

In 2017, Egypt made a moderate advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. The Ministry of Social Solidarity began operating 17 mobile units, providing services to over 4,000 street-based children. The National Coordination Committee on Preventing Illegal Migration and Combating Trafficking in Persons provided training to media professionals on reporting on human trafficking and victim protection. Social media messaging on irregular migration and human trafficking produced by the same Committee reached one million individuals. Moreover, the National Council for Childhood and Motherhood conducted 35 awareness-raising campaigns. However, children in Egypt engage in the worst forms of child labor, including in commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking, and in quarrying limestone. The government did not publish data on the enforcement of child labor laws. In addition, programs to combat child labor are insufficient to adequately address the extent of the problem.



## I. PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Children in Egypt engage in the worst forms of child labor, including in commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking, and in quarrying limestone. (1; 2; 3; 4; 5) Table 1 provides key indicators on children’s work and education in Egypt.

**Table 1. Statistics on Children’s Work and Education**

Children	Age	Percent
Working (% and population)	10 to 14	2.9 (246,179)
Attending School (%)	10 to 14	93.8
Combining Work and School (%)	10 to 14	1.3
Primary Completion Rate (%)		93.9

Source for primary completion rate: Data from 2016, published by UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2018. (6)

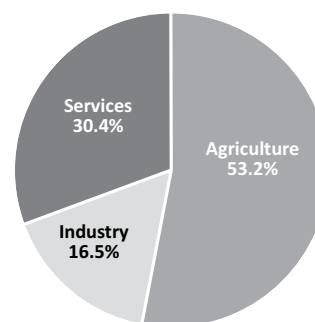
Source for all other data: Understanding Children’s Work Project’s analysis of statistics from Survey of Young People in Egypt, 2009. (7)

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 cotton (8; 9; 10; 5; 11)
	Caring for livestock (12; 5; 11)
	Fishing, activities unknown (13; 5)
Industry	Quarrying† limestone (1; 2; 3; 5)
	Making bricks (14; 15; 16; 5; 17)
	Working in carpentry workshops (18; 19; 5)
	Working in marble workshops (20; 21)
	Construction, activities unknown (22; 5; 11)
Services	Working in aluminum factories (23; 5)
	Domestic work (12; 9; 5)
	Driving tuktuks (24; 25)
	Repairing automobiles (13; 5)
	Street work, including selling goods, collecting garbage, and sweeping (8; 18; 26; 22; 27)

**Figure 1. Working Children by Sector, Ages 5-14**



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

Sector/Industry	Activity
Categorical Worst Forms of Child Labor <sup>‡</sup>	Domestic work as a result of human trafficking (4; 5)
	Commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking (4; 5; 28)
	Forced begging, sometimes as a result of human trafficking (29; 4; 5)

<sup>†</sup> Determined by national law or regulation as hazardous and, as such, relevant to Article 3(d) of ILO C. 182.

<sup>‡</sup> Child labor understood as the worst forms of child labor *per se* under Article 3(a)–(c) of ILO C. 182.




Some girls are subjected to commercial sexual exploitation under the pretext of temporary marriage to wealthy foreign men, mostly from Persian Gulf countries. (4; 5; 28) Some Egyptian children are trafficked to Italy, and although the number of arrivals decreased significantly in 2017, Egyptian children continue to be used for bonded child labor, commercial sexual exploitation, and illicit activities in Italy. (30; 31; 32; 33; 34; 4; 11; 35)

According to the Ministry of Education, thousands of children dropped out of school in 2016 and 2017 because of school-related costs, such as transportation, clothing, and food. (10; 5) Girls face additional barriers to education, including long distances to school, harassment and violence at school and on the way to school, lack of sanitation facilities, and cultural barriers. (36; 5) Approximately 600,000 girls were out of school in 2017. (36) Despite a 2016 UN program aiming to enroll all Syrian refugee children in school, UNICEF reported that as of November 2017, 39,000 Syrian refugee children were out of school. (37; 38)

## II. LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR CHILD LABOR

Egypt 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 (Table 4). However, gaps exist in Egypt’s legal framework to adequately protect children from the worst forms of child labor, including the prohibition of commercial sexual exploitation of children.

