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In 2022, Albania made moderate advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. The government continued to support the work of the Special Anti-Corruption and Organized Crime Court, which was established in 2019 and has the power to hear cases involving human trafficking if linked to organized crime (including cases involving children). Additionally, during the reporting period the government supported policies focused on improving children's rights, including the National Agenda for the Rights of the Child and the National Strategy on Education. However, children in Albania are subjected to the worst forms of child labor, including use in illicit activities and forced begging, and in commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking. Children also perform dangerous tasks in scavenging, including scavenging for chromium near mines. Albania's legal framework governing child labor also does not explicitly prohibit using, procuring, or offering children for illicit activities.



I. PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Table I provides key indicators on children's work and education in Albania.

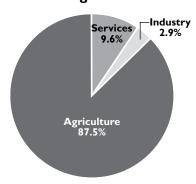
Table I. Statistics on Children's Work and Education

Children	Age	Percent
Working (% and population)	5 to 14	4.6 (23,665)
Attending School (%)	5 to 14	92.5
Combining Work and School (%)	7 to 14	5.2
Primary Completion Rate (%)		100.7

Source for primary completion rate: Data from 2021, published by UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2023. (1)

Source for all other data: International Labor Organization's analysis of statistics from National Child Labor Survey (SIMPOC), 2010. (2)

Figure 1. 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.

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

Sector/Industry	Activity
Agriculture	Farming, activities unknown (3-5)
Industry	Scavenging near mining sites,† including for chromium and iron (5-8)
	Construction, activities unknown (1,7,16)
	Working in the textile, garment, and footwear sectors (4,5,10,11)
	Processing fish (5,12)
Services	Begging (5,13-15)
	Street work, including vending, washing vehicles, busking, and shining shoes (7,9,21-23)
	Collecting recyclable materials on the street and in landfills (5,7,20,23)
	Working in wholesale and retail trade (1,7)
	Working in hotels and restaurants (1,7)
	Working in call centers (7,9,16)
Categorical Worst	Use in illicit activities, including burglary, drug trafficking, and harvesting and processing cannabis (5,13,20,21)
Forms of Child	Commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking (8,22,23)
Labor‡	Forced begging (8,24-27)

[†] Determined by national law or regulation as hazardous and, as such, relevant to Article 3(d) of ILO C. 182.

[‡] Child labor understood as the worst forms of child labor per se under Article 3(a)–(c) of ILO C. 182.

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Children are sometimes forced into labor, such as begging and scavenging. (8,22,25) To contribute to family income, some Roma and Balkan Egyptian children are forced to engage in street begging or the collection of recyclables. (5,26) In addition, some children informally scavenge chromium around hazardous mines where debris from mine tunnels is found, and they sometimes carry these heavy rocks for miles. (5) Children are also subjected to trafficking, both domestic and abroad to EU countries, for commercial sexual exploitation and forced labor. (8,22,25) Domestic child trafficking and forced begging have continued in recent years, particularly during the tourist season. (8,22,24) Albania lacks recent, comprehensive data on child labor, including in the agriculture and construction sectors. (5)

Children in Albania face a number of barriers to accessing education, which increases their vulnerability to child labor. (5) Although Albania allows children without a birth certificate to enroll in public schools, some children from Roma and Balkan Egyptian families and refugees without proper birth documentation may still face obstacles in obtaining access to social services and education. (5) Roma and Balkan Egyptian children also experience discrimination in schools when placed in separate classrooms, and faced other hurdles to accessing education, such as a lack of access to reliable transportation. (5,27) In addition, some migrant and refugee children from Syria, Afghanistan, and Bangladesh face difficulties accessing education due to language barriers. (8) Children with disabilities also continue to experience discrimination and other hurdles to accessing inclusive education. (5,28)

II. LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR CHILD LABOR

Albania has ratified all key international conventions concerning child labor (Table 3).

