

In 2021, Jordan made significant advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. The government enacted several amendments to the Law on the Prevention of Human Trafficking, including adding organized begging to the categories of trafficking crimes, and launched a new website for the public to submit labor complaints, which includes a dedicated channel for child soldiers. The government also amended the National Framework to Combat Child Labor to reflect the Ministry of Social Development's responsibility to protect working children as specified in Juvenile Law No. 32 of 2014. Additionally, it established a new program—Addressing the Worst Forms of Child Labor in the Agriculture Sector—that aims to reduce child labor in agriculture in rural and remote parts of Mafraq and the Jordan Valley. Moreover, the government formed an interagency committee to update the National Strategy to Combat Child Labor; the committee met six times and agreed on a draft updated strategy. However, children in Jordan are subjected to the worst forms of child labor, including in forced begging and commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking. Children also perform dangerous tasks in agriculture. Moreover, 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, the scope of government programs is insufficient to fully address the extent of child labor, including in construction and street vending.



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

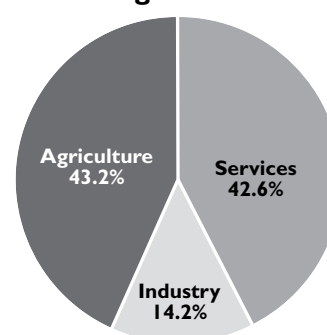
Children in Jordan are subjected to the worst forms of child labor, including in forced begging and commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking. (1-8) Children also perform dangerous tasks in agriculture. (9,10) Based on the 2016 National Child Labor Survey, approximately 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 I provides key indicators on children's work and education in Jordan.

**Table I. 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 (%)		81.6

Source for primary completion rate: Data from 2020, 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 I. 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.

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

Sector/Industry	Activity
Agriculture	Farming, including weeding, planting, and harvesting tomatoes and olives (8-10,13-16)
Industry	Mining† and quarrying† (9,16)
	Construction,† including building and painting homes (9,10,15,16)
	Manufacturing, activities unknown (9,16,17)
Services	Maintenance and repair of motor vehicles† (8,9,15,17)
	Driving animals to transport tourists (18)
	Street work,† including selling items and washing cars (8,17,19,20)
	Scavenging scrap metal and waste† (16,21-23)
	Begging (1,8,19)
	Domestic work† (17)
	Food services, including working in restaurants and bakeries (9,16,17)
	Hotel services† (9,16,17)
	Working in retail, including cleaning shops (8,9,16,24)
Categorical Worst Forms of Child Labor‡	Use in illicit activities, including drug trafficking (25,26)
	Forced begging (1,3,8,19,27)
	Commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking (4-7,28)

† 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.

In 2021, child labor in Jordan continued to increase and COVID-19 pandemic-related barriers to education have persisted. (23,26,29) 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 the Internet and devices prevented many students from taking advantage of these resources during school shutdowns. (26,29) The learning loss associated with school closures and insufficient online learning made children more likely to drop out, increasing their vulnerability to child labor and other forms of exploitation. (29) Worsening living situations and lack of access to education led to increases in child labor, including in hazardous tasks such as collecting and processing scrap metal. (23) Additionally, an influx of students switching from private schools to public schools exacerbated capacity problems in public schools. (8)

Non-Jordanian children, including Syrian refugees and refugees from other countries including Iraq, Yemen, Sudan, and Somalia face higher barriers to education than Jordanians. (30) In addition, children of Jordanian mothers and non-Jordanian fathers and non-Jordanian children not belonging to refugee groups lack access to public education. (26) While Syrian children are granted access to Jordanian public schools, UNICEF also notes that Syrian refugee children drop out of school at a higher rate than Jordanian children do. (30) These children face barriers to education, including bullying and harassment, and the costs of transportation, uniforms, and school materials. In addition, they are often unprepared for their appropriate grade level because of interruptions in their early years of schooling. (2,8,10,23,31,32) Sources indicate that, rather than attending school, Syrian refugee children are sometimes forced to work alongside their families in agriculture and the services industries, as well as being forced to peddle goods and beg. (2,3,15)




