

In 2018, Cameroon made a moderate advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. The government more than doubled the number of labor inspectors, and removed more than 300 children from situations of exploitation and provided them with social services. It also hired more than 3,000 teachers and expanded the scope of a school feeding program which aims to benefit 81,500 children in the Adamawa, East, North, and Northwest regions. However, children in Cameroon engage in the worst forms of child labor, including in commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking. Children also perform dangerous tasks in cocoa production. The government has not acceded to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child Optional Protocol on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography. In addition, it has not prohibited the use of children in illicit activities, including in the production and trafficking of drugs.



I. PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Children in Cameroon engage in the worst forms of child labor, including in commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking. Children also perform dangerous tasks in cocoa production. (1-3) Table 1 provides key indicators on children’s work and education in Cameroon. Data on some of these indicators are not available from the sources used in this report.

Table 1. Statistics on Children’s Work and Education

Children	Age	Percent
Working (% and population)	5 to 14	56.2 (Unavailable)
Attending School (%)	5 to 14	79.7
Combining Work and School (%)	7 to 14	52.7
Primary Completion Rate (%)		70.1

Source for primary completion rate: Data from 2017, published by UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2019. (4)

Source for all other data: International Labor Organization’s analysis of statistics from Enquête Démographique et de Santé et à Indicateurs Multiples, 2011. (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	Production of bananas, cocoa, palm oil, onions, and tea, including handling pesticides, using machetes, clearing fields, climbing trees, and lifting heavy loads† (6-10)
	Raising livestock (9-11)
	Fishing (7,9-12)
Industry	Working in artisanal gold mines† and gravel quarries,† transporting heavy loads† of sand or gravel, breaking stones, and digging or standing in stagnant water to extract minerals (3,8-14)
	Construction, including carrying heavy loads† of water, concrete, cement, and bricks (8,10,11,13)
Services	Domestic work (8-11,13,15)
	Working in restaurants and as phone booth operators (9-11)
	Working in transportation (8-11)
	Street work, including carrying heavy luggage and selling bush meat,† vending, and begging (7,9-11,13,16-20)
	Voluntarily recruited children used in hostilities by state-armed groups (9)

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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 (2,3,9,10,13,21-23)
	Recruitment of children by <i>Boko Haram</i> , a non-state armed group, for use in armed conflict, including as suicide bombers and concubines (10,24,25)
	Forced labor in agriculture in the production of cocoa, cotton, onions, and tea; fishing; livestock raising; domestic work; spare parts shops; in artisanal gold mines and gravel quarries; street vending; and construction, each sometimes as a result of human trafficking (3,10,13,23,26)
	Forced begging as <i>talibés</i> in Koranic schools (3,8)

† 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.

Cameroon is a source, transit, and destination country for child trafficking from neighboring countries in Central and West Africa. (3,8,18) Due to increased awareness among parents of the risks associated with entrusting children to intermediaries who often promise to take children to urban centers to pursue education or an improved living arrangement, some perpetrators of human trafficking have resorted to kidnapping children. (3) Children engaged in cocoa production are exposed to dangerous working conditions, including exposure to pesticides and the use of sharp tools such as machetes. (11) The NGO, Child Soldiers International, alleged that some officially sanctioned community neighborhood watch groups, known as vigilance committees, may have used and recruited children as young as age 12 in military operations against *Boko Haram*. (9) In Cameroon, *Boko Haram* uses boys as child soldiers, and girls as forced suicide bombers and sex slaves. (10)




