

## MINIMAL ADVANCEMENT – EFFORTS MADE BUT REGRESSION IN PRACTICES THAT DELAYED ADVANCEMENT

In 2022, Bangladesh made minimal advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. The Department of Inspections for Factories and Establishments rescued 3,990 children from working in various hazardous sectors. Furthermore, the government added five additional sectors to the hazardous work list (dried fish production; informal steel-based work; brick and stone production, collection, and carrying; tailoring and informal production of garments; and waste management), officially prohibiting children from working in these jobs. The Bangladesh government also launched its first national study on human trafficking. The study will help provide a baseline understanding of the human trafficking situation in the country, including how human trafficking crimes are committed and how victims are targeted. The government supported UNICEF's rollout of the Myanmar Curriculum to over 250,000 Rohingya children in 2022, providing Rohingya students with a formal, standardized education based on Burma's national curriculum. However, despite these initiatives to address child labor,



Bangladesh is assessed as having made only minimal advancement because it continued to hinder educational opportunities for Rohingya children in 2022. Reports indicate that the Bangladesh government closed Rohingya-operated schools and threatened to confiscate UNHCR-issued identity cards from Rohingya teachers and move them to the flood-prone island of Bhasan Char, which hampered education access for Rohingya children. Furthermore, children in Bangladesh are still subjected to the worst forms of child labor, including commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking, and forced labor in the drying of fish and the production of bricks. Children also perform dangerous tasks in the production of garments and leather goods. The Bangladesh Labor Act does not apply to children working in all sectors in which child labor occurs. Though the government did not publicly release information on its criminal law enforcement efforts related to child labor in 2022, penalties for child labor violations can only be imposed after a lengthy legal process and, when courts do impose them, the fines are too low to deter child labor law violations.

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

Table I provides key indicators on children's work and education in Bangladesh. Data on some of these indicators are not available from the sources used in this report. The Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics, with support from the ILO, started collecting data for their national child labor survey in 2022. The survey results have not yet been published. (1-3)

**Table I. Statistics on Children's Work and Education**

Children	Age	Percent
Working (% and population)	5 to 14	9.2 (Unavailable)
Attending School (%)	5 to 14	88.4
Combining Work and School (%)	7 to 14	8.2
Primary Completion Rate (%)		Unavailable

Source for primary completion rate: Data from 2021, published by UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2023. (4)

Source for all other data: International Labor Organization's analysis of statistics from Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 6 (MICS 6), 2019. (5)

# Bangladesh

## MINIMAL ADVANCEMENT – EFFORTS MADE BUT REGRESSION IN PRACTICES THAT DELAYED ADVANCEMENT

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	Harvesting and processing crops, including tobacco† and salt;† raising poultry; grazing cattle; and harvesting tea leaves (6,7)
	Fishing, including drying and processing fish,† including shrimp† (3-8)
Industry	Producing garments, including tailoring and in the informal garment sector,† and textiles, including jute (3,10,11)
	Producing leather† and leather goods,† including footwear (3,12,13)
	Manufacturing bricks,† glass,† hand-rolled cigarettes ( <i>bidis</i> ),† matches,† soap,† furniture (steel),† furniture (wood),† aluminum products,† and metal products† (3,8,14-16)
	Shipbreaking† (3,17,18)
	Battery recycling† (3,19)
	Construction† and breaking bricks† and stones† (3,8,17)
Services	Domestic work (3,20)
	Garbage collecting, sorting, and recycling† (3,11,21)
	Working in transportation, including ticket taking,† welding,† pulling rickshaws, driving, working as crew members on fishing boats, and repairing automobiles† (6,8,20,21)
	Working in retail shops (3,8,22,23)
Categorical Worst Forms of Child Labor‡	Use in illicit activities, including smuggling and selling drugs (3)
	Forced begging (3)
	Forced labor in the drying of fish and the production of bricks (1,3,24)
	Commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking (3,25,26)
	Forced domestic work (3)

† 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.

Approximately 1.7 million children in Bangladesh, many under the age of 11, are engaged in child labor. Approximately 3.45 million children between the ages of 5 and 17 are working in Bangladesh, of which 1.28 million are engaged in hazardous work. (3,27) Hazardous sectors include tanneries, shipbreaking, the dried fish industry, and rolling cigarettes. (1,3,12) In addition, 93 percent of child labor in Bangladesh occurs in the informal sector, including domestic work, street work, and work on small agricultural farms. (6,9,28) There are more than 400,000 children engaged in domestic work in Bangladesh. Some girls are forced into domestic work and are abused by their employers. (3,4,29) Further, children throughout Bangladesh are sexually exploited, including with the hazardous use of steroids for girls to appear older, in the country's legal and illegal brothels, and child commercial sexual exploitation remained widespread during the reporting period. (3,9,30) Reports indicate that some police officers accept bribes to verify that workers in registered brothels are older than age 18 and to procure falsified documents for younger workers. (9,26) Some reports suggest that children are being hired at the local district level for jobs funded by the government's job creation projects. (3)

A The government supported UNICEF's rollout of the Myanmar Curriculum to over 250,000 Rohingya children in 2022, providing Rohingya students with a formal, standardized education based on Burma's national curriculum. (86) However, during the reporting period, the Government of Bangladesh closed most Rohingya-operated schools and continued to ban Rohingya children from attending schools outside of refugee camps. (31-35) It also prohibits teaching Rohingya children the Bangla language or the national curriculum as part of the government's policy to prevent Rohingya refugees from integrating and permanently residing in the country. (32,33,36-39) Furthermore, during the reporting period, the government threatened to confiscate UNHCR-issued identity cards from Rohingya teachers and students and to move them to the flood-prone island of Bhasan Char. (32-40) Finally, there are reports of Bangladeshi officials taking bribes to provide human traffickers access to refugee camps and facilitate the trafficking of Rohingya children. (3) NGOs allege that some officials allow traffickers to operate at the India-Bangladesh border and check-points. (3,9)

