

In 2017, Guinea-Bissau made a minimal advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. The government published the results of the national child labor survey. However, children in Guinea-Bissau engage in the worst forms of child labor in forced begging. Children also engage in child labor in agriculture. 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 adequately conduct inspections and prosecute cases of child labor. In addition, social programs do not fully address the extent of the problem.



I. PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Children in Guinea-Bissau engage in the worst forms of child labor in forced begging. (1) Children also engage in child labor in agriculture. (2) According to a national child labor survey, more than 169,200 children ages 5 to 17 work; 85 percent of these children work in agriculture. (3) 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 (%)	5 to 14	57.4
Attending School (%)	5 to 14	68.1
Combining Work and School (%)	7 to 14	48.4
Primary Completion Rate (%)		64.3

Source for primary completion rate: Data from 2010, published by UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2018. (4)

Source for all other data: Understanding Children’s Work Project’s analysis of statistics from Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 5, 2014. (5)

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 (6; 3)
	Fishing, activities unknown (3; 2)
Services	Domestic work (3; 2)
	Street work, including car washing, shoe shining, and vending (7; 2)
Categorical Worst Forms of Child Labor‡	Commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking (8; 9; 1)
	Forced labor in domestic work, agriculture, and street work, including begging, each sometimes as a result of human trafficking (10; 9; 1)

‡ 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 traffickers affiliated with Koranic schools force boys to beg within the country and in The Gambia, Guinea, Mali, and Senegal. (1) Although many Koranic school teachers provide religious education as traditionally intended, some force the students, known as *talibés*, to beg on the streets for money and food. (7) Most *talibés* originate from the predominantly Muslim areas of Bafatá and Gabú in the east of the country. (9)

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. Boys from neighboring countries are forced to beg and harvest cashews in Guinea-Bissau. (1) Girls are subjected to forced labor in street vending and domestic work in Guinea and Senegal. Girls are also engaged in commercial sexual exploitation in the Bijagós Archipelago of Guinea-Bissau, on mainland Guinea-Bissau in bars and hotels, and in Senegal. (8; 1)

Continued government instability, in which the parliament has not met in over two years, may have impacted the government’s ability to address child labor during the reporting period. (11; 12)




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II. LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR 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 (Table 4). However, gaps exist in Guinea-Bissau's legal framework to adequately protect children from child labor, including with regard to the minimum age for work.

Table 4. Laws and Regulations on Child Labor

Standard	Meets International Standards: Yes/No	Age	Legislation
Minimum Age for Work	No	14	Article 146 of the General Labor Law (13)
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work	Yes	18	Article 148 of the General Labor Law (13)
Identification of Hazardous Occupations or Activities Prohibited for Children	Yes		Article 148 of the General Labor Law (13)
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 (14; 15)
Prohibition of Child Trafficking	Yes		Articles 2, 4, and 15 of the Law to Prevent and Combat Human Trafficking (15)
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 (14; 15)
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities	Yes		Articles 3 and 7 of the Decree on Narcotic Substances (16)
Prohibition of Military Recruitment			
State Compulsory	Yes	18	Article 2 of Law No. 4/99 (17)
State Voluntary	Yes	17	Article 31 of Law No. 4/99 (17)
Non-state	No		
Compulsory Education Age	Yes	15‡	Articles 12 and 13 of the Education System Law (18)
Free Public Education	No		Article 12(2) of the Education System Law (18)

‡ Age calculated based on available information (18; 19)

The minimum age for work is not in compliance with international standards, as the law's minimum age protections do not apply to children working without a work contract. (13; 19)

The General Labor Law prohibits children under age 18 from conducting heavy work, work in unhealthy or dangerous conditions, and underground work; however, the types of hazardous work prohibited for children do not cover street work, an area of work where there is evidence of exposure to physical, psychological, or sexual abuse. (13; 1; 2)

The Education System Law states that basic education is compulsory and lasts nine years; however, it only makes basic education free through grade six, leaving children in grades seven to nine without access to free basic education. (18)

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 operations of the Ministry of Labor and Public Administration that may hinder adequate enforcement of their child labor laws.

