

In 2020, Morocco made moderate advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. The government enacted programs to pilot a child protection network and assess the feasibility of 10 additional child welfare centers. In addition, the Ministry of Labor and Vocational Integration launched a new roadmap for fighting child labor that seeks to: improve the Domestic Work Law 19.12 and make benefits available from the National Social Security Fund to child domestic workers; improve labor inspection at the 54 designated centers across the country by hiring specialists to enhance the oversight of inspections and the methodology behind interventions; strengthen partnerships with civil society organizations; and increase international cooperation on child labor. Morocco also became a Pathfinder country under Alliance 8.7, which calls for the eradication of child labor by 2025, and forced labor, modern slavery, and human trafficking by 2030. However, children in Morocco are subjected to the worst forms of child labor, including forced domestic work, sometimes as a result of human trafficking. Children also engage in child labor in producing artisanal handicrafts. Laws related to the minimum age for work and the use of children for illicit activities do not meet international standards. In addition, research could not determine whether penalties were imposed for violations related to the worst forms of child labor. Furthermore, the scope of government programs that target child labor is insufficient to fully address the extent of the problem.

## I. PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Children in Morocco are subjected to the worst forms of child labor, including forced domestic work, sometimes as a result of human trafficking. Children also engage in child labor in producing artisanal handicrafts. (1-3) Government statistics from 2020 showed 34,000 children under the age of 15 are working; however, the government has not yet made the full data set available, including microdata, leaving the nature and causes of children's involvement in specific forms of child labor unknown. (2,4,5) Table 1 provides key indicators on children's work and education in Morocco.

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

Children	Age	Percent
Working (% and population)	10 to 14	4.5 (150,178)
Attending School (%)	6 to 14	82.9
Combining Work and School (%)	10 to 14	0.7
Primary Completion Rate (%)		97.1

Source for primary completion rate: Data from 2019, published by UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2021. (6)

Source for all other data: International Labor Organization's analysis of statistics from Enquête sur la Population et la Santé Familiale (DHS), 2003–2004. (7)

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, activities unknown (2,8)
	Fishing (2,8)
	Forestry, activities unknown (1,2,9,10)
Industry	Construction, including in carpentry† (1-3,11)
	Textiles (3,12)
	Producing artisanal crafts (1,2,13)
	Metallurgy, including welding (1)
Services	Begging (3,14)
	Domestic work (2,8,9,15,16)
	Maintenance and repair of motor vehicles (3,12)
Categorical Worst Forms of Child Labor‡	Commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking (1,3,15,17,18)
	Forced domestic work, sometimes as a result of human trafficking (1,3,12,16,18,19)
	Forced begging as a result of human trafficking (1,3,15,18)
	Illegal sand extraction (20)

† 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.

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Rural Moroccan girls, some as young as age 6, are recruited for domestic work in private urban homes, a practice known locally as *petites bonnes*. Unaccompanied minors from Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Nigeria, and Senegal are trafficked to Morocco for this same purpose. (14,19,21) Some of these girls are subjected to physical and verbal abuse, excessive working hours, and denied access to educational opportunities by their employers. (14,16,19,21) Furthermore, some employers confiscate the identity papers of child domestic workers. (19,21) In addition, exploitation in domestic work makes children vulnerable to child sex trafficking in Morocco, neighboring countries such as Spain, and the Persian Gulf. (22)

Children in Morocco, particularly in rural areas, face barriers to education, including the cost of school materials, poor facilities, and insufficiently qualified teachers. (2) Moreover, some children must reside in boarding houses to attend school because the commute is too far. Some families are reluctant to allow children—particularly girls—to make the daily journey for fear of exposure to risks associated with traveling to school. (2) Other barriers to education include the lack of free and safe transportation, and fees associated with preschool and after-school activities. In addition, some children who lack documentation are unable to enroll in school. (2)

## II. LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR CHILD LABOR

Morocco 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 Morocco's legal framework to adequately protect children from the worst forms of child labor, including prohibiting the use of children in illicit activities.