Although Decree N° 2001/041 on the Organization of Public Schools guarantees free education in Cameroon, costs associated with education may be prohibitive to some families who are required to pay for uniforms, books, and other school-related fees. (7,8,26-31) In addition, a lack of schools and teachers in rural areas, the absence of potable water and sanitation facilities, and long distances to schools also hinder access to education. (11,18,26,29,32,33) Children in refugee camps may have a particularly difficult time accessing education due to a lack of school infrastructure, teachers, and resources to pay for school-related expenses. (29,34-37) Since November 2016, the Anglophone Northwest and Southwest regions have experienced strikes and boycotts protesting systemic government discrimination against Anglophone speakers who have demanded more political autonomy or secession. Protests have become increasingly violent, and school infrastructure and personnel have been directly targeted. (9,38) As of June 2018, at least 58 schools were damaged in the two Anglophone regions as a result of the conflict, leaving an estimated 42,500 children with limited access to education. Additionally, between January and July 2018, there were 10 reported threats or attacks on education personnel, including the deaths of at least 2 teachers and the kidnapping of 3 school principals. (38,39) These events have disrupted schooling for children in these areas due to school closures, an absence of teachers, and voluntary or forced displacement as a result of the protest. The disruption of children’s access to education places children at high risk of becoming victims of exploitation and child labor. (39-46)

In 2018, in the Far North region, *Boko Haram* continued to forcibly recruit child soldiers for use in attacks against civilian and military targets, including using three girls between the ages of 14 and 17 as suicide bombers. Children in refugee or IDP camps are particularly vulnerable to the worst forms of child labor, including commercial sexual exploitation. (11,24) However, during the reporting period, the government reopened 40 schools in the Far North region that had been closed since 2014 due to threats from *Boko Haram*. (9,47,48) During the reporting period, the Ministry of Basic Education signed new employment contracts with 3,051 primary and nursery school teachers, and in December 2018, launched a campaign to recruit an additional 1,000 teachers. (20)

II. LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR CHILD LABOR

Cameroon has ratified most 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 Cameroon's legal framework to adequately protect children from the worst forms of child labor, including the prohibition of using children in illicit activities and the establishment of a compulsory education age that is consistent with the minimum age for work.

Table 4. Laws and Regulations on Child Labor

Standard	Meets International Standards	Age	Legislation
Minimum Age for Work	Yes	14	Article 2 of Order N° 017 on Child Labor; Section 86 of the Labor Code (49,50)
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work	Yes	18	Articles 9–23 of Order N° 017 on Child Labor; Section 86 of the Labor Code (49,50)
Identification of Hazardous Occupations or Activities Prohibited for Children	Yes		Articles 9–23 of the Order on Child Labor (50)
Prohibition of Forced Labor	Yes		Sections 2–6 of the Law Relating to the Fight Against Trafficking in Persons and Slavery; Articles 11, 342-1, 352, and 353 of the Penal Code; and Section 2 of the Labor Code (49,51,52)
Prohibition of Child Trafficking	No		Sections 2 and 4–6 of the Law Relating to the Fight Against Trafficking in Persons and Slavery; Articles 11, 342-1, and 352–354 of the Penal Code (51,52)
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children	Yes		Articles 294 and 344–347 of the Penal Code; Articles 76, 81, and 82 of the Law on Cybersecurity and Cybercriminality (51,53)
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities	No		
Minimum Age for Voluntary State Military Recruitment	Yes	18	Article 12 of the Decree Concerning the Status of Non-Defense Military Personnel; Article 2a of the Decree Establishing the Conditions for Admission to Military Training Schools for Officers (54,55)
Prohibition of Compulsory Recruitment of Children by (State) Military	Yes*		Article 12 of the Decree Concerning the Status of Non-Defense Military Personnel; Article 2a of the Decree Establishing the Conditions for Admission to Military Training Schools for Officers (54,55)
Prohibition of Military Recruitment by Non-state Armed Groups	No		
Compulsory Education Age	No	12‡	Preamble of the Constitution; Articles 9 and 16 of the Law Orienting the Education System (56,57)
Free Public Education	Yes		Articles 46 (2), 47, and 48 of the Decree on the Organization of Public Schools (30)

* No conscription (58)

‡ Age calculated based on available information (27)

