

In 2021, Algeria made minimal advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. The National Authority for the Protection and Promotion of Children launched an interagency program with the National Social, Economic, and Environmental Council to increase coordination between governmental ministries to study children's needs in Algeria, analyze expenses dedicated to children, and develop a national action plan for children's development. However, children in Algeria are subjected to the worst forms of child labor, including in commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking, and forced begging. Children also perform dangerous tasks in street vending. Algerian law does not provide increased penalties for, or categorize as a separate crime, the involvement of children in either the production or trafficking of drugs. Additionally, the government has not determined by national law or regulation the types of work that are hazardous for children to perform. Moreover, while the labor inspectorate is authorized to conduct inspections in all workplaces, inspectors do not investigate unmarked workplaces, such as houses or informal construction sites, without a complaint.



I. PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Children in Algeria are subjected to the worst forms of child labor, including in commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking, and forced begging. (1,2) Children also perform dangerous tasks in street vending. (3) Table 1 provides key indicators on children's work and education in Algeria.

Table 1. Statistics on Children's Work and Education

Children	Age	Percent
Working (% and population)	5 to 14	3.6 (Unavailable)
Attending School (%)	5 to 14	94.8
Combining Work and School (%)	7 to 14	3.9
Primary Completion Rate (%)		103.7

Source for primary completion rate: Data from 2020, published by UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2022. (4)

Source for all other data: International Labor Organization's analysis of statistics from Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 6 (MICS 6), 2018–2019. (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 harvesting olives (3,6,7)
Industry	Construction, activities unknown (6,8)
Services	Street work, including vending, collecting plastics, and begging (1,3,7,9)
	Domestic work (8)
	Working in small workshops and businesses, including mechanics' shops (3,7,8)
Categorical Worst Forms of Child Labor‡	Commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking (10)
	Use in illicit activities, including drug trafficking (6)
	Forced begging (3,8,10)

‡ 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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Unaccompanied Sub-Saharan migrant children in Algeria are subjected to labor exploitation by criminal organizations, including commercial sexual exploitation. (3,7,11,12) Migrant children are also forced into begging. (3) Children's work is often part-time and informal in nature, with some migrant children working in small-scale family-run businesses such as restaurants or small stores. Children also work in informal street markets in street vending and begging. (7,8,13,14) In 2021, the government announced it would conduct a survey on child economic exploitation, which will be done in cooperation with UNICEF and is expected to be completed in 2022. (3,15) However, a comprehensive study on the activities and scope of the child labor situation in Algeria was not performed during the reporting period.

The Algerian public education system is free and open to all children ages 6 to 16, regardless of ethnicity and nationality. In 2021, parents in Algeria had to pay a fine for children who are truant. (3) Despite universal access to education, attendance problems have been present at schools in the southern regions of Algeria, with children as young as 13 or 14 dropping out of school. (14)




Non-Algerian children must provide documentation of grade level or sit for testing to determine their level. (7,8,14,16) There are no laws or regulations that prevent access to school, although there are reports of isolated cases of migrant children without valid documentation being denied enrollment by school administrators and reported to authorities. (3,7,14) In addition, migrants who do not speak Arabic, the language of instruction, face challenges in the Algerian education system. (14) Some migrant families may also not be familiar with Algerian law granting free education to all children. (14)

Barriers to education, including those placed on migrant children and children with disabilities, result in absence from school and increased vulnerability to child labor. (7,12,16,17)

II. LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR CHILD LABOR

Algeria 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 Algeria's legal framework to adequately protect children from the worst forms of child labor, including the lack of prohibitions related to 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	Yes	16	Article 15 of the Labor Code; Article 7 of Executive Decree No. 96-98 on the List and Content of Special Books and Registers Mandatory for Employers (18,19)
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work	Yes	18	Article 15 of the Labor Code; Article 7 of Executive Decree No. 96-98 on the List and Content of Special Books and Registers Mandatory for Employers (18,19)
Identification of Hazardous Occupations or Activities Prohibited for Children	No		
Prohibition of Forced Labor	Yes		Article 303 bis 4 of the Penal Code (20)
Prohibition of Child Trafficking	No		Articles 303 bis 4 and 319 bis of the Penal Code (20)
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children	Yes		Articles 2, 319, 333 bis 1, 343, and 344 of the Penal Code (20)
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities	No		Article 195 bis of the Penal Code (20)
Minimum Age for Voluntary State Military Recruitment	Yes	17	Article 14 of Presidential Decree No. 08-134 on the National People's Army (21)
Prohibition of Compulsory Recruitment of Children by (State) Military	Yes		Article 3 of Law No. 14-06 on National Service (22)
Prohibition of Military Recruitment by Non-state Armed Groups	No		
Compulsory Education Age	Yes	16	Article 12 of Law No. 08-04 on National Education (23)
Free Public Education	Yes		Article 13 of Law No. 08-04 on National Education (23)

The prohibitions against child trafficking are insufficient because they require threats, the use of force, or coercion to be established for the crime of child trafficking. (20)

The Labor Code prohibits anyone under age 19 from working at night and anyone under age 18 from performing work that is harmful to their health, safety, or morals. (18) However, Algeria has not determined by national law or regulation the types of work that are hazardous for children, and research did not determine whether the government commission tasked with proposing a list of hazardous professions continued to work on this issue in 2021. Additionally, Algerian law does not provide increased penalties for, or categorize as a separate crime, the involvement of children in either the production or trafficking of drugs. (20)

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.

Table 5. Agencies Responsible for Child Labor Law Enforcement

Organization/Agency	Role
Ministry of Labor, Employment, and Social Security (MTESS)	Enforces labor laws, including laws related to child labor, through its General Labor Inspectorate; issues citations noting violations of labor laws; and refers violations to the Ministry of Justice. (1,3,16) Supervises the application of laws and regulations related to labor relations, working conditions, and worker safety. (3,6) Shares child labor reports with the Ministry of National Solidarity, Family, and the Condition of Women to ensure follow-up with social services. (3,6)
Ministry of Justice	Prosecutes child exploitation cases, including those related to non-compliance with labor laws, through its Office of Criminal Affairs and Amnesty Procedures, the lead enforcement agency for human trafficking issues. (3,14,24) During legal proceedings, appoints a special judge familiar with the needs of minors if a child does not have a parent. (3)

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Table 5. Agencies Responsible for Child Labor Law Enforcement (Cont.)

Organization/Agency	Role
The National Council for Human Rights	Housed under the authority of the President. Investigates human rights violations, including those pertaining to labor. (14)
Ministry of National Solidarity, Family, and the Condition of Women	Provides social services to children and families. Also conducts investigations, as directed by the Ministry of Justice, into issues related to children and families. (3,25)
Ministry of the Interior and Local Assemblies	Enforces criminal laws related to child trafficking through the Directorate General for National Security (DGSN) in urban areas, which comprises 8 active brigades of 77 specialized police officers focused on illegal immigration and human trafficking, and 50 Brigades for the Protection of Minors, including 300 police officers specializing in the protection of children. Maintains a hotline to report child abuse and missing children, and may conduct investigations on child labor violations, as directed by the Ministry of Justice. (3,6,13,17,25,26)
Ministry of National Defense	Enforces criminal laws pertaining to child labor, including child trafficking, in rural and border regions through the National Gendarmerie. As directed by the Ministry of Justice, may conduct investigations on child labor violations. (3,17) Works with DGSN and the NGO Algerian Network for the Defense of Children's Rights to administer hotlines for the reporting of child abuse; also receives training on child labor. (3,17) Maintains a website through which individuals can file complaints. (3,17)

Labor Law Enforcement

In 2021, labor law enforcement agencies in Algeria took actions to address child labor (Table 6). However, gaps exist within the operations of the Ministry of Labor, Employment, and Social Security that may hinder adequate labor law enforcement, including the lack of authority to inspect informal workplaces for child labor.

