

In 2018, Morocco made a moderate advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. The government published information on criminal and labor law enforcement efforts, in addition to investigating and prosecuting criminal cases involving child labor violations. Moreover, it operated child protection centers and continued to fund the Tayssir Conditional Cash Transfer Program, providing direct cash transfers to qualifying families whose children meet school attendance criteria, reaching more than 2 million students in 2018. The government also launched social programs focused on providing vocational training to at-risk youth, and assistance to street children at risk of child labor. In addition, it drafted legislation to enhance enforcement abilities in the artisanal sector, specifically allowing labor inspectors to enter into private workshops employing any number of employees. However, children in Morocco engage in the worst forms of child labor, including forced domestic work. Children also engage in child labor in producing artisanal handicrafts. Although the government made meaningful efforts in all relevant areas during the reporting period, laws related to the minimum age for work and the use of children for illicit activities do not meet international standards. The scope of government programs that target child labor is insufficient to fully address the extent of the problem.

I. PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Children in Morocco engage in the worst forms of child labor, including forced domestic work. Children also engage in child labor in agriculture. (1-9) Government statistics from 2017 showed 30,545 children ages 7 to 15 working; however, the government has not yet made the full data set available, including microdata, leaving the nature and causes of children's involvement in specific forms of child labor unknown. (10,11) Table 1 provides key indicators on children's work and education in Morocco.

Table 1. Statistics on Children's Work and Education

Children	Age	Percent
Working (% and population)	10 to 14	4.5 (150,178)
Attending School (%)	6 to 14	82.9
Combining Work and School (%)	10 to 14	0.7
Primary Completion Rate (%)		92.7

Source for primary completion rate: Data from 2017, published by UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2019. (12)

Source for all other data: International Labor Organization's analysis of statistics from *Enquête sur la Population et la Santé Familiale (DHS), 2003–2004*. (13)

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	Planting and harvesting argan, grain, olives, vegetables, and fruits (1)
	Herding goats, cattle, and sheep and raising them for the production of fertilizer, and cattle for the production of milk and butter (1,2)
	Fishing (3,4,10)
	Forestry, activities unknown (3,4,14)
Industry	Construction, including in carpentry† (4,15)
	Weaving textiles (2,16)
	Producing artisanal crafts (3,4,15)
	Metallurgy, including welding (2,4,15)
Services	Begging (17-19)
	Domestic work (3,5,18,20-22)
	Working as salespersons in stores and as tour guides (15)
	Tailoring textiles (15,16)
	Working as waiters in cafés or restaurants (15)
	Maintenance and repair of motor vehicles (2,16)
Street vending (2,15)	

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

Sector/Industry	Activity
Categorical Worst Forms of Child Labor†	Commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking (4-9,18,23)
	Forced domestic work, sometimes as a result of human trafficking (3-6,9,20)
	Begging as a result of human trafficking (4-6,9)
	Illegal sand extraction (25)

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

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

Morocco is a source, destination, and transit country for children subjected to forced labor and sex trafficking. (7,8,18,24,26)




According to local union observations, rural Moroccan girls, some as young as age 6, are recruited for domestic work in private urban homes. Girls from Cameroon, Côte d’Ivoire, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Nigeria, and Senegal are brought to Morocco for this same purpose. (6,8,27) Some of these girls are subjected to physical and verbal abuse, excessive working hours without regular periods of rest or days off, and no access to educational opportunities. (6,8,27)

Children face barriers to accessing education, including distance to schools, inadequate transportation, prohibitive costs associated with attending school, and the lack of safety and inclusiveness to accommodate students of diverse backgrounds and abilities. These barriers to education increase vulnerability to child labor, especially in rural areas. (1,3,6,23,28) Children with disabilities face additional barriers to education, such as inadequate facilities and support. (6,19,29) Some migrant children, particularly unaccompanied children from sub-Saharan Africa and rural children, face additional barriers to accessing education, such as lack of knowledge of the language of instruction. Furthermore, because birth certificates are required to attend school past the fifth grade, many unregistered children remain out of school and vulnerable to child labor. (23,30,31)

II. LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR CHILD LABOR

Morocco 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 Morocco’s legal framework to adequately protect children from the worst forms child labor, including prohibiting the use of children in illicit activities.

Table 4. Laws and Regulations on Child Labor

Standard	Meets International Standards	Age	Legislation
Minimum Age for Work	No	15	Article 143 of the Labor Code (32)
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work	Yes	18	Article 147 of the Labor Code (32)

Table 4. Laws and Regulations on Child Labor (Cont.)

