

In 2022, Burkina Faso made moderate advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. On September 12, 2022, the government adopted a handover protocol in collaboration with the United Nations, which considers child soldiers as victims and directs officials to transfer them to social services by security forces if detained following military operations. The government also developed a mobile application for labor inspectors that will provide real-time data and information on child labor throughout the country and translated its hazardous work list for children into five local languages. Lastly, the government adopted the 2023–2027 Strategic Plan on Eliminating Child and Forced Labor in the Cotton, Textile, and Garment Value Chains. However, children in Burkina Faso are subjected to the worst forms of child labor, including in farming and commercial sexual exploitation, each sometimes as a result of human trafficking. Children also perform dangerous tasks in artisanal gold mining. The Labor Code does not identify the light work activities in which children may engage. The government also lacked resources for the enforcement of child labor laws and did not release information on its labor and criminal law enforcement efforts.



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

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

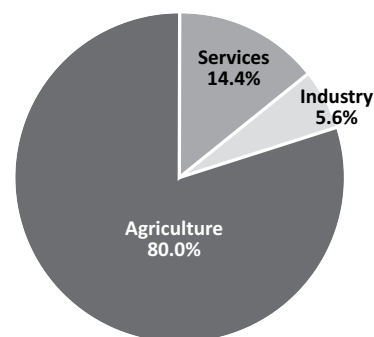
**Table 1. Statistics on Children’s Work and Education**

Children	Age	Percent
Working (% and population)	10 to 14	35.7 (849,922)
Attending School (%)	10 to 14	Unavailable
Combining Work and School (%)	10 to 14	Unavailable
Primary Completion Rate (%)		67.0

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 Enquête Multisectorielle Continué (EMC), 2014. (2)

**Figure 1. Working Children by Sector, Ages 10-14**



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	Planting, weeding, and harvesting crops, including cotton (3-8) Raising and herding† livestock, including cattle and goats (8-10)
Industry	Artisanal mining† of gold, including digging† and crushing† rock, working underground,† carrying heavy loads,† and exposure to mercury† (3,8-11) Quarrying† and transporting heavy loads† while working to extract granite (10,12) Working in construction (8,11)
Services	Domestic work (3,8,11) Street work, including vending† (8,13)
Categorical Worst Forms of Child Labor‡	Commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking (8,14-16) Forced farming, including in the production of cotton and cocoa; livestock raising; domestic work; begging; gold mining; and quarrying (8,10,11,14,16)

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

Sector/Industry	Activity
Categorical Worst Forms of Child Labor†	Forced begging in Koranic schools (11,12,14)
	Recruitment of children by non-state armed groups for use in armed conflict (8,16)

† 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.

Children engage in artisanal gold mining, which is particularly arduous and often exposes children to dangerous chemicals such as cyanide and mercury, which are used in the gold extraction process. (5,10,15,17) Burkina Faso also is one of the largest producers of cotton in Africa, with a reported 250,000 children involved in growing the crop, primarily on small family farms. (4,7,12) Children working in the cotton sector are exposed to many health risks, including exposure to pesticides, injury from the use of sharp tools, animal bites, and respiratory issues. (4,10)




During the reporting period, children were used as soldiers by extremist armed groups. In addition, a *coup d’etat* in January 2022 and a subsequent military takeover in September 2022, as well as continued insecurity, has led to the mass displacement of more than 2 million IDPs in the last 3 years, including a large number of vulnerable children. (8,12,16,18) Child trafficking also occurs within Burkina Faso, and it is a destination, transit point, and source for child trafficking to and from other West African countries. (14,15,19)

