

In 2019, Senegal made a moderate advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. The country's first national human trafficking database, "Systraite," was piloted in five regions, and the Ministry of Supervised Education and Social Protection released a multi-disciplinary action plan to address forced begging. However, children in Senegal engage in the worst forms of child labor, including in forced begging, sometimes as a result of human trafficking. Children also perform dangerous tasks in gold mining. Hazardous work prohibitions do not include domestic work and street work, areas in which child labor is prevalent, and labor and criminal law enforcement agencies lack resources to adequately enforce child labor law. In addition, an overlap of mandated activities among mechanisms to coordinate efforts to address child labor creates confusion and obstructs effective collaboration.



I. PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Children in Senegal engage in the worst forms of child labor, including in forced begging, sometimes as a result of human trafficking. Children also perform dangerous tasks in gold mining. (1-5) Table I provides key indicators on children's work and education in Senegal.

Table I. Statistics on Children's Work and Education

Children	Age	Percent
Working (% and population)	5 to 14	22.3 (Unavailable)
Attending School (%)	5 to 14	53.0
Combining Work and School (%)	7 to 14	13.9
Primary Completion Rate (%)		57.1

Source for primary completion rate: Data from 2018, published by UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2020. (1)

Source for all other data: International Labor Organization's analysis of statistics from Demographic and Health Survey (DHS), 2015. (6)

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	Herding cattle (7)
	Fishing, activities unknown (5)
	Farming, including the production of cotton, rice, peanuts, and mangoes (2,5)
Industry	Washing ore, crushing rocks, using mercury, and carrying heavy loads† while mining gold, iron, and salt, and quarrying rock (3,7)
	Welding and auto repair (8)
Services	Domestic work (2-5)
	Street work, including vending (4,5,9)
Categorical Worst Forms of Child Labor‡	Forced domestic work, gold mining, fishing, and farming, each sometimes as a result of human trafficking (2,4,10,11)
	Commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking (8,12,13)
	Forced begging, sometimes as a result of human trafficking (4,5,10,14-22)

† 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.

Children in Senegal are exploited in domestic servitude and forced labor in gold mines, and are victims of trafficking for commercial sexual exploitation, particularly within the country. (4,14,15) Forced begging remains a significant problem in Senegal. It is a traditional practice to send boys to Koranic schools called *daaras*, at which

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students known as *talibés* receive a Koranic education from teachers known as *marabouts*; however, some *daaras* have corrupted the traditional practices, forcing many students to beg. (4,5,12,15,23-26) Corrupt *marabouts* take the *talibés*' earnings and beat those who fail to meet the daily quota. (5,12,16,18,24,25) According to a report by UNODC, this practice enriches *marabouts*, bringing in over \$10 million annually in Dakar alone. (27,28) *Talibés* at such institutions often live in overcrowded, unsanitary conditions, receive inadequate food and medical care, and are vulnerable to physical and sexual abuse. (5,12,13,16,17,25) Children from rural areas in Senegal and neighboring countries are particularly vulnerable to this practice, and are sometimes victims of human trafficking. (12,16,23,25,26,29)

Barriers to education exist that force some students to quit school, including school-related fees, a lack of birth registration documents, and a lack of both teachers and rural schools. Some girls reportedly quit school due to sexual harassment, including by teachers. (8,10,30,31)

II. LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR CHILD LABOR

Senegal 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 Senegal's legal framework to adequately protect children from the worst forms of child labor, including the prohibition of military recruitment by non-state armed groups.

Table 4. Laws and Regulations on Child Labor

Standard	Meets International Standards	Age	Legislation
Minimum Age for Work	Yes	15	Article 1. 145 of the Labor Code; Article 6 of the Decree Establishing the Scale of Penalties for Violations of the Labor Code and Associated Rules for Application (32,33)
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work	Yes	18	Article 1 of the Ministerial Order No. 3749 Determining and Prohibiting the Worst Forms of Child Labor; Article 1 of the Ministerial Order No. 3750 Determining the Types of Hazardous Work Prohibited for Children and Youth; Article 1 of the Ministerial Order No. 3751 Determining the Categories of Business and Work Prohibited to Children and Youth; Article 2 defining the Worst Forms of Child Labor; Article 3 Prohibiting Acts defined in Article 1 (34-36)
Identification of Hazardous Occupations or Activities Prohibited for Children	Yes		Article 2 of the Ministerial Order No. 3749 Determining and Prohibiting the Worst Forms of Child Labor; Ministerial Order No. 3750 Determining the Types of Hazardous Work Prohibited to Children and Youth; Article 2 of the Ministerial Order No. 3751 Determining the Categories of Business and Work Prohibited to Children and Youth (34-36)