Standard	Meets International Standards	Age	Legislation
Identification of Hazardous Occupations or Activities Prohibited for Children	Yes		Hazardous Child Labor List, Decree No. 2-10-183; Article 181 of the Labor Code (32,33)
Prohibition of Forced Labor	Yes		Article 10 of the Labor Code (32)
Prohibition of Child Trafficking	Yes		Articles 448.1, 448.4–448.5 of the Law on Trafficking in Human Beings (34)
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children	Yes		Article 503 of the Penal Code (35)
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities	No		
Minimum Age for Voluntary State Military Recruitment	Yes	18	Article 4 of Royal Decree of 9 June 1966 (36)
Prohibition of Compulsory Recruitment of Children by (State) Military	Yes		Article 4 of Law No. 44-18 (37)
Prohibition of Military Recruitment by Non-state Armed Groups	Yes		Articles 448.1 and 448.4 of the Law on Trafficking in Human Beings (34)
Compulsory Education Age	Yes	15	Article 1 of Law No.04-00 (38)
Free Public Education	Yes		Article 1 of Law No.04-00 (38)

Following the passage of the Law on Setting Up Employment Conditions of Domestic Workers in 2016, the law entered into force on October 2, 2018. However, despite regulations to inform agencies on implementing the law, enforcement issues remain, such as the inability of labor inspectors to inspect closed private residences, where many domestic workers are employed. (23,39) In 2018, the Government of Morocco drafted legislation to enhance enforcement abilities in the artisanal sector, specifically allowing labor inspectors to enter private workshops employing any number of employees. (9,40) In addition, in 2018, the Government of Morocco instated military conscription for the national armed forces with an age of 19. (41)

Currently, the law does not provide explicit protections for self-employed children, those who work in the traditional artisan or handicraft sectors for businesses with fewer than five employees, or those who work on private farms or in residences. Despite assurances from the Government of Morocco that inspectors could inspect in the case of any established labor relationship, often verified through witnesses in the absence of contracts, there is an absence of explicit legal protections that conform to international standards, which require all children to be protected under the law establishing a minimum age for work. (5, 11, 22, 32, 40, 42, 43) In addition, the types of hazardous work prohibited for children do not fully cover sectors in which child labor is known to occur or sectors in which work conditions may harm children's health, safety, and morals. (33) Moroccan law does not define using, procuring, or offering of children for either the production or trafficking of drugs as a separate crime; nor does it provide for increased penalties in such cases. (31, 39)

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 Vocational Integration (MOLVI) 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 Vocational Integration (MOLVI)	Enforces child labor laws and oversees programs on child labor as lead agency through its child labor task force. (3,5,9,23,31) Provides occupational health and safety services, administers social security, and organizes labor inspections and employment services through nationwide satellite offices. (3)
Ministry of the Interior	Enforces prohibitions on trafficking in persons and prostitution and other exploitative crimes involving minors, as established in the Penal Code, through the General Directorate of National Security. (5,9,23)

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Table 5. Agencies Responsible for Child Labor Law Enforcement (Cont.)

Organization/Agency	Role
General Prosecutor	Prosecutes criminal offenses against children and processes cases involving women and children within the court system. (9,23,44)
Ministry of Solidarity, Women, Family, and Social Development (MSWFSD)	Ensures continuity of child protection and child labor elimination efforts and expands children's access to education. (45) Implements the Integrated Public Policy on the Protection of Children. (4,5) Supports 142 Child Reception Centers that provide services to child victims of violence. (31)
Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation	Coordinates efforts to reduce migrant vulnerability to child labor through its Delegate Ministry in Charge of Moroccans Living Abroad and Migration Affairs. Promotes migrant children's access to public education facilities and other social services and assistance. (3,44,46)
Ministry of National Education, Vocational Training, Higher Education, and Scientific Research	Provides education and job training to children, including former child domestic workers and migrant youth through the Office of Vocational Training and Work Promotion centers. (31,40,44)

In 2018, the Office of the General Prosecutor selected 42 prosecutors nationwide from the courts of appeals as responsible for handling trafficking in persons cases. (9)