More than 40 percent of schools lack basic sanitation facilities and basic hygiene services, and one in five schools lack safe drinking water. (41) Many schools in Bangladesh are overcrowded and over 80 percent run double




## MINIMAL ADVANCEMENT – EFFORTS MADE BUT REGRESSION IN PRACTICES THAT DELAYED ADVANCEMENT

shifts. (3) The country does not have an adequate number of teachers for an education system of its size. (3) The Primary Teacher Training Institutes cannot keep up with the demand for teachers, particularly in rural areas. (3) Other barriers to education include the high costs for transportation, uniforms, and school supplies. (3,6,42) In 2022, almost 20 million children were vulnerable to extreme weather, floods, river erosion, and sea-level rise. (43,44) Increases in such climate-related natural disasters that result in damage to property and crops push large sections of the population into poverty, making children more vulnerable to exploitative child labor and human trafficking. (3,43,44)

## II. LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR CHILD LABOR

Bangladesh 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 Bangladesh's legal framework to adequately protect children from the worst forms of child labor, including a lack of protections against the commercial sexual exploitation of children.

**Table 4. Laws and Regulations on Child Labor**

Standard	Meets International Standards	Age	Legislation
Minimum Age for Work	No	19	Sections 1–2, 34 and 284 of the Bangladesh Labor Act; Sections 159, 161, and 175 of the Bangladesh EPZ Labor Act, 2019. (28,45)
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work	Yes	18	Sections 39–42 of the Bangladesh Labor Act (28)
Identification of Hazardous Occupations or Activities Prohibited for Children	Yes		Sections 39–42 of the Bangladesh Labor Act; Statutory Regulatory Order Number 65, List of Worst Form of Work for Children (28,46,47)
Prohibition of Forced Labor	Yes		Sections 370, 371, and 374 of the Penal Code; Sections 2, 3, 6, and 9 of the Prevention and Suppression of Human Trafficking Act (48,49)
Prohibition of Child Trafficking	Yes		Sections 2,3, and 6 of the Prevention and Suppression of Human Trafficking Act; Sections 2 and 6 of the Suppression of Violence Against Women and Children Act (49,50)
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children	No		Sections 372 and 373 of the Penal Code; Sections 78 and 80 of the Children's Act; Sections 2,3, 6 and 11 of the Prevention and Suppression of Human Trafficking Act; Sections 2 and 8 of the Pornography Control Act (48,49,51,52)
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities	No		Section 79 of the Children's Act (51)
Minimum Age for Voluntary State Military Recruitment	Yes	16+	Army, Air Force, and Navy Regulations titles unknown (53-56)
Prohibition of Compulsory Recruitment of Children by (State) Military	N/A*		

# Bangladesh

## MINIMAL ADVANCEMENT – EFFORTS MADE BUT REGRESSION IN PRACTICES THAT DELAYED ADVANCEMENT

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

Standard	Meets International Standards	Age	Legislation
Prohibition of Military Recruitment by Non-state Armed Groups	No		Anti-Terrorism Act of 2009. (57)
Compulsory Education Age	No		Sections 2 and 3 of the Primary Education (Compulsory) Act (58)
Free Public Education	Yes		Article 17 of the Constitution (59)

\* Country has no conscription (60)

During the reporting period, the Bangladesh government revised the list of hazardous work to include five additional sectors: dried fish manufacturing; street-based child labor such as hawking and trash collection; production, collection, and transportation of bricks and collection and transportation of stones; local tailoring and informal garment sectors; and garbage and waste management. (3,47) However, even with the hazardous work list amendment, the list does not cover domestic work, in which children are known to work long hours and are exposed to violence and sexual assault. (3,15,46,61-63)

The Bangladesh Labor Act does not meet international standards because a number of sectors are excluded from its application, including seamen, ocean-going vessels, agriculture farms with fewer than 10 workers, and domestic work. (28) Bangladesh does not criminalize the use, procurement, or offering of children in pornographic performances. Bangladesh does not criminalize the use of children who are not under guardianship in prostitution. (48,52) Bangladesh criminalizes the use of children in the transport of drugs, but does not criminalize the use of children in the production of drugs. (51) The Bangladesh Constitution also does not criminally prohibit the recruitment of children by non-state armed groups. (59) No compulsory education age is in effect because the compulsory education age of 10 in the Primary Education (Compulsory) Act does not go into effect until it is published in the Gazette. In addition, as the Primary Education (Compulsory) Act only provides compulsory education for children up to age 10, even if it is put into effect, children between the ages of 10 to 18 would remain particularly vulnerable to child labor as they do not have to be in school and they are not able to legally work without restriction. (16,64)