**Table 4. Laws and Regulations on Child Labor**

Standard	Meets International Standards: Yes/No	Age	Legislation
Minimum Age for Work	Yes	15	Article 64 of the Child Law (39)
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work	Yes	18	Article 1 of Ministry of Manpower’s Decree 118 (40)
Identification of Hazardous Occupations or Activities Prohibited for Children	Yes		Articles 1–2 of Ministry of Manpower’s Decree 118 (40)
Prohibition of Forced Labor	Yes		Article 89 of the Constitution; Article 291 of the Penal Code; Articles 2–3 of the Law on Combating Human Trafficking (39; 41; 42)
Prohibition of Child Trafficking	Yes		Article 89 of the Constitution; Article 291 of the Penal Code; Articles 2–3 of the Law on Combating Human Trafficking (39; 41; 42)

**Table 4. Laws and Regulations on Child Labor (cont)**

Standard	Meets International Standards: Yes/No	Age	Legislation
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children	No		Article 116- <i>bis</i> (a) of the Child Law and Article 291 of the Penal Code; Articles 2–3 of the Law on Combating Human Trafficking; Articles 1–4 and 6 of the Law on the Combating of Prostitution (39; 42; 43)
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities	Yes		Article 34 of the Law on Narcotics; Article 65 of the Child Law; Article 2.2 of Ministry of Manpower’s Decree 118 (39; 40; 44)
Prohibition of Military Recruitment			
State Compulsory	Yes	18	Article 1 of the Law on Military and National Service (45)
State Voluntary	Yes	15	Ministry of Defense Guidelines on Youth Volunteers in the Armed Forces (46)
Non-state	Yes	18	Article 7- <i>bis</i> (b) of the Child Law (39)
Compulsory Education Age	Yes	15‡	Article 59(1) of the Child Law; Articles 80 and 238 of the Constitution (39; 41)
Free Public Education	Yes		Article 54 of the Child Law (39)

‡ Age calculated based on available information (29)

Laws prohibiting the commercial sexual exploitation of children are not comprehensive because they do not criminally prohibit the use of a child in prostitution.

The law prohibits hazardous occupations and activities for children, including in quarrying, tanning, welding, spraying pesticides, and carrying heavy loads. (40) However, the types of hazardous work prohibited for children do not cover brick production, an area of work in which there is evidence of exposure to hazardous temperatures. (15; 14; 17)

### III. ENFORCEMENT OF LAWS ON CHILD LABOR

The government has established institutional mechanisms for the enforcement of laws and regulations on child labor (Table 5). However, gaps exist within the authority of the Ministry of Manpower that may hinder adequate enforcement of their child labor laws.

**Table 5. Agencies Responsible for Child Labor Law Enforcement**

Organization/Agency	Role
Ministry of Manpower	Enforce child labor laws and regulations, including receiving and investigating child labor complaints. Inspectors conduct routine labor inspections and report violations to the Ministry of the Interior, which then refers the case for prosecution. (5)
Ministry of the Interior	Enforce laws and regulations prohibiting human trafficking and commercial sexual exploitation of children. (5)
Ministry of Justice, Prosecutor General’s Office	Prosecute violation of laws related to the worst forms of child labor and human trafficking. (5)
Ministry of Local Development	Provide administrative and logistical support for the enforcement of child labor laws. Administer the Child Protection Committees. (5)

#### *Labor Law Enforcement*

In 2017, labor law enforcement agencies in Egypt took actions to combat child labor (Table 6). However, gaps exist within the authority of the Ministry of Manpower that may hinder adequate labor law enforcement, including penalty assessment authorization.

**Table 6. Labor Law Enforcement Efforts Related to Child Labor**

Overview of Labor Law Enforcement	2016	2017
Labor Inspectorate Funding	Unknown	Unknown* (5)
Number of Labor Inspectors	Unknown	Unknown* (5)
Inspectorate Authorized to Assess Penalties	Unknown	No (5)

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

Overview of Labor Law Enforcement	2016	2017
Training for Labor Inspectors		
Initial Training for New Employees	Unknown	Yes (5)
Training on New Laws Related to Child Labor	Unknown	N/A
Refresher Courses Provided	Yes (47)	Yes (5)
Number of Labor Inspections Conducted	21,735 (47)	Unknown* (5)
Number Conducted at Worksites	21,735 (47)	3,388 (48)
Number of Child Labor Violations Found	1,531 (47)	509 (48)
Number of Child Labor Violations for which Penalties were Imposed	56 (47)	Unknown* (5)
Number of Child Labor Penalties Imposed that were Collected	Unknown	Unknown* (5)
Routine Inspections Conducted	Unknown	Yes (5)
Routine Inspections Targeted	Unknown	Unknown* (5)
Unannounced Inspections Permitted	Unknown	Yes (5)
Unannounced Inspections Conducted	Unknown	Yes (5)
Complaint Mechanism Exists	Yes (49)	Yes (5)
Reciprocal Referral Mechanism Exists Between Labor Authorities and Social Services	Yes (49)	Yes (5)

\* The government does not publish this information.

In 2017, the Ministry of Manpower conducted a training for labor inspectors, in cooperation with the WFP, using a checklist on a mobile tablet application to increase efficiency. The Ministry of Manpower conducted 3,388 worksite inspections, issued formal warnings at 509 worksites, and filed police reports against 61 employers. (48)

### *Criminal Law Enforcement*

In 2017, criminal law enforcement agencies in Egypt took actions to combat child labor (Table 7). However, gaps exist within the operations of the criminal enforcement agencies that may hinder their capacity to enforce child labor laws, including disaggregation of human trafficking enforcement data on children.

