

In 2020, Jordan made moderate advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. In 2020, for the first time, the Ministry of Labor conducted 850 targeted child labor inspections in the agricultural sector throughout the country. It also developed a new website and mobile phone application that, once operational, will allow the public to report cases of child labor, which will then be logged into the National Child Labor Database. In addition, the Minister of Labor launched the Program to End the Worst Forms of Child Labor in Zarqa and Amman. However, children in Jordan are subjected to the worst forms of child labor, including in forced begging and commercial sexual exploitation, each sometimes as a result of human trafficking. 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 the costs associated with transportation and supplies, among other issues. In addition, research was unable to determine whether criminal law enforcement agencies in Jordan conducted investigations on cases related to the worst forms of child labor despite evidence of these worst forms of child labor.



### I. PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Children in Jordan are subjected to the worst forms of child labor, including in forced begging and commercial sexual exploitation, each sometimes as a result of human trafficking. (1-8) Children also perform dangerous tasks in agriculture. (9,10) 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. (9) Boys constitute nearly 90 percent of those involved in child labor. (9) Table 1 provides key indicators on children’s work and education in Jordan.

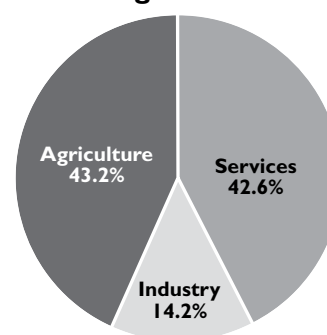
**Table 1. Statistics on Children’s Work and Education**

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 (%)		81.7

Source for primary completion rate: Data from 2019, published by UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2021. (11)

Source for all other data: International Labor Organization’s analysis of statistics from National Child Labour Survey (SIMPOC), 2016. (12)

**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 (9,10,13-18)
Industry	Mining† and quarrying† (9)
	Construction,† including building and painting homes (9,10,18-20)
	Manufacturing, activities unknown (9,21)

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

Sector/Industry	Activity
Industry	Carpentry† (19,20)
	Blacksmithing† (19)
Services	Maintenance and repair of motor vehicles† (9,13,18,20,21)
	Attending to donkeys, camels, and horses to transport tourists (22)
	Street work,† including selling items, washing cars, and begging (13,19-21,23)
	Scavenging scrap metal and waste (24,25)
	Domestic work† (13,21)
	Food services, including working in restaurants and bakeries (9,13,19,21)
	Hotel services† (9,21)
	Working in retail, including cleaning shops (9,15,26)
Categorical Worst Forms of Child Labor‡	Use in illicit activities, including drug trafficking (27,28)
	Forced begging, sometimes as a result of human trafficking (1,3,4,23)
	Commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking (5-8)

† 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.

In 2020, the Covid-19 pandemic created additional barriers to education in Jordan. (28) While the government created distance-learning tools for students to continue their education from home, such as an online education portal and educational television channels, a lack of access to Internet and devices prevented many students from taking advantage of these resources during school shutdowns. (28) In addition, decreases in income caused some parents to move their children from private schools to public schools. The Ministry of Education reported 120,000 new enrollments in 2020, putting further strain on a taxed system. (28)

Syrian refugee children also face barriers to education in Jordan. While Syrian children are granted access to Jordanian public schools, UNICEF estimates more than 50,000 Syrian refugee children were out of school as of December 2020. (29) UNICEF also notes that Syrian refugee children drop out of school at a higher rate than Jordanian children do. (29) 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. (10,30,31) Sources indicate that Syrian refugee children are sometimes forced to work alongside their families in agriculture and service industries, as well as being forced to peddle goods and beg, rather than attending school. (4,18)




In previous years, Jordan waived a requirement for documentation to expand access to education for Syrian children. However, the government opted not to extend the waiver for the 2019–2020 academic year despite some refugee families not having valid documentation. (32,33) The government continued to address the overcrowding of classrooms by providing school attendance in double-shift schools, while schools were open. (2,34,35) At these double-shift schools, Jordanian children attend in the morning and Syrian children attend in the afternoon. (3,36) 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. (37)

Non-Syrian refugees in Jordan, primarily from Iraq, Yemen, Sudan, and Somalia, also face barriers to education due to the lack of documentation. (28)

## 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 (38)
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work	Yes	18	Article 74 of the Labor Code; Article 2 of the Ministerial Order of 2011 (38,39)
Identification of Hazardous Occupations or Activities Prohibited for Children	Yes		Article 2 of the Ministerial Order of 2011 (39)
Prohibition of Forced Labor	No		Articles 3(a)-(b) of the Law on the Prevention of Human Trafficking (40)
Prohibition of Child Trafficking	Yes		Articles 3(a), 8-11 of the Law on the Prevention of Human Trafficking (40)
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children	Yes		Articles 298–299, 306, 310–311, 315, and 319 of the Penal Code; Articles 3(a)-(b) of the Law on the Prevention of Human Trafficking (40,41)
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities	Yes		Article 8 of the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act (42)
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 (43)
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 (44)
Free Public Education	Yes		Article 10(a) of the Education Act; Article 20 of the Constitution (44,45)