### 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).

**Table 5. Agencies Responsible for Child Labor Law Enforcement**

Organization/Agency	Role & Activities
Department of Inspection for Factories and Establishments (DIFE)	Located within the Ministry of Labor and Employment (MOLE). (64) Enforces labor laws, including those related to child labor and hazardous work. (65) During the reporting period, carried out monthly awareness programs in factories and at district offices on the elimination of child labor among enterprises, employers, and the public. (3) Also removed 3,990 children from automobile, brick, and stone crushing; engineering workshops; bakeries, hotels and restaurants; and the plastics sector. (3)
Bangladesh Police	Enforce Penal Code provisions protecting children from forced labor and commercial sexual exploitation. (66) Through its Trafficking in Persons Monitoring Cell, investigate cases of human trafficking and enforce the Prevention and Suppression of Human Trafficking Act's anti-human trafficking provisions. (67) Operate victim support centers for trafficked women and children through partnership with 11 NGOs. (68)
Bangladesh Labor Court	Prosecutes labor law violations, including those related to child labor, and imposes fines or sanctions against employers. (28)

### **Labor Law Enforcement**

In 2022, labor law enforcement agencies in Bangladesh took actions to address child labor (Table 6). However, gaps exist within the Department of Inspection for Factories and Establishments (DIFE) that may hinder adequate labor law enforcement, including a lack of unannounced inspections in the export processing zones.

## MINIMAL ADVANCEMENT – EFFORTS MADE BUT REGRESSION IN PRACTICES THAT DELAYED ADVANCEMENT

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

Overview of Labor Law Enforcement	2021	2022
Labor Inspectorate Funding	\$4,233,631† (69)	\$4,937,352‡ (69)
Number of Labor Inspectors	305† (70)	400‡ (70)
Mechanism to Assess Civil Penalties	Yes (28)	Yes (28)
Training for Labor Inspectors Provided	Yes (68)	Yes (3)
Number of Labor Inspections Conducted at Worksite	45,832† (70)	43,042‡ (69)
Number of Child Labor Violations Found	7,025† (70)	5,193 (3,69)
Number of Child Labor Violations for Which Penalties Were Imposed	135 (70)	26 (66)
Number of Child Labor Penalties Imposed that Were Collected	6 (70)	11 (69)
Routine Inspections Conducted	Yes (68)	Yes (71)
Routine Inspections Targeted	Yes (68)	Yes (71)
Unannounced Inspections Permitted	Yes (28)	Yes (28)
Unannounced Inspections Conducted	Yes (72)	Yes (66,72)
Complaint Mechanism Exists	Yes (68)	Yes (71)
Reciprocal Referral Mechanism Exists Between Labor Authorities and Social Services	No (6)	No (3)

†Data from July 1, 2021, to June 30, 2022.

‡Data are from July 1, 2022, to June 30, 2023.

Bangladesh employs 400 labor inspectors for a workforce of over 74 million workers. (66,73) The ILO and NGOs report that the number of labor inspectors in Bangladesh is inadequate and that the number of inspections carried out is insufficient given the size and population of the country. (73,74) The shortage in human resources and high turnover rates at DIFE led the agency to omit around 95 percent of industrial and commercial establishments from its inspection list. (3) Sources also indicate that DIFE is insufficiently funded and that inspectors are reluctant to enforce labor laws for fear of pushing people out of work and into poverty. (3)

Under the Export Processing Zone (EPZ) Labor Rules, published in October 2022, DIFE is required to provide notice to the Bangladesh EPZ Authority (BEPZA) by “intimation” prior to conducting inspections. (75) Following the inspection, DIFE must submit its report to the BEPZA Inspector General to implement recommendations the BEPZA Inspector General deems feasible. DIFE cannot file cases in the labor courts for violations in the EPZ. (75) Rather, the BEPZA Inspector General must file all cases in the EPZ Labor Court. During the reporting period, DIFE and BEPZA jointly developed standard operating procedures for inspecting EPZ factories. (3,75) For factories outside of the EPZs, DIFE must notify the establishment three times regarding a labor law violation before it can lodge a complaint in the labor courts. (3,75) Penalties for a child labor law violation carry a maximum fine of approximately \$47 (5,000 taka), which is insufficient to act as a deterrent. (3,18,28,45) In addition, while a previous reciprocal referral mechanism existed between labor authorities and social services, DIFE lacks an active referral and rehabilitation system for children. (3,6)

### Criminal Law Enforcement

In 2022, criminal law enforcement agencies in Bangladesh took actions to address child labor (Table 7). However, gaps exist within the operations of enforcement agencies that may hinder adequate criminal law enforcement, including the lack of publicly released criminal law enforcement information.

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

Overview of Criminal Law Enforcement	2021	2022
Training for Criminal Investigators Provided	Unknown (6)	Yes (66)
Number of Investigations	Unknown (6)	Unknown (3)
Number of Prosecutions Initiated	Unknown (6)	Unknown (3)
Number of Convictions	Unknown (6)	Unknown (3)
Imposed Penalties for Violations Related to the Worst Forms of Child Labor	Unknown (6)	Unknown (3)
Reciprocal Referral Mechanism Exists Between Criminal Authorities and Social Services	Yes (6)	Yes (66)

# Bangladesh

## MINIMAL ADVANCEMENT – EFFORTS MADE BUT REGRESSION IN PRACTICES THAT DELAYED ADVANCEMENT

According to independent reports, during the reporting period, the Government of Bangladesh repatriated 21 survivors of human trafficking, including children. (9) But the Government of Bangladesh did not provide specific information on criminal law enforcement efforts against child labor crimes. Some reports have suggested that investigation coordination between agencies and authorities is lacking. (3) Many cases are resolved through mediation and settlement rather than prosecution. (3,6) According to reports, criminal investigators do not receive sufficient training on forced labor and child labor. (6) Despite the high number of children engaged in commercial sexual exploitation, the Government of Bangladesh largely ignores the issue due to the prevailing belief that commercial sexual exploitation is not a major issue in the country. (3) DIFE has the authority to refer cases only to the labor courts and not the criminal courts, even in cases requiring criminal court intervention. The labor courts have never referred a case to the criminal courts. (3) Corruption and the lack of enforcement of Occupational Health and Safety Codes contribute to industrial fires and fire-related worker deaths, including child laborers. (10,70,76)

### 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). However, gaps exist that hinder the effective coordination of efforts to address child labor, including coordination efforts that encompasses all child labor issues.