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During the reporting period, the government brought together social partners, members of the judiciary, and law enforcement in a series of three workshops with the goal of raising awareness on the application of ILO conventions in participants' respective categories of work. (9,20) The government has not established a compulsory education age, which may lead to children being out of school and vulnerable to engaging in child labor. Human trafficking provisions remain discordant with international standards, as they require threats, the use of force, or coercion to be established for the crime of child trafficking, and individuals ages 16 to 18 are not considered children. (51,52) In addition, the types of hazardous work prohibited for children under age 18 are not comprehensive, as work underwater or at dangerous heights is not prohibited. (15,50) In 2018, the Ministry of Labor and Social Security (MINTSS) undertook efforts to begin revising the list of prohibited hazardous work. (9)

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 MINTSS 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 Social Security (MINTSS)	Leads efforts to enforce all labor laws, including those related to child labor, promotes decent working conditions, and leads the National Committee to Combat Child Labor (CNLCTE). (7,59)
Ministry of Justice (MOJ)	Prosecutes cases referred by the General Delegate for National Security (DGSN) or the Ministry of Defense's National Gendarmerie (SED) and contributes to investigations as appropriate. (60)
Ministry of Social Affairs (MINAS)	Leads efforts to combat human trafficking. Provides social services through its National Referral System. (7,11,61,62) Through its Minors Brigade, supports local police in their investigations of child trafficking and the use of children in hazardous work. (63) Through its Joint Mobile Brigade, prevents and combats the phenomenon of street children through identification, reintegration, and education; reintegrates street children to assist in the Joint Mobile Brigade's work. (64) In 2018, conducted a nationwide campaign against the commercial sexual exploitation of children. (10)
Ministry of Women's Empowerment and Family (MINPROFF)	Promotes and protects the rights of the child. (7)
General Delegate for National Security (DGSN)	Enforces laws against the worst forms of child labor and investigates violations in urban areas. (60) Through its Special Vice Squad, investigates cases of human trafficking, commercial sexual exploitation, and other forms of abuse against women and children. (15,60) Refers cases to the MOJ or Ministry of Defense for investigation by SED. (64)
Ministry of Defense's National Gendarmerie (SED)	Investigates cases of child trafficking and commercial sexual exploitation in both urban and rural areas before referring cases to MOJ for prosecution. (64)

Although it does not play a direct role in enforcement, Cameroon's National Commission on Human Rights and Freedoms advises government ministries on the enforcement of laws related to child labor and advocates for sanctions as appropriate. (11,65) Local representatives from the Ministry of Territorial Administration may settle child labor disputes amicably or refer the case to the Ministry of Defense's National Gendarmerie, the General Delegate for National Security (DGSN), or the Ministry of Justice for further investigation and prosecution. (64) In 2018, the Ministry of Social Affairs (MINAS) identified 877 street children exposed to situations of potential exploitation, and successfully removed 307 of them from their situations by referring them to a MINAS-run center or reuniting them with their families. (9) Also during the reporting period, MINAS spent approximately \$1,004 to train one of these children at the Regional School of Agriculture in Ebolowa, South Region. (10)

Labor Law Enforcement

In 2018, labor law enforcement agencies in Cameroon took actions to combat child labor (Table 6). However, gaps exist within the operations of MINTSS that may hinder adequate labor law enforcement, including financial and human resource allocation.

