In 2019, Egypt made a moderate advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. The government formed and held the inaugural meeting of the National Steering Committee for the National Action Plan to Eliminate the Worst Forms of Child Labor and Supporting Families, which will coordinate the implementation of the plan. The National Council for Childhood and Motherhood also continued to strengthen Child Protection Committees that had been inactive. Additionally, the Ministry of Social Solidarity exceeded its yearly goal in providing supplemental income to families to support children's school attendance, reaching 5 million children by April 2019. However, children in Egypt engage in the worst forms of child labor, including in commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking, and in quarrying limestone. Additionally, the government did not



publish data on the enforcement of child labor laws and programs to combat child labor are insufficient to adequately address the extent of the problem.

## I. PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

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

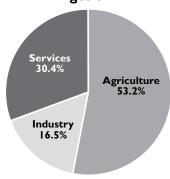
Table I. Statistics on Children's Work and Education

Children	Age	Percent
Working (% and population)	10 to 14	2.9 (246,179)
Attending School (%)	10 to 14	93.8
Combining Work and School (%)	10 to 14	1.3
Primary Completion Rate (%)		100.7

Source for primary completion rate: Data from 2018, published by UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2020. (4)

Source for all other data: International Labor Organization's analysis of statistics from Survey of Young People in Egypt (SYPE), 2009. (5)

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



Based on a review of available information, Table 2 provides an overview of children's work by sector and activity.

Table 2. Overview of Children's Work by Sector and Activity

Sector/Industry	Activity
Agriculture	Farming, including the production of cotton (6-10)
	Caring for livestock (10-12)
	Fishing, activities unknown (11,13)
Industry	Quarrying† limestone (1,2,6)
	Making bricks (6,14-17)
	Working in carpentry workshops (11,18)
	Working in marble workshops (19,20)
	Construction, activities unknown (6,10,17,21)
	Working in aluminum factories (11,22)

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

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Sector/Industry	Activity
Services	Domestic work (6,12,17)
	Driving tuktuks (6,23,24)
	Repairing automobiles (6,25)
	Street work, including selling goods, collecting garbage, and sweeping (7,21,26)
Categorical Worst	Domestic work as a result of human trafficking (3,13)
Forms of Child Labor‡	Commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking (3,6,27)
	Forced begging, sometimes as a result of human trafficking (3,6)

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

Some girls are subjected to commercial sexual exploitation under the pretext of temporary marriage to wealthy foreign men, mostly from Persian Gulf countries. (6,27) In past years, Egyptian children were trafficked to Italy, where they were used for bonded child labor, commercial sexual exploitation, and illicit activities. (10,28-33) Egyptian children continued to fall victim to labor exploitation in agriculture and food services, and some were sexually exploited. (6,34)

Many children drop out of school because of school-related costs, such as transportation, clothing, and food. (9,11,13) Girls face additional barriers to education, including long distances to school, harassment and violence at school and on the way to school, lack of sanitation facilities, and cultural barriers. (13,35) In addition, Syrian refugees in Egypt face difficulties in accessing education. (36) In 2019, the UN and partners enrolled 44,784 Syrian refugees in school, provided 483 teachers with professional development training, and distributed textbooks and school materials to 1,527 Syrian children. (37)

### II. LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR CHILD LABOR

Egypt has ratified all key international conventions concerning child labor (Table 3).

Table 3. Ratification of International Conventions on Child Labor

	Convention	Ratification
E TO THE	ILO C. 138, Minimum Age	✓
ATTO: N	ILO C. 182, Worst Forms of Child Labor	✓
	UN CRC	✓
	UN CRC Optional Protocol on Armed Conflict	✓
	UN CRC Optional Protocol on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography	✓
	Palermo Protocol on Trafficking in Persons	✓

The government has established laws and regulations related to child labor (Table 4). However, gaps exist in Egypt's legal framework to adequately protect children from the worst forms of child labor, including the prohibition of some forms of hazardous work such as brickmaking.