In 2021, Jordan waived a requirement for identity documentation to expand access to education for Syrian children for the 2021–2022 school year. (33) The government provided double-shift schools to address overcrowding. (2,8,29,34,35) At these double-shift schools, Jordanian children attended in the morning and Syrian children attended in the afternoon. However, Jordanian and Syrian children attending double-shift schools were vulnerable to child labor because the school hours are considerably shorter, and fewer school hours leave more time for work. (36)

Non-Syrian refugees in Jordan, primarily from Iraq, Yemen, Sudan, and Somalia, also faced barriers to education due to the lack of identity documentation. (26)

## 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 (37)
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work	Yes	18	Article 74 of the Labor Code; Article 2 of the Ministerial Order of 2011 (37,38)
Identification of Hazardous Occupations or Activities Prohibited for Children	Yes		Article 2 of the Ministerial Order of 2011 (38)
Prohibition of Forced Labor	Yes		Articles 3(a) and 3(b) of the Law on the Prevention of Human Trafficking (39)
Prohibition of Child Trafficking	Yes		Articles 3(a) and 8–11 of the Law on the Prevention of Human Trafficking (39)
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children	Yes		Articles 298, 299, 306, 310, 311, 315, and 319 of the Penal Code; Articles 3(a) and 3(b) of the Law on the Prevention of Human Trafficking (39,40)
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities	Yes		Article 8 of the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act (41)
Minimum Age for Voluntary State Military Recruitment	Yes	16	Article 5(b) of the Military Service act; Article 13(b) of the Officer's Service Act (42,43)
Prohibition of Compulsory Recruitment of Children by (State) Military	Yes		Article 3(a) of the National Service Act (44)
Prohibition of Military Recruitment by Non-state Armed Groups	No		Article 141 of the Penal Code (40)
Compulsory Education Age	Yes	16	Articles 7(a.2) and 10(b) of the Education Act (45)
Free Public Education	Yes		Article 10(a) of the Education Act; Article 20 of the Constitution (45,46)

In 2021, the government enacted several amendments to its anti-trafficking law, including adding organized begging to the types of trafficking crimes. The new law also increases penalties for trafficking crimes, includes a directive to name special trafficking prosecutors and judges, and guarantees victims' rights including temporary residence in Jordan and suitable housing, legal aid and translation services, and compensation for "material and moral harm." (47) At the close of the reporting period, the government was still drafting regulations for the implementation of the new trafficking law amendments. (27)

Also in 2021, the government issued the Agricultural Workers Regulation No. 19, which includes an article prohibiting the employment of children under the age of 16 in the agriculture sector and prohibiting

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the employment of children under the age of 18 in hazardous tasks in the agriculture sector. It also issued corresponding instructions for labor inspection in the agricultural sector. (8)

### 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 (MOL), Central Inspection Directorate	Enforces labor laws, including those on child labor. 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) Maintains a hotline, website, and mobile app to receive labor-related complaints, including complaints of child labor. (21,26) 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. (49,50) The phone number is difficult to locate and, based on available information, operators rarely responded to voicemails left after working hours. (49,50) In 2021, MOL launched a new website to submit labor complaints, www.hemayah.jo, which includes a dedicated channel for child labor. The platform received 101 child labor complaints during the reporting period, of which only 4 were unresolved. (8,51)
MOL Child Labor Section	Coordinates government campaigns against child labor, conducts training, and raises awareness about child labor issues. (16) 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. (21,52)
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, when needed, to repatriate foreign workers. (2)

### Labor Law Enforcement

In 2021, labor law enforcement agencies in Jordan took actions to address child labor (Table 6). However, gaps exist within the operations of the Ministry of Labor (MOL) that may hinder adequate labor law enforcement, including insufficient financial resource allocation.