Table 6. Labor Law Enforcement Efforts Related to Child Labor

Overview of Labor Law Enforcement	2017	2018
Labor Inspectorate Funding	Unknown (11)	Unknown (9)
Number of Labor Inspectors	132 (11)	286 (9)
Inspectorate Authorized to Assess Penalties	Yes (49)	Yes (9)
Initial Training for New Labor Inspectors	Yes (11)	Yes (9)
Training on New Laws Related to Child Labor	N/A (11)	N/A (9)
Refresher Courses Provided	Yes (11)	Unknown (9)
Number of Labor Inspections Conducted	1,777 (11)	2,000‡ (9)
Number Conducted at Worksite	Unknown (11)	Unknown (9)
Number of Child Labor Violations Found	0 (11)	0 (9)
Number of Child Labor Violations for Which Penalties Were Imposed	N/A (11)	N/A (9)
Number of Child Labor Penalties Imposed that Were Collected	N/A (11)	0 (9)
Routine Inspections Conducted	Yes (11)	Yes (9)
Routine Inspections Targeted	Yes (11)	Yes (9)
Unannounced Inspections Permitted	Yes (11)	Yes (9)
Unannounced Inspections Conducted	Yes (11)	Yes (9)
Complaint Mechanism Exists	Yes (11)	Yes (9)
Reciprocal Referral Mechanism Exists Between Labor Authorities and Social Services	Yes (11)	Yes (9)

‡ Data are from January 1, 2018 to October 31, 2018. (9)

Although the government significantly increased its number of labor inspectors from 2017, it likely is still insufficient for the size of Cameroon's workforce, which includes more than 9 million workers. (9,11,52,58,60,66) According to the ILO's recommendation of 1 inspector for every 15,000 workers in industrializing economies, Cameroon would employ about 660 labor inspectors. (58-60,66-68) Furthermore, inspectors are tasked with conciliation duties which may detract from time devoted to their primary duties; and labor inspections are not conducted in the informal sector in which the majority of child labor occurs. (41,49,61,69,70) In general, the labor inspectorate lacked resources during the reporting period, and field inspectors in particular lacked transportation. However, the 2018 budget included funding to purchase vehicles for some divisions with heavy workloads. (9,11)

The government has not created a specific mechanism for filing and responding to complaints about child labor. (9) In an attempt to increase its scope, MINAS, Interpol, and DGSN all maintain hotlines for reporting the worst forms of child labor. Calls are routed to the National Referral System for assistance to victims. (13,15,24,26,71,72) However, the system has not been well-publicized since it was established in 2013, leaving the public unaware of its existence, and some calls may go unanswered. (24,71) Research was unable to determine how many cases of child labor were identified as a result of complaints made to these hotlines.

Criminal Law Enforcement

In 2018, criminal law enforcement agencies in Cameroon 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 financial resources and collaboration between ministries.

Table 7. Criminal Law Enforcement Efforts Related to Child Labor

Overview of Criminal Law Enforcement	2017	2018
Initial Training for New Criminal Investigators	Yes (11)	Yes (9)
Training on New Laws Related to the Worst Forms of Child Labor	N/A (11)	N/A (9)
Refresher Courses Provided	No (24)	Unknown (9)
Number of Investigations	0 (11)	Unknown (9)

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Table 7. Criminal Law Enforcement Efforts Related to Child Labor (Cont.)

Overview of Criminal Law Enforcement	2017	2018
Number of Violations Found	Unknown	Unknown (9)
Number of Prosecutions Initiated	0 (11)	Unknown (9)
Number of Convictions	0 (11)	Unknown (9)
Imposed Penalties for Violations Related to The Worst Forms of Child Labor	Unknown	Unknown (9)
Reciprocal Referral Mechanism Exists Between Criminal Authorities and Social Services	Yes (11)	Yes (9)

It is unclear how many investigators were employed by the government in 2018, although several government bodies work together to enforce criminal laws related to the worst forms of child labor. In general, these agencies do not receive adequate funding or training to investigate the worst forms of child labor, and high staff turnover is a challenge. (3,9,11) As a result, NGOs are critical in bringing child trafficking cases to the government's attention and providing services to victims. (3,9,64) During the year, there were credible reports of children involved in commercial sexual exploitation. However, the government does not appear to have initiated investigations into any of these cases. (9)