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

Standard	Meets International Standards	Age	Legislation
Prohibition of Forced Labor	Yes		Article L. 4 of the Labor Code; Article 2 of the Ministerial Order No. 3749 Determining and Prohibiting the Worst Forms of Child Labor; Article 1 of the Law Concerning the Fight Against Trafficking in Persons and Similar Practices and the Protection of Victims (32,36,37); Article L.279 of the Labor Code; Article 4 of the Ministerial Order
Prohibition of Child Trafficking	Yes		Article 1 of the Law Concerning the Fight Against Trafficking in Persons and Similar Practices and the Protection of Victims (37)
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children	Yes		Article 2 of the Ministerial Order No. 3749 Determining and Prohibiting the Worst Forms of Child Labor; Articles 323 and 324 of the Penal Code (36,38)
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities	No		Article 2 of the Ministerial Order No. 3749 Determining and Prohibiting the Worst Forms of Child Labor (36)
Minimum Age for Voluntary State Military Recruitment	Yes	18	Article 19 of Law No. 2008-28 (39)
Prohibition of Compulsory Recruitment of Children by (State) Military	N/A*		
Prohibition of Military Recruitment by Non-state Armed Groups	No		
Compulsory Education Age	Yes	16	Article 3 of Law No. 2004-37 (40)
Free Public Education	Yes		Article 3 of Law No. 2004-37; Articles 21 and 22 of the Constitution (40,41)

* No conscription (7)

While the 2005 anti-trafficking law criminalized forced begging, provisions in the penal code that allowed seeking of alms under certain conditions may have hampered the ability of law enforcement officials to distinguish between traditional alms seeking and exploitation through forced begging. (3,26,36,42) Government officials, UNODC, UNICEF, and local NGOs have stated that penalties for child labor violations may not be severe enough to deter employers from exploiting children, particularly because the penalties are rarely enforced. (43) Furthermore, the types of hazardous work prohibited for children do not include domestic work or street work, areas in which there is evidence of potential harm to child workers. (7,34-36) The light work provisions are not specific enough to prevent children from involvement in child because they do not limit the number of hours per week for light work, determine the activities in which light work may be permitted, or specify the conditions under which light work may be undertaken. The light work framework also does not meet international standards as it applies to children under the age of 13. (32,33) Because the minimum age for work is lower than the compulsory education age, children may be encouraged to leave school before the completion of compulsory education. (23,32,33,40) In September 2018, as part of the draft law comment period, government finalized and publicized a draft of the revamped Child Code but it was still pending final approval at the end of the reporting period. (5,44)

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, Social Dialogue, Professional Organizations, and Institutional Relations (MOL) that may hinder adequate enforcement of their child labor laws.

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Table 5. Agencies Responsible for Child Labor Law Enforcement

Organization/Agency	Role
Ministry of Labor, Social Dialogue, Professional Organizations, and Institutional Relations (MOL)	Enforces child labor laws through the Directorate General of Labor and Social Security and by using social security inspectors. (31,43)
Ministry of Women, Family, Gender, and Child Protection (MWFGCP)	Contributes to the creation and implementation of child protection policies and provides services to victims of exploitative child labor. Operates the Ginddi Center for vulnerable children and a toll-free child protection hotline through which the public can report child labor abuses. (14,19,26) During the reporting period, the Ministry of Good Governance and Child Protection (MGGCP) collaborated with international donors and an NGO to lead a train-the-trainers session for juvenile justice practitioners on child protection, especially for victims or witnesses of violence, human trafficking, or exploitation. MGGCP also partnered with religious leaders to participate in the second phase of the president's campaign to remove vulnerable children from the streets of Dakar. (11) In April 2019, MGGCP was incorporated into MWFGCP. (4)
Ministry of Justice (MOJ)	Prosecutes violations of child labor laws. (45) Trains police and judiciary on laws related to human trafficking and forced begging. (16) Through its Department of Correctional Education and Social Protection, helps develop draft texts in the field of social protection and juvenile delinquency; strengthens the capacity of stakeholders to care for children; and shares responsibility with the Ministry of Women, Family, and Children to provide services to vulnerable children. (19,46,47)
Ministry of the Interior and Public Security	Oversees all law enforcement agencies, including the local and national police officials who investigate cases of human trafficking and forced child begging, and arrests perpetrators of the worst forms of child labor. (45,48-50) Houses the Children's Unit, located in Dakar, which employs three officers who specialize in child protection, victim identification, and reintegration. (19,48,49) Through its Children's Unit, receives assistance from the Vice Squad in child protection cases. (51) Through its Air and Border Police (<i>Police de l'air et des frontières</i>), focuses on migrant smuggling and transnational crimes. (52)