Although the Law Orienting the Education System mandates free education until age 16, many children face barriers to educational access. (3,9,20,21) Due to a lack of infrastructure, some communities create makeshift structures to serve as schools, and in rural areas teacher shortages are common, especially for the post-primary levels. (8) In addition, there are fees for all levels of public education, which sometimes pose heavy burdens on families. (3,9) Moreover, school violence exists and is exacerbated by the current security crisis, and transportation costs restrict access to schooling in urban areas. (9) Children in Burkina Faso must have birth documentation (e.g., a birth certificate or supplemental birth judgment) to register for school. (9,22) A student may begin schooling without documentation; however documentation must be provided before the end of the first quarter following the child’s registration. (3,9) Because more than one in five children do not have a birth certificate, many children in Burkina Faso remain out of school and vulnerable to child labor. (8,9) While research has found no evidence of discrimination based on ethnicity, refugees and IDPs face many educational challenges, mainly due to the sudden increase in educational needs in the communities hosting them. Less than 20 percent of displaced people manage to obtain school registration. (8,9) In some localities where armed attacks on schools have intensified, especially in the East and Sahel regions, there is a preference of some communities for other types of education such as Koranic schools. (9) Ongoing insecurity in the country has resulted in more than 6,253 schools being closed, affecting more than 1 million children. (8)

## II. LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR CHILD LABOR

Burkina Faso 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 Burkina Faso's legal framework to adequately protect children from the worst forms of child labor, including unspecified light work provisions.

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

Standard	Meets International Standards	Age	Legislation
Minimum Age for Work	Yes	16	Article 152 of the Labor Code; Order Deviating the Age of Admission to Employment (23,24)
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work	Yes	18	Articles 149 and 150 of the Labor Code; Article 1 of the Hazardous Work List (23,25)
Identification of Hazardous Occupations or Activities Prohibited for Children	Yes		Article 153 of the Labor Code; Articles 3–6 of the Hazardous Work List; Article 77 of the Mining Code (23,25,26)
Prohibition of Forced Labor	Yes		Articles 5 and 153 of the Labor Code; Articles 3–5 of the Law Suppressing the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography; Article 1-4 of the Law on Combating Trafficking of Persons and Similar Practices (23,27,28)
Prohibition of Child Trafficking	Yes		Article 153 of the Labor Code; Articles 1–5, 14, and 15 of the Law on Combating Trafficking of Persons and Similar Practices (23,28)
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children	Yes		Article 153 of the Labor Code; Articles 3, 4, 7–10, and 20 of the Law Suppressing the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography (23,27)
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities	Yes		Article 153 of the Labor Code (23)
Minimum Age for Voluntary State Military Recruitment	Yes	20	Article 2 of the Decree Organizing Operations Related to Convoking the Contingent (29)
Prohibition of Compulsory Recruitment of Children by (State) Military	N/A*		
Prohibition of Military Recruitment by Non-state Armed Groups	Yes		Articles 153 and 424 of the Labor Code (23)
Compulsory Education Age	Yes	16	Article 4 of the Law Orienting the Education System (21)
Free Public Education	Yes		Article 6 of the Law Orienting the Education System (21)

\* Country has no conscription (30)

The light work provisions in the Labor Code are not sufficiently specific to prevent children from involvement in child labor because activities that qualify as light work that may be permitted are not identified in the legislation. (23,24)

### III. ENFORCEMENT OF LAWS ON CHILD LABOR

The government has established institutional mechanisms for the enforcement of laws and regulations on child labor (Table 5). However, gaps exist within the operations of enforcement agencies that may hinder adequate enforcement of child labor laws.