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

Coordinating Body	Role & Activities
National Child Labor Welfare Council	Coordinates government efforts to guide and monitor the implementation of the National Plan of Action on the Elimination of Child Labor. (77) Chaired by MOLE and comprising of officials representing relevant government ministries, international organizations, child advocacy groups, and employer and worker organizations. (77) In 2022, the Council held Child Labor Monitoring Committee meetings at the district level and organized discussions with various stakeholders on the elimination of child labor. (78) MOLE integrated the workflow of different divisional councils with that of different NGOs, district, and sub-district level committees to better coordinate efforts to address child labor. While the councils held regular meetings in 2022, reports suggest that coordination efforts at the district level are limited to child marriage, and do not encompass all child labor issues in Bangladesh. (3)

The Counter-Trafficking National Coordination Committee under the Ministry of Home Affairs (MOHA) formed counter-trafficking committees at the central government and grassroots levels to improve coordination. (78)

### 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 not covering all aspects of child labor in the country.

**Table 9. Key Policies Related to Child Labor**

Policy	Description & Activities
National Plan of Action on the Elimination of Child Labor (2021–2025)	Identifies strategies for developing institutional capacity, increasing access to education and health services, raising social awareness, strengthening law enforcement, and creating prevention and reintegration programs. (79) Although there has been some improvement, the National Plan of Action on the Elimination of Child Labor faces coordination and implementation challenges among ministries. (3,6,80) During the reporting period, MOLE activated the National Monitoring Core Committee prescribed under the National Plan of Action. The committee formulates national-level policies to eliminate child labor with assistance from NGOs. (3)
National Plan of Action for Prevention and Suppression of Human Trafficking (2018–2025)	Establishes a plan to build government capacity to address trafficking in persons and provide economic and social safety nets for victims and vulnerable populations, particularly children. (81,82) Led by the Ministry of Home Affairs (MOHA). The national plan has been extended to 2025 due to the slow progress made during 2020 and 2021 pandemic lockdowns. (11) In 2022, MOHA routinely monitored and implemented the action plan through a government organized NGO coordination committee. (83) MOHA also conducted consultative meetings with domestic and international organizations to collect feedback on the ongoing implementation process. (2) During the reporting period, the government established special tribunals, created an anti-trafficking task force to curb human trafficking, and took initiatives to prevent child trafficking, mostly for child labor in the informal sector. (78)

‡ The government had other policies that may have addressed child labor issues or had an impact on child labor. (84)



## MINIMAL ADVANCEMENT – EFFORTS MADE BUT REGRESSION IN PRACTICES THAT DELAYED ADVANCEMENT

### 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 discontinuation of a social program that could cause an increase in child labor.

**Table 10. Key Social Programs to Address Child Labor**

Program	Description & Activities
Elimination of Hazardous Child Labor, Phase IV (2021–2023)†	Government of Bangladesh-funded, \$33 million, 3-year project implemented by MOLE. (70) Removed 90,000 children from hazardous labor in Phases I through III by providing informal and technical education, stipends, and awareness raising for employers and families. (21) Phase IV of the Elimination of Hazardous Child Labor program was approved in October 2021. (6,16) MOLE has signed agreements with 112 selected NGOs to remove 100,000 children from hazardous work. (70) Under the program, NGOs will provide education and vocational training to affected child laborers. During the education period, each child's family will receive a monthly stipend of \$9 (1,000 taka). After completing the training, each child will receive \$93 (10,000 taka) as financial compensation. (3) During the reporting period, NGOs completed a nationwide child labor survey to identify the child labor situation in 43 hazardous sectors. (3) However, the government did not make the survey public. (70)
School Programs‡	Second Chance Education is funded by the Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee and provides informal schooling for children ages 8 to 14 who have dropped out of formal schools. (2) Along with the Educating a Child Initiative, the program supported 170,000 students from 2018 to 2022. (78) The School Feeding Program, which ended in July 2022, helped implement school meal programs in poverty-stricken areas for 12 years. Reports have noted that the decision to end the program could fuel school dropouts and increase child labor since many families keep their children in school due to feeding programs. (3)
Child Protection Programs†	Child protection programs in Bangladesh include Child Sensitive Social Protection in Bangladesh (CSPB) II which will end in 2024. (66,70) The CSPB Project is implemented by the Ministry of Social Welfare's Department of Social Services, with support from UNICEF, to implement the Children Act (2013). This program will help to reduce violence, abuse and neglect against children. (16,66) The project offers case management services to identify vulnerable children and provide intervention plans, psychological counseling through the Child Friendly Services hub, and conditional cash support to reduce child labor. (70) During the reporting period, CSPB supported underprivileged families to reduce child labor, prevent early marriages, and reduce school dropouts. (70) The project offers a 24-hour emergency hotline service through Child Helpline 1098. (2) Between July 2017 and June 2022, the helpline received more than 1.4 million complaints, stopped 2,754 child marriages, and served 31,980 callers with psychosocial counseling, 18,753 callers with legal assistance, and 8,572 callers with protection from violence and abuse. (66)

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 Bangladesh.

