

In 2019, Jordan made a moderate advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. The Ministry of Labor's Child Labor Unit established and began using an electronic child labor monitoring system to coordinate government and civil society efforts to remove children from child labor and provide them with services. Moreover, the government increased the number of families receiving assistance through the National Aid Fund, a program that provides cash transfers conditioned on families re-enrolling working children in school. In addition, the government continued to provide shelter, educational, and financial services to children engaged in child labor. However, children in Jordan engage in the worst forms of child labor, including in street work. Children also perform dangerous tasks in agriculture. Insufficient resources hampered the Ministry of Labor's capacity to ensure compliance with child labor laws in the agricultural sector. Moreover, and despite government efforts, Syrian children still face barriers to accessing education due to socioeconomic pressures, bullying, and costs associated with transportation and supplies, among other issues. In addition, the government did not conduct investigations on cases related to the worst forms of child labor, including forced begging or commercial sexual exploitation of children, even though there is evidence of these worst forms of child labor.



I. PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Children in Jordan engage in the worst forms of child labor, including in street work. (1,2) Children also perform dangerous tasks in agriculture. (3,4) Based on the 2016 National Child Labor Survey, approximately 70,000 children ages 5 to 17 are engaged in child labor, most commonly in agriculture and retail trade. Approximately 80 percent of child laborers are Jordanian and about 15 percent are Syrian. (3) Boys constitute nearly 90 percent of those involved in child labor. (3) Table 1 provides key indicators on children's work and education in Jordan.

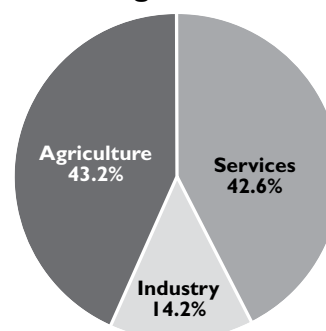
Table 1. Statistics on Children's Work and Education

Children	Age	Percent
Working (% and population)	5 to 14	1.0 (33,182)
Attending School (%)	5 to 14	94.8
Combining Work and School (%)	7 to 14	1.0
Primary Completion Rate (%)		72.7

Source for primary completion rate: Data from 2018, published by UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2020. (5)

Source for all other data: International Labor Organization's analysis of statistics from National Child Labor Survey (SIMPOC), 2016. (6)

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 weeding, planting, and harvesting tomatoes and olives (3,4,7-12)
Industry	Mining† and quarrying† (3)
	Construction,† including building and painting homes (3,4,13,14)
	Manufacturing, activities unknown (3,15)
	Carpentry† (13,14)
	Blacksmithing† (13)

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

Sector/Industry	Activity
Services	Repairing automobiles† (3,7,14,15)
	Attending to donkeys, camels, and horses to transport tourists (16)
	Street work,† including selling items, washing cars, and begging (7,13-15)
	Scavenging scrap metal and waste (17,18)
	Domestic work† (7,15)
	Food services, including working in restaurants and bakeries (3,7,13,15)
	Hotel services† (3,15)
	Working in retail, including cleaning shops (3,10,19)
Categorical Worst Forms of Child Labor‡	Forced begging, sometimes as a result of human trafficking (1,20-22)
	Commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking (21-24)

† 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.




While Syrian children are granted access to Jordanian public schools, more than 83,000, or nearly one third of all Syrian refugee children, were not enrolled in formal or informal education in academic year 2018–2019. (2) These children face barriers to education, including bullying and harassment, and the costs of transportation, uniforms, and school materials. In addition, they are unprepared for their appropriate grade level because of interruptions in their early years of schooling. (4,25-28) NGOs have indicated that, among Syrian refugees, child labor in agriculture alongside family members has increased. (22)

In previous years, Jordan waived a requirement for documentation in order to expand access to education for Syrian children. However, the government opted not to extend the waiver for the 2019-2020 academic year. (29) The government continued to address the overcrowding of classrooms by providing school attendance in double-shift schools. (2,30,31) At these double-shift schools, Jordanian children attend in the morning and Syrian children attend in the afternoon. (20,32) Out of approximately 3,800 schools in the country, Jordan ran more than 354 schools on double-shift schedules. (2) In 2019, 200 of the latter were for refugee children, mainly Syrian. (2) In addition, the Ministry of Education provides an accelerated educational program for refugees who have been out of school for more than 3 years. (22) However, Jordanian and Syrian children attending double-shift schools are vulnerable to child labor because the school hours are considerably shorter, and fewer school hours leave more time for work. (33,34)

II. LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR CHILD LABOR

Jordan 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 Jordan’s legal framework to adequately protect children from the worst forms of child labor.