During the reporting period MINAS, in collaboration with the Ministry of Territorial Administration and the national police, implemented activities to raise awareness among parents on the negative effects of child labor. In June, authorities in Kribi identified 21 children, ages 6 to 13, engaged in street vending. (9) The police took custody of the children until their parents could be reached. The police then interrogated the parents, informed them of the risks of street vending, and warned the parents that they would be prosecuted if the children returned to the street. (9) The government acknowledges that a lack of awareness of child trafficking issues may prevent citizens from reporting offenses to enforcement agencies and that children may be afraid to speak against perpetrators in court. (3) During the reporting period, border police increased efforts to ensure that children do not cross borders without being accompanied by a parent. Adults accompanying children must show proof of their relationship with the child by presenting the child's identification documents. (10,73) The ongoing participation of lawyers in the Anglophone protests also impacted the ability of victims to seek justice and may have contributed to delayed court proceedings, including those related to the alleged complicity of government officials in a child trafficking ring. (24) A lack of collaboration between NGOs and the government, combined with judicial inefficiencies, led some cases to be settled outside the judicial system. (3,74) Although the government generally considers children to be victims rather than offenders, reports indicate that the government has held children as young as age 5 in detention facilities for prolonged periods due to suspicion of being affiliated with *Boko Haram*, or to prevent them from being recruited into *Boko Haram*. (65,75-81) During the reporting period, 55 children affiliated with *Boko Haram* voluntarily surrendered to military authorities and were arrested, detained, and denied access to support services. (81) In July 2018, the government announced that it had arrested seven military personnel suspected of being involved in the killing of two children in the Far North. (48,82,83)

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 the lack of resources to carry out mandates.

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

Coordinating Body	Role & Description
National Committee to Combat Child Labor (CNLCTE)	Coordinates government efforts to combat child labor, proposes measures to harmonize Cameroon's legal framework to international standards, and implements the National Plan of Action to Combat Child Labor and Trafficking in Children (PANETEC). (58,84,85) Led by MINTSS, includes representatives from 10 other ministries and government bodies. (59,84) The CNLCTE held its third session on September 26, 2018. (9)

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

Coordinating Body	Role & Description
Inter-Ministerial Committee (IMC)	Coordinates government efforts to combat human trafficking. Chaired by the Secretary General of the Office of the Prime Minister, includes members of eight ministries, law enforcement personnel, civil society organizations, and NGOs. (3,24) Oversees Regional Taskforces on Trafficking in Persons in Northwest, Southwest, and Littoral Provinces. (3,86) In 2018, continued to hold meetings with stakeholders to discuss efforts in combating human trafficking. (73)

A lack of resources and socio-political unrest in the Anglophone regions hampered government efforts to effectively coordinate to combat the worst forms of child labor. (20)

V. GOVERNMENT POLICIES ON CHILD LABOR

The government has established policies related to child labor (Table 9). However, policy gaps exist that hinder efforts to address child labor, including implementation.

Table 9. Key Policies Related to Child Labor

Policy	Description
MOJ's National Action Plan for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights in Cameroon (2015–2019)	Strives to combat exploitative child labor by disseminating standard operating procedures for the National Referral System, raising awareness about how to identify and report cases of child trafficking, increasing punishments for offenders, and building the capacity of labor inspectors. (60,87,88) Also aims to improve access to education for vulnerable groups by increasing the number of teachers and classrooms, establishing a legal framework to regulate parent teacher associations, and increasing the rate of educational attainment for girls. (88) In 2018, implementation was impacted by security concerns and a lack of resources. (73)
Decent Work Country Program (2014–2019)	Incorporates child labor concerns into the national strategy for work. (6) In 2018, the government extended the program by two years. (9)

Although the National Action Plan to Combat Child Labor and Trafficking in Children (PANETEC) expired in 2016 before its official adoption in October 2017, in 2018 the Government of Cameroon updated the PANETEC objectives and implementing mechanism as part of its commitment to the Sustainable Development Goals. (9,11,65) The Trafficking in Persons Action Plan (2014–2019) does not receive dedicated funding; however, member ministries of the Inter-Ministerial Committee (IMC) use their ministry funds to carry out activities in support of the Action Plan. (64) The government is drafting a new Trafficking in Persons Action Plan for 2017–2019. (65) The government has not included child labor elimination and prevention strategies into the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (2010–2020) or the IMC's National Gender Policy Document (2011–2020). (89-91)

VI. SOCIAL PROGRAMS TO ADDRESS CHILD LABOR

In 2018, the government funded and participated in programs that may contribute to preventing child labor (Table 10). However, gaps exist in these social programs, including adequacy of programs to address the full scope of the problem.