\* No volunteers are accepted to join the armed forces. (46,47)

Jordan's Law on the Prevention of Human Trafficking criminalizes trafficking for the purposes of forced labor; however, the law does not criminally prohibit forced labor as its own offense when the other elements of human trafficking are not present. (40)

### 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 enforcement agencies 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 (MOL), Directorate of Labor Affairs and Inspection	Enforces labor laws, including those on child labor. Maintains a hotline, website, and mobile app to receive labor-related complaints, including complaints of child labor. (24,28) 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. (48) 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. (46,49) The phone number is difficult to locate and, based on available information, operators rarely respond to voicemails left after working hours. (46,49) In 2020, MOL developed a new website and mobile app that allows the public to report cases of child labor, which are then logged in the National Child Labor Database. However, the app had not launched by the end of the reporting period. (28)
MOL Child Labor Unit	Coordinates government efforts to campaign against child labor, conducts training, and raises awareness about child labor issues. (3) 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. (24)
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 2020, labor law enforcement agencies in Jordan took actions to combat child labor (Table 6). However, gaps exist within the operations of the Ministry of Labor (MOL) that may hinder adequate labor law enforcement, including an insufficient number of inspectors.

**Table 6. Labor Law Enforcement Efforts Related to Child Labor**

Overview of Labor Law Enforcement	2019	2020
Labor Inspectorate Funding	\$422,715 (50)	\$353,000 (28)
Number of Labor Inspectors	171 (2)	136 (28)
Inspectorate Authorized to Assess Penalties	Yes (38)	Yes (38)
Initial Training for New Labor Inspectors	Yes (2)	Yes (28)
Training on New Laws Related to Child Labor	N/A	N/A
Refresher Courses Provided	Yes (2)	Yes (28)
Number of Labor Inspections Conducted	63,653 (2)	90,723 (18)
Number Conducted at Worksite	63,653 (2)	5,402 (28)
Number of Child Labor Violations Found	467 (2)	503 (18)
Number of Child Labor Violations for Which Penalties Were Imposed	250 (2)	79 (18)
Number of Child Labor Penalties Imposed that Were Collected	Unknown (2)	Unknown
Routine Inspections Conducted	Yes (2)	Yes (18)
Routine Inspections Targeted	Yes (2)	Yes (18)
Unannounced Inspections Permitted	Yes (2)	Yes (18)
Unannounced Inspections Conducted	Yes (2)	Yes (28)
Complaint Mechanism Exists	Yes (2)	Yes (2)
Reciprocal Referral Mechanism Exists Between Labor Authorities and Social Services	Yes (2)	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. (37) The inspector also enters the child's information into the child labor database. (28) A warning requires the employer to sign a pledge declaring that they will cease employing children. Without the pledge, MOL can close the business. (3) 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. (37) MOL and MOSD may also

conduct a joint visit. (28) Jordanian children identified during labor inspections are referred to the Child Labor Unit of MOSD, and those suspected of being trafficked are referred to the Counter Trafficking Unit for criminal investigation. (28,37,52)

In 2020, MOL conducted 90,723 inspections, 11,952 of which focused on child labor. (18) In December 2020, for the first time, MOL conducted 850 targeted child labor inspections in the agricultural sector throughout the country. (28) 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. In addition, the current number of labor inspectors is likely insufficient for the size of Jordan’s workforce, which includes more than 2.295 million workers. (28,53) According to the ILO’s technical advice of a ratio approaching 1 inspector for every 15,000 workers in developing economies, Jordan would employ about 153 inspectors. (54)

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

### Criminal Law Enforcement

In 2020, criminal law enforcement agencies in Jordan took actions to combat child labor (Table 7). However, gaps exist within the operations of criminal enforcement agencies that may hinder adequate criminal law enforcement, including a lack of investigations into the worst forms of child labor.

**Table 7. Criminal Law Enforcement Efforts Related to Child Labor**

Overview of Criminal Law Enforcement	2019	2020
Initial Training for New Criminal Investigators	Yes (55)	Yes (28)
Training on New Laws Related to the Worst Forms of Child Labor	N/A	N/A
Refresher Courses Provided	Yes (55)	Yes (28)
Number of Investigations	0 (55)	Unknown
Number of Violations Found	0 (55)	Unknown
Number of Prosecutions Initiated	0 (55)	Unknown
Number of Convictions	0 (55)	Unknown
Imposed Penalties for Violations Related to the Worst Forms of Child Labor	No (55)	Unknown (28)
Reciprocal Referral Mechanism Exists Between Criminal Authorities and Social Services	Yes (3)	Yes (28)