Table 3. Ratification of International Conventions on Child Labor

	Convention	Ratification
KITOTA	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	1

The government has established laws and regulations related to child labor (Table 4). However, gaps exist in Albania's legal framework to adequately protect children from the worst forms of child labor, including the failure to prohibit 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 98 of the Code of Labor; Article 24 of the Law for the Protection of the Rights of the Child (29,30)
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work	Yes	18	Articles 98–101 of the Code of Labor; Article 24 of the Law for the Protection of the Rights of the Child (29,30)
Identification of Hazardous Occupations or Activities Prohibited for Children	Yes		Articles 99–101 of the Code of Labor; Decree of the Council of Ministers on Defining Hazardous and Hard Works; Article 34 of the Law on Occupational Safety and Health at Work; Regulation on Protection of Children at Work (28,29,31,32)
Prohibition of Forced Labor	Yes		Article 8 of the Code of Labor; Articles 124b and 128b of the Criminal Code (32,36)

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

	Meets		
Standard	International Standards	Age	Legislation
Prohibition of Child Trafficking	Yes		Article 128/b of the Criminal Code (34)
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children	No		Articles 114, 117, and 128/b of the Criminal Code; Article 26 of the Law for the Protection of the Rights of the Child (30,34)
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities	No		Article 129 of the Criminal Code; Articles 24 and 25 of the Law for the Protection of the Rights of the Child (30,34)
Minimum Age for Voluntary State Military Recruitment	Yes	18	Article 9 of the Law on Military Service (35)
Prohibition of Compulsory Recruitment of Children by (State) Military	N/A*		Article 9 of the Law on Military Service (35)
Prohibition of Military Recruitment by Non-state Armed Groups	Yes		Article 28 of the Law for the Protection of the Rights of the Child (30)
Compulsory Education Age	Yes	16	Article 22 of the Law on Pre-University Education System (36)
Free Public Education	Yes		Article 57 of the Constitution of the Republic of Albania; Article 5 of the Law on Pre-University Education System (36,37)

^{*} Country has no conscription (34)

Albania does not explicitly prohibit using, procuring, or offering children under age 18 for illicit activities, including in the production and trafficking of drugs. Article 129 of the Criminal Code only prohibits inducing or encouraging children under age 14 to participate in criminality. (33) Additionally, Article 25 of the Law for the Protection of the Rights of the Child provides for protection of children against the use of alcohol and drugs, as well as the illicit production and trafficking of these substances, but does not criminalize inducing a child to participate in these acts. (30) The law also does not criminally prohibit the use of children for prostitution. (33)

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 & Activities
Ministry of Finance and Economy (State Inspectorate for Labor and Social Services)	Enforces laws related to child labor and receives and responds to child labor complaints through the State Social Services Agency. (5) The 241 Child Protection Units (CPUs) located throughout the country at the municipal level identify at-risk children, conduct initial evaluations of each case, and refer children to appropriate social services. (5,37)
Ministry of Interior	Enforces laws related to the worst forms of child labor through protection officers. (28) Coordinates operations of the Border Police and each of the Illicit Human Trafficking sections in the country's 12 Regional Police Directorates through the General Directorate of State Police. (3,4) Establishes the government's policy on addressing human trafficking through the State Committee Against Trafficking in Persons, chaired by the Interior Minister. (28,42)
Office of the Prosecutor General	Investigates and prosecutes child trafficking cases through the Special Anti-Corruption and Organized Crime Court. (8)

Labor Law Enforcement

In 2022, labor law enforcement agencies in Albania took actions to address child labor (Table 6). However, gaps exist within the authority of enforcement agencies that may hinder adequate labor law enforcement, including

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lack of authority to inspect informal work locations such as private farms and unregistered businesses.