Table 6. Labor Law Enforcement Efforts Related to Child Labor

Overview of Labor Law Enforcement	2020	2021
Labor Inspectorate Funding	Unknown (24)	Unknown (3)
Number of Labor Inspectors	885 (24)	709 (3)
Mechanism to Assess Civil Penalties	Yes (24)	Yes (3)
Initial Training for New Labor Inspectors	No (24)	Yes (3)
Training on New Laws Related to Child Labor	N/A (24)	Yes (3)
Refresher Courses Provided	Yes (24)	Yes (3)
Number of Labor Inspections Conducted	116,701 (24)	153,537 (3)
Number Conducted at Worksite	109,113 (24)	153,537 (3)
Number of Child Labor Violations Found	14 (24)	0 (3)
Number of Child Labor Violations for Which Penalties Were Imposed	Unknown (24)	N/A (3)
Number of Child Labor Penalties Imposed that Were Collected	Unknown (24)	N/A (3)
Routine Inspections Conducted	Yes (24)	Yes (3)
Routine Inspections Targeted	Yes (24)	Yes (3)
Unannounced Inspections Permitted	Yes (24)	Yes (3)
Unannounced Inspections Conducted	Yes (24)	Yes (3)
Complaint Mechanism Exists	Yes (14)	Yes (3)
Reciprocal Referral Mechanism Exists Between Labor Authorities and Social Services	Yes (14)	Yes (3)

When child labor law violations are found, the children are removed from worksites and placed in the school system. (14) In addition, the Government of Algeria increased the number of working units dedicated to child labor specifically. (3) However, the government did not provide information on labor inspectorate funding for inclusion in this report. Although the labor inspectorate is authorized to conduct inspections in all workplaces, inspectors do not investigate unmarked workplaces, such as houses or informal construction sites, without a complaint. (3)

The number of labor inspectors in Algeria dropped from 885 in 2020 to 709 in 2021. (3) The number of labor inspectors is likely insufficient for the size of Algeria's workforce, which includes more than 12.3 million workers. According to the ILO's technical advice of a ratio approaching 1 inspector for every 15,000 workers in developing economies, Algeria would need to employ roughly 827 labor inspectors. (27,28)

Criminal Law Enforcement

In 2021, criminal law enforcement agencies in Algeria took actions to address child labor (Table 7). However, gaps exist within the operations of the criminal enforcement agencies that may hinder adequate criminal law enforcement, including the lack of information pertaining to the number of investigations, prosecutions, and convictions.

Table 7. Criminal Law Enforcement Efforts Related to Child Labor

Overview of Criminal Law Enforcement	2020	2021
Initial Training for New Criminal Investigators	No (24)	Yes (3)
Training on New Laws Related to the Worst Forms of Child Labor	N/A (24)	Yes (3)
Refresher Courses Provided	Yes (24)	Yes (3)
Number of Investigations	Unknown (24)	Unknown (3)
Number of Violations Found	5,669 (24)	9 (3)
Number of Prosecutions Initiated	Unknown (24)	Unknown (3)
Number of Convictions	Unknown (24)	Unknown (3)
Imposed Penalties for Violations Related to the Worst Forms of Child Labor	Unknown (24)	Unknown (3)
Reciprocal Referral Mechanism Exists Between Criminal Authorities and Social Services	Yes (24)	Yes (3)

The government did not provide information on the number of investigations, prosecutions initiated, convictions, or penalties imposed. (3) The government did provide initial training and refresher courses to criminal investigators. In addition, 180 judicial police officers received specialized trainings on children's matters from the UNODC. (3)

In 2021, criminal law enforcement agencies reported 9 violations involving 13 child victims. From 2020 to October 2021, 77 individuals were put in pre-trial detention on suspicion of exploiting children through begging networks and an additional 54 were put under judicial supervision. (3)

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
National Authority for the Protection and Promotion of Children (ONPPE)	Protects and promotes children's rights and advocates for children in danger of economic exploitation. Acts as a liaison between the Ministry of Justice and members of the public alleging violations of children's rights, and oversees efforts of the National Commission for the Prevention of and Fight Against Child Labor. (3,6,7,26,29,30) Runs a national hotline and website to field questions and complaints about the mistreatment of children. (3) During the reporting period, the Authority continued to run the hotline and website, and held trainings for government officials and members of Algerian civil society. (3,14) In 2021, ONPPE launched an interagency program with the National Social, Economic, and Environmental Council to increase coordination between governmental ministries to study children's needs in Algeria, analyze expenses dedicated to children, and develop a national action plan for children's development. (3)
National Committee for the Prevention of and Fight Against Trafficking in Persons	Monitors implementation of the National Action Plan for the Prevention of and Fight Against Trafficking in Persons. Comprises representatives from the President's Office; the Prime Minister's Office; 12 ministries, including MTESS; and other government entities. (3,6,29,31,32) Active in 2021. (3)

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 the lack of a policy specifically dedicated to addressing the worst forms of child labor.