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

Overview of Labor Law Enforcement	2020	2021
Labor Inspectorate Funding	\$353,000 (26)	\$353,107 (8)
Number of Labor Inspectors	136 (26)	170 (8)
Mechanism to Assess Civil Penalties	Yes (37)	Yes (37)
Initial Training for New Labor Inspectors	Yes (26)	Yes (8)
Training on New Laws Related to Child Labor	N/A	Yes (8)
Refresher Courses Provided	Yes (26)	Yes (8)
Number of Labor Inspections Conducted	90,723 (15)	71,686 (8)
Number Conducted at Worksite	5,402 (26)	71,686 (8)
Number of Child Labor Violations Found	503 (15)	923 (8)
Number of Child Labor Violations for Which Penalties Were Imposed	79 (15)	97 (8)
Number of Child Labor Penalties Imposed that Were Collected	Unknown	Unknown (8)
Routine Inspections Conducted	Yes (15)	Yes (8)
Routine Inspections Targeted	Yes (26)	Yes (8)
Unannounced Inspections Permitted	Yes (26)	Yes (8)
Unannounced Inspections Conducted	Yes (26)	Yes (8)
Complaint Mechanism Exists	Yes (26)	Yes (8)
Reciprocal Referral Mechanism Exists Between Labor Authorities and Social Services	Yes (26)	Yes (8)

When a labor inspector identifies a child laborer, the inspector issues a warning, may issue a fine, and requires the employer to send the child home while the inspector is still present. (36) The inspector also enters the child's information into the child labor database. (26) A warning requires the employer to sign a pledge declaring that they will cease employing children. Without the pledge, MOL can close the business. 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. (53) If a child labor violation is identified, the labor inspector conducts unannounced follow-up inspections at the worksite to ensure compliance. (36) MOL and MOSD may also conduct a joint visit. (26) 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. (26,36,54) During the reporting period, 268 children were removed from the labor market and received social services, including education. (8) MOSD additionally referred 1,000 children to social services as part of its anti-vagrancy campaign. (27)

In 2021, MOL conducted 71,686 inspections, 25,338 of which focused on child labor. (8) 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, MOL reported that inspections in the agricultural sector were insufficient to meet the demands of Agricultural Workers Bylaw No. 19. (8) Moreover, sources report that the inspectorate has insufficient financial resources to effectively fulfill its mandate. (8)

The number of labor inspectors is likely insufficient for the size of Jordan's workforce, which includes over 2.9 million workers. According to the ILO's technical advice of a ratio approaching 1 inspector for every 15,000 workers in developing economies, Jordan would need to employ roughly 196 labor inspectors. (8,55,56)

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 2021, criminal law enforcement agencies in Jordan took actions to address 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 information on its criminal law enforcement efforts.

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

Overview of Criminal Law Enforcement	2020	2021
Initial Training for New Criminal Investigators	Yes (26)	Unknown
Training on New Laws Related to the Worst Forms of Child Labor	N/A	Yes (27)
Refresher Courses Provided	Yes (26)	Unknown
Number of Investigations	Unknown	Unknown
Number of Violations Found	Unknown	Unknown
Number of Prosecutions Initiated	Unknown	Unknown
Number of Convictions	Unknown	Unknown
Imposed Penalties for Violations Related to the Worst Forms of Child Labor	Unknown (26)	Unknown
Reciprocal Referral Mechanism Exists Between Criminal Authorities and Social Services	Yes (26)	Yes (27)

In 2021, Jordanian criminal law enforcement agencies took action to combat forced begging following on the anti-vagrancy campaign launched in 2020. (19,57) The Judicial Council appointed 41 specialized trafficking judges and prosecutors ensuring that all 12 governorates had at least one specialized judge and prosecutor. (27) In September 2021, three girls found begging were referred to social services as potential trafficking victims. (58) Later in the month, the MOSD announced that the father, mother, and uncle of the three girls had been charged with human trafficking under the newly amended anti-trafficking law. (57) However, a trial judge subsequently decided that a non-trafficking begging charge was more appropriate, and, as a result, the case never reached a specialized trafficking judge. (27,59) Sources indicate that the forthcoming regulations clarifying the amendments to the anti-trafficking law could lead to more trafficking prosecutions. (27)

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The government did not provide complete information on its criminal law enforcement efforts for inclusion in this report.

