

In 2021, Morocco made moderate advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. The government increased the number of labor inspectors by over 43 percent and launched a new labor inspectorate information technology management system that enabled remote training sessions for inspectors in compliance with COVID-19 pandemic countermeasures. In addition, the government signed eight partnership agreements with local non-government organizations in various regions of Morocco to counter the prevalence of child labor. However, children in Morocco are subjected to the worst forms of child labor, including forced domestic work. Moroccan law on the minimum age for work does not meet international standards. 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. Children also engage in child labor in producing artisanal handicrafts. (1,2) 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. (1,3) 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 (%)		100.1

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 *Enquête sur la Population et la Santé Familiale (DHS), 2003–2004*. (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, activities unknown (1,6,7)
	Fishing (1,6,7)
	Forestry, activities unknown (1,7)
Industry	Textiles (2)
	Construction† (8)
	Production of artisanal crafts (1,7)
Services	Begging (2)
	Domestic work (1,6,7,9,10)
	Maintenance and repair of motor vehicles (2)
Categorical Worst Forms of Child Labor‡	Commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking (2,7,11)
	Forced domestic work (2,9,11,12)
	Forced begging (2,7,11)

† 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.

Rural Moroccan girls, some as young as age 8, are recruited for domestic work in private urban homes, a practice known locally as *petites bonnes*. (12,13) Some of these girls are subjected to physical and verbal abuse, excessive working hours, and denied access to educational opportunities by their employers. (9,12-14) Furthermore, some employers confiscate the identity papers of child domestic workers. (12,13) In addition, exploitation in domestic work makes children vulnerable to child sex trafficking in Morocco, neighboring countries such as Spain, and the Persian Gulf. (15) Since 2018, over 18,000 child migrants have gone missing in Europe and most of these minors

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were from Morocco. (16) These unaccompanied children lack access to stable housing, exposing them to poverty and social exclusion. (16)




Children in Morocco, particularly in rural areas, face barriers to education, including the cost of school materials, poor facilities, and transportation issues. (1) Over 80 percent of children who are economically active have left schooling. (7) Some children must reside in boarding houses to attend school due to long commutes and 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. Other barriers to education include fees associated with pre-school and after-school activities and required documentation for school enrollment. (1) The COVID-19 pandemic has also deepened the digital divide in Morocco between those who have access to Internet technology and those who do not. (17,18)

However, in 2021 the Government of Morocco took actions to remove barriers to education. Enrollment procedures have been simplified to allow for non-discriminatory access to public education for all. (7) Moreover, the Government of Morocco reports that 895 migrant and refugee children have received direct aid, while 180 children were beneficiaries of scholarships. In total, 1,800 children received educational support as part of the "AMAL" program. (7,19)

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 a minimum age for work that does not meet international standards.

Table 4. Laws and Regulations on Child Labor

Standard	Meets International Standards	Age	Legislation
Minimum Age for Work	No	15	Articles 4 and 143 of the Labor Code (20)
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work	Yes	18	Article 147 of the Labor Code; Article 6 of Law No. 19-12 (20,21)
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 (20,22)
Prohibition of Forced Labor	Yes		Articles 448.1, 448.4-448.5 of the Law on Trafficking in Human Beings; Articles 10 and 12 of the Labor Code; Article 467-2 of the Penal Code (20,23,24)
Prohibition of Child Trafficking	Yes		Articles 448.1, 448.4, and 448.5 of the Law on Trafficking in Human Beings (24)
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children	Yes		Articles 497, 498, 499, and 503-2 of the Penal Code; Articles 448.1 and 448.4 of the Law on Trafficking in Human Beings (23,24)

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

Standard	Meets International Standards	Age	Legislation
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities	Yes		Law number 1-73-282; Article 467-2 of the Penal Code; Articles 448.1 and 448.4 of the Law on Trafficking in Human Beings (23-25)
Minimum Age for Voluntary State Military Recruitment	Yes	18	Article 4 of Royal Decree of 9 June 1966 (26)
Prohibition of Compulsory Recruitment of Children by (State) Military	Yes		Article 4 of Law No. 44-18 (27)
Prohibition of Military Recruitment by Non-state Armed Groups	Yes		Articles 448.1 and 448.4 of the Law on Trafficking in Human Beings (24)
Compulsory Education Age	Yes	15	Article I of Law No. 04-00 (28)
Free Public Education	Yes		Article I of Law No. 04-00 (28)

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. (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 child labor laws.