In 2020, the Counter Trafficking Unit (CTU) worked with civil society organizations and NGOs to conduct 10 human trafficking workshops. CTU also held 31 lectures and 6 seminars for law enforcement, judges, public prosecutors, and relevant ministries to raise awareness on human trafficking indicators. (18) In addition, the Public Security Directorate conducted 18 awareness-raising sessions on trafficking of children and 22 sessions on child street begging and child trafficking. (28)

During the reporting period, CTU investigated 23 human trafficking cases involving 40 offenders and 25 victims. Of the victims identified, one was a child. (18) However, research was unable to determine whether criminal law enforcement agencies in Jordan conducted investigations on cases related to the worst forms of child labor, including forced begging or commercial sexual exploitation of children, despite evidence of these worst forms of child labor. (3,5,7,18)

In October 2020, MOSD along with the Public Security Directorate launched an anti-vagrancy campaign to combat the increasing problem of begging, including by children. (23) As of November 2020, MOSD reported 1,248 children had been referred to social services as part of the enforcement effort. (56) In addition, prosecutions for 21 individual traffickers resulted from the campaign. (57)

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### 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. (58) The National Committee on Child Labor did not meet during the reporting period and has been inactive for several years. (57)
National Committee to Combat Trafficking (NCCT)	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 (CTU), which is in charge of human trafficking investigations. (59) CTU is operated jointly by the Public Security Directorate and MOL. (46) NCCT met in September 2020 and meets on an ad hoc basis. (18)

In 2020, MOL, with input from UNICEF, developed standard operating procedures defining the roles of MOL, the Ministry of Education, MOSD, and the Juvenile Police Department in combating child labor. (28) In addition, MOL, MOSD, and the Greater Amman Municipality signed an agreement to collaborate on eliminating child labor in Amman's Central Market. (28)

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. (60)

### 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
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. (61) In 2020, MOSD and Juvenile Police worked on developing standard operating procedures in line with the National Framework. (62)
Jordan Response Plan for the Syria Crisis (2018–2022)	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. (63) In 2020, the government continued to offer double-shifted schools for Syrian refugee children and updated the response plan, extending it to 2022. (18,28)
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. (64) The government has yet to implement the plan since passing it in 2015.

### VI. SOCIAL PROGRAMS TO ADDRESS CHILD LABOR

In 2020, 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. (65) Provides services to children engaged in child begging through centers in Madaba and Delail (Zarqa). (49) Active in 2020. (28)
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. (24) In 2020, the government continued expanding the number of households receiving aid. (66)
Non-Formal Education Centers	Funded by USAID and UNICEF, and operated by the Ministry of Education and local NGO Questscope, these 40 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. (37,67) Targets children age 13 and older who have been out of school for 3 years and are ineligible to enroll in public schools. (68) Upon completion of the curriculum, students receive a certificate indicating the equivalency of grade 10 education. (67) Active in 2020. (68)
Program to End the Worst Forms of Child Labor in Zarqa and Amman*	Funded by UNICEF, implemented by the Rowad al Khair Society and with the participation of MOL, this program aims to identify 400 of the most vulnerable children in Zarqa and Amman to receive psychosocial support, access to education, and other training to reduce the number of children subjected to the worst forms of child labor. Launched in 2020. (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. (70) 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. On December 14, 2020, a regional conference was held with attendees from Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Syria, and others to exchange good practices on combating child labor in the Middle East and North Africa. (71) Additional information is available on the USDOL <a href="#">website</a> .

\* Program was launched during the reporting period.

† 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. (24,28,72)

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 – 2020
	Ensure that the law criminalizes forced labor as its own offense.	2019 – 2020
Enforcement	Improve the quality of the Ministry of Labor's hotline by making it easier to locate, ensuring that operators, including those who speak foreign languages, are available outside of business hours, and all messages are addressed.	2018 – 2020
	Publish the number of labor law penalties imposed that were collected.	2015 – 2020
	Increase the number of labor inspectors to meet the ILO technical advice.	2020
	Ensure that criminal investigations are conducted on the worst forms of child labor, including forced begging and the commercial sexual exploitation of children.	2015 – 2020
	Publish information on criminal law enforcement efforts, including the number of investigators, violations, prosecutions, and convictions.	2019 – 2020
	Ensure that the number of inspections conducted per labor inspector affords inspectors enough time to adequately identify and remediate labor law violations.	2019 – 2020
Coordination	Ensure that the National Committee on Child Labor functions and is able to carry out its mandate.	2017 – 2020
	Establish coordinating mechanisms to combat all worst forms of child labor and other forms of child labor, including street and farm work.	2018 – 2020

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

Area	Suggested Action	Year(s) Suggested
Government Policies	Implement the Plan of Action to Eliminate Child Labor in Tourism in Petra.	2018 – 2020
Social Programs	Continue to expand access to education for all children including Syrian and non-Syrian refugees, including ensuring students have transportation, are able to purchase supplies and uniforms, extending school hours, and students are not bullied or harassed.	2013 – 2020
	Ensure that Syrian refugees without documentation may enroll in school.	2020
	Institute programs to address the worst forms of child labor in agriculture, construction, and street vending.	2013 – 2020

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