

In 2020, Egypt made moderate advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. The government announced \$50 million in additional funding to support the Takaful and Karama program, which allowed the provision of cash assistance to 309,748 new families to support school attendance for their children. On November 10, 2020, the National Coordinating Committee for Combating and Preventing Illegal Migration and Trafficking in Persons launched the second phase of its "Together Against Human Trafficking" awareness campaign in partnership with the International Organization for Migration. The campaign included a public service announcement featuring prominent Egyptian celebrities that was broadcast on television and displayed on billboards and buses. Additionally, the Ministry of Manpower approved a new action plan for implementing the Accelerating Action for the Elimination of Child Labor in Supply Chains in Africa program. However, children in Egypt are subjected to the worst forms of child labor, including in commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking, and in quarrying limestone. 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 are subjected to 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 1 provides key indicators on children's work and education in Egypt. Data on some of these indicators are not available from the sources used in this report.

Table 1. Statistics on Children's Work and Education

Children	Age	Percent
Working (% and population)	5 to 14	4.9 (Unavailable)
Attending School (%)	5 to 14	80.9
Combining Work and School (%)	7 to 14	5.2
Primary Completion Rate (%)		104.6

Source for primary completion rate: Data from 2019, published by UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2021. (4)

Source for all other data: International Labor Organization's analysis of statistics from Demographic and Health Survey (DHS), 2014. (5)

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 (2,6-10)
	Caring for livestock (10,12-14)
	Fishing, activities unknown (13,15)
Industry	Quarrying† limestone (1,2,6)
	Making bricks (1,2,6,16,17)
	Working in carpentry workshops (13,18)
	Working in marble workshops (19,20)
	Construction, activities unknown (6,10,17,21)
Services	Domestic work (2,6,14,17,22)
	Driving tuktuks (2,6,23,24)
	Repairing automobiles (2,6,25)

MODERATE ADVANCEMENT

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

Sector/Industry	Activity
Services	Street work, including selling goods and collecting garbage (2,7,21,26)
Categorical Worst Forms of Child Labor‡	Domestic work as a result of human trafficking (2,3,15)
	Commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking (2,3,6,27,28)
	Forced begging, sometimes as a result of human trafficking (2,3,6)
	Trafficking of drugs, sometimes as a result of human trafficking (3,28)

† 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.

Egyptian children are exploited in forced labor, domestic service, street begging, drug trafficking, quarrying, and agricultural work in Egypt. (3) Some children are forced by their immediate and extended families into sexual exploitation, begging, and domestic and factory labor. (3,28) In addition, some girls are subjected to commercial sexual exploitation under the pretext of temporary marriage, sometimes called "summer marriage," to wealthy foreign men, mostly from Persian Gulf countries. (2,6,27) Egyptian children—particularly from Fayoum and Damietta—are transferred to Europe, where they are exploited in bonded child labor, commercial sexual exploitation, and drug dealing. (2,3,10,29)







Children in Egypt face barriers to education, including access to identity documentation and associated costs of attending school. Enrolling in public school requires a certified birth certificate, which many children born out of wedlock in Egypt lack. (2) Children drop out of school because of school-related costs, such as educational supplies, transportation, clothing, and food. (2,9,13,15) A lack of qualified teachers, poorly maintained schools, sanitation issues, classroom density, lack of infrastructure, and violence in schools also prevent children from attending school. (2) In rural communities, children face difficulties due to long commuting distances. Girls face additional barriers to education, especially in rural Egypt, including harassment and violence at school and on the way to school, as well as cultural barriers. (2,15,30)

The government offers refugee children access to the public education system; however, refugee children are subjected to racism, violence, and bullying. In response, some non-Egyptians residing in the country, such as those from Sudan, South Sudan, and Syria, have organized independent school systems unaffiliated with the government for their children. (2,31) Only 39,000 of the more than 150,000 Syrian children in Egypt are officially registered with the Egyptian public school system. (31)