Table 5. Agencies Responsible for Child Labor Law Enforcement

Organization/Agency	Role
Ministry of Economic Inclusion, Small Business, Employment and Skills (MEIPEEC)	Enforces child labor laws with its 54 inspection offices throughout the country. (7)
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. (1)
General Prosecutor	Prosecutes criminal offenses against children and processes cases involving women and children in the court system. (1, 11, 29, 30) Serves independently as a judiciary body separate from the Ministry of Justice. (1)
Ministry of Solidarity, Social Inclusion, and Family (MSWFSD)	Leads all public policy on child protection. (7)

In 2021, a Moroccan judge from the Taroudant province ordered the parents of 24 girls to follow the law and enroll their daughters in high school. This represents an unprecedented intervention by the Moroccan judge, who through his decision enforced the education laws of the country. (31)

Labor Law Enforcement

In 2021, labor law enforcement agencies in Morocco took actions to address child labor (Table 6). However, gaps exist within the authority of the Ministry of Economic Inclusion, Small Business, Employment and Skills that may hinder adequate labor law enforcement, including an insufficient number of labor inspectors.

Table 6. Labor Law Enforcement Efforts Related to Child Labor

Overview of Labor Law Enforcement	2020	2021
Labor Inspectorate Funding	Unknown (1)	Unknown (7)
Number of Labor Inspectors	282 (1)	404 (7)
Mechanism to Assess Civil Penalties	Yes (1)	Yes (7)
Initial Training for New Labor Inspectors	Yes (1)	Yes (7)
Training on New Laws Related to Child Labor	Yes (1)	Yes (7)
Refresher Courses Provided	Yes (1)	No (7)

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

Overview of Labor Law Enforcement	2020	2021
Number of Labor Inspections Conducted	19,302† (1)	18,776 (7)
Number Conducted at Worksite	19,302† (1)	18,776 (7)
Number of Child Labor Violations Found	56 (1)	24 (7)
Number of Child Labor Violations for Which Penalties Were Imposed	0 (1)	5 (7)
Number of Child Labor Penalties Imposed that Were Collected	0 (1)	Unknown (7)
Routine Inspections Conducted	Yes (1)	Yes (7)
Routine Inspections Targeted	Yes (1)	Yes (7)
Unannounced Inspections Permitted	Yes (20)	Yes (20)
Unannounced Inspections Conducted	Yes (1)	Yes (7)
Complaint Mechanism Exists	Yes (1)	Yes (7)
Reciprocal Referral Mechanism Exists Between Labor Authorities and Social Services	Yes (1)	Yes (7)

† Data are from January 1, 2020, to September 30, 2020. (1)

In 2021, the Government of Morocco increased the number of labor inspectors by more than 43 percent, from 282 to 404 inspectors in total. (1,7) In addition, the government launched a new labor inspectorate information technology management system which enabled remote training sessions for inspectors in compliance with pandemic countermeasures. (7) During the reporting period, 998 children were removed from worksites considered dangerous by inspectors. The Government of Morocco maintains 54 "designated focal points," which serve to coordinate efforts among labor inspectors as they work to deal with the prevalence of child labor. (7)

Despite these efforts, the number of labor inspectors remains likely insufficient for the size of Morocco's workforce, which includes more than 11 million workers. According to the ILO's technical advice of a ratio approaching 1 inspector for every 15,000 workers in industrializing economies, Morocco would need to employ about 797 labor inspectors. (32,33) Government officials report that funding for the labor inspectorate is insufficient and prevents the inspectorate from fully performing its duties. (7)

In addition, the official procedures involved in processing child labor violations require the participation of several agencies for each case, which places considerable administrative burden on labor inspectors. Penalties for employing children in hazardous work are also insufficient to act as a deterrent to child labor. (1,34,35) Despite regulations to inform agencies on implementing the 2016 Law on Setting Up Employment Conditions of Domestic Workers, there remain enforcement issues, such as the lack of inspections of closed private residences, in which many child domestic workers are employed. (7,29,36)

Criminal Law Enforcement

In 2021, criminal law enforcement agencies in Morocco 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 publication of criminal law enforcement data.

Table 7. Criminal Law Enforcement Efforts Related to Child Labor

Overview of Criminal Law Enforcement	2020	2021
Initial Training for New Criminal Investigators	Yes (1)	Yes (7)
Training on New Laws Related to the Worst Forms of Child Labor	N/A (1)	Yes (7)
Refresher Courses Provided	Yes (1)	Unknown (7)
Number of Investigations	Unknown (1)	Unknown (7)
Number of Violations Found	Unknown (1)	Unknown (7)
Number of Prosecutions Initiated	22 (1)	Unknown (7)
Number of Convictions	Unknown (1)	Unknown (7)
Imposed Penalties for Violations Related to the Worst Forms of Child Labor	Unknown (1)	Unknown (7)
Reciprocal Referral Mechanism Exists Between Criminal Authorities and Social Services	Yes (1)	No (37)

In 2021, 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 laws on violence against children. (7) In addition, the Ministry of Justice provided a training session for law enforcement officials and prosecutors pertaining to the implementation of Domestic Labor Law 19.12. (7) The Public Prosecutor's Office also organized trainings to help prosecutors recognize the indicators of human trafficking of child victims. The Ministry of the Interior held online trainings on human trafficking and smuggling of migrants. (10)