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

Organization/Agency	Role & Activities
Ministry of Public Service, Labor, and Social Security (MFPTSS)	Enforces labor laws as the lead agency on child labor law enforcement and establishes a government policy to address child labor. (31) In 2022, MFPTSS organized a training workshop on child labor for journalists and communicators to increase their understanding of the laws and regulations against child labor and child trafficking, and to facilitate the implementation of the National Strategy to End the Worst Forms of Child Labor. (16) The Ministry of Territorial Administration, Decentralization, and Interior Security (MATDSI) assists MFPTSS by participating in joint routine inspections for suspected child trafficking cases. (10,32)
Ministry of Women, National Solidarity, Family, and Humanitarian Action (MFSNF)	Removes children from exploitative child labor; provides reintegration services through its mobile unit for intervention, and works with local village surveillance committees on awareness-raising efforts through participation in joint routine inspections with MFPTSS. (10,32) Operates a free hotline to report child abuse and maintains civil registry offices in maternity wards to register newborn babies. Enlists its National Council for Childhood to oversee all policies aimed at the survival, protection, development, and participation of children in broader policy initiatives. (33) It is unknown how many cases of child labor were identified as a result of complaints made to the MFSNF hotline.
Ministry of Justice	Appoints one or more judges who specialize in child protection issues to each high court to oversee juvenile court cases. Collaborates with MFSNF social workers in charge of child protection to conduct investigations on behalf of vulnerable children, including victims of child trafficking, commercial sexual exploitation, exploitative child labor, and begging. (10,34) Receives criminal cases involving children and women referred from MATDSI's Morals Brigade in the MATDSI National Police Force. (10,32)

### Labor Law Enforcement

In 2022, labor law enforcement agencies in Burkina Faso took actions to address child labor (Table 6). However, gaps exist within the operations of the Ministry of Public Service, Labor, and Social Security (MFPTSS) that may hinder adequate labor law enforcement, including a lack of human resources.

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

Overview of Labor Law Enforcement	2021	2022
Labor Inspectorate Funding	Unknown	\$225,000 (8)
Number of Labor Inspectors	159 (3)	180 (8)
Mechanism to Assess Civil Penalties	Yes (23)	Yes (23)
Training for Labor Inspectors Provided	Unknown	Yes (8)
Number of Labor Inspections Conducted at Worksite	Unknown	Unknown (8)
Number of Child Labor Violations Found	Unknown	Unknown (8)
Number of Child Labor Violations for Which Penalties Were Imposed	Unknown	Unknown (8)
Number of Child Labor Penalties Imposed that Were Collected	Unknown	Unknown (8)
Routine Inspections Conducted	Unknown	Unknown (8)
Routine Inspections Targeted	Unknown	Unknown (8)
Unannounced Inspections Permitted	Yes (23)	Yes (23)
Unannounced Inspections Conducted	Unknown	Unknown (8)
Complaint Mechanism Exists	Yes (3)	Yes (8)
Reciprocal Referral Mechanism Exists Between Labor Authorities and Social Services	Yes (3)	Yes (8)

In 2022, the MFPTSS created a mobile application for labor inspectors as a tool for reporting and monitoring their work that also will provide real-time data and information on child labor throughout the country. (8) In particular, the application will help inspectors determine the dangers that children are exposed to, include information about appropriate social services, and help verify that children have been removed from work sites. (8) During the reporting period, the government also reported its labor inspectorate budget for the first time since 2018. (8) However, research indicates that Burkina Faso does not have an adequate number of labor inspectors to carry out their mandated duties. (35) Furthermore, the labor inspectorate lacks adequate resources to enforce labor laws throughout the country, including the financial resources needed to carry out a sufficient number of preliminary labor inspections and follow-up inspections. (19,36)

### Criminal Law Enforcement

In 2022, criminal law enforcement agencies in Burkina Faso 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 inconsistent application of victim identification and referral procedures by authorities and frontline responders.

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

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

On September 12, 2022, the government adopted a handover protocol in collaboration with the UN that considers child soldiers as victims, and directs officials to transfer children to social services by security forces if detained following military operations. (8,12,16) The authorities have begun implementing the protocol and have transferred 149 children to social services. However, the protocol did not apply to children previously detained, leaving at least 15 minors, including potential human trafficking victims, in detention for alleged association with violent extremist groups. (12) They were held in a high-security prison separately from adult detainees and international organizations and NGOs were allowed access to provide specialized care, including legal services. However, research suggests that there are isolated cases of children being detained by the government in connection with terrorism charges and held in prisons along with adults, with some children being held for years. (8,12,37) In addition, although the government has standard victim identification and referral procedures, criminal law enforcement authorities and frontline responders do not apply them uniformly. (15,19)