**Table 7. Criminal Law Enforcement Efforts Related to Child Labor**

Overview of Criminal Law Enforcement	2016	2017
Training for Investigators		
Initial Training for New Employees	Unknown	Unknown (5)
Training on New Laws Related to the Worst Forms of Child Labor	Unknown	Unknown (5)
Refresher Courses Provided	Yes (50)	Yes (51)
Number of Investigations	13 (50)	Unknown (5)
Number of Violations Found	Unknown	Unknown (5)
Number of Prosecutions Initiated	2 (50)	Unknown (5)
Number of Convictions	Unknown	Unknown (5)
Reciprocal Referral Mechanism Exists Between Criminal Authorities and Social Services	Yes (49)	Yes (5)

In 2017, 20 Ministry of Interior's law enforcement officials received training on human trafficking, identifying victims, and investigating crime scenes, with particular focus on protecting children and women who are victims of human trafficking. (51) The Ministry also added a module on human trafficking to its curriculum that officials periodically complete. The Ministry of Justice held 11 trainings on human trafficking for 321 judges. (48) The Ministry of Defense provided training to all soldiers on identifying and interacting with victims of human trafficking. (48)

The Prosecutor General published and circulated a toolkit for officials who investigate cases of human trafficking. The toolkit includes guidelines on identifying cases of human trafficking, providing services to victims, and cooperating with international judicial actions. (48)

During the reporting period, the Ministry of Interior opened 144 human trafficking cases and referred 41 cases to the Prosecutor General's Office. Five individuals were convicted of human trafficking crimes. (52) However, it is unknown how many of these cases may have involved child trafficking.

#### IV. COORDINATION OF GOVERNMENT EFFORTS ON CHILD LABOR

The government has established mechanisms to coordinate its efforts to address child labor (Table 8). However, gaps exist that hinder the effective coordination of efforts to address child labor, including among government agencies.

**Table 8. Key Mechanisms to Coordinate Government Efforts on Child Labor**

Coordinating Body	Role and Description
National Council for Childhood and Motherhood (NCCM)	Coordinate enforcement of laws related to child labor, including its worst forms. Provide technical support and training about child labor for the Ministry of Manpower's inspectors. (5) Identify and monitor at-risk children. Manage two 24-hour hotlines and receive reports of child labor and child trafficking. (5) In 2017, the Council held 35 awareness-raising campaigns that reached 1,740 students, educators, migrants, and others. (48)
National Coordinating Committee to Combat the Worst Forms of Child Labor	Coordinate the efforts of the Ministries of Manpower, Justice, Social Solidarity, and the Interior; the Council for Human Rights, Childhood, and Motherhood; and the Council for Women in drafting a National Strategy to Combat the Worst Forms of Child Labor. (5) Research was unable to determine whether the National Coordinating Committee to Combat the Worst Forms of Child Labor was active during the reporting period.
National Coordination Committee on Preventing Illegal Migration and Combating Trafficking in Persons	Coordinate efforts to combat human trafficking. Led by an Ambassador appointed by the Prime Minister, comprises 18 government entities, including the Ministries of the Interior and Manpower. (5) In 2017, provided training for reporters on human trafficking, victim protection, and ethical considerations when covering human trafficking issues. (53) Reached over one million people through social media messaging on the dangers of irregular migration and human trafficking. (48) However, during the reporting period, there was a lack of coordination between arresting officers and prosecutors. In 2017, began revisions to improve the national referral mechanism. (48)
Child Protection Committees	Coordinate child protection efforts at the local level. Led by the Ministry of Social Solidarity and chaired by local governors in each governorate, with subcommittees at each police station. (5) Research was unable to determine whether the Child Protection Committees were active during the reporting period.

#### V. GOVERNMENT POLICIES ON CHILD LABOR

The government has established policies that are consistent with relevant international standards on child labor (Table 9).

**Table 9. Key Policies Related to Child Labor**

Policy	Description
National Plan of Action Against the Worst Forms of Child Labor and Supporting Families	Aims to eliminate the worst forms of child labor by 2025 and identify roles of government agencies responsible for assisting child laborers. (5) In 2017, government agencies, in cooperation with international organizations, concluded the main Action Plan elements, including expansion of the child labor knowledge base; capacity building of agencies providing support; social protection, with links to existing programs; enhanced education, including vocational education for children; and advocacy and awareness raising. (5)
Third National Plan of Action Against Human Trafficking (2016–2021)	Aims to maintain referral mechanisms, train law enforcement officials, and combat trafficking of street children. (5) During the reporting period, the National Coordination Committee on Preventing Illegal Migration and Combating Trafficking in Persons began to work on improving the national referral mechanism. Several government agencies provided human trafficking training to officials. (48) In 2017 and 2018, the Ministry of Social Solidarity provided services to thousands of street-based children. (48)

#### VI. SOCIAL PROGRAMS TO ADDRESS CHILD LABOR

In 2017, the government funded and participated in programs that include the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor (Table 10). However, gaps exist in these social programs, including the adequacy of programs to address the full scope of the problem.