‡ The government had other social programs that may have included the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor. (80)

Research has found that the government's social programs often align 16357 with the priorities of various domestic and foreign funders and lack coordination among relevant ministries to address the cross-cutting nature of child labor issues, such as its intersections with economic insecurity and education. (22) In addition, DIFE maintains the 16357 Hotline to receive complaints involving labor law violations. During the reporting period, the 16357 Hotline received 612 complaints; however, the complaints were not related to child labor. (3) The Department of Social Services manages the child protection 1098 Helpline. During the reporting period, the Ministry of Women and Children Affairs maintained a mobile app called "Joy," which records dialogue and images of child labor victims and perpetrators and sends relevant information to the National Helpline Center 109 and nearby police stations. (2) During the reporting period, around 300 people received emergency support through the "Joy" app. (66)

In 2022, Bangladesh launched its first national study on human trafficking. The study will help provide a baseline for the trafficking situation and examine how human trafficking crimes are committed and victims targeted in Bangladesh. (85)

### 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 Bangladesh (Table 11).

# Bangladesh

## MINIMAL ADVANCEMENT – EFFORTS MADE BUT REGRESSION IN PRACTICES THAT DELAYED ADVANCEMENT

**Table 11. Suggested Government Actions to Eliminate Child Labor**

Area	Suggested Action	Year(s) Suggested
Legal Framework	Ensure the minimum age for work applies to all children, including those engaged in domestic work, and working on vessels and small farms.	2009 – 2022
	Ensure that the types of hazardous work prohibited for children are comprehensive, including domestic service.	2016 – 2022
	Ensure that the law criminally prohibits the use of a child for pornographic performances and prostitution.	2015 – 2022
	Ensure that the law criminally prohibits the use, procuring, and offering of children for both the production and trafficking of drugs.	2015 – 2022
	Ensure that the compulsory education age meets minimum age for work.	2022
	Ensure that the law criminally prohibits the recruitment of children under age 18 by non-state armed groups.	2016 – 2022
Enforcement	Ensure that labor inspectors reduce the number of times an inspector has to notify the employer of violations before assessing penalties for labor violations.	2014 – 2022
	Increase the number of labor inspectors from 380 to 1861 to ensure adequate coverage of the labor force of approximately 74.5 million people.	2009 – 2022
	Ensure that inspections for child labor are conducted in export processing zones.	2013 – 2022
	Increase the penalties for child labor violations, ensuring they are sufficiently stringent to deter future violations.	2022
	Ensure that criminal child labor violations are prosecuted.	2022
	Ensure that investigation and prosecution of child sexual exploitation is carried out and inspectors and investigators receive proper training to address child labor crimes, including commercial sexual exploitation.	2022
	Ensure that the referral mechanism between law authorities and service providers is adequate, including implementing a functional coordinating mechanism between the two.	2013 – 2022
	Ensure that public officials who facilitate or participate in the worst forms of child labor are held accountable, including officials who facilitate the trafficking of Rohingya children.	2019 – 2022
	Collect and publish national-level data on the enforcement of criminal laws relevant to child labor, including information on the training for investigators, and the number of prosecutions initiated, convictions attained, and penalties imposed.	2012 – 2022
	Provide law enforcement with trainings and sufficient financial resources to conduct investigations, including those related to the worst forms of child labor, and address the high turnover of labor inspectors.	2014 – 2022
Coordination	Ensure that the relevant ministries mandated to address child labor issues in the country implement a coordinating mechanism that is effective and takes into account the cross-cutting nature of child labor issues, such as economic insecurities and education.	2020 – 2022
	Ensure that the district-level coordination efforts under the National Plan of Action on the Elimination of Child Labor encompass all child labor issues in Bangladesh, rather than being limited to child marriage.	2020 – 2022
Government Policies	Ensure that the committee implementing national level policy to eliminate child labor effectively coordinates work across different ministries.	2022
Social Programs	Enhance efforts to make education accessible for all children by removing barriers to school attendance, including increasing capacity of the Teacher Training Institute, improving bathroom sanitation and resources, ensuring a well-developed distance learning mechanism, increasing the number of schools to minimize overcrowding and double shifts, and eliminating high costs for transportation and school materials.	2021 – 2022
	Ensure that the local district authorities, responsible for implementing the central government's job creation project, enforce strict anti- child labor policies and penalize those who hire children for government-funded job programs.	2022
	Expand education services for Rohingya refugee children by removing barriers to attending school, allowing instruction in Bangla, expanding the small pilot program to include children of all ages, ceasing the seizure of identification documents, and implementing programs to decrease children's engagement in child labor activities	2017 – 2022
	Expand programs to address the scope of the child labor problem, including developing and implementing programs to address child labor in the informal garment, leather, and fish drying industries.	2016 – 2022
	Ensure continuation of school feeding programs and other social safety net programs to provide children with school meals.	2022