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
 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 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 (32)
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work	Yes	18	Article 1 of Ministry of Manpower's Decree 118 (33)
Identification of Hazardous Occupations or Activities Prohibited for Children	Yes		Articles 1–2 of Ministry of Manpower's Decree 118 (33)
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 (32,34,35)
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 (32,34,35)
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 (32,35,36)
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 (32,33,37)
Minimum Age for Voluntary State Military Recruitment	No	15	Ministry of Defense Guidelines on Youth Volunteers in the Armed Forces (38)
Prohibition of Compulsory Recruitment of Children by (State) Military	Yes		Article 1 of the Law on Military and National Service (39)
Prohibition of Military Recruitment by Non-state Armed Groups	Yes		Article 7-bis(b) of the Child Law (32)
Compulsory Education Age	Yes	15‡	Article 59(1) of the Child Law; Articles 80 and 238 of the Constitution (32,34)
Free Public Education	Yes		Article 54 of the Child Law (32)

‡ Age calculated based on available information (40,41)

The law prohibits hazardous occupations and activities for children, including in quarrying, tanning, welding, spraying pesticides, and carrying heavy loads. (33) 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. (2,16)

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 enforcement agencies 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 through its inspection department, including receiving and investigating child labor complaints. Inspectors conduct labor inspections and report violations to the police, which operates under the Ministry of Interior. (2,6) If police investigations confirm criminal activity, cases are subsequently sent to the Prosecutor General's Office, which operates under the Ministry of Justice. (6,2)
Ministry of Interior	Investigates human trafficking and commercial sexual exploitation of children. Reports violations to the Public Prosecution Office under the Prosecutor General's Office. (2,6)
Ministry of Justice, Prosecutor General's Office	Prosecutes violation of laws related to the worst forms of child labor and human trafficking. (2,6)
Ministry of Local Development	Provides administrative and logistical support for the enforcement of child labor laws. Administers the Child Protection Committees. (2,6)
Administrative Control Authority	Investigates government corruption and human trafficking, and reports violations to the Ministry of the Interior, which refers cases for prosecution. (2,42)

MODERATE ADVANCEMENT

Labor Law Enforcement

In 2020, 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.

Table 6. Labor Law Enforcement Efforts Related to Child Labor

Overview of Labor Law Enforcement	2019	2020
Labor Inspectorate Funding	Unknown (6)	Unknown (2)
Number of Labor Inspectors	Unknown (6)	Unknown (2)
Inspectorate Authorized to Assess Penalties	No (6)	No (2)
Initial Training for New Labor Inspectors	Unknown (6)	Unknown (2)
Training on New Laws Related to Child Labor	N/A	N/A
Refresher Courses Provided	Yes (6)	Yes (2)
Number of Labor Inspections Conducted	Unknown (6)	Unknown (2)
Number Conducted at Worksite	Unknown (6)	Unknown (2)
Number of Child Labor Violations Found	Unknown (6)	Unknown (2)
Number of Child Labor Violations for Which Penalties Were Imposed	Unknown (6)	Unknown (2)
Number of Child Labor Penalties Imposed that Were Collected	Unknown (6)	Unknown (2)
Routine Inspections Conducted	Yes (6)	Unknown (2)
Routine Inspections Targeted	Yes (6)	Unknown (2)
Unannounced Inspections Permitted	Yes (6)	Yes (2)
Unannounced Inspections Conducted	Yes (6)	Unknown (2)
Complaint Mechanism Exists	Yes (6)	Yes (2)
Reciprocal Referral Mechanism Exists Between Labor Authorities and Social Services	Yes (6)	Yes (2)

In 2020, the Ministry of Manpower trained 527 labor inspectors in occupational safety and hazard laws and regulations. In addition, the ILO in Egypt trained 140 inspectors on conventions against child labor, international laws, and regulations as part of the Accelerating Action for the Elimination of Child Labor in Supply Chains in Africa (ACCEL Africa) project. (2) These trainings took place throughout the country, including in Alexandria, Beheira, Fayoum, Sharkia, and Kafr al-Sheikh governorates. The ACCEL Africa Project also provided refresher courses for 240 Egyptian labor inspectors. (2) However, sources report that the number of inspectors receiving training on child labor policies was insufficient to deal with the scope of the problem. Moreover, labor inspectors in Egypt do not have the authority to inspect informal workplaces, leaving children working outside of the formal economy vulnerable to exploitation. (2)