Labor Law Enforcement

In 2019, labor law enforcement agencies in Senegal took actions to combat child labor (Table 6).

Table 6. Labor Law Enforcement Efforts Related to Child Labor

Overview of Labor Law Enforcement	2018	2019
Labor Inspectorate Funding	\$183,685 (54)	\$203,100 (5)
Number of Labor Inspectors	55 (54)	68 (5)
Inspectorate Authorized to Assess Penalties	Yes (54)	Yes (5)
Initial Training for New Labor Inspectors	Yes (54)	Yes (5)
Training on New Laws Related to Child Labor	N/A (54)	N/A (5)
Refresher Courses Provided	Yes (54)	Yes (5)
Number of Labor Inspections Conducted	2,557 (55)	Unknown (5)
Number Conducted at Worksite	Unknown (54)	Unknown (5)
Number of Child Labor Violations Found	0 (54)	0 (5)
Number of Child Labor Violations for Which Penalties Were Imposed	0 (54)	0 (5)
Number of Child Labor Penalties Imposed that Were Collected	0 (54)	0 (5)
Routine Inspections Conducted	Yes (54)	Yes (5)
Routine Inspections Targeted	Yes (54)	Yes (5)
Unannounced Inspections Permitted	Yes (54)	Yes (5)
Unannounced Inspections Conducted	Yes (54)	Yes (5)
Complaint Mechanism Exists	No (54)	No (5)
Reciprocal Referral Mechanism Exists Between Labor Authorities and Social Services	No (54)	Yes (5)

The number of labor inspectors is insufficient for the size of Senegal's workforce, which includes over 6 million workers. According to the ILO's technical advice of a ratio approaching 1 inspector for every 40,000 workers in less developed economies, Senegal would employ about 175 labor inspectors. (56,57) MOL acknowledged that the current number of labor inspectors is insufficient; and although the number of inspectors increased during the reporting period, a high turnover rate and limited funding level have further hindered the labor inspectorate's capacity to enforce child labor laws. (7,45)

Anecdotal reports indicate that there is a lack of child labor law enforcement in the informal sector, in which most children are employed. This is especially true in the artisanal gold mining sector because most activities take place in the far southeast of the country in the Kédougou region, far from the capital. (5,14,26,58) Article L. 241 of the Labor Code grants inspectors the authority to assess penalties for all offenses; however, they typically do so only for minor offenses and refer the more serious infractions to the courts for determination of penalties. (32,45,58) Courts may require violations to be resolved through conciliation at the labor inspectorate and if that fails, refer cases to a tribunal for judgment. (45) The Ginddi Center’s child protection hotline was operational during the reporting period, but research was unable to determine how many children were supported. It was noted that the Ginddi Center was overcrowded, so the government relied on NGOs to support victims of human trafficking. (4)

Criminal Law Enforcement

In 2019, criminal law enforcement agencies in Senegal took actions to combat child labor (Table 7). However, gaps exist within the authority and operations of the criminal law enforcement agencies that may hinder adequate criminal law enforcement, including poor coordination among agencies.

Table 7. Criminal Law Enforcement Efforts Related to Child Labor

Overview of Criminal Law Enforcement	2018	2019
Initial Training for New Criminal Investigators	Yes (54)	Yes (5)
Training on New Laws Related to the Worst Forms of Child Labor	N/A (54)	N/A (5)
Refresher Courses Provided	No (54)	Yes (5)
Number of Investigations	Unknown (54)	9 (5)
Number of Violations Found	Unknown (54)	7 (5)
Number of Prosecutions Initiated	Unknown (54)	7 (5)
Number of Convictions	Unknown (54)	2 (55)
Imposed Penalties for Violations Related to The Worst Forms of Child Labor	Unknown (26)	Yes (5)
Reciprocal Referral Mechanism Exists Between Criminal Authorities and Social Services	No (54)	Yes (5)

