

In 2022, Algeria made minimal advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. The government drafted legislation to remove the requirement of proving force, fraud, or coercion in some circumstances for an act to be considered child trafficking; the law was approved by both chambers of parliament in April 2023 and will enter into force after its publication in the official gazette. The National Authority for the Protection and Promotion of Children also launched an online platform to increase coordination among civil society organizations working on child protection issues. 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 engage 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. The government also 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 some workplaces, such as houses or informal construction sites, without a complaint, resulting in instances of child labor going undetected.



I. PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Table 1 provides key indicators on children’s work and education in Algeria. Data on some of these indicators are not available from the sources used in this report.

Table 1. Statistics on Children’s Work and Education

| Children | Age | Percent |
|-------------------------------|---------|-------------------|
| Working (% and population) | 5 to 14 | 3.6 (Unavailable) |
| Attending School (%) | 5 to 14 | 94.8 |
| Combining Work and School (%) | 7 to 14 | 3.9 |
| Primary Completion Rate (%) | | 95.7 |

Source for primary completion rate: Data from 2022, published by UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2023. (1)

Source for all other data: International Labor Organization’s analysis of statistics from Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 6 (MICS 6), 2018–19. (2)

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 (3) |
| Industry | Construction, activities unknown (3,4) |
| Services | Street work, including vending and begging (3,4,8) |
| | Domestic work (5) |
| | Working in small businesses, including mechanics’ shops and restaurants (3,6) |
| Categorical Worst Forms of Child Labor‡ | Commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking (4) |
| | Forced begging (3,4) |

‡ 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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School-aged children in Algeria generally attend school regularly, so jobs for children are often part time and informal in nature, with some children working in small-scale family-run businesses such as restaurants or small stores. (3,5-7) Children also work in informal street markets in street vending and begging. (3,4) In addition, sub-Saharan migrant children, including unaccompanied children, are sometimes exploited through commercial sexual exploitation and forced begging. (3,4) In 2022, the government continued to conduct a survey on child economic exploitation in cooperation with UNICEF; the study is not yet complete. (8-10)

The Algerian public education system is free and open to all children ages 6 to 16, regardless of ethnicity and nationality. School enrollment increased in 2022 as the COVID-19 pandemic protocols ended. (11) Despite universal access to education, schools in the southern regions of Algeria face attendance problems, with children as young as age 13 or 14 dropping out of school. (7,12) Non-Algerian children face other barriers to education such as required documentation of grade level or testing to determine their level. (5,7,12,13) Unlike in 2021, there were no reported cases of migrant children without valid documentation being denied enrollment by school administrators and reported to authorities in 2022. (6,8,10) In addition, migrants who do not speak Arabic, the language of instruction, face challenges in the Algerian education system, and some migrant families may also not be familiar with Algerian law granting free education to all children. (8,12) These informal barriers to education, specifically for migrant children, result in absence from school and contribute to increased vulnerability to child labor. (6,14,15)

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 (16,17) |
| 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 (16,17) |
| Identification of Hazardous Occupations or Activities Prohibited for Children | No | | |
| Prohibition of Forced Labor | Yes | | Article 303 bis 4 of the Penal Code (18) |
| Prohibition of Child Trafficking | No | | Articles 303 bis 4 and 319 bis of the Penal Code (18) |

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

| Standard | Meets International Standards | Age | Legislation |
|---|-------------------------------|-----|---|
| Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children | Yes | | Articles 2, 319, 333 bis I, 343, and 344 of the Penal Code (18) |
| Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities | No | | Article 195 bis of the Penal Code (18) |
| Minimum Age for Voluntary State Military Recruitment | Yes | 17 | Article 14 of Presidential Decree No. 08-134 on the National People's Army (19) |
| Prohibition of Compulsory Recruitment of Children by (State) Military | Yes | | Article 3 of Law No. 14-06 on National Service (20) |
| 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 (21) |
| Free Public Education | Yes | | Article 13 of Law No. 08-04 on National Education (21) |

The prohibitions against child trafficking in Algerian law are insufficient because they require threats, the use of force, or coercion for the crime of child trafficking to be established. (18) In April 2023, Algeria passed a law that largely removes the requirement of proving force, fraud, or coercion for the prosecution of child trafficking crimes, which will enter into force after publication in the national gazette. The law was approved by both chambers of parliament in April 2023 and will enter into force after publication in the official gazette. (12,22) However, the draft law still requires proof of force, fraud, or coercion when the exploitative purpose has not been achieved. (22) This law is insufficient to meet international standards regarding prohibition of child trafficking, as child trafficking must be criminalized without a requirement to prove force, fraud, or coercion, without exceptions.