Labor Law Enforcement

In 2018, labor law enforcement agencies in Morocco took actions to combat child labor (Table 6). However, gaps exist within the authority of the MOLVI 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	2017	2018
Labor Inspectorate Funding	Unknown (44)	Unknown (23)
Number of Labor Inspectors	304 (44)	297 (23)
Inspectorate Authorized to Assess Penalties	No (44)	No (23)
Initial Training for New Labor Inspectors	Yes (44)	Yes (23)
Training on New Laws Related to Child Labor	Yes (44)	Yes (23)
Refresher Courses Provided	Yes (44)	Yes (23)
Number of Labor Inspections Conducted	350† (44)	25,882 (23)
Number Conducted at Worksite	Unknown (44)	25,882 (23)
Number of Child Labor Violations Found	1,713 (44)	2,824 (23)
Number of Child Labor Violations for Which Penalties Were Imposed	11 (44)	0 (23)
Number of Child Labor Penalties Imposed that Were Collected	Unknown (44)	0 (23)
Routine Inspections Conducted	Yes (44)	Yes (23)
Routine Inspections Targeted	Yes (44)	Yes (23)
Unannounced Inspections Permitted	Yes (44)	Yes (23)
Unannounced Inspections Conducted	Yes (44)	Yes (23)
Complaint Mechanism Exists	Yes (44)	Yes (23)
Reciprocal Referral Mechanism Exists Between Labor Authorities and Social Services	Yes (44)	Yes (23)

† Data are from January 1, 2017 to September 30, 2017. (47)

The sectors most frequently inspected included trade, agriculture, and metal and woodwork. There are 22 inspectors dedicated to agriculture, as well as 23 engineers and 18 physicians in charge of health and safety labor inspections, and the government also has 54 dedicated child labor points of contact distributed across the country in various governmental departments. (23,31,44,47) During 2018, labor inspectors participated in 18 separate training sessions, and during the first 9 months of the year removed 14 children under the age of 15 from dangerous working conditions. In the first 9 months of 2018, the government conducted 25,822 labor inspections, including 263 focused on child labor. Last year's reported figures referred only to inspections focused on child labor. (23) The government prescribes a quota of 20 labor inspections per inspector each month, conducted in the formal market. (40)

Insufficient resources, including an insufficient number of inspectors, hamper the labor inspectorate's capacity to enforce child labor laws. (5,39,48,49) Although Morocco employs 297 labor inspectors, the number of labor inspectors is likely insufficient for the size of Morocco's workforce, which includes more than 12 million workers. According to the ILO's technical advice of a ratio approaching 1 inspector for every 15,000 workers in industrializing economies, Morocco should employ about 800 inspectors. (48,50,51) The official procedures involved in processing child labor violations require the participation of several agencies for each case, which places considerable administrative burdens on labor inspectors. (2) Government officials, local stakeholders, and the ILO Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations report that the penalties against companies that employ children in hazardous work, set forth in the Labor Code, are insufficient deterrents. (22,48)

Criminal Law Enforcement

In 2018, criminal law enforcement agencies in Morocco 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 publication of criminal law enforcement data.

Table 7. Criminal Law Enforcement Efforts Related to Child Labor

Overview of Criminal Law Enforcement	2017	2018
Initial Training for New Criminal Investigators	Unknown (44)	Yes (23)
Training on New Laws Related to the Worst Forms of Child Labor	Yes (44)	N/A (23)
Refresher Courses Provided	Yes (44)	Yes (23)
Number of Investigations	Unknown (44)	12 (23)
Number of Violations Found	Unknown (44)	1 (23)
Number of Prosecutions Initiated	3 (44)	5 (23)
Number of Convictions	Unknown (44)	Unknown (23)
Imposed Penalties for Violations Related to The Worst Forms of Child Labor	Unknown	Unknown
Reciprocal Referral Mechanism Exists Between Criminal Authorities and Social Services	Yes (44)	Yes (23)

Criminal authorities refer victims to appropriate social services through coordination with the government's 54 dedicated child labor points of contact across other government entities and through civil society actors. (23,39)

IV. COORDINATION OF GOVERNMENT EFFORTS ON CHILD LABOR

The government has established mechanisms to coordinate its efforts to address child labor (Table 8).

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

Coordinating Body	Role & Description
Technical Committee Under the Special Ministerial Commission for Children for the Protection and Improvement of Childhood	Ensures inter-sectoral coordination and monitoring for implementing international conventions on children's issues through a committee of 25 government bodies, chaired by the Head of the Government of Morocco. Establishes strategies and mechanisms to implement national policies and plans for child protection and coordinates the management of efforts at the local and regional levels. (31) In 2018, the committee met twice to coordinate inter-agency policies and programs, and to create an action plan for 2019. (23)

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
MSWFSD's Integrated Public Policy on the Protection of Children in Morocco (PPIPEM)	Promotes an interdisciplinary approach to respond to child exploitation and other issues. (3-5,52,53) Stakeholders in PPIPEM confirmed formal meetings for review and discussion of progress related to the policy during the reporting period. (40)

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VI. SOCIAL PROGRAMS TO ADDRESS CHILD LABOR

In 2018, 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 efforts to address the problem in all sectors.