**Table 4. Laws and Regulations on Child Labor**

Standard	Meets International Standards	Age	Legislation
Minimum Age for Work	No	15	Article 143 of the Labor Code (23)
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work	Yes	18	Article 147 of the Labor Code (23)
Identification of Hazardous Occupations or Activities Prohibited for Children	Yes		Hazardous Child Labor List, Decree No. 2-10-183; Article 181 of the Labor Code (23,24)
Prohibition of Forced Labor	No		Articles 10 and 12 of the Labor Code; Article 467-2 of the Penal Code (23,25)
Prohibition of Child Trafficking	Yes		Articles 448.1, 448.4–448.5 of the Law on Trafficking in Human Beings (26)
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children	No		Article 503-2 of the Penal Code (25)
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities	No		Article 467-2 of the Penal Code (25)
Minimum Age for Voluntary State Military Recruitment	Yes	19	Article 4 of Royal Decree of 9 June 1966 (27)

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

Standard	Meets International Standards	Age	Legislation
Prohibition of Compulsory Recruitment of Children by (State) Military	Yes		Article 4 of Law No. 44-18 (28)
Prohibition of Military Recruitment by Non-state Armed Groups	Yes		Articles 448.1 and 448.4 of the Law on Trafficking in Human Beings (26)
Compulsory Education Age	Yes	15	Article 1 of Law No. 04-00 (29)
Free Public Education	Yes		Article 1 of Law No. 04-00 (29)

The labor law does not apply to children who work in the traditional artisan or handicraft sectors for family businesses with fewer than five employees. (23)

The types of hazardous work prohibited for children do not cover domestic work, in which there is evidence that girls are exposed to physical and psychological abuse and are working for long hours, during the night, and are unreasonably confined to the premises of the employer. (24) The Penal Code only criminalizes the forced labor of children under 15 years old. (25) Moroccan law does not prohibit the use, procuring, or offering of children for the production or trafficking of drugs. (26,31,34)

### 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 child labor laws.

**Table 5. Agencies Responsible for Child Labor Law Enforcement**

Organization/Agency	Role
Ministry of Labor and Vocational Integration (MOLVI)	Enforces child labor laws with its 54 inspection offices throughout the country. (2) During the reporting period, MOLVI launched a new roadmap for fighting child labor that seeks to: improve the Domestic Work Law 19.12 and make benefits available from the National Social Security Fund to child domestic workers; improve labor inspection at the 54 designated centers across the country by hiring specialists to enhance the oversight of inspections and the methodology behind interventions; strengthen partnerships with civil society organizations; and increase international cooperation on child labor. (2)
Ministry of the Interior	Enforces prohibitions on trafficking in persons, prostitution, and other exploitative crimes involving minors, as established in the Penal Code, through the General Directorate of National Security. (2,15,18,30)
General Prosecutor	Prosecutes criminal offenses against children and processes cases involving women and children in the court system. (2,18,30,35) Serves independently as a judiciary body separate from the Ministry of Justice. (2)

#### **Labor Law Enforcement**

In 2020, labor law enforcement agencies in Morocco took actions to combat child labor (Table 6). However, gaps exist within the authority of the Ministry of Labor and Vocational Integration (MOLVI) that may hinder adequate labor law enforcement, including the authority to assess penalties.

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

Overview of Labor Law Enforcement	2019	2020
Labor Inspectorate Funding	Unknown (36)	Unknown (2)
Number of Labor Inspectors	317 (36)	282 (2)
Inspectorate Authorized to Assess Penalties	Yes (36)	Yes (2)
Initial Training for New Labor Inspectors	Yes (36)	Yes (2)
Training on New Laws Related to Child Labor	Yes (36)	Yes (2)
Refresher Courses Provided	Yes (36)	Yes (2)

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**Table 6. Labor Law Enforcement Efforts Related to Child Labor (Cont.)**

Overview of Labor Law Enforcement	2019	2020
Number of Labor Inspections Conducted	24,383 <sup>†</sup> (36)	19,302 <sup>‡</sup> (2)
Number Conducted at Worksite	24,383 <sup>†</sup> (36)	19,302 <sup>‡</sup> (2)
Number of Child Labor Violations Found	160 (36)	56 (2)
Number of Child Labor Violations for Which Penalties Were Imposed	0 (36)	0 (2)
Number of Child Labor Penalties Imposed that Were Collected	Unknown (36)	0 (2)
Routine Inspections Conducted	Yes (36)	Yes (2)
Routine Inspections Targeted	Yes (36)	Yes (2)
Unannounced Inspections Permitted	Yes (36)	Yes (2)
Unannounced Inspections Conducted	Yes (36)	Yes (2)
Complaint Mechanism Exists	Yes (36)	Yes (2)
Reciprocal Referral Mechanism Exists Between Labor Authorities and Social Services	Yes (36)	Yes (2)