Although the number of labor inspectors is unknown, according to the ILO's technical advice of a ratio approaching 1 inspector for every 15,000 workers in developing economies, Egypt would employ about 1,607 labor inspectors because its workforce consists of more than 24.11 million workers. (43-45)

The government did not provide information on its labor law enforcement efforts for inclusion in this report. (2)

Criminal Law Enforcement

In 2020, 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 in referring child victims to social services.

Table 7. Criminal Law Enforcement Efforts Related to Child Labor

Overview of Criminal Law Enforcement	2019	2020
Initial Training for New Criminal Investigators	Unknown (6)	Unknown (2)
Training on New Laws Related to the Worst Forms of Child Labor	N/A	N/A
Refresher Courses Provided	Yes (46)	Unknown (2)
Number of Investigations	Unknown (6)	Unknown (2)

Table 7. Criminal Law Enforcement Efforts Related to Child Labor (Cont.)

Overview of Criminal Law Enforcement	2019	2020
Number of Violations Found	Unknown (6)	Unknown (2)
Number of Prosecutions Initiated	Unknown (6)	Unknown (2)
Number of Convictions	Unknown (6)	Unknown (2)
Imposed Penalties for Violations Related to the Worst Forms of Child Labor	Unknown (6)	Unknown (2)
Reciprocal Referral Mechanism Exists Between Criminal Authorities and Social Services	Yes (6)	Yes (2)

In 2020, Egypt investigated 156 trafficking cases, including 365 victims, 242 of whom were children. The government also secured convictions for child traffickers, including two individuals in Fayoum governorate for trafficking children abroad to work, two individuals for attempting to sell their 15-year-old sister into a temporary marriage, and six individuals for exploiting children in sexual trafficking and begging. (28)

The government did not provide information on its criminal law enforcement efforts specific to the worst forms of child labor for inclusion in this report. (2)

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 efficacy in accomplishing mandates.

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. (47) Identifies and monitors at-risk children. Manages two 24-hour hotlines and receives reports of child labor and child trafficking. (15) During the reporting period, received a portion of a \$1,250,000 grant to upgrade its hotlines, which included increasing receiving and processing capacity and adding services for migrant children. (28) In 2020, participated in a meeting of the National Steering Committee for the National Action Plan for Combating the Worst Forms of Child Labor and Supporting Families. (2) In January 2020, NCCM instituted standard operating procedures for child protection cases, including cases of child trafficking. (3)
National Steering Committee for the National Action Plan to Eliminate the Worst Forms of Child Labor 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, 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. (2,6) In July 2020, the committee held its second meeting ever, which was co-chaired by the Ministry of Manpower and ILO and included 25 representatives from domestic agencies and international organizations, to assess progress made on the National Action Plan and to plan future activities. Among the meeting outcomes were a ministerial decree to institutionalize the committee, a unified list of 2021 priorities, and plans to conduct trainings and further cooperate with the Accelerating Action for the Elimination of Child Labor in Supply Chains in Africa (ACCEL Africa) project. (2)
National Coordinating Committee for Combating and Preventing Illegal Migration and Trafficking in Persons (NCCPIM and TIP)	Coordinates efforts to combat human trafficking. (48) Led by an ambassador appointed by the Prime Minister, comprises 29 government entities, including the ministries of the Interior and Manpower. (15) Reports indicate that NCCPIM and TIP's mandate being limited to the handling of two crimes—illegal immigration and trafficking—hinders its ability to raise awareness about trafficking as a distinct crime and draws attention away from local forms of trafficking. In January 2020, NCCPIM and TIP partnered with an international organization to provide anti-trafficking training to 20–25 judges in specialized human trafficking courts. (3) NCCPIM and TIP also organized 24 capacity-building workshops related to human trafficking during the reporting period. (28) On November 10, 2020, NCCPIM and TIP launched the second phase of its "Together Against Human Trafficking" awareness campaign in partnership with IOM. The campaign included a public service announcement featuring prominent Egyptian celebrities that was broadcast on television and displayed on billboards and buses. (28) Other awareness efforts took place throughout the reporting period, including a social media campaign with the participation of the Prime Minister, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Minister of Social Solidarity, NCCPIM and TIP's chairperson, National Council for Human Rights (NCHR) directors, NCCM leaders, President of the Federation of NGOs, heads of UN agencies in Egypt including IOM and UNODC, and NGOs. (28)
Child Protection Committees	Coordinate 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. (15) In 2020, the government maintained 320 child protection committees. (3)