Table 4. Laws and Regulations on Child Labor

Standard	Meets International Standards	Age	Legislation
Minimum Age for Work	Yes	16	Article 73 of the Labor Code (35)
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work	Yes	18	Article 74 of the Labor Code; Article 2 of the Ministerial Order of 2011 (35,36)
Identification of Hazardous Occupations or Activities Prohibited for Children	Yes		Article 2 of the Ministerial Order of 2011 (36)
Prohibition of Forced Labor	No		Articles 3(a)–(b) of the Law on the Prevention of Human Trafficking (35,37)
Prohibition of Child Trafficking	Yes		Article 3(a) of the Law on the Prevention of Human Trafficking (37)
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children	Yes		Articles 298–299, 306, 310–311, 315, and 319 of the Penal Code; Article 3(b) of the Law on the Prevention of Human Trafficking (37,38)
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities	Yes		Article 8 of the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act (39)
Minimum Age for Voluntary State Military Recruitment	N/A*		
Prohibition of Compulsory Recruitment of Children by (State) Military	Yes		Article 3(a) of the National Service Act (40)
Prohibition of Military Recruitment by Non-state Armed Groups	No		
Compulsory Education Age	Yes	16	Articles 7(a.2) and 10(b) of the Education Act (41)
Free Public Education	Yes		Article 20 of the Constitution (42)

* No volunteers are accepted to join the armed forces. (43,44)

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 (MOL) 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 (MOL), Directorate of Labor Affairs and Inspection	Enforces labor laws, including those on child labor. Maintains a hotline to receive labor-related complaints, including complaints of child labor. (17) Identifies cases of child labor through worksite inspections and refers cases to the relevant services. Registers instances of child labor in a National Child Labor Database, which allows ministries to monitor and track children as they are identified and referred to services. (45) The hotline has operators during office hours, although operators who speak foreign languages were not always available. The hotline has an automated message recording after 3 p.m. (43,46) The phone number is difficult to locate and, based on available information, operators rarely respond to voicemails left after working hours. (43,46)
MOL Child Labor Unit	Coordinates government efforts to campaign against child labor, conducts training, and raises awareness about child labor issues. (20) Manages the Child Labor Monitoring System, a case management tool that helps coordinate efforts by relevant government agencies and civil society organizations to ensure that children are removed from child labor and provided with critical social and educational services. (2)
Public Security Directorate, Criminal Investigation Unit	Investigates and prosecutes violations of the Penal Code, including allegations of the worst forms of child labor. Operates a section to combat human trafficking. (17)
Joint Anti-Trafficking Unit of MOL and the Public Security Directorate	Investigates cases of human trafficking and forced labor, refers cases for prosecution, and coordinates with foreign embassies to identify victims of human trafficking and to repatriate workers. (2)

Labor Law Enforcement

In 2019, labor law enforcement agencies in Jordan took actions to combat child labor (Table 6). However, gaps exist within the operations of the MOL that may hinder adequate labor law enforcement, including insufficient regulations and resources.

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Table 6. Labor Law Enforcement Efforts Related to Child Labor

Overview of Labor Law Enforcement	2018	2019
Labor Inspectorate Funding	\$422,715 (15)	\$422,715 (47)
Number of Labor Inspectors	135 (48)	171 (2)
Inspectorate Authorized to Assess Penalties	Yes (49)	Yes (50)
Initial Training for New Labor Inspectors	N/A	Yes (2)
Training on New Laws Related to Child Labor	N/A	N/A
Refresher Courses Provided	Yes (48)	Yes (2)
Number of Labor Inspections Conducted	52,663 (51)	63,653 (2)
Number Conducted at Worksite	Unknown	63,653 (2)
Number of Child Labor Violations Found	671 (48)	467 (2)
Number of Child Labor Violations for Which Penalties Were Imposed	Unknown	250 (2)
Number of Child Labor Penalties Imposed that Were Collected	Unknown	Unknown (2)
Routine Inspections Conducted	Yes (15)	Yes (2)
Routine Inspections Targeted	Yes (15)	Yes (2)
Unannounced Inspections Permitted	Yes (15)	Yes (2)
Unannounced Inspections Conducted	Yes (15)	Yes (2)
Complaint Mechanism Exists	Yes (15)	Yes (2)
Reciprocal Referral Mechanism Exists Between Labor Authorities and Social Services	Yes (52)	Yes (2)

When a labor inspector identifies a child laborer, the inspector issues a warning and may issue a fine, and asks the employer to send the child home while the inspector is still present. (33) A warning requires the employer to sign a pledge declaring that they will cease employing children. Without the pledge, the MOL can close the business. (20) The information about the child is then shared with the Ministry of Social Development (MOSD), which contacts the family to identify the appropriate social services needed. If a child labor violation has been identified, the labor inspector conducts unannounced follow-up inspections at the worksite to ensure compliance. (33) In 2019, the MOL issued 295 warnings for child labor. Following a warning, the case is logged into an electronic database and referred to the MOSD for follow up. (2)

In 2019, the government reported an increase in inspectors from 135 to 171 as inspectors in managerial positions took on increased field inspection responsibilities. (51) The MOL conducted 63,653 inspections, 7,143 of which were conducted in East Amman, Petra, and the al-Zaatari refugee camp, in which child labor likely exists. (2) However, the high number of inspections per inspector raises concerns that inspectors may not have the time to adequately identify and remediate labor law violations.