Table 9. Key Policies Related to Child Labor

Policy	Description
National Action Plan for the Prevention of and Fight Against Trafficking in Persons (2019–2021)	Aimed to prevent and reduce human trafficking by raising awareness, strengthening legislation, prosecuting human trafficking crimes, improving the provision of protective services to survivors, and increasing collaboration with national and international NGOs. (14,33) Active in 2021. (3)

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The Algerian government does not have a national action plan to address the worst forms of child labor.

VI. SOCIAL PROGRAMS TO ADDRESS CHILD LABOR

In 2021, 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 inadequacy of programs to address the full scope of the problem.

Table 10. Key Social Programs to Address Child Labor

Program	Description
Child Labor Awareness Campaign†	Campaign carried out through ONPPE and other government agencies that undertakes various efforts to raise awareness about child labor throughout the year. The Ministry of National Solidarity, Family, and the Condition of Women also has a communication plan for each of the country's 48 <i>wilayas</i> (governates) on child-related messaging. (3)
Children Assistance Facilities†	Facilities operated by the government to provide support for children, namely orphans and children in dangerous situations who are taken into custody by the state. (3) Active in 2021. (3)

† Program is funded by the Government of Algeria.

‡ The government had other social programs that may have included the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor, including its worst forms. (8,17,29)

Although Algeria has programs that target child labor, the scope of these programs is insufficient to fully address the extent of the problem, including the commercial sexual exploitation of children, forced begging, and street work.

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 Algeria (Table 11).

Table 11. Suggested Government Actions to Eliminate Child Labor

Area	Suggested Action	Year(s) Suggested
Legal Framework	Ensure that laws increase penalties for, or categorize as a separate crime, the involvement of children in all illicit activities, including using, procuring, and offering children for the production and trafficking of drugs.	2013 – 2021
	Ensure that the law does not require threats, the use of force, or coercion to be established for the crime of child trafficking.	2021
	Determine the types of hazardous work prohibited for children under age 18, in consultation with employers' and workers' organizations.	2009 – 2021
	Ensure that the law criminally prohibits the recruitment of children under age 18 by non-state armed groups.	2016 – 2021
Enforcement	Publish information on labor inspectorate funding.	2009 – 2021
	Increase the number of labor inspectors to meet the ILO's technical advice.	2021
	Publish information on the criminal enforcement of child labor laws, including the number of investigations, prosecutions, convictions, and penalties imposed for crimes related to the worst forms of child labor.	2020 – 2021
	Ensure that inspections are conducted in all workplaces, including unmarked workplaces, such as houses or informal construction sites.	2021
Government Policies	Adopt a national policy that includes all relevant worst forms of child labor, such as commercial sexual exploitation, forced begging, and street work.	2015 – 2021
Social Programs	Research and publish detailed information on children involved in child labor, or at risk of being involved; specify these activities, including those carried out in construction work; and publish information to inform policies.	2014 – 2021
	Ensure that social programs address migrant children involved in rural family-run businesses and agricultural work, as well as those subjected to forced begging.	2020 – 2021
	Expand existing programs to address the full scope of the child labor problem, including the commercial sexual exploitation of children, street work, and forced begging.	2016 – 2021
	Ensure that isolated cases of school administrators denying enrollment to migrant children are stopped in accordance with laws allowing for free public education for all children.	2018 – 2021

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

Area	Suggested Action	Year(s) Suggested
Social Programs	Take measures to remove barriers to education for migrant children and children with disabilities, including language barriers, lack of specialized training, transportation, and accessibility of school buildings.	2015 – 2021
	Expand social programs to address school dropout rates in the southern region of the country.	2020 – 2021

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