# Egypt

## MODERATE ADVANCEMENT

**Table 10. Key Social Programs to Address Child Labor‡**

Program	Description
Enhancing Access of Children to Education and Fighting Child Labor (2014–2018)	\$65 million, EU-funded, 4-year project implemented by the WFP to provide food security for up to 100,000 children at risk of child labor and financial assistance to 400,000 family members to compensate for wages that child labor would have otherwise generated, enabling children to attend school. Supports 50,000 households in income-generating activities to help keep their children in school. (54) In 2017, under the National School Feeding Program, in-kind and cash transfers continued for vulnerable families, but the exact number of these families was unavailable. (5)
Expanding Access to Education and Protection for at Risk Children in Egypt (2016–2021)	\$32 million, EU-funded project implemented by UNICEF in cooperation with the Ministry of Education and the NCCM to expand access to education for 36,000 children, including 6,000 children with disabilities, and to support 15 Child Protection Committees in 15 governorates. (55) Research was unable to determine whether activities were undertaken to implement Expanding Access to Education and Protection for at Risk Children in Egypt during the reporting period.
Solidarity and Dignity Initiative of the Cash Transfer Program (2015–2017)†	Provided a monthly income supplement to poor families, conditional on keeping their children at school, or unconditional for the elderly and family members with disabilities. Aimed to reach 1.5 million households by 2017. (56) Research was unable to determine whether activities were undertaken to implement the Solidarity and Dignity Initiative of the Cash Transfer Program during the reporting period.
Positive Life Alternatives for Egyptian Youth at-Risk of Irregular Migration Program (2015–2017)	\$3.2 million, USAID-funded, 2-year project implemented by the IOM to support activities that included the goal of eliminating the worst forms of child labor, specifically through raising awareness among children and youth on the dangers of irregular migration and human trafficking, and building technical capacity of service providers for at-risk children. (57; 58) Research was unable to determine whether activities were undertaken to implement the Positive Life Alternatives for Egyptian Youth at-Risk of Irregular Migration Program during the reporting period.
Children without Shelter†	The Ministry of Social Solidarity operated shelters for victims of human trafficking, child victims of trafficking and forced labor, and other vulnerable individuals. Dar as-Salam, operated by the NCCM and an NGO, Face, provides social services, including psychological counseling and health services. (50) In 2017, the Ministry of Solidarity began operating 17 mobile units, providing services to over 4,000 street children. (48) The Ministry also reintegrated almost 400 street children back into their families. (5)

† Program is funded by the Government of Egypt.

‡ The government had other social programs that may have included the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor. (5)

Although Egypt has programs that target child labor, the scope of these programs is insufficient to fully address the extent of the problem, particularly to address commercial sexual exploitation and in quarrying limestone.

## VII. SUGGESTED GOVERNMENT ACTIONS TO ELIMINATE CHILD LABOR

Based on the reporting above, suggested actions are identified that would advance the elimination of child labor in Egypt (Table 11).

**Table 11. Suggested Government Actions to Eliminate Child Labor**

Area	Suggested Action	Year(s) Suggested
Legal Framework	Ensure that the law criminally prohibits the use of children for commercial sexual exploitation.	2017
	Ensure that the types of work that children perform in Egypt that expose them to hazardous temperatures, such as brick production, are prohibited for children under age 18.	2017
Enforcement	Publish information on the Labor Inspectorate funding, the number of labor inspectors, penalties imposed and collected, and whether targeted inspections were conducted.	2011 – 2017
	Strengthen the Labor Inspectorate by authorizing inspectors to assess penalties.	2017
	Publish information on training for criminal investigators and the disaggregated numbers of violations, investigations, prosecutions, and convictions for criminal violations of child labor laws.	2011 – 2017
Coordination	Ensure all coordinating bodies are able to carry out their intended mandates.	2017
	Ensure coordination between arresting officers and prosecutors in cases of human trafficking.	2017
Social Programs	Ensure universal access to free public education, especially for refugee children and girls, by addressing the cost of school fees, supplies, and other barriers to education.	2010 – 2017
	Ensure that the Solidarity and Dignity Initiative of the Cash Transfer Program is implemented.	2017
	Expand programs to address the full scope of the child labor problem, particularly in commercial sexual exploitation and in quarrying limestone.	2010 – 2017

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# Egypt

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