Insufficient regulations and resources, and the migratory nature of the agricultural sector hampered the MOL's capacity to ensure compliance with child labor laws in the agriculture sector. (15,17,53) In addition to ongoing national budget constraints, the MOL has not issued regulations on labor inspections in agriculture, which further limits its oversight in this sector. (33,53) In 2019, the MOL worked with Better Work Jordan on drafting and issuing manuals for inspectors in agriculture, chemicals, engineering, and plastics, each of which contains a chapter on child labor. (2)

The government did not provide information on the number of child labor penalties that were collected for inclusion in this report.

Jordanian children identified during labor inspections are referred to the Child Labor Unit of the MOSD. (33,54) Until early 2019, Syrian refugee children who were identified during labor inspections were separated from their families and taken to the Azraq refugee camp. (33,55,56) Families faced difficulties in reuniting with children sent to Azraq, including traveling long distances from urban areas where the majority of refugees live and other camps. (47,55,56) Additionally, those families that live in host communities (i.e., about 80 percent of all Syrian refugees) feared that by presenting themselves at Azraq, they would also be forced to stay at the Azraq camp and lose their freedom of movement and livelihoods. (46,55,56) According to UNICEF, the practice of detaining

minors engaged in illegal labor continues following the closure of the Azraq facility, although at a reduced level. (46)

Criminal Law Enforcement

In 2019, criminal law enforcement agencies in Jordan 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 investigation planning.

Table 7. Criminal Law Enforcement Efforts Related to Child Labor

Overview of Criminal Law Enforcement	2018	2019
Initial Training for New Criminal Investigators	Unknown	Yes
Training on New Laws Related to the Worst Forms of Child Labor	N/A	N/A
Refresher Courses Provided	Yes (43)	Yes (71)
Number of Investigations	0 (71)	0 (71)
Number of Violations Found	0 (71)	0 (71)
Number of Prosecutions Initiated	0 (71)	0 (71)
Number of Convictions	0 (71)	0 (71)
Imposed Penalties for Violations Related to The Worst Forms of Child Labor	No (71)	No (71)
Reciprocal Referral Mechanism Exists Between Criminal Authorities and Social Services	Yes (20)	Yes (20)

In 2019, the Joint Anti-Trafficking Unit conducted 39 workshops with civil society organizations and 250 lectures throughout the country to raise awareness regarding human trafficking indicators. (1) During the reporting period, the Joint Anti-Trafficking Unit investigated 205 cases, 13 of which were found to be human trafficking cases and an additional 8 were cases of forced labor. (1) However, criminal law enforcement agencies in Jordan conducted no investigations on cases related to the worst forms of child labor, including forced begging or commercial sexual exploitation of children, even though there is evidence of these worst forms of child labor. (20,21,23,71)

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 efforts to address all forms of child labor.

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

Coordinating Body	Role & Description
National Committee on Child Labor	Formulates new policies, amends legislation as necessary, and oversees the implementation of child labor policies, including the National Framework to Combat Child Labor. Led by MOL, members include three other ministries, plus international and civil society organizations. (57) The National Committee on Child Labor did not meet in 2019. (51)
National Committee for the Prevention of Human Trafficking	Coordinates government efforts to combat human trafficking, and chaired by the Ministry of Justice. Other members include representatives from 10 state agencies, including the Counter Trafficking Unit, which is in charge of human trafficking investigations. (58) The Counter Trafficking Unit is operated jointly by the Public Security Directorate and MOL. (43) The committee met in January 2019 and meets on an ad hoc basis. (1)

Although Jordan has a National Committee for the Prevention of Human Trafficking to coordinate efforts to address trafficking in persons, it does not have coordinating mechanisms to address other forms of child labor, including street and farm work. (59)

V. GOVERNMENT POLICIES ON CHILD LABOR

The government has established policies that are consistent with relevant international standards on child labor (Table 9). However, policy gaps exist that hinder efforts to address child labor, including implementation.