Of the seven cases prosecuted during the reporting period, five were for exploitation of child begging and two were for child procurement for sexual services. (5)

The authorities have had limited success in prosecuting cases related to forced begging due to a lack of coordination and resource constraints, and partly due to a perceived lack of political support, cultural norms, and pressure from influential Koranic teachers who support this practice, particularly in rural areas. (14,58,60,61) Although police stations in Senegal are expected to report cases involving children to the Ministry of the Interior and Public Security’s Children’s Unit, research found no evidence that this occurs regularly. (62) Research indicates that training for criminal investigators was cursory and not sufficient to fully enforce existing laws against labor abuses involving children. (5)

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 clarity of institutional mandates.

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

Coordinating Body	Role & Description
National Committee Against Child Labor	Coordinates initiatives, policies, and partnerships with civil society organizations to address child labor. Chaired by MOL and includes representatives from three ministries, the police, and elected officials. (58) Research was unable to determine whether this organization was active during the reporting period.
National Task Force Against Trafficking in Persons (CNLTP)	Reports on human trafficking in Senegal, with a focus on women and children; coordinates the implementation of the National Action Plan to Combat Trafficking in Human Beings and other efforts to prevent human trafficking; prosecutes perpetrators; and protects victims. (14,49,58,63) Chaired by MOJ and employs five staff members. (48,58,63)
Childhood Protection Unit (CAPE)	Coordinates government efforts related to child protection, including through the implementation of the National Strategy on Child Protection. (51,52,54,58,64) Contributes to the creation and implementation of child protection policies, and develops a national system for collecting and disseminating data on vulnerable children. Advocates on behalf of all entities working on issues related to child begging, violence against children, and child labor. (65) During the reporting period, CAPE became attached to MWFGCP. (4) Research was unable to determine whether CAPE was active during the reporting period.
Trafficking in Persons Database “Systraite”	In October 2019, the Government of Senegal officially launched the country’s first national trafficking in persons database, <i>Système de suivi de la traite</i> , or “Systraite.” Currently in a pilot phase collecting information on human trafficking victims, convictions, and perpetrators in five regions: Dakar, Saint Louis, Thies, Kedougou, and Tambacounda. (4,66,67) Launched in partnership with IOM and with funding from USDOS. (68)
Daara Mapping	In collaboration with local communities, USAID, foreign NGOs, UNODC, and CNLTP, <i>daara</i> mapping has been taking place since 2014. (4,11) During the reporting period, mapping took place in the four municipalities of Dakar, which resulted in the closure of several substandard facilities. (4)

The National Task Force Against Trafficking in Persons remains underfunded. Overlap among the activities of the coordinating bodies due to their institutional mandates also creates confusion and obstructs effective collaboration and implementation of efforts. (14,15,58)

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 lack of a national policy to address child labor, including its worst forms.

Table 9. Key Policies Related to Child Labor

Policy	Description
National Action Plan to Combat Trafficking in Human Beings (2018–2020)	Implemented by CNLTP, a continuation of the previously ended action plan along four axes: prevention, protection and prosecution, capacity building, and research and evaluation. (14,58) During the reporting period, CNLTP continued the 2018–2020 National Action Plan, with wide participation by both public and non-public entities. However, it continued to utilize international donors as the primary mechanism to provide training due to insufficient government funding. (4)
National Strategy on Child Protection	Aims to establish an integrated national social protection system and specifically identifies the issue of child begging through an action plan with a recommended budget of \$18 million. (19) Implemented through Child Protection Committees, currently established in 24 prefectures, which refer victims to social services and assist law enforcement with reintegrating child trafficking victims. (19,48) It has not been operational since 2012. The committee did not meet in 2019. However, government and civil society stakeholders have held informal, ad hoc consultations throughout the year. (55)

‡ The government had other policies that may have addressed child labor issues or had an impact on child labor. (48)

Research was unable to determine whether any actions were undertaken in 2019 to renew the National Action Plan on the Prevention and Abolition of Child Labor in Senegal, which expired in 2016.

VI. SOCIAL PROGRAMS TO ADDRESS CHILD LABOR

In 2019, 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 adequacy of programs to address the full scope of the problem.