## MINIMAL ADVANCEMENT – EFFORTS MADE BUT REGRESSION IN PRACTICES THAT DELAYED ADVANCEMENT

### REFERENCES

- 1 U.S. Embassy- Dhaka. Reporting. January 16, 2020.
- 2 U.S. Embassy- Dhaka official. E-mail communication with USDOL official. June 21, 2022.
- 3 U.S. Embassy- Dhaka. Reporting. January 17, 2023.
- 4 UNESCO Institute for Statistics. Gross intake ratio to the last grade of primary education, both sexes (%). Accessed March 15, 2023. For more information, please see "Children's Work and Education Statistics: Sources and Definitions" in the Reference Materials section of this report. <http://data.uis.unesco.org/>
- 5 ILO. Analysis of Child Economic Activity and School Attendance Statistics from National Household or Child Labor Surveys. Original data from Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 6 (MICS 6), 2019. Analysis received March 2023. Please see "Children's Work and Education Statistics: Sources and Definitions" in the Reference Materials section of this report.
- 6 U.S. Embassy- Dhaka. Reporting. January 14, 2022.
- 7 Deshwar, Mintu. May Day: Large number of children work in tea estates. Inter Press Service News Agency, May 4, 2020. <http://www.ipsnews.net/2020/05/may-day-large-number-children-work-tea-estates/>
- 8 Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics. Child Labor Survey Bangladesh 2013. October 2015. [https://www.ilo.org/ipecc/informationresources/WCMS\\_IPEC\\_PUB\\_28175/lang--en/index.htm](https://www.ilo.org/ipecc/informationresources/WCMS_IPEC_PUB_28175/lang--en/index.htm)
- 9 U.S. Department of State. Trafficking in Persons Report- 2022: Bangladesh. Washington, D.C., June 2022. <https://www.state.gov/reports/2022-trafficking-in-persons-report/bangladesh/>
- 10 Anjum, Samaya. Factory Fire Reveals Bangladesh's Child Labor Problem. The Diplomat, July 21, 2021. <https://thediplomat.com/2021/07/factory-fire-reveals-bangladeshs-child-labor-problem>
- 11 U.S. Embassy- Dhaka. Reporting. February 8, 2022.
- 12 Bhandari, Neena. Child labour rampant in Bangladesh's leather industry Eco- Business. July 27, 2021. <https://www.eco-business.com/news/child-labour-rampant-in-bangladeshs-leather-industry/>
- 13 Afroze, Jiniya. Protecting Child Workers During the Pandemic. Project Syndicate: Dhaka. November 20, 2020. <https://www.project-syndicate.org/commentary/covid19-bangladesh-child-workers-leather-garment-industry-by-jiniya-afroze-2020-11>
- 14 Kim, Jiyun, et al. How the Bidi Tobacco Industry Harms Childworkers—Results from a Walk-through and Quantitative Survey. Elsevier Korea, February 25, 2020. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7303532/>
- 15 Dhaka Tribune. Comilla brickfield owners continue to employ child labour. Dhaka Tribune, February 5, 2019. <https://www.dhakatribune.com/bangladesh/nation/2019/02/05/comilla-brickfield-owners-continue-to-employ-child-labour#:~:text=Fear has spread among Comilla>
- 16 U.S. Embassy- Dhaka official. E-mail communication to USDOL official. July 1, 2021.
- 17 U.S. Department of State. Trafficking in Persons Report- 2021: Bangladesh. Washington, D.C., July 2021. <https://www.state.gov/reports/2021-trafficking-in-persons-report/>
- 18 Chowdhury, Muhamud Shaheen. Study Report on Child Labour in the Shipbreaking Sector in Bangladesh. June 19, 2019. [https://shipbreakingplatform.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/Child20Labor20Final\\_compressed.pdf](https://shipbreakingplatform.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/Child20Labor20Final_compressed.pdf)
- 19 Afrin, Saudia. Lead Poisoning and Child Labour: Bangladesh has a Long Way To Go. Dhaka Tribune, October 27, 2021. Source on file.
- 20 Dhaka Tribune. Majority use children for hazardous work despite knowing about its consequences, study finds. Dhaka Tribune, November 1, 2019. <https://www.dhakatribune.com/feature/2019/11/01/majority-use-children-for-hazardous-work-despite-knowing-about-its-consequences-study-finds>
- 21 U.S. Embassy- Dhaka official. E-mail communication to USDOL official. July 9, 2020.