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Table 9. Key Policies Related to Child Labor

Policy	Description
National Framework to Combat Child Labor	Outlines the roles and responsibilities of key government agencies, including the ministries of Education, Labor, and Social Development; NGOs; and other stakeholders involved in identifying and responding to cases of child labor. Based on the Framework, MOL inspectors monitor child labor and refer cases to the Ministry of Social Development (MOSD) and the Ministry of Education for the provision of services. (60) In 2019, the government continued training programs and the drafting of a new national framework. (2)
Jordan Response Plan for the Syria Crisis (2018–2020)	Integrates a refugee-oriented humanitarian response with a strategic plan for increasing the resilience of local communities. The plan has a particular focus on economic strengthening, education, and social protection. (61) In academic year 2018–2019, 200 double-shift schools served Syrian refugees. (2)
Plan of Action to Eliminate Child Labor in Tourism in Petra	Employs counselors to respond to children at risk of truancy, raise children’s awareness of the hazards of child labor and the significance of education, incorporate child labor prevention strategies into mainstream programs for legally employed children age 16 and older, and inform students about high-quality employment in the tourism sector. (62) The government has yet to implement the plan since passing it in 2015. During the reporting period, the government held meetings with UNICEF on carrying out the plan. (47)

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 services to address child labor in all sectors.

Table 10. Key Social Programs to Address Child Labor

Program	Description
MOSD Child Labor Unit†	Provides support to children engaged in child labor, returns them to school, and provides services to their families; provides vocational training for youth; organizes training on child labor for families; and maintains the website of the National Child Labor Database. (64) Provides services to children engaged in child begging through centers in Madaba and Delail (Zarqa). (46) Active in 2019. (51)
Social Support Center in Marka†	ILO- and MOL-funded center operated in cooperation with the ILO at Marka, the Palestinian refugee camp. Activities include identifying child laborers, providing services such as non-formal education, and assisting families in finding alternate forms of supplemental income. (17) Active in 2019. (51)
National Aid Fund†	Overseen by MOSD, the Fund pays families through a conditional cash transfer program to withdraw their child from the labor market and re-enroll them in school. (17) In 2019, the fund increased the number of families receiving cash transfers from 92,000 to 105,000 in line with the 2019 to 2021 expansion plan. (65-67)
Non-Formal Education Centers	Funded by USAID and UNICEF, and operated by the Ministry of Education and local NGO Questscope, these centers throughout the country seek to bring school dropouts, including those engaged in or at risk of child labor, back into the educational system. Children attend classes 3 hours a day in a flexible learning environment, with class sizes of around 20 students and specially trained teachers. (33,34) Targets children age 13 and older. Upon completion of the curriculum, students receive a certificate indicating the equivalency of grade 10 education. (34) A center in Petra provides services to children at risk of child labor in the tourism industry in Petra. (68) Active in academic year 2018–2019. (69)
Measurement, Awareness-Raising, and Policy Engagement Project on Child Labor and Forced Labor (MAPI6)	USDOL-funded global project implemented by the 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. (63) In Jordan, the project strengthens the government’s ability to address child labor, especially in communities most affected by the Syrian refugee crisis, including updating relevant policies and programs. The project also carries out limited research on the nature of child labor in agriculture. Additional information is available on the USDOL website.

† Program is funded by the Government of Jordan.

‡ The government had other social programs that may have included the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor. (70)

Although Jordan has programs that target child labor, the scope of these programs does not fully address the extent of the problem, including the worst forms of child labor in agriculture, construction, and street vending.

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 Jordan (Table 11).

Table 11. Suggested Government Actions to Eliminate Child Labor

Area	Suggested Action	Year(s) Suggested
Legal Framework	Ensure that the law criminally prohibits the recruitment of children under age 18 into non-state armed groups.	2016 – 2019
	Ensure that the law criminalizes forced labor as its own offense.	2019
Enforcement	Improve the quality of the Ministry of Labor’s hotline by ensuring that operators, including those who speak foreign languages, are available outside of business hours, and ensuring that the translated recorded message is of high quality.	2018 – 2019
	Publish information about labor law enforcement, including labor inspectorate funding and the number of penalties collected for child labor violations.	2015 – 2019
	Ensure that Ministry of Labor inspectors have the resources needed to carry out inspections in the agricultural sector; and ensure that regulations are issued to mandate labor inspections in agriculture.	2014 – 2019
	Ensure that refugee children identified during labor inspections are referred to social services and are not separated from their families and taken to refugee camps.	2016 – 2019
	Ensure that investigations are conducted on the worst forms of child labor, including forced begging and the commercial sexual exploitation of children.	2015 – 2019
	Ensure that the number of inspections conducted per inspector allows for high quality inspections.	2019
Coordination	Establish coordinating mechanisms to combat all worst forms of child labor and other forms of child labor, including street and farm work.	2018 – 2019
	Ensure that the National Committee on Child Labor meets and carries out its mandate.	2019
Government Policies	Implement the Plan of Action to Eliminate Child Labor in Tourism in Petra.	2018 – 2019
Social Programs	Continue to expand access to education for all children, including providing after-school programs, extending school hours, and ensuring Syrian refugees may enroll in school.	2013 – 2019
	Institute programs to address the worst forms of child labor in agriculture, construction, and street vending.	2013 – 2019

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