \$9,280 from the Government in 2015; however, facilities lacked the financial and human resources needed to adequately assist victims.(5)
School Lunch Program	Government, WFP, and U.S. Department of Agriculture-funded program implemented by International Partnership for Human Development that provides school lunches to more than 200,000 children.(11)

† Program is funded by the Government of Guinea-Bissau.

Although Guinea-Bissau has programs that target child labor, the scope of these programs is insufficient to fully address the extent of the problem.

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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 Guinea-Bissau (Table 11).

Table 11. Suggested Government Actions to Eliminate Child Labor, Including its Worst Forms

Area	Suggested Action	Year(s) Suggested
Legal Framework	Ensure that all children are protected by law, including children who are self-employed and in domestic work.	2015
	Determine the types of hazardous work prohibited for children, in consultation with employers' and workers' organizations.	2009 – 2015
	Ensure that the legal framework provides penalties for possessing and distributing child pornography.	2013 – 2015
	Ensure that all 9 years of basic education are free.	2015
	Make publicly available the Child Code, Law No. 3/80, Decree No. 20/83, and Law No. 4/99.	2014 – 2015
Enforcement	Make law enforcement data publicly available, including information on the labor inspectorate's funding; the inspectorate's ability to assess penalties; number and type of labor inspections conducted, and complaint mechanism; as well as the number of violations found during criminal investigations; and referral mechanisms between labor and law enforcement agencies and social service providers.	2009 – 2015
	Ensure that a sufficient number of law enforcement officials receive proper training and resources in order to inspect, investigate, and prosecute cases of child labor.	2009 – 2015
Coordination	Ensure that the Inter-Ministerial Steering Committee on Trafficking meets regularly in order to coordinate efforts to combat human trafficking.	2014 – 2015
Government Policies	Increase free birth registration for all children to encourage higher primary and secondary school enrollment.	2014 – 2015
	Integrate child labor elimination and prevention strategies into existing policies.	2013 – 2015
	Ensure implementation of the National Action Plan on Trafficking.	2014 – 2015
Social Programs	Publish the complete results of the national child labor survey.	2013 – 2015
	Develop social programs to ensure that informal fees do not hinder access to education.	2011 – 2015
	Increase funding for transit shelters to ensure that facilities have adequate resources to assist child trafficking victims.	2015
	Expand existing programs to address the scope of the child labor problem.	2009 – 2015

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