Table 10. Key Social Programs to Address Child Labor

Program	Description
Removal of Street Children (<i>Retrait des enfants de la Rue</i>)	Government program to remove children who are begging from the streets of Dakar and place them in government-run shelters or return them to their homes. (4,26,54,69) The first phase removed over 1,500 children, including around 1,000 <i>talibés</i> , from the streets of Dakar from June 2016 to early 2017. In early 2018, the government launched phase two, picking up over 300 <i>talibés</i> between April and June 2018. (70) During the reporting period, the government continued planning for a third phase to take place in the cities of Dakar, Thies, and Saint-Louis. (4)
<i>Daara</i> Modernization Program†	\$18.5 million government-funded voluntary program implemented by Tostan and <i>La Rencontre Africaine pour la Défense des Droits d'Homme</i> that aims to regulate, inspect, and fund <i>daaras</i> and eliminate forced begging. (3,61,71) Research was unable to determine whether activities were conducted during the reporting period.
Ginddi Center‡	Shelter that serves abused and vulnerable children, including runaway <i>talibés</i> , street children, and child trafficking victims. (19,31,58,61) Provides food, education, vocational training, family mediation, medical care, and psychological care. (46,58,72) Research was unable to determine whether activities were conducted during the reporting period.
Centers to address child trafficking‡	MOJ-run transit houses in Dakar, Pikine, and Saint-Louis that provide monitoring, education, and rehabilitation and reintegration services for victims of child trafficking. (48) Research was unable to determine whether activities were conducted during the reporting period.

† Program is funded by the Government of Senegal.

‡ The government had other social programs that may have included the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor. (73-75)

Although the Government of Senegal has implemented programs to address child trafficking and forced begging, research found no evidence that the government has carried out programs to assist children involved in domestic work, agriculture, or mining. (10)

In December 2019, the Ministry of Supervised Education and Social Protection released a multi-disciplinary action plan to address the problem of forced begging. (4)

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 Senegal (Table 11).

Table 11. Suggested Government Actions to Eliminate Child Labor

Area	Suggested Action	Year(s) Suggested
Legal Framework	Ensure that penalties for child labor violations, including the worst forms, are stringent enough to serve as a deterrent.	2014 – 2019
	Ensure that the types of hazardous work prohibited for children are comprehensive.	2016 – 2019
	Ensure that the law criminally prohibits the recruitment of children under age 18 by non-state armed groups.	2016 – 2019
	Clarify ambiguity in forced begging provisions in the Penal Code and the Law Concerning the Fight Against Trafficking in Persons to explicitly guarantee that no exceptions can enable a child to be forced to beg.	2017 – 2019
	Ensure that the law's light work provisions are specific enough to prevent children's involvement in child labor.	2017 – 2019
Enforcement	Establish by law a compulsory education age equal to the minimum age for work.	2018 – 2019
	Publish all relevant information on labor inspections conducted, including those at worksites.	2013 – 2019
	Ensure all penalties are assessed, particularly in the most serious cases.	2019
	Increase the number of labor inspectors to meet the ILO's technical advice, and ensure adequate labor inspectorate funding.	2010 – 2019
	Ensure that labor law enforcement and inspections are carried out in the informal sector.	2014 – 2019
	Establish a mechanism to receive child labor complaints, and track cases of child labor for referral to law enforcement or social services providers.	2014 – 2018
	Establish a formal and reciprocal complaint mechanism between labor law enforcement .	2016 – 2019
	Ensure that training for criminal investigators adequately addresses issues related to the worst forms of child labor in Senegal.	2019
	Ensure courts have sufficient resources and coordination to be able to successfully prosecute cases.	2019
Disaggregate Ginddi Center hotline call data to show how many calls are regarding children.	2019	

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

Area	Suggested Action	Year(s) Suggested
Coordination	Ensure that coordinating mechanisms on child labor are active and able to carry out their intended mandates by providing adequate resources, support, and distinct scopes of responsibility.	2010 – 2019
Government Policies	Adopt a national policy to address child labor.	2016 – 2019
Social Programs	Ensure that all children have access to education by eliminating school-related fees, building schools in rural areas, training additional teachers, ensuring that all children have access to birth registration, and ensuring that schools are free from sexual abuse.	2011 – 2019
	Institute programs to address child labor in domestic work, agriculture, and mining, and ensure that adequate funding is available to support existing programs targeting the worst forms of child labor, including forced begging.	2010 – 2019
	Ensure the <i>Daara</i> Modernization Program and the Centers address child trafficking conduct activities to eradicate forced begging and support victims of child trafficking.	2017 – 2019

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