## 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 insufficient coordination among ministries.

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

Coordinating Body	Role & Activities
National Coordination Committee for the National Strategy Plan to Combat the Worst Forms of Child Labor (CNC-SN/PFTE)	Defines appropriate strategies for mobilizing the resources necessary to implement SN/PFTE. Created in July 2020 by order of the Minister of Labor, comprises representatives from other ministries, civil society organizations, NGOs, unions, and employers. (3,8,9) The decree determining the list of dangerous work prohibited for children has been translated into five local languages, including Moore, Dioula, Fulfulde, Gourmanché, and Dagara. (8) MFPTSS serves as the Secretariat for CNC/SN/PFTE. (38) Promotes consultation and synergy of action among the actors involved in SN/PFTE implementation. Validates the annual activity programs of SN/PFTE. (9) Monitors and evaluates implementation and proposes necessary readjustments. Reviews and adopts the reports submitted to it by the Technical Secretariat. (9) Issues reasoned opinions on any question related to the worst forms of child labor. (9) The Committee held its first meeting in October 2022, where it reviewed and finalized the 2021 implementation report of SN-PFTE, and provided training to its members, as well as a training to approximately 50 teachers on child labor issues. (8)

Poor coordination among the various ministries responsible for addressing child labor and a lack of funding and resources, including computers and electricity, continue to hamper the government's ability to coordinate efforts to fully address child trafficking. (3,17,36)

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### V. GOVERNMENT POLICIES ON CHILD LABOR

The government has established policies related to child labor (Table 9). However, policy gaps exist that hinder efforts to address child labor, including a lack of implementation of policies related to child labor.

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

Policy	Description & Activities
National Strategy to End the Worst Forms of Child Labor (2019–2023) (SN/PFTE)	Aims to monitor, address, prevent, and protect against the worst forms of child labor in Burkina Faso, and reintegrate victims. (3,14) Developed by law enforcement agencies focused on child labor and its worst forms; governmental and non-governmental bodies; technical, financial, and social partners; and civil society organizations, including children's associations. (9) During the reporting period, the government continued to implement SN/PFTE, including by the completion of the data collection process for the national survey on child labor, the digitalization of child labor inspections through the development of a mobile application, the translation into local languages of the decree fixing the lists of dangerous work prohibited for children, and the drafting of the decree enumerating the list of light work authorized for children. (8,16)
National Child Protection Strategy (2020–2023)	Aims to strengthen the institutional, community, and family environment to ensure effective protection for children. (22) Research was unable to determine whether activities were undertaken to implement the National Child Protection Strategy during the reporting period.

During the reporting period, the MFPTSS adopted the 2023–2027 Strategic Plan on Eliminating Child and Forced Labor in the Cotton, Textile, and Garment Value Chains under the CLEAR Cotton project co-funded by the ILO and EU. (12,16)

### 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 full scope of the problem.

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

Program	Description & Activities
Campaign to Remove Street Children	NGO MinWomen-funded program, with coordination by MFSNF. Includes outreach missions in the streets to identify and refer vulnerable children, including victims of forced begging, and reintegrate them back into society or to one of the four youth shelters established in the Somgandé, Baskuy, Nongremassom, and Cissin districts of Ouagadougou. (19,36) During the reporting period, MFSNF continued to implement campaigns to remove children from streets, including an operation launched by the Minister of MFSNF to relocate children from the streets of Ouagadougou. (12)
MFSNF Projects to Combat Human Trafficking†	Aim to address human trafficking. Includes the operation of transit centers that provide food, medical assistance, and counseling to child trafficking survivors and children vulnerable to human trafficking. (15) Transit centers aim to reintegrate victims into their communities and facilitate the repatriation of foreign victims when possible. (15) The National Parenting Program assists parents in providing access to education and raising awareness about child trafficking. Nationwide media campaigns to address human trafficking provide advocacy, raise awareness, and build capacity for key actors involved in child protection issues, including child trafficking. (15) Watchdog and monitoring committees ensure that all cases of alleged trafficking of children are reported to the justice system by social workers. (39) Research was unable to determine whether activities were undertaken to implement the MFSNF Projects to Combat Human Trafficking during the reporting period.
ILO-Implemented Projects to Combat Child Labor	Project to address child labor and forced labor in supply chains, implemented by the ILO in collaboration with the Food and Agriculture Organization. Includes Eliminating Child Labor and Forced Labor in the Cotton, Textile and Garment Value Chains: An Integrated Approach (2018–2022), a 9.70 million (EUR 9 million) EU and ILO initiative of the UN-funded global project to combat child labor and forced labor in cotton and textile supply chains. (40) Research was unable to determine whether activities were undertaken to implement ILO projects to Combat Child Labor during the reporting period.