Table 6. Labor Law Enforcement Efforts Related to Child Labor

Overview of Labor Law Enforcement	2021	2022
Labor Inspectorate Funding	\$1,700,000 (7)	\$1,550,000 (43)
Number of Labor Inspectors	131 (7)	124 (43)
Mechanism to Assess Civil Penalties	Yes (31)	Yes (38)
Training for Labor Inspectors Provided	Yes (7)	Yes (43)
Number of Labor Inspections Conducted at Worksite	4,973 (7)	9,273 (43)
Number of Child Labor Violations Found	4 (7)	10 (43)
Number of Child Labor Violations for Which Penalties Were Imposed	0 (7)	2 (43)
Number of Child Labor Penalties Imposed that Were Collected	0 (7)	2 (43)
Routine Inspections Conducted	Yes (7)	Yes (43)
Routine Inspections Targeted	Yes (7)	Yes (43)
Unannounced Inspections Permitted	Yes (29)	Yes (38)
Unannounced Inspections Conducted	Yes (7)	Yes (43)
Complaint Mechanism Exists	Yes (7)	Yes (43)
Reciprocal Referral Mechanism Exists Between Labor Authorities and Social Services	Yes (7)	Yes (43)

In 2022, inspectors received training on regulations related to the employment of minors. (8) Inspectors determined that the tourism sector continued to contribute to children working as street vendors, particularly in Durres and Vlore. (8,22) The State Inspectorate for Labor and Social Services (SILSS) also developed an online tool to improve transparency around penalties, particularly when a fine can be issued and the amount of the fine. Although SILSS can inspect registered private entities, it cannot inspect private homes, private farms, or unregistered businesses. (5)

Criminal Law Enforcement

In 2022, the government's criminal law enforcement agencies appeared to function adequately in addressing child labor (Table 7).

Table 7. Criminal Law Enforcement Efforts Related to Child Labor

Overview of Criminal Law Enforcement	2021	2022
Training for Criminal Investigators Provided	No (39)	Yes (44)
Number of Investigations	68 (7)	44‡ (8)
Number of Prosecutions Initiated	25 (5)	19‡ (8)
Number of Convictions	15 (5)	14‡ (8)
Imposed Penalties for Violations Related to the Worst Forms of Child Labor	15 (7)	14 (44)
Reciprocal Referral Mechanism Exists Between Criminal Authorities and Social Services	Yes (7)	Yes (44)

[‡] Includes data from January 2022 to September 2022.

If a child victim of labor exploitation is identified during the course of a labor inspection, then the agency conducting the inspection first refers the child to the police and state social services, then to an anti-trafficking shelter. (5,40) The case may also be referred to local Child Protection Units (CPUs), which can then connect the child to social services. (5,37,40,41) During the reporting period, the state police continued to investigate the trafficking of minors in collaboration with the 12 regional police directorates. Additionally, criminal law enforcement authorities received multiple trainings on anti-trafficking efforts and new criminal legislation regarding the treatment of minor victims of human trafficking. (8)

IV. COORDINATION OF GOVERNMENT EFFORTS ON CHILD LABOR

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

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However, gaps exist that hinder the effective coordination of efforts to address child labor, including coordination among agencies.

Table 8. Key Mechanism to Coordinate Government Efforts on Child Labor

Coordinating Body	Role & Activities
State Agency for the Rights and Protection of Children	Oversees implementation of the government's child rights protection policies, including monitoring the National Agenda for the Rights of the Child. (5,42) Manages cases of at-risk children and refers them to appropriate social services. Sanctions authorities who fail to protect children from violence and exploitation. (5,37) Coordinates local and central efforts on health, security, and the education of children. (5) During the reporting period, the State Agency for the Rights and Protection of Children met with local Child Protection Units and ad-hoc Cross-Sectoral Technical Groups to improve the local bodies' ability to properly identify children at risk of exploitation. Additionally, the State Agency continued to coordinate regular annual meetings with child protection workers in all 61 municipalities. (8)

Coordination between SILSS and the Albanian State Police has traditionally been sporadic. (11,44,49)

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 & Activities
National Action Plan for Combating Trafficking in Persons (2021–2023)	Calls for the identification and referral of child victims and those at risk of human trafficking to social protection services in accordance with standard operating procedures. (5) Increases the use of CPUs, police, and border control personnel to identify victims, including children involved in street work. Seeks to raise public awareness of all forms of human trafficking, including for forced labor. (5) Active during the reporting period. (8)
National Agenda for the Rights of the Child (2021–2026)	Aims to protect and promote children's rights by supporting physical and psychosocial development, and the social inclusion of children. (5,41) Other goals include eliminating all forms of violence against children and creating child-friendly systems and services in education, justice, health, and social protection. (5,41) Active during the reporting period. (8)
National Strategy on Education (2021–2026)	Aims to promote learning environments that are conducive to student well-being and preventing children from dropping out of school. (23) Active during the reporting period. (8)

[‡]The government had other policies that may have addressed child labor issues or had an impact on child labor. (4,45,46)

VI. SOCIAL PROGRAMS TO ADDRESS CHILD LABOR

In 2022, 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 problem in all sectors.