Table 10. Key Social Programs to Address Child Labor

Program	Description
Measurement, Awareness-Raising, and Policy Engagement Project on Child Labor and Forced Labor (MAPI6)*	USDOL-funded project implemented by ILO to conduct research and develop new survey methodologies, improve awareness, strengthen policies and government capacity, and promote partnerships to combat child labor and forced labor. Additional information is available on the USDOL website.
Tayssir Conditional Cash Transfer Program†	MSWFSD program that provides direct cash transfers to qualifying families whose children meet school attendance criteria. Aims to increase school enrollment and reduce dropout rates, particularly in rural areas, with 832,500 recipients in 2015–2016 and 509,475 recipients in 2016–2017. (3,11,46) In 2018, the program provided assistance to 2,087,200 students from low-income families. (23)
Government-Funded Shelters and Centers‡	MSWFSD's <i>Entraide Nationale</i> agency manages three key shelter and support centers – the Child Protection Units, Social Assistance Centers, and Orientation and Accompaniment Centers for People with Disabilities – to provide services to child victims of all types of violence, street children, migrant children and refugees, and those with disabilities. (39,40,44,47,54) Other shelters and service centers include student dormitories and training and integration programs for vulnerable children. (39,40,44,47) In 2018, the government operated 82 Child Protection Units across the country, and conducted a campaign in Marrakech in November to raise awareness in schools on the domestic service law. (40)
After-School Program for a Second Chance (E2C)†	Provides students with afterschool educational assistance as part of non-formal education program. (4,44) In 2018, program officials from the Direction of Non-Formal Education, which manages the program, noted that follow-up efforts in October to reach students who failed to return to school reached more than 30,000 students, facilitating the return to educational institutions of approximately one third of them. (40)
Government-funded Projects*†	MSWFS-funded project <i>Mouwakaba</i> assists 2,700 at-risk youth in 6 cities with vocational training. The Cities without Street Children project provides assistance to homeless children in Casablanca and Méknes. (23)
USAID-Funded Projects to Address Child Labor	USAID projects in Morocco that aim to increase the social and economic inclusion of at-risk youth (ages 10–24) living in the marginalized neighborhoods of Tangier and Tetouan. Includes Favorable Opportunities to Reinforce Self-Advancement for Today's Youth (FORSATY) (2012–2017), a \$12.77 million project implemented by Search for Common Ground. (48)

* Program was launched during the reporting period.

† Program is funded by the Government of Morocco.

‡ The government had other social programs that may have included the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor. (2-5,9,44,47,48)

In 2018, the government continued a regularization campaign to provide legal status and documentation to foreign migrants. (9) Although the government has programs that target child labor, the scope of these programs is insufficient to fully address the extent of the problem, including for children engaged in forced domestic work. (3,39,44)

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 Morocco (Table 11).

Table 11. Suggested Government Actions to Eliminate Child Labor

Area	Suggested Action	Year(s) Suggested
Legal Framework	Ensure that laws prohibit children from being used, procured, or offered for the production and trafficking of illicit drugs.	2015 – 2018
	Ensure that all children are protected by law, including children who are self-employed, work for artisan and handicraft businesses with fewer than five employees, or work on private farms or in residences.	2009 – 2018
	Ensure that the types of hazardous work that may harm children's health, safety, and morals are prohibited and comprehensive.	2016 – 2018
	Implement regulations related to the Law on Setting Up Employment Conditions of Domestic Workers.	2017 – 2018

Table 11. Suggested Government Actions to Eliminate Child Labor (Cont.)

Area	Suggested Action	Year(s) Suggested
Enforcement	Publish information on the funding of the labor inspectorate.	2015 – 2018
	Increase the number of labor inspectors responsible for enforcing laws related to child labor to meet the ILO technical advice and ensure sufficient labor inspectorate resources.	2012 – 2018
	Streamline child labor enforcement procedures among government agencies.	2013 – 2018
	Publish information on the convictions pertaining to the criminal law enforcement of child labor.	2012 – 2018
	Increase penalties for employers who use children in hazardous work.	2012 – 2018
	Publish information on the number of convictions and imposed penalties pertaining to the criminal enforcement of child labor laws.	2017-2018
	Authorize the labor inspectorate to assess penalties.	2017 – 2018
Social Programs	Take measures to ensure children's safety in schools; remove barriers to education, especially for children with disabilities, language issues, rural children, and migrant children; and increase birth registration rates.	2013 – 2018
	Expand existing programs to address the full scope of the child labor problem, including in forced domestic work.	2013-2018
	Collect and publish microdata on the extent and nature of child labor to inform policies and programs, including in agriculture, industry, and services.	2016 – 2018

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