Egypt

MODERATE ADVANCEMENT

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. (2,15) 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 2020, ILO and the ministries of Manpower, Social Solidarity, and Agriculture, along with NCCM, worked together to implement the National Action Plan by continuing to mobilize resources, develop institutions, review legislation, and cooperate on an inter-institutional level. (2)
National Strategy for Combating and Preventing Trafficking in Persons (2016–2021)	Aims to maintain referral mechanisms, train law enforcement officials, and combat trafficking of street children. (2,15) Active in 2020. (3)
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 educational and vocational training opportunities. (2,13) Active in 2020. (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 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. (51) Active in 2020. (52)
Solidarity and Dignity Program (Takaful and Karama)†	Funded by the Ministry of Social Solidarity, this program promotes school attendance and health monitoring for children by providing income supplements to poor families. (2,13) This partnership between the government and the World Food Program, UNDP, UNICEF, and the World Bank offers income supplements to poor families under the conditions that household children maintain at least an 80 percent attendance record in school and that mothers and children under age 6 provide demonstrable evidence of having been seen at health clinics four times per year. (2) In March 2020, the Government of Egypt declared \$50 million in additional funding to support the Takaful and Karama program. Between March and October 2020, 309,748 new families were added as project participants to this program. (2) In November 2020, the program aided 11.1 million people by providing \$1.3 billion in benefits. (2) Despite these increases, reporting indicates that need remains for additional families to be added to this program. (2)
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 the NGO Face, provides social services, including psychological counseling and health services. (53) Mobile units in 10 governorates work to reintegrate children with their families or place them in foster care. (54) Active in 2020. (55)
ACCEL Africa (2018–2022)	Aims to eliminate child labor in the cotton, textiles, and ready-made-garments sectors; implemented by ILO and funded by the Dutch government. ACCEL Africa- Egypt partners with the ministries of Manpower, Education, Social Solidarity, and Agriculture, as well as NCCM to improve policy, legal, and institutional frameworks. (56) During the reporting period, the Ministry of Manpower committed to a new action plan for implementing the program. (2) Also in 2020, ILO launched a pilot program for an internet-based referral mechanism under the ACCEL Africa project. (2)

† 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 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 – 2020
	Ensure that the law establishes age 16 as the minimum age for voluntary recruitment by the state military with safeguards for voluntariness.	2019 – 2020
Enforcement	Publish information on labor law enforcement efforts.	2011 – 2020
	Strengthen the labor inspectorate by authorizing inspectors to assess penalties.	2017 – 2020
	Ensure the number of labor inspectors in Egypt meets the ILO's technical guidance.	2018 – 2020
	Increase the number of inspectors receiving training on child labor policies.	2019 – 2020
	Publish information on criminal law enforcement efforts.	2011 – 2020
Coordination	Ensure that the National Coordinating Committee for Combating and Preventing Illegal Migration and Trafficking in Persons effectively addresses trafficking as a distinct crime.	2020
Social Programs	Ensure universal access to free public education, especially for girls, by addressing the cost of school fees, supplies, violence in schools, lack of documentation, and other barriers to education.	2010 – 2020
	Expand programs to address the full scope of the child labor problem, particularly in commercial sexual exploitation and in quarrying limestone.	2010 – 2020
	Expand the Takaful and Kamara program to ensure that children are able to stay in school.	2020

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MODERATE ADVANCEMENT

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