Table 4. Laws and Regulations on Child Labor

Standard	Meets International Standards	Age	Legislation
Minimum Age for Work	Yes	15	Article 64 of the Child Law (38)
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work	Yes	18	Article I of Ministry of Manpower's Decree II8 (39)
Identification of Hazardous Occupations or Activities Prohibited for Children	Yes		Articles I–2 of Ministry of Manpower's Decree 118 (39)

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

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

	Meets		
Standard	International Standards	Age	Legislation
Prohibition of Forced Labor	Yes		Article 89 of the Constitution; Article 291 of the Penal Code; Articles 2–3 of the Law on Combating Human Trafficking (38,40,41)
Prohibition of Child Trafficking	Yes		Article 89 of the Constitution; Article 291 of the Penal Code; Articles 2–3 of the Law on Combating Human Trafficking (38,40,41)
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children	Yes		Article 116-bis(a) of the Child Law; Article 291 of the Penal Code; Articles 2–3 of the Law on Combating Human Trafficking; Articles 1–4 and 6 of the Law on the Combating of Prostitution (38,41,42)
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities	Yes		Article 34 of the Law on Narcotics; Article 65 of the Child Law; Article 2.2 of Ministry of Manpower's Decree 118 (38,39,43)
Minimum Age for Voluntary State Military Recruitment	No	15	Ministry of Defense Guidelines on Youth Volunteers in the Armed Forces (44)
Prohibition of Compulsory Recruitment of Children by (State) Military	Yes		Article I of the Law on Military and National Service (45)
Prohibition of Military Recruitment by Non- state Armed Groups	Yes		Article 7-bis(b) of the Child Law (38)
Compulsory Education Age	Yes	15‡	Article 59(1) of the Child Law; Articles 80 and 238 of the Constitution (38,40)
Free Public Education	Yes		Article 54 of the Child Law (38)

<sup>‡</sup> Age calculated based on available information (29,46)

The law prohibits hazardous occupations and activities for children, including in quarrying, tanning, welding, spraying pesticides, and carrying heavy loads. (39) However, the types of hazardous work prohibited for children do not cover brick production, an area of work in which there is evidence of exposure to hazardous temperatures. (14,15,17)

#### III. ENFORCEMENT OF LAWS ON CHILD LABOR

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

Table 5. Agencies Responsible for Child Labor Law Enforcement

Organization/Agency	Role
Ministry of Manpower	Enforces child labor laws and regulations, including receiving and investigating child labor complaints. Inspectors conduct routine labor inspections and report violations to the Ministry of the Interior, which then refers the case for prosecution. (6)
Ministry of the Interior	Enforces laws and regulations prohibiting human trafficking and commercial sexual exploitation of children. (6)
Ministry of Justice, Prosecutor General's Office	Prosecutes violation of laws related to the worst forms of child labor and human trafficking. (6)
Ministry of Local Development	Provides administrative and logistical support for the enforcement of child labor laws. Administers the Child Protection Committees. (6)
Administrative Control Authority	Investigates government corruption and human trafficking, and reports violations to the Ministry of the Interior, which refers the case for prosecution. (47)

## **Labor Law Enforcement**

In 2019, labor law enforcement agencies in Egypt took actions to combat child labor (Table 6). However, gaps exist within the authority of the Ministry of Manpower that may hinder adequate labor law enforcement, including the authority to assess penalties.

# Egypt

#### MODERATE ADVANCEMENT

Table 6. Labor Law Enforcement Efforts Related to Child Labor

Overview of Labor Law Enforcement	2018	2019
Labor Inspectorate Funding	Unknown (11)	Unknown (6)
Number of Labor Inspectors	530 (11)	Unknown (6)
Inspectorate Authorized to Assess Penalties	No (II)	No (6)
Initial Training for New Labor Inspectors	Unknown (11)	Unknown (6)
Training on New Laws Related to Child Labor	N/A	N/A
Refresher Courses Provided	Yes (17)	Yes (6)
Number of Labor Inspections Conducted	Unknown (11)	Unknown (6)
Number Conducted at Worksite	Unknown (11)	Unknown (6)
Number of Child Labor Violations Found	602 (47)	Unknown (6)
Number of Child Labor Violations for Which Penalties Were Imposed	Unknown (11)	Unknown(6)
Number of Child Labor Penalties Imposed that Were Collected	Unknown (11)	Unknown (6)
Routine Inspections Conducted	Yes (11)	Yes (6)
Routine Inspections Targeted	Yes (II)	Yes (6)
Unannounced Inspections Permitted	Yes (II)	Yes (6)
Unannounced Inspections Conducted	Yes (11)	Yes (6)
Complaint Mechanism Exists	Yes (11)	Yes (6)
Reciprocal Referral Mechanism Exists Between Labor Authorities and Social Services	Yes (II)	Yes (6)

In 2019, the Ministry of Manpower continued its cooperation with the ILO, the World Food Program, and NGOs. It conducted three workshops that trained 118 labor inspectors on relevant child labor laws and the Ministry of Social Solidarity's child protection policies and reporting mechanism. (6) However, sources report that the number of inspectors receiving training on child labor policies was insufficient to deal with the scope of the problem. (6)