Table 5. Agencies Responsible for Child Labor Law Enforcement

Organization/Agency	Role
Ministry of Labor and Public Administration	Enforce child labor legislation in collaboration with the Ministries of Interior and Justice, and the National Institute for Women and Children (IMC). (11)
Ministry of Interior's Public Order Police and National Guard	Combat child labor through the prevention of child trafficking. (6; 7)
Judicial Police's Women and Child Brigade	Investigate the worst forms of child labor and refer cases to IMC and NGOs. The brigade comprises 10 officers. (11)

Labor Law Enforcement

In 2017, labor law enforcement agencies in Guinea-Bissau took actions to combat child labor (Table 6). However, gaps exist within the operations of the Ministry of Labor and Public Administration that may hinder adequate labor law enforcement, including with training for labor inspectors.

Table 6. Labor Law Enforcement Efforts Related to Child Labor

Overview of Labor Law Enforcement	2016	2017
Labor Inspectorate Funding	Unknown	Unknown
Number of Labor Inspectors	17 (2)	17 (2)
Inspectorate Authorized to Assess Penalties	Unknown	Unknown
Training for Labor Inspectors		
Initial Training for New Employees	No (20)	No (2)
Training on New Laws Related to Child Labor	N/A	N/A
Refresher Courses Provided	No (20)	No (2)
Number of Labor Inspections Conducted	103 (11)	49 (2)
Number Conducted at Worksites	103 (11)	49 (2)
Number of Child Labor Violations Found	4 (20)	0 (2)
Number of Child Labor Violations for Which Penalties were Imposed	0 (11)	N/A
Number of Child Labor Penalties Imposed that were Collected	N/A (11)	N/A
Routine Inspections Conducted	No (2)	No (2)
Routine Inspections Targeted	No (2)	No (2)
Unannounced Inspections Permitted	Yes (11)	Yes (2)
Unannounced Inspections Conducted	Yes (11)	Yes (2)
Complaint Mechanism Exists	No (11)	No (2)
Reciprocal Referral Mechanism Exists Between Labor Authorities and Social Services	No (11)	No (2)

In 2017, the government reported that the number of labor inspectors was insufficient. In addition, enforcement of child labor laws remains challenging due to the lack of resources for inspections. (2)

Criminal Law Enforcement

In 2017, criminal law enforcement agencies in Guinea-Bissau took actions to combat child labor (Table 7). However, gaps exist within the operations of the criminal enforcement agencies that may hinder adequate criminal law enforcement, including with financial resources.

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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	Yes (20)	Yes (1)
Training on New Laws Related to the Worst Forms of Child Labor	N/A	N/A
Refresher Courses Provided	Yes (20)	Yes (2)
Number of Investigations	0 (20)	26 (2)
Number of Violations Found	0 (20)	75 (2; 21)
Number of Prosecutions Initiated	0 (11)	Unknown
Number of Convictions	0 (11)	0 (2)
Reciprocal Referral Mechanism Exists Between Criminal Authorities and Social Services	No (11)	No (2)

In 2017, the government reported that training for criminal law enforcement officials and resources for criminal investigations was insufficient. (2) The National Guard intercepted 53 children destined for forced labor in Senegal at border crossing points and referred them to NGOs. (21) The Judicial Police reported 20 cases of forced child labor and 2 cases of child trafficking. (2)

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 with regard to coordination efforts.

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

Coordinating Body	Role and Description
Inter-Ministerial Commission to Fight Child Labor	Established in 2010 to coordinate the government's efforts to prevent and eliminate child labor. In 2017, the group was inoperative due to a lack of government engagement and resources. (2)
National Committee to Prevent and Combat Trafficking in Persons	Led by the IMC, the committee coordinates government efforts to combat human trafficking. (22) In 2018, the IMC and Ministry of Tourism (MT) developed an Action Plan that involves raising awareness about the worst forms of child labor. (23)
IMC	Coordinate with NGOs and other partner organizations to rehabilitate and reintegrate child victims of exploitation. (7) In 2017, worked with UNODC to train community activists on preventing and combatting child trafficking, including forced begging. (24) Collaborated with the Ministry of Justice to provide birth registration to 190 <i>tailibés</i> and their siblings. (21)