Table 10. Key Social Programs to Address Child Labor

Program	Description & Activities
Program of Cooperation for Sustainable Development (2022-2026) *	UN program that aims to increase access to education for vulnerable children and improve protections for child survivors of human trafficking. During the reporting period, the Government of Albania and the UN office in Albania signed a new commitment to continue working on economic and social reforms to improve the situation of vulnerable populations throughout the country. (8,47)
Cash Transfer Program (Ndihma Ekonomike) †	Government-funded cash transfer program that provides an allowance for families receiving economic aid through the Law on Social Assistance and Services. (4) During the reporting period, the government continued to provide regular cash payments to qualifying families. (48)
World Vision Albania Centers (Children's City Program) †	The municipalities of Durrës, Maliq, and Korçë collaborated with World Vision Albania to construct centers for children in high-risk situations, including violence, abuse, and various forms of exploitation. (48) During the reporting period, World Vision Albania continued to assist children who were previously in abusive situations. (8)

For information about USDOL's projects to address child labor around the world, visit https://www.dol.gov/agencies/ilab/ilab-project-page-search

 $[\]ensuremath{^{*}}$ Program was launched during the reporting period.

[†] Program is funded by the Government of Albania.

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

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Research indicates that there is a lack of shelters for street children who are not victims of human trafficking, although some state- and NGO-run services were available for children who were forced to beg. (5)

A lack of financial and human resources and issues related to the decentralization of social funds from the central government to municipalities were also cited as gaps in the efficient implementation of social programs. (4,45,50,51)

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 Albania (Table 11).

Table 11. Suggested Government Actions to Eliminate Child Labor

Area	Suggested Action	Year(s) Suggested
Legal Framework	Ensure that using, procuring, and offering children under age 18 for illicit activities, including in the production and trafficking of drugs, are criminally prohibited.	2015 – 2022
	Ensure that the use of children in prostitution is criminally prohibited.	2019 – 2022
Enforcement	Ensure that labor inspectors can inspect the informal sector in which child labor is known to occur, including private homes, private farms, or unregistered businesses.	2010 – 2022
Coordination	Ensure proper coordination between the State Inspectorate for Labor and Social Services and the Albanian State Police.	2019 – 2022
Social Programs	Collect and publish comprehensive data on the extent and nature of child labor in Albania. In particular, gather data on the prevalence and conditions of child labor in sectors of heightened concern, such as the agriculture and construction sectors.	2013 – 2022
	Provide adequate transportation resources for all children who face transportation-related barriers to school attendance, in particular Roma and Balkan Egyptian children and those who live in communities far from schools.	2011 – 2022
	Enhance efforts to eliminate barriers and make education accessible for all children, including children from Roma and Balkan Egyptian minority communities, children with disabilities, and children from Syria, Afghanistan, Bangladesh, and elsewhere living in Albania as refugees or displaced migrants, by removing all school-related fees and ensuring that children without documentation do not face obstacles to enrolling in school.	2013 – 2022
	Provide translation services for all children, especially those from migrant or refugee families, who are facing language-related barriers to education.	2018 – 2022
	Increase the number of shelters for victims of the worst forms of child labor, in particular for unhoused children living and working in forced begging rings on the streets.	2017 – 2022
	Institute programs to assist children who are victims of human trafficking and those who are used in scavenging chromium.	2014 – 2022
	Ensure that funding and human resources are increased for social programs for child labor and that decentralized social funds to municipalities are appropriately allocated to adequately carry out programs.	2018 – 2022

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