<sup>†</sup> Data are from January 1, 2019 to September 30, 2019. (36)

<sup>‡</sup> Data are from January 1, 2020 to September 30, 2020. (2)

Labor inspectors take note of labor code infractions and refer violations to the public prosecutor's office. (2) In 2020, the government provided specialized training to 22 new inspectors hired in 2019. (2) In addition to labor inspectors, the government reported an additional 129 agricultural inspectors who may refer cases of child labor in agriculture. (2) However, government officials report that funding for the labor inspectorate is insufficient and prevents the inspectorate from fully discharging its duties. (2) Although Morocco employs 282 labor inspectors, the number of labor inspectors is likely insufficient for the size of Morocco's workforce, which includes more than 10 million workers. (38) According to the ILO's technical advice of a ratio approaching 1 inspector for every 15,000 workers in industrializing economies, Morocco would employ about 666 inspectors. (38,39)

In 2020, 159 children under the age of 15, and 464 children between the ages of 15 and 18, were removed from worksites considered dangerous by inspectors. (2) However, the official procedures involved in processing child labor violations require the participation of several agencies for each case, which places considerable administrative burdens on labor inspectors. Additionally, the penalties for employing children in hazardous work are insufficient to act as a deterrent. (2,36,40,41) Despite regulations to inform agencies on implementing the Law on Setting Up Employment Conditions of Domestic Workers in 2016, there remain enforcement issues, such as the lack of inspection of closed private residences, in which many child domestic workers are employed. (30–32)

### Criminal Law Enforcement

In 2020, criminal law enforcement agencies in Morocco 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 the publication of criminal law enforcement data.

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

Overview of Criminal Law Enforcement	2019	2020
Initial Training for New Criminal Investigators	Yes (36)	Yes (2)
Training on New Laws Related to the Worst Forms of Child Labor	N/A (36)	N/A (2)
Refresher Courses Provided	Yes (36)	Yes (2)
Number of Investigations	154 (36)	Unknown (2)
Number of Violations Found	Unknown (32)	Unknown (2)
Number of Prosecutions Initiated	170 (36)	22 (2)
Number of Convictions	176 (36)	Unknown (2)
Imposed Penalties for Violations Related to the Worst Forms of Child Labor	Unknown (36)	Unknown (2)
Reciprocal Referral Mechanism Exists Between Criminal Authorities and Social Services	Yes (36)	Yes (2)

Criminal authorities refer victims to appropriate social services through coordination with NGOs and with the government's 54 dedicated child labor points of contact. (30,36) In 2020, the General Directorate of National Security carried out a 30-hour training session at the national police headquarters on protecting children's rights, including psychological aid to children, investigations and forensics related to child victims, and legal ways to prevent violence against children. (2)

The government did not provide information on the number of investigations, violations found, or number of convictions. (2)

#### IV. COORDINATION OF GOVERNMENT EFFORTS ON CHILD LABOR

The government has established mechanisms to coordinate its efforts to address child labor (Table 8).

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

Coordinating Body	Role & Description
Technical Committee Under the Special Ministerial Commission for Children for the Protection and Improvement of Childhood	Ensures inter-sectoral coordination and monitoring for implementing international conventions on children's issues through a committee of 25 government bodies, chaired by the Head of the Government of Morocco. Establishes strategies and mechanisms to implement national policies and plans for child protection and coordinates the management of efforts at the local and regional levels. (2,34) The committee met regularly in 2020. (2)
Inter-Ministerial Committee for Combating Trafficking in Persons	Coordinates the government's approach to trafficking in persons on an inter-ministerial level. Conducts training sessions for members of the security services. (3) Chaired by the Head of the Government of Morocco and led by the Ministry of Justice, with representation from civil society. (2) Established in May 2019. (2,3,42)

#### 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
Ministry of Solidarity, Social Development, Equality and the Family Integrated Public Policy on the Protection of Children in Morocco	Promotes an interdisciplinary approach to respond to the exploitation of children and other issues. (1,9,15,43,44) In 2020, the government enacted programs to pilot a child protection network and assess the feasibility of 10 additional child welfare centers. (2)