Table 10. Key Social Programs to Address Child Labor

Program	Description
Project to Fight the Phenomenon of Street Children (Project 559)†	MINAS-funded program that provides street children with health care, education, and psychosocial care. (11,27,31) Through its partnership agreement Project 559, in conjunction with the National Employment Fund, supports the reintegration of street children and provides vocational training opportunities. (11) In 2018, MINAS worked to reintegrate into school 53 children who had been working on the street. (9,20)
UNICEF Country Program (2018–2020)*	Prioritizes strengthening the child protection system to prevent violence and exploitation, especially sexual violence against girls. Provides financial and technical support to the government for the implementation of an inclusive birth registration project, with a particular focus on indigenous communities. (9) In September 2018, the project team, which included officials from the National Civil Status Bureau and MINAS, visited the Betare Oya health district to engage with members of the Baka indigenous community to commit to facilitating birth registration. (9)

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Table 10. Key Social Programs to Address Child Labor (Cont.)

Program	Description
School Feeding Program (2018–2022)*	\$27 million U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA)-funded McGovern-Dole International Food for Education and Child Nutrition Program, which improves literacy and nutrition in 265 primary schools. In 2018, the USDA and the government expanded the scope of the program which now benefits 81,500 children in the Adamawa, East, North, and Northwest regions. (9)
Services for Displaced or Refugee Children†	UNICEF programs that provide educational services to children affected by conflict, including: CARED2, which offers accelerated education curriculums for children in refugee camps in the Far North; ETAPES, which establishes temporary schools and protection centers in Adamawa and East regions; and the Child Protection and Education Project, which works with Catholic Relief Services in the East to enroll and retain refugee children in schools. (92) Research was unable to determine whether activities were undertaken to implement activities during the reporting period.
Northern Cameroon Initiative	A USAID/Office of Transition Initiatives \$25.6 million program to stabilize border communities impacted by crisis, and to counter the spread of violent extremism. In 2018, the program undertook activities to combat child labor including rehabilitating schools, promoting birth registration by issuing birth certificates, and strengthening parent teacher associations. (73,93)
World Bank Projects	Programs that aim to provide social safety nets and improve educational outcomes, including Social Safety Nets (2014–2018), a \$50 million program by the Ministry of Economy, Planning, and Regional Development to provide direct cash transfers to vulnerable families for healthcare and education expenses; and the Equity and Quality for Improved Learning Project (2014–2018), a \$55.8 million program by the Ministry of Basic Education to distribute textbooks for grades 1 to 3, promote girls' education, increase the number of teachers in Cameroon, and improve access to primary education as part of the Education for All initiative. (94,95)
Cameroon Institute of Childhood (ICE) Rehabilitation Project (2017–2020)†	\$2.9 million project financed by MINAS and its partners to rehabilitate a center in Betamba, which serves children in conflict with the law and provides vocational training to area youth. (11) During the reporting period, upgrades were made to the health unit, a multipurpose hall, and a dormitory. Additionally, in June 2018, Orange Foundation provided computer equipment to the center. (96)

* Program was launched during the reporting period.

† Program is funded by the Government of Cameroon.