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. (16) 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 2022. (3) 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. (18)

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 Labor, Employment, and Social Security | Enforces labor laws, including laws related to child labor, through its labor inspectorate. Issues citations noting violations of labor laws and refers violations to the Ministry of Justice. (3) Supervises the application of laws and regulations related to labor relations, working conditions, and worker safety. (8) Refers children found in child labor to the Ministry of National Solidarity, Family, and the Condition of Women to ensure follow-up with social services. (3) Since 2003, chairs the Interministerial Committee against Child Labor involving 12 other government ministries. (10,23) In 2022, labor inspections were conducted in all 58 wilayas (states). (3) |
| 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. (7,8,24) During legal proceedings, appoints a special judge familiar with the needs of minors if a child does not have a parent. (8) Also directs the Ministry of National Solidarity, Family, and the Condition of Women to conduct investigations into issues related to children and families. (8,25) |

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

| Organization/Agency | Role & Activities |
|-------------------------------|--|
| Criminal Enforcement Agencies | As directed by the Ministry of Justice, both the Directorate General for National Security (DGSN), which is part of the Ministry of Interior and Internal Assemblies, and the National Gendarmerie, which is part of the Ministry of National Defense, conduct child labor investigations and enforce criminal laws. DGSN investigates child labor in urban areas while the National Gendarmerie investigates such cases along the country's border and in rural areas. (3,26) DGSN comprises brigades of specialized police officers focused on illegal immigration and human trafficking. There are 61 brigades for the protection of minors or other vulnerable populations. (3,8,15,25) Both DGSN and the National Gendarmerie administer hotlines for the reporting of child abuse. The National Gendarmerie also maintains a website through which individuals can file complaints. In 2022, 1,780 potential child endangerment cases came through the National Gendarmerie's hotline, but it is not certain how many of these calls were related to child labor. (3,12) |

Labor Law Enforcement

In 2022, 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 | 2021 | 2022 |
|--|-------------|-------------|
| Labor Inspectorate Funding | Unknown (8) | Unknown (3) |
| Number of Labor Inspectors | 709 (8) | 619 (3) |
| Mechanism to Assess Civil Penalties | Yes (8) | Yes (3) |
| Training for Labor Inspectors Provided | Yes (8) | Yes (3) |
| Number of Labor Inspections Conducted at Worksite | 153,537 (8) | 165,406 (3) |
| Number of Child Labor Violations Found | 0 (8) | 1 (3) |
| Number of Child Labor Violations for Which Penalties Were Imposed | N/A (8) | Unknown (3) |
| Number of Child Labor Penalties Imposed that Were Collected | N/A (8) | Unknown (3) |
| Routine Inspections Conducted | Yes (8) | Yes (3) |
| Routine Inspections Targeted | No (8) | No (3) |
| Unannounced Inspections Permitted | Yes (8) | Yes (3) |
| Unannounced Inspections Conducted | Yes (8) | Yes (3) |
| Complaint Mechanism Exists | Yes (8) | Yes (3) |
| Reciprocal Referral Mechanism Exists Between Labor Authorities and Social Services | Yes (8) | Yes (3) |

Although the labor inspectorate is authorized to conduct inspections in all workplaces, inspectors do not investigate informal 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, and to 619 in 2022. (3,8,24) Research indicates that Algeria does not have an adequate number of labor inspectors to carry out their mandated duties. (27,28)

Criminal Law Enforcement

In 2022, criminal law enforcement agencies in Algeria took actions to address child labor (Table 7). However, the lack of information provided by the government regarding its criminal law enforcement efforts makes the scope and effectiveness of these efforts difficult to determine.