- 22 U.S. Embassy- Dhaka. Reporting. January 14, 2021.
- 23 U.S. Department of State. Trafficking in Persons Report- 2020: Bangladesh. Washington, D.C., June 2020. <https://www.state.gov/reports/2020-trafficking-in-persons-report/bangladesh/>
- 24 Illius, Shamsuddin. Bonded Labour at Dry Fish Units Robbing Children of Their Youth. The Business Standard. January 23, 2020. <https://www.tbsnews.net/bangladesh/bonded-labour-dry-fish-units-robbing-children-their-youth-38755>
- 25 The Daily Star. Cop arrested over child prostitution. The Daily Star, January 28, 2019. <https://www.thedailystar.net/backpage/news/cop-arrested-over-child-prostitution-1693840>
- 26 Redfern, Corinne. The Living Hell of Young Girls Enslaved in Bangladesh's Brothels. The Guardian, July 6, 2019. <https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2019/jul/06/living-hell-of-bangladesh-brothels-sex-trafficking>
- 27 UNICEF. Children in Bangladesh. Dhaka. Accessed: January 25, 2023. <https://www.unicef.org/bangladesh/en/children-bangladesh>
- 28 Government of Bangladesh. Labour Act. Enacted: June 2, 2006. Source on file.
- 29 Mahboob, Dibakar. Where is the law and humanity for children working in domestic settings? The Daily Star. May 1, 2019.
- 30 Panos, Akash. Bangladesh: The oldest profession in the world destroys the lives of young girls UNICEF. May 20, 2022. <https://www.unicef.de/informieren/aktuelles/photo-of-the-year/contest-2010/-/gmb-akash/101916>
- 31 Human Rights Watch. Bangladesh: Rohingya Refugee Students Expelled April 1, 2019. <https://www.hrw.org/news/2019/04/01/bangladesh-rohingya-refugee-students-expelled>
- 32 Human Rights Watch. Bangladesh: Rohingya Refugee Schools Face Closure. December 18, 2021. <https://www.hrw.org/news/2021/12/18/bangladesh-rohingya-refugee-schools-face-closure#>
- 33 UNICEF. UNICEF: Education milestone for Rohingya refugee children as Myanmar curriculum pilot reaches first 10,000 children. May 1, 2022. <https://www.unicef.org/press-releases/unicef-education-milestone-rohingya-refugee-children-myanmar-curriculum-pilot>
- 34 VOA Bangladesh Closes Rohingya Camp Private Schools April 19, 2022. <https://learningenglish.voanews.com/a/bangladesh-closes-rohingya-camp-private-schools/6529953.html>
- 35 Human Rights Watch. Bangladesh: Officials Threaten Rohingya for Setting Up Schools March 21, 2022. <https://www.hrw.org/news/2022/03/21/bangladesh-officials-threaten-rohingya-setting-schools>
- 36 Amnesty International. Bangladesh: Restore and strengthen capacity of community-led schools in Rohingya camps April 28, 2022. <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2022/04/bangladesh-restore-and-strengthen-capacity-of-community-led-schools-in-rohingya-camps/>
- 37 Al Jazeera Bangladesh shuts school in Rohingya camp set up by slain leader March 29, 2022. <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/3/29/bangladesh-shuts-school-in-rohingya-camp-set-up-by-slain-leader>
- 38 Shin, San Thai. Why we Rohingya want to save our refugee-run schools. The New Humanitarian, January 17, 2022. <https://www.thenewhumanitarian.org/opinion/first-person/2022/1/17/Rohingya-education-teacher-refugee-run-schools-Bangladesh-camps>
- 39 Hasnat, Saif and Yasir, Sameer. Bangladesh Shuttters Dozens of Schools Set Up by Rohingya in Camps. New York Times. May 2, 2022. <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/05/02/world/asia/rohingya-bangladesh-school-closings.html#:~:text=the main story-,Bangladesh Shuttters Dozens of Schools Set Up by Rohingya in, the refugees to stay permanently.>
- 40 Hasnat, Said and Yasir Sameer. Bangladesh Shuttters Dozens of Schools Set Up by Rohingya in Camps. May 2, 2022. <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/05/02/world/asia/rohingya-bangladesh-school-closings.html>
- 41 Selim, Faria. Press release Schools ill-equipped to provide healthy and inclusive learning environments for all children. UNICEF. June 23, 2022. <https://www.unicef.org/bangladesh/en/press-releases/schools-ill-equipped-provide-healthy-and-inclusive-learning-environments-all>