The number of labor inspectors is likely insufficient for the size of Egypt's workforce, which includes over 29.95 million workers. (48) According to the ILO's technical advice of I inspector for every 15,000 workers in developing economies, Egypt would employ about 1,997 inspectors. (49,50) The government does not publish information about the funding of the labor inspectorate, initial training for new inspectors, the number of inspections, the number of violations, or penalties for violations. (6)

## **Criminal Law Enforcement**

In 2019, criminal law enforcement agencies in Egypt took actions to combat child labor (Table 7). However, gaps exist within the operations of the criminal enforcement agencies that may hinder adequate criminal law enforcement, including a lack of disaggregation of human trafficking enforcement data on children.

Table 7. Criminal Law Enforcement Efforts Related to Child Labor

Overview of Criminal Law Enforcement	2018	2019
Initial Training for New Criminal Investigators	Unknown (11)	Unknown (6)
Training on New Laws Related to the Worst Forms of Child Labor	N/A	N/A
Refresher Courses Provided	Yes (51)	Yes (52)
Number of Investigations	Unknown (11)	Unknown (6)
Number of Violations Found	Unknown (11)	Unknown (6)
Number of Prosecutions Initiated	Unknown (11)	Unknown (6)
Number of Convictions	Unknown (11)	Unknown (6)
Imposed Penalties for Violations Related to The Worst Forms of Child Labor	Unknown	Unknown (6)
Reciprocal Referral Mechanism Exists Between Criminal Authorities and Social Services	Yes (11)	Yes (6)

The government did not publicly release information on its criminal law enforcement efforts. (6) In 2019, 40 individuals, including an employee of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, were sentenced to prison terms ranging from 3 to 16 years for human trafficking offenses including the commercial sexual exploitation of girls. (53) During

the reporting period, the government conducted training sessions on human trafficking for social workers that focused on women and children. (54) In addition, a series of training sessions on countering human trafficking was held for prosecutors. (52)

In 2019, the Prosecutor General's Office established a Child Protection Office to review cases and rulings relating to children to protect them from exploitation and violence. (55)

#### 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 coordination among government agencies.

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

Coordinating Body	Role & Description
National Council for Childhood and Motherhood (NCCM)	Coordinates enforcement of laws related to child labor, including its worst forms. Provides technical support and training about child labor for the Ministry of Manpower's inspectors. (5) Identifies and monitors at-risk children. Manages two 24-hour hotlines and receives reports of child labor and child trafficking. (13) In 2019, NCCM took part in the inaugural meeting of the National Steering Committee for the National Action Plan to Eliminate the Worst Forms of Child Labor and Supporting Families. (6) In January 2019, NCCM in coordination with other government entities and NGOs released its Children on the Move standard operating procedures for handling trafficking cases involving children. In addition, NCCM with UNICEF trained its hotline staff and upgraded the hotline's software to track the age, region, and types of crimes reported. (55)
National Steering Committee for the National Action Plan to Eliminate the Worst Forms of Child Labour and Supporting Families*	Coordinates efforts to implement the National Action Plan to Eliminate the Worst Forms of Child Labor and Supporting Families. Membership includes the Ministries of Manpower, Social Solidarity, Education, Agriculture, the Interior, Planning, Finance, Investment and International Cooperation, Trade, Justice, Health, Local Development, and Awqaf, in addition to NCCM, the National Council of Women, the Central Agency for Population and Statistics, the National Media Agency, and Al Azhar University. (6) In July 2019, the committee held its inaugural meeting. (6)
National Coordination Committee on Preventing Illegal Migration and Combating Trafficking in Persons (NCCPIM & TIP)	Coordinates efforts to combat human trafficking. Led by an ambassador appointed by the Prime Minister, comprises 18 government entities, including the Ministries of the Interior and Manpower. (13) Despite efforts, insufficient cooperation by some entities prevents effective collaboration of government agencies and NGOs. (51) In 2019, NCCPIM & TIP along with other ministries and coordinating bodies conducted TIP-awareness campaigns for NGOs, diplomats, and Egyptian Red Crescent volunteers. (55)
Child Protection Committees	Coordinates child protection efforts at the local level in partnership with community organizations. Led by the Ministry of Social Solidarity and chaired by local governors in each governorate, with subcommittees at each police station. (13) During the reporting period, NCCM continued to strengthen Child Protection Committees that had been inactive in previous years. (51)

<sup>\*</sup> Mechanism to coordinate efforts to address child labor was created during the reporting period.