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 Policy for the Protection of Children and Adolescents† (2018–2030)	Guides the government's policies for combatting violence towards children, including child labor. (25) In 2017, policy was not implemented due to a lack of funding. (2)
National Action Plan on Human Trafficking (2015–2018)	Guides the government's efforts to prevent and combat trafficking in persons. (22) Research was unable to determine whether activities were undertaken to implement this policy during the reporting period.
Code of Conduct Against Sexual Exploitation in Tourism	Seeks to raise awareness on commercial sexual exploitation of children and child trafficking in Guinea-Bissau, particularly in the Bijagós Archipelago. (26) Research was unable to determine whether activities were undertaken to implement this policy during the reporting period.
UN Country Partnership Framework	Aims to assist in promoting free and universal birth registration, and enforcing human trafficking and child labor provisions. (27) Research was unable to determine whether activities were undertaken to implement this policy during the reporting period.
UNDAF (2013–2017)	Aims to assist in implementing a national action plan against child labor. (28) Research was unable to determine whether activities were undertaken to implement this policy during the reporting period.

† Policy was approved during the reporting period.

Research found that the government did not take steps to implement the Code of Conduct Against Sexual Exploitation in Tourism. (1; 23)

VI. SOCIAL PROGRAMS TO ADDRESS CHILD LABOR

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

Table 10. Key Social Programs to Address Child Labor‡

Program	Description
UNICEF Country Program (2016–2020)	UNICEF-funded program in collaboration with the government to prevent and combat child trafficking through education, social protection mechanisms, and capacity-building for law enforcement officials. (29) In 2017, worked with the National Guard to raise awareness on child trafficking in 75 villages in Bafatá and Gabú regions. (21)
Friends of the Child (<i>Associação dos Amigos da Criança</i>) Shelters	Donor-funded program, with government support, implemented by an NGO that provides social services to vulnerable children, including victims of the worst forms of child labor. Research found that the two shelter facilities lack the financial and human resources needed to adequately assist victims. (30; 1)

‡ The government had other social programs that may have included the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor. (31)

In 2017, IMC conducted awareness raising activities to prevent child labor throughout the country. (2) Although Guinea-Bissau has programs that target child labor, the scope of these programs is insufficient to fully address the extent of the problem.

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 Guinea-Bissau (Table 11).

Table 11. Suggested Government Actions to Eliminate Child Labor

Area	Suggested Action	Year(s) Suggested
Legal Framework	Ensure that all children are protected by law, including children without a work contract.	2015 – 2017
	Ensure that hazardous work prohibitions for children under 18 cover types of work, including street work, that exposes children to physical, psychological, or sexual abuse.	2009 – 2017
	Ensure that the law criminally prohibits the recruitment of children under 18 by non-state armed groups.	2016 – 2017
	Ensure that all 9 years of basic education are free.	2015 – 2017
Enforcement	Publish law enforcement data, including information on the Labor Inspectorate funding, ability of the inspectorate to assess penalties, as well as the number of prosecutions initiated.	2009 – 2017
	Ensure that a sufficient number of law enforcement officials receive proper training and resources to inspect, investigate, and prosecute cases of child labor.	2009 – 2017
	Strengthen the Labor Inspectorate by initiating routine inspections rather than performing inspections solely based on complaints received, and by initiating targeted inspections based on analysis of data related to risk-prone sectors and patterns of serious incidents.	2016 – 2017
	Establish a mechanism to receive child labor complaints.	2016 – 2017
Coordination	Establish referral mechanisms to ensure children found during labor inspections and criminal investigations are referred to social service providers.	2016 – 2017
	Ensure the Inter-Ministerial Commission to Fight Child Labor is active and has adequate resources to make efforts to prevent and eliminate child labor.	2017
Government Policies	Ensure implementation of key policies related to child labor including the National Policy for the Protection of Children and Adolescents and Code of Conduct Against Sexual Exploitation in Tourism.	2017
Social Programs	Ensure facilities have adequate resources to assist victims of the worst forms of child labor.	2015 – 2017
	Expand existing programs to address the scope of the child labor problem.	2009 – 2017

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