- 42 UNICEF. The Future of 37 million children in Bangladesh is at risk with their education severely affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. Dhaka, Bangladesh: October 19th, 2021. <https://www.unicef.org/bangladesh/en/press-releases/future-37-million-children-bangladesh-risk-their-education-severely-affected-covid>
- 43 UNICEF. Climate change, children and violence top the agenda at innovative Visionaries speakers event. Dhaka. April 6, 2022. <https://www.unicef.org/bangladesh/en/press-releases/climate-change-children-and-violence-top-agenda-innovative-visionaries-speakers>
- 44 UNODC. Global Report on Trafficking in Persons- 2022. January 2023. [https://www.unodc.org/documents/data-and-analysis/glotip/2022/GLOTIP\\_2022\\_web.pdf](https://www.unodc.org/documents/data-and-analysis/glotip/2022/GLOTIP_2022_web.pdf)
- 45 Government of Bangladesh. Bangladesh EPZ Labour Act 2019. 2019.
- 46 Ministry of Labor and Employment-Child Labor Unit. List of Worst Forms of Works for Children. 2013. Source on file.
- 47 Government of Bangladesh. Bangladesh Gazette: List of Hazardous Work for Children. April 29, 2022. Source on file.
- 48 Government of Bangladesh. Penal Code, Act No. XLV. Enacted: 1860.
- 49 Government of Bangladesh. The Prevention and Suppression of Human Trafficking Act. Enacted: 2012. <http://www.refworld.org/pdfid/543f75664.pdf>
- 50 Government of Bangladesh. The Suppression of Violence Against Women and Children. Enacted: 2000. Source on file.
- 51 Government of Bangladesh. Children's Act, No. 24. Enacted: June 20, 2013. Source on file.
- 52 Government of Bangladesh. Pornography Control Act. Enacted: 2012. Source on file.
- 53 Bangladesh Air Force. Apply for Airman. Accessed August 6, 2020. [https://baf.mil.bd/website/apply\\_for\\_airman.php](https://baf.mil.bd/website/apply_for_airman.php)
- 54 Bangladesh Army. Soldier. Accessed August 6, 2020. <https://www.army.mil.bd/Soldier>
- 55 UN Committee on the Rights of the Child. Consideration of reports submitted by States parties under article 44 of the Convention—Fifth periodic reports of States parties due in 2012. December 16, 2014: CRC/C/BGD/5. Source on file.
- 56 U.S. Embassy- Dhaka. Reporting. March 17, 2021.
- 57 Government of Bangladesh Anti-Terrorism Act, 2009. 2009. Source on file.
- 58 Government of Bangladesh. Primary Education (Compulsory) Act, 1990. Enacted: 1990. <https://planipolis.iiep.unesco.org/en/1990/primary-education-compulsory-act-1990-act-no-27-1990-4770>
- 59 Government of Bangladesh. Constitution. Enacted: March 26, 1971. Source on file.
- 60 Government of Bangladesh. The Army Act, 1952. Enacted: 1952. Source on file.
- 61 Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics. Baseline Survey for Determining Hazardous Child Labour Sectors in Bangladesh 2005. 2006. Source on file.
- 62 Mahmud, Faisal. Why violence against domestic workers in Bangladesh largely goes unreported and unpunished. Scroll.in. September 8, 2021. <https://scroll.in/article/1004607/why-violence-against-domestic-workers-in-bangladesh-largely-goes-unreported-and-unpunished>
- 63 ILO. R190 - Worst Forms of Child Labour Recommendation, 1999 (No. 190) 1999. [https://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=NORMLEXPUB:12100:0::NO::P12100\\_INSTRUMENT\\_ID:312528](https://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=NORMLEXPUB:12100:0::NO::P12100_INSTRUMENT_ID:312528)
- 64 Ministry of Labor and Employment. Department of Inspection for Factories and Establishments - About Us. Accessed January 30, 2023. <http://www.dife.gov.bd/site/page/b2ef53e5-3049-4913-bc29-5ddcc015b712/About-Us>
- 65 Department of Inspections for Factories and Establishments. Vision and Mission. Ministry of Labour. Accessed January 23, 2023. <http://www.dife.gov.bd/site/page/c6339314-9ba9-4118-81b4-896a86e39732/->
- 66 U.S. Embassy- Dhaka. E-mail Communication. June 20, 2023.
- 67 Ministry of Home Affairs. National Plan of Action for Combating Human Trafficking 2015-2017. January 2015. Source on file.
- 68 Government of Bangladesh. Labour Inspection Report 2020-2021. Ministry of Labour and Employment, 2021. Source on file.
- 69 U.S. Embassy Official. E-mail Communication with USDOL. April 24, 2023.
- 70 U.S. Embassy- Dhaka. Reporting. April 4, 2022.
- 71 Department of Industries and Factories. Labour Inspection Report 2021-2022. Government of Bangladesh. 2021-2022. <http://dife.portal.gov.bd/site/publications/ae252acb-8a05-4d74-bd11-d15f8e01bafa/->
- 72 ILO CEACR. Individual Observation concerning Labour Inspection Convention, 1947 (No. 81) Bangladesh (Ratification: 1972). Published: 2021. [https://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=NORMLEXPUB:13100:0::NO::P13100\\_COMMENT\\_ID:4019764](https://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=NORMLEXPUB:13100:0::NO::P13100_COMMENT_ID:4019764)
- 73 ILOSTAT. ILO modelled estimates and projections (ILOEST)— Population and labour force. Accessed January 31, 2023. Labor force data is modelled on a combination of demographic and economic explanatory variables by the ILO. Please see "Labor Law Enforcement: Sources and Definitions" in the Reference Materials section of this report. <https://ilostat.ilo.org/data/>
- 74 ILO Brief. Labor Inspection Governance in Bangladesh. ILO. April 2020. [https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---asia/---ro-bangkok/---ilo-dhaka/documents/newsitem/wcms\\_760503.pdf](https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---asia/---ro-bangkok/---ilo-dhaka/documents/newsitem/wcms_760503.pdf)
- 75 Government of Bangladesh. EPZ Labour Rules. 2022.
- 76 The Associated Press. A fire at a depot in Bangladesh has killed at least 49 and injured more than 100 Dhaka: The Guardian. June 5, 2022. <https://www.npr.org/2022/06/05/1103139651/bangladesh-container-depot-fire-chittagong>
- 77 Government of Bangladesh. National Plan of Action to Eliminate Child Labour (2020–2025). Central Monitoring Committee on Child Labour, November 30, 2020. [https://mole.portal.gov.bd/sites/default/files/files/mole.portal.gov.bd/project/6038e47e\\_5792\\_45f4\\_8fc0\\_958f113443f9/NPA.pdf](https://mole.portal.gov.bd/sites/default/files/files/mole.portal.gov.bd/project/6038e47e_5792_45f4_8fc0_958f113443f9/NPA.pdf)
- 78 U.S. Embassy Official Communication to USDOL Official. February 14, 2023.
- 79 Government of Bangladesh. National Plan of Action for Implementing the National Child Labour Elimination Policy (2012–2016). 2013. <http://www.gbv.de/dms/zbw/798813121.pdf>
- 80 U.S. Embassy- Dhaka. Reporting. February 15, 2021.
- 81 Government of Bangladesh. National Plan of Action for Prevention and Suppression of Human Trafficking. 2018–2022. Source on file.
- 82 Cox Bazaar Correspondent. Government Formulated National Action Plan to Prevent Human Trafficking. Bangladesh Post October 23, 2022. <https://bangladeshpost.net/posts/govt-formulated-national-action-plan-to-prevent-human-trafficking-97462>
- 83 Center for Policy Dialogue GO-GO and GO-NGO Coordination for Better Development. Outcomes 2021. <https://cpd.org.bd/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/Issue-Brief-4-GO-GO-and-GO-NGO-Coordination-for-Better-Development-Outcomes.pdf>
- 84 Government of Bangladesh. National Education Policy. 2010. <http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/02.National-Education-Policy-2010-English.pdf>
- 85 United Nations. GLO.ACT - Bangladesh launches the first national study on Trafficking in Persons in Bangladesh Dhaka. October 2, 2022. <https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/human-trafficking/glo-act3/Countries/glo-act---bangladesh-launches-the-first-national-study-on-trafficking-in-persons-in-bangladesh.html>
- 86 UNICEF Bangladesh. Bangladesh Consolidated Emergency Report. March 03, 2023. Source on file.