‡ The government had other social programs that may have included the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor, including its worst forms. (3,16)

During the reporting period, the government, in conjunction with civil society partners, launched a birth registration process for returnee children, internally displaced children, and children from the host population of Mozogo in the Far North Region. In June 2018, the government distributed 368 birth certificates. (9)

Although the government has implemented programs to assist victims of child trafficking and children engaged in street work and domestic work, the scope of these programs is insufficient and does not fully address the extent of the problem in other sectors such as agriculture, mining, quarrying, and commercial sexual exploitation. (1,9,95) Government-run centers can temporarily house victims, but space is limited. (24,74,97) In 2018, the government has made efforts to increase the capacity of victim support centers by rehabilitating the Betamba Child Institute, but this effort does not adequately address the magnitude of the need. (20)

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 Cameroon (Table 11).

Table 11. Suggested Government Actions to Eliminate Child Labor

Area	Suggested Action	Year(s) Suggested
Legal Framework	Accede to the Optional Protocol on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography.	2013 – 2018
	Criminally prohibit the use of children for illicit activities, including in the production and trafficking of drugs.	2014 – 2018
	Ensure that the law criminally prohibits the recruitment of children under age 18 by non-state armed groups.	2016 – 2018
	Establish a minimum age for compulsory education that is consistent with the minimum age for admission to work.	2009 – 2018

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

Area	Suggested Action	Year(s) Suggested
Legal Framework	Ensure that laws prohibiting child trafficking do not require threats, the use of force, or coercion to be considered child trafficking and that all children under age 18 are protected.	2015 – 2018
	Ensure that the hazardous occupations and activities prohibited for children are comprehensive and include work underwater and at dangerous heights.	2014 – 2018
Enforcement	Collect and publish comprehensive statistics on enforcement efforts, including labor inspectorate funding, the number of inspections conducted at worksites, and number of criminal labor law violations found.	2009 – 2018
	Increase the number of labor inspectors to meet the ILO's technical advice.	2009 – 2018
	Ensure that the labor inspectorate and criminal law enforcement agencies receive an adequate amount of funding, training, and resources with which to conduct inspections and investigations.	2009 – 2018
	Strengthen the labor inspectorate by conducting inspections in all sectors, including in the informal sector.	2013 – 2018
	Establish a formal institutional mechanism to investigate and address complaints related to allegations of child labor, including commercial sexual exploitation.	2018
	Ensure that all hotlines for reporting the worst forms of child labor are well-publicized and operational, and that all calls are logged so that cases of child labor may be tracked for referral to law enforcement or social services providers.	2015 – 2018
	Raise awareness of child trafficking issues to encourage citizens to report offenses to enforcement agencies, and ensure that such cases are resolved within the judicial system.	2016 – 2018
	Cease the practices of subjecting children to physical violence and detaining children for their alleged association with armed groups, and ensure that enforcement officials do not carry out extrajudicial killings.	2015 – 2018
Coordination	Ensure that existing coordinating mechanisms function effectively and receive sufficient resources to carry out their stated mandates.	2014 – 2018
Government Policies	Ensure that existing policies, such as the Ministry of Justice's National Action Plan for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights in Cameroon (2015–2019) and the Inter-Ministerial Committee's Trafficking in Persons Action Plan (2014–2019), receive adequate funding and are implemented as intended.	2016 – 2018
	Integrate child labor elimination and prevention strategies into the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper and the Inter-Ministerial Committee's National Gender Policy Document.	2010 – 2018
Social Programs	Ensure that all children, regardless of refugee status, have access to education by eliminating school-related fees, minimizing the disruption of teacher strikes. Ensure that schools are free from violence and not re-appropriated for other purposes.	2009 – 2018
	Ensure that social programs to address child labor are implemented in accordance with their mandates.	2018
	Ensure that the number of schools and teachers, and potable water and sanitation facilities are adequate throughout the country.	2009 – 2018
	Expand existing programs to address the scope of the child labor problem in Cameroon, and institute programs to address child labor in agriculture, mining, quarrying, and commercial sexual exploitation.	2009 – 2018
	Ensure that all government-run centers have sufficient space to accommodate victims.	2016 – 2018

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