Table 7. Criminal Law Enforcement Efforts Related to Child Labor

| Overview of Criminal Law Enforcement | 2021 | 2022 |
|---|-------------|-------------|
| Training for Criminal Investigators Provided | Yes (8) | Yes (3) |
| Number of Investigations | Unknown (8) | Unknown (3) |
| Number of Prosecutions Initiated | Unknown (8) | Unknown (3) |
| Number of Convictions | Unknown (8) | 67 (3) |
| Imposed Penalties for Violations Related to the Worst Forms of Child Labor | Unknown (8) | Yes (3) |
| Reciprocal Referral Mechanism Exists Between Criminal Authorities and Social Services | Yes (8) | Yes (3) |

Under Algerian law, penalties for crimes of the worst forms of child labor may include prison sentences, fines, or both. The government did not provide information on the number of investigations conducted, prosecutions initiated, or sentences imposed for those convicted of child labor crimes during the reporting period. (3) In 2022, the National Gendarmerie investigated 23 child labor violations involving 27 child victims. (10) Although the government did not provide the number of child labor prosecutions initiated in 2022, the Ministry of Justice reported prosecuting 75 child labor cases, some carrying over from previous years, and achieving 67 convictions. (3) Six child victims of human trafficking (five girls and one boy) were also identified during the reporting period. (26)

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).

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

| Coordinating Body | Role & Activities |
|---|---|
| National Commission for the Prevention of and Fight Against Child Labor | Under the direction of the National Authority for the Protection and Promotion of Children, 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. (3,8,29,30) Runs a national hotline and website to field questions and complaints about the mistreatment of children. (3) In 2022, launched an online platform for civil society organizations working on child protection issues so they can better coordinate their efforts. (3) |

Trafficking of children is addressed specifically by the National Committee for Preventing and Combating Human Trafficking, led by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The committee coordinates the activities of stakeholders involved in addressing human trafficking, develops the national anti-trafficking action plan, and provides training to relevant government authorities. (12)

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 addressing all of the worst forms of child labor that exist within the country.

Table 9. Key Policies Related to Child Labor

| Policy | Description & Activities |
|--|--|
| National Action Plan for the Prevention of and Fight Against Trafficking in Persons (2022–2024)† | Aims 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. This plan continues activities of the 2019–2021 plan that could not be completed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. (7,26,31) |

† Policy was approved during the reporting period.

The Government of Algeria does not currently have a national action plan that addresses all worst forms of child labor. In 2019, the government drafted but did not finalize a national action plan that intended to promote and protect children's rights, including reducing child labor; the plan was not enacted during the reporting period. (3,10) An event was held in 2022 so that agencies, such as the National Authority for the Protection and Promotion of Children and the National Economic, Social and Environmental Council, along with other stakeholders from government and civil society organizations, could collaborate and develop recommendations for this plan. (11)

VI. SOCIAL PROGRAMS TO ADDRESS CHILD LABOR

In 2022, the government funded and participated in programs that included the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor (Table 10). However, gaps exist in these social programs, including the adequacy of programs to address the full scope of the problem.

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Table 10. Key Social Programs to Address Child Labor

| Program | Description & Activities |
|---------------------------------|---|
| 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. (8) During the reporting period, 103 facilities operated across the country. (10) |

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

† 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. (5,15,29)

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 – 2022 |
| | Determine the types of hazardous work prohibited for children under age 18, in consultation with employers' and workers' organizations. | 2009 – 2022 |
| | Ensure that the law does not require threats, the use of force, or coercion to be established for the crime of child trafficking, without exceptions. | 2021 – 2022 |
| | Ensure that the law criminally prohibits the recruitment of children under age 18 by non-state armed groups. | 2016 – 2022 |
| Enforcement | Publish information on labor inspectorate funding. | 2009 – 2022 |
| | Increase the number of labor inspectors from 619 to 843 to ensure adequate coverage of the labor force of approximately 12.6 million people and allow for targeted inspections where child labor is likely occurring. | 2021 – 2022 |
| | Publish information on the criminal enforcement of child labor laws, including the number of investigations, prosecutions, penalties imposed, and penalties collected for crimes related to the worst forms of child labor. | 2020 – 2022 |
| | Ensure that inspections are conducted in all workplaces, including informal workplaces, such as houses or construction sites. | 2021 – 2022 |
| 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 – 2022 |
| 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 – 2022 |
| | 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 – 2022 |
| | 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 – 2022 |
| | 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 – 2022 |
| | Take measures to remove barriers to education for migrant children, including language barriers, lack of specialized training, and transportation. | 2015 – 2022 |
| | Expand social programs to address school dropout rates in the southern region of the country. | 2020 – 2022 |

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