In 2020, Morocco became a Pathfinder country under Alliance 8.7, which calls for the eradication of child labor by 2025, and forced labor, modern slavery, and human trafficking by 2030. (2)

#### 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 efforts to address the problem in all sectors.

**Table 10. Key Social Programs to Address Child Labor**

Program	Description
Social Cohesion Support Fund†	Programs that aim to improve access to education. Includes the Ministry of Solidarity, Social Development, Equality and the Family (MSWFSD)-funded Tayssir Conditional Cash Transfer Program that provides direct cash transfers to qualifying families whose children meet school attendance criteria. In 2020, over two million students from low-income families were participants in the Tayssir program. (2) In addition, in 2020, 13,221 children with disabilities received education assistance. (2)
Government-Funded Shelters and Centers†	MSWFSD's <i>Entraide Nationale</i> agency manages three types of shelter and support centers—Child Protection Units, Social Assistance Centers, and Orientation and Accompaniment Centers for People with Disabilities—to provide services to child victims of violence, street children, migrant children and refugees, and those with disabilities. (31,32,35,36,45,46) Other types of shelters and service centers include student dormitories and training and integration programs for vulnerable children. (31,32,35,45) Research was unable to determine what actions were taken by these centers during the reporting period.

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

Program	Description
Government-Funded Project†	Projects that aim to assist vulnerable children. Include: After-School Program for a Second Chance, which provides students with after-school educational assistance as part of non-formal education program; Mouwakaba, a MSWFSD-funded project that assists nearly 2,700 at-risk youth in 6 cities with vocational training; and "Cities without Street Children," which provides assistance to homeless children in Casablanca and Méknès. Active in 2020. (2)
Measurement, Awareness-Raising, and Policy Engagement Project on Child Labor and Forced Labor (MAPI6)	USDOL-funded 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. In Morocco, \$362,500 was allocated for activities to support the enforcement of the 2016 Law on Setting Up Employment Conditions of Domestic Workers, which protects children from hazardous domestic work. (2,47) In January and February of 2020, the government conducted a training session for 36 partner Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) and 77 participants on combating child domestic labor. (2) Additional information is available on the USDOL <a href="#">website</a> .

† Program is funded by the Government of Morocco.

‡ The government had other social programs that may have included the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor. (1,2,45)

Although the government has programs that target child labor, the scope of these programs is insufficient to fully address the extent of the problem, including for children engaged in forced domestic work. (9,31,35,36)

## 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 Morocco (Table 11).

**Table 11. Suggested Government Actions to Eliminate Child Labor**

Area	Suggested Action	Year(s) Suggested
Legal Framework	Ensure that all children age 15 and under are protected by law, including children who work for artisan and handicraft businesses that regularly employ hired workers or produce goods for non-local consumption.	2009 – 2020
	Ensure that the hazardous occupations and activities prohibited for children are comprehensive and includes domestic work, in which physical and emotional abuse is known to occur.	2016 – 2020
	Criminalize the use, procuring, and offering of children for the production and trafficking of drugs.	2015 – 2020
	Ensure that forced labor of children over age 15 is criminalized.	2019 – 2020
	Ensure that the law criminally prohibits the use, procuring, and offering of a child for prostitution.	2019 – 2020
Enforcement	Ensure that inspectors inspect in all sectors in which children work, including households.	2017 – 2020
	Increase the number of labor inspectors responsible for enforcing laws related to child labor to meet the ILO's technical advice and ensure that they have sufficient resources.	2012 – 2020
	Publish information on labor law enforcement efforts, including the amount of labor inspectorate funding, penalties imposed, and penalties collected.	2015 – 2020
	Reduce administrative burdens and streamline child labor enforcement procedures among government agencies.	2013 – 2020
	Increase penalties for employers who use children in hazardous work to be an effective deterrent.	2012 – 2020
	Publish information on criminal enforcement efforts, including the number of investigations, violations found, and number of convictions.	2012 – 2020
Social Programs	Ensure programs address barriers to education such as safety in schools, transportation, the cost of school supplies, and lack of documentation.	2013 – 2020
	Expand existing programs to address the full scope of the child labor problem, including in forced domestic work.	2013 – 2020
	Collect and publish information, including microdata from the 2017 survey, on the extent and nature of child labor to inform policies and programs, including in agriculture, industry, and services.	2016 – 2020



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