### 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. (60) The National Committee on Child Labor did not meet during the reporting period and has been inactive for several years. (61)
National Committee to Combat Trafficking (NCCT)	Coordinates government efforts to combat human trafficking. 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. (62) CTU is operated jointly by the Public Security Directorate and MOL. (49) In 2021, NCCT met five times and members participated in several conferences and trainings. (27) In addition, NCCT began publishing quarterly reports online to increase transparency. (27)

In 2021, the government formed an *ad hoc* interagency committee to update the National Strategy to Combat Child Labor. The committee met six times and agreed on a draft updated strategy, and continued working into 2022. (8)

Although Jordan has a National Committee for the Prevention of Human Trafficking to coordinate efforts to address trafficking in persons, it does not have functioning coordinating mechanisms to address other forms of child labor, including street and farm work. (63)

### 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 a lack of 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. (64) In 2021, the framework was amended to reflect the MOSD's responsibility to protect children who work as specified in Juvenile Law No. 32 of 2014. (8) MOSD completed a draft manual on children working in street work and begging and sent it to the Prime Minister's office for review. (8)
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. (65) In 2021, the government updated the response plan, extending it to 2022, and continued to offer double-shifted schools for Syrian refugee children. (15,26)
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 ages 16 and older, and inform students about high-quality employment in the tourism sector. (66) The government has yet to implement the plan since passing it in 2015.

### 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 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. (67) Provides services to children engaged in child begging through centers in Madaba and Deleil (Zarqa). (50) Active in 2021. (27)
Addressing the Worst Forms of Child Labor in the Agriculture Sector*†	Aims to reduce child labor in the agriculture sector, taking into consideration vulnerabilities of children and their families, with field visits by joint teams of MOL inspectors and behavior monitors from MOSD and the Family Healthcare Institute of the Noor Al Hussein Foundation. (51) Works in informal tented settlement communities in rural and remote parts of Mafraq and the Jordan Valley that have not received child labor protection support. (8) Established in 2021. (8)
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. (68)
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. (21)
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. (36,69) Targets children ages 13 and older who have been out of school for 3 years and are ineligible to enroll in public schools. (70) Upon completion of the curriculum, students receive a certificate indicating the equivalency of grade 10 education. (69)

\* 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. (21,26,73,74)

Although Jordan has programs that target child labor, the scope of these programs does not fully address the extent of the problem, including child labor in 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 – 2021
Enforcement	Improve the quality of the Ministry of Labor's hotline by making it easier to locate and ensuring that operators, including those who speak foreign languages, are available outside of business hours, and all messages are addressed.	2018 – 2021
	Publish the number of labor law penalties imposed that were collected.	2015 – 2021
	Increase the number of labor inspectors to meet the ILO technical advice.	2020 – 2021
	Ensure that criminal investigations are conducted on the worst forms of child labor, including the commercial sexual exploitation of children.	2015 – 2021
	Publish information on criminal law enforcement efforts, including the number of investigators, violations, prosecutions, and convictions.	2019 – 2021
	Ensure that the labor inspectorate has sufficient resources to fulfill its mandate.	2021
	Ensure that the number of inspections conducted per labor inspector affords inspectors enough time to adequately identify and remediate labor law violations.	2019 – 2021
Coordination	Establish coordinating mechanisms to eliminate all worst forms of child labor and other forms of child labor, including street and farm work.	2018 – 2021
Government Policies	Implement the Plan of Action to Eliminate Child Labor in Tourism in Petra.	2018 – 2021
Social Programs	Continue to expand access to education for all children including Syrian and non-Syrian refugees, ensuring that students have transportation, are able to purchase supplies and uniforms, students are not bullied or harassed, and school hours are extended.	2013 – 2021
	Institute programs to address the worst forms of child labor in construction and street vending.	2013 – 2021

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