## V. GOVERNMENT POLICIES ON CHILD LABOR

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

Table 9. Key Policies Related to Child Labor

Policy	Description
National Action Plan Against the Worst Forms of Child Labor and Supporting Family (2018–2025)	Aims to eliminate the worst forms of child labor by 2025 and identify roles of government agencies responsible for assisting child laborers. (13) Developed in 2017 and formally adopted in 2018, the strategic objectives of the National Action Plan include expansion of the child labor knowledge base; capacity-building of agencies providing support; social protection, with links to existing programs; enhanced education, including vocational education for children; and advocacy and awareness-raising. (17) In 2019, the Ministries of Manpower, Social Solidarity, Agriculture, and NCCM collaborated with the ILO to determine gaps in ministerial coordination and the regime to criminalize child labor. (6)
Third National Plan of Action Against Human Trafficking (2016–2021)	Aims to maintain referral mechanisms, train law enforcement officials, and combat trafficking of street children. (13) During the reporting period, several government agencies provided human trafficking training to officials. (52,54)

Table 9. Key Policies Related to Child Labor (Cont.)

Policy	Description
National Strategy for Childhood and Motherhood (2018–2030)	The child labor chapter aims to promote dialogue on child labor legislation, including updating the hazardous work list; building the capacity of relevant government agencies, such the Ministry of Manpower and NCCM; developing programs to address child labor; and expanding education and vocational training opportunities. (11) During the reporting period, NCCM took part in the National Steering Committee for
	the National Action Plan Against the Worst Forms of Child Labor and Supporting Family. (6)

#### 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 the adequacy of programs to address the full scope of the problem.

Table 10. Key Social Programs to Address Child Labor

Program	Description
Expanding Access to Education and Protection for At-Risk Children in Egypt (2016–2021)	\$32 million, EU-funded project implemented by UNICEF in cooperation with the Ministry of Education and NCCM to expand access to education for 36,000 children, including 6,000 children with disabilities, and to support 15 Child Protection Committees in 15 governorates. (57) Active in 2019. (58)
Solidarity and Dignity Program (Takafol and Karama)†	Funded by the Ministry of Social Solidarity, promotes school attendance and health monitoring for children by providing income supplements to poor families. (11) In 2019, UNICEF assisted the Ministry of Social Solidarity in expanding and improving the program to meet the government's single-year goal. By April 2019, provided benefits to 5 million children in 2.6 million families. (6)
Children without Shelter†	Ministry of Social Solidarity-operated shelters for victims of human trafficking, child victims of trafficking and forced labor, and other vulnerable individuals. The Dar as-Salam shelter, operated by NCCM and an NGO, Face, provides social services, including psychological counseling and health services. (61) Mobile units in 10 governorates work to reintegrate children with their families or place them in foster care. (62) Active in 2019. (63)

<sup>†</sup> Program is funded by the Government of Egypt.

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

## VII. SUGGESTED GOVERNMENT ACTIONS TO ELIMINATE CHILD LABOR

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

Table 11. Suggested Government Actions to Eliminate Child Labor

Area	Suggested Action	Year(s) Suggested
Legal Framework	Ensure that the law establishes 16 as the minimum age for voluntary recruitment by the state military with safeguards for voluntariness.	2019
	Ensure that the types of work that children perform in Egypt that expose them to hazardous temperatures, such as brick production, are prohibited for children under age 18.	2017 – 2019
Enforcement	Publish information on labor inspection, including funding, the number of labor inspectors, initial training for inspectors, number of labor inspections conducted, violations found, and penalties imposed and collected.	2011 – 2019
	Strengthen the labor inspectorate by authorizing inspectors to assess penalties.	2017 – 2019
	Increase the number of labor inspectors to meet the ILO's technical advice.	
	Increase the number of inspectors receiving training on child labor policies.	2019
	Publish information on initial and refresher training for criminal investigators and the disaggregated number of investigations, violations, prosecutions, convictions, and penalties for criminal violations of child labor laws.	2011 – 2019
Coordination	Ensure the National Coordinating Committee to Combat the Worst Forms of Child Labor is able to carry out its intended mandate, and ensure effective collaboration between government agencies and other stakeholders.	2017 – 2019
Social Programs	Ensure universal access to free public education, especially for girls, by addressing the cost of school fees, supplies, and other barriers to education.	2010 – 2019
	Expand programs to address the full scope of the child labor problem, particularly in commercial sexual exploitation and in quarrying limestone.	2010 – 2019

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