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 Burkina Faso.

Although Burkina Faso has social programs to address the worst forms of child labor in cotton production and gold mining, the scope of these programs is insufficient to fully address the extent of the problem. (15)



## 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 Burkina Faso (Table I I).

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

Area	Suggested Action	Year(s) Suggested
Legal Framework	Ensure that laws determine the light work activities in which children are permitted to engage.	2016 – 2022
Enforcement	Increase the number of labor inspectors from 180 to 209 to ensure adequate coverage of the labor force of approximately 8.4 million people.	2009 – 2022
	Ensure that labor law enforcement receives sufficient human and financial resources to fulfill its mandates, including conducting an adequate number of inspections, and following up after preliminary inspections to ensure the remediation of notices to comply with labor law obligations.	2009 – 2022
	Publish statistics on labor law enforcement efforts, including the labor inspectorate's funding, number of labor inspectors employed, number and type of labor inspections conducted, number of child labor violations found, number of penalties imposed and collected, number of inspections conducted at worksites, number of targeted and routine inspections, and whether unannounced inspections were conducted.	2009 – 2022
	Establish and publish data on a mechanism to log all calls to the government child protection hotline and to track cases of child labor for referral to law enforcement or social services providers.	2015 – 2022
	Ensure that criminal law enforcement authorities and frontline responders apply standard victim identification and referral procedures uniformly.	2016 – 2022
	Publish statistics on criminal law enforcement efforts, including training for criminal investigators, number of investigations, violations found, prosecutions initiated, number of convictions, and penalties imposed.	2016 – 2022
	Ensure that a reciprocal referral mechanism exists between criminal authorities and social services and is operational.	2019 – 2022
	Take active measures, including ensuring that a mechanism is operational, to ensure that children are not inappropriately incarcerated, detained with adults, penalized, or physically harmed solely for unlawful acts committed as a direct result of their subjection to the worst forms of child labor, such as child soldiering.	2020 – 2022
Coordination	Ensure that coordinating bodies receive adequate resources, such as computers and electricity, to accomplish their mandates.	2015 – 2022
	Enhance coordination and collaborative processes and procedures among ministries, law enforcement, and social services.	2019 – 2022
Government Policies	Ensure that activities are undertaken to implement key policies related to child labor, including the National Child Protection Strategy, and publish results from activities implemented during the reporting period.	2020 – 2022
Social Programs	Collect and publish data on the extent and nature of child labor to inform policies and programs.	2022
	Establish a social program to ensure that IDP and other vulnerable children have access to education and thus reduce their risk of exposure to the worst forms of child labor.	2020 – 2022
	Improve access to education by eliminating school-related fees and other costs, such as uniforms, by increasing the number of schools and teachers in rural areas, ensuring access to affordable transportation, and ending violence in schools.	2010 – 2022
	Ensure that children are registered at birth and that IDPs have access to the requisite documentation to gain access to social services, including education.	2010 – 2022
	Ensure that activities are undertaken to implement key social programs to address child labor during the reporting period and make information about implementation measures publicly available.	2020 – 2022
	Expand existing programs to fully address child labor in cotton production and gold mining.	2009 – 2022

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