However, the government did not provide information on the number of investigations, violations found, prosecutions initiated, convictions, or penalties imposed for the worst forms of child labor for inclusion of this report. (7) In addition, no formal referral mechanism exists between criminal authorities and social services and coordination varies from region to region. (37)

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 intersectoral 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. (1,38) Due to pandemic restrictions, no meetings took place under this coordinating body during the reporting period. (37)
Commission for the Support of Women Victims of Violence	Monitors policies and actions against child labor, ensuring coordination on child labor issues between labor inspectors and those NGOs that have partnership projects with the government of Morocco. Made up of 19 ministerial departments and is chaired by the Head of Government. (7) Research was unable to determine whether this coordinating body was active during the reporting period.
Interministerial Committee for Combating Trafficking in Persons	Coordinates the government's approach to trafficking in persons on an interministerial level. Conducts training sessions for members of the security services. (2) Chaired by the Head of the Government of Morocco and led by the Ministry of Justice, with representation from civil society. (7,37) Established in May 2019. (1,2,39) In 2021, the Committee carried out four training sessions with the Council of Europe, covering themes of human trafficking and management of crime scenes. (10)

Due to the restrictions associated with the pandemic, a number of coordination activities including regular meetings were cancelled in 2021. (7,37)

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 Inclusion, and Family (MSWFSD) Integrated Public Policy on the Protection of Children in Morocco	Promotes an interdisciplinary approach to respond to the exploitation of children and other issues. (40) Under this policy, MEIPEEC continued administering grant programs to associations and NGOs in 2021 to address child labor. In this context, MEIPEEC signed eight partnership agreements with local NGOs in multiple regions of Morocco to counter the prevalence of child labor. (7) These agreements support the removal of children under age 15 from work, with a particular focus on domestic work, while also seeking to improve working conditions and raise awareness of the hazards associated with child labor. (7)

In March 2021, Labor Minister Mohamed Amekraz appeared on a virtual conference marking 2021 as the ILO-sponsored International Year for the Elimination of Child Labor and addressed attendees with an elaboration on the government's 10-year plan to eliminate child labor. (41) Morocco is 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. (1)

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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 inadequate efforts to address child labor 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 MSWFSD-funded Tayssir Conditional Cash Transfer Program that provides direct cash transfers to qualifying families whose children meet school attendance criteria. (1) In 2021, the Government of Morocco reported its continued support for this social program, but did not provide further information. (7)
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. (30,36,42,43) Other types of shelters and service centers include student dormitories and training and integration programs for vulnerable children. (30,34,36,42) In 2021, the Government of Morocco reported its continued support for this social program, but did not provide further information. (7)
Government-Funded Projects†	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 programs; <i>Mouwakaba</i> , 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 Méknes. (30,34,43,44) In 2021, the Government of Morocco reported its continued support for this social program, but did not provide further information. (7)
Measurement, Awareness-Raising, and Policy Engagement Project on Child Labor and Forced Labor (MAP 16)	The MAP 16 USDOL-funded project is 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, during the reporting period, project activities supported the enforcement of the 2016 Law on Setting Up Employment Conditions of Domestic Workers, which protects children from hazardous domestic work. (1) In collaboration with this project, the General Confederation of Moroccan Enterprises launched the ILTESAM Platform: Initiative for the Fight Against Child Labor by the Private Sector in Morocco, which supports member companies by providing them with information on child labor, including awareness toolkits and online training. The platform also fosters the exchange of good practices of companies in addressing child labor. (8) Additional information is available on the USDOL website.
AMAL Program	Supports the efforts of the Moroccan authorities to ensure an environment conducive to the development and autonomy of children and young people in migration and refugee status. Implemented by UNHCR, IOM, and UNICEF under the coordination of the UN's Office of the Resident Coordinator. (37,45)

† Program is funded by the Government of Morocco.

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. (44)

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 in the traditional artisan and handicraft sectors for family businesses.	2009 – 2021
Enforcement	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 – 2021
	Publish information on labor law enforcement efforts, including the amount of labor inspectorate funding, and penalties collected for violations of the worst forms of child labor.	2015 – 2021
	Reduce administrative burdens and streamline child labor enforcement procedures among government agencies.	2013 – 2021
	Increase penalties for employers who use children in hazardous work to be an effective deterrent.	2012 – 2021

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

Area	Suggested Action	Year(s) Suggested
Enforcement	Publish information on criminal enforcement efforts, including whether investigators received refresher training course, the number of investigations, violations found, prosecutions initiated, number of convictions, and penalties imposed for violations related to the worst forms of child labor.	2012 – 2021
	Ensure that a formal referral mechanism exists between criminal authorities and social services to ensure effective coordination on cases of the worst forms of child labor.	2021
Coordination	Ensure that key coordinating bodies related to the worst forms of child labor are active.	2021
Social Programs	Ensure programs address barriers to education such as the cost of school supplies, poor facilities, transportation issues, and lack of documentation.	2013 – 2021
	Expand existing programs to address the full scope of the child labor problem, including in forced domestic work.	2013 – 2021
	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 – 2021

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