

In 2022, Jordan made moderate advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. The government amended the Penal Code to increase penalties for enabling or encouraging a child under the age of 16 to beg or collect donations, including imprisonment of not less than 2 years for forced child begging. The government also investigated 42 cases involving the use of children in the production and trafficking of drugs and updated the National Framework for the Reduction of Child Labor, extending it to 2030. However, children in Jordan are subjected to the worst forms of child labor, including in forced begging and use in illicit activities, including drug trafficking. Children also perform dangerous tasks in agriculture. Moreover, Syrian children still face barriers to accessing education due to socioeconomic pressures, bullying, and the costs associated with transportation and supplies, among other issues. In addition, the scope of government programs is insufficient to fully address the extent of child labor, including in construction and street vending.



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

Table 1 provides key indicators on children's work and education in Jordan.

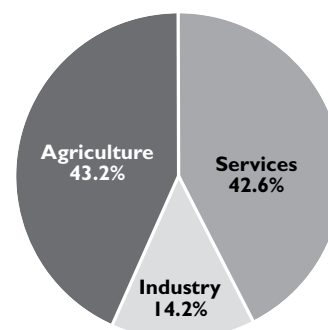
**Table 1. Statistics on Children's Work and Education**

Children	Age	Percent
Working (% and population)	5 to 14	1.0 (33,182)
Attending School (%)	5 to 14	94.8
Combining Work and School (%)	7 to 14	1.0
Primary Completion Rate (%)		80.7

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

Source for all other data: International Labor Organization's analysis of statistics from National Child Labour Survey (SIMPOC), 2016. (2)

**Figure 1. Working Children by Sector, Ages 5-14**



Based on a review of available information, Table 2 provides an overview of children's work by sector and activity.

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

Sector/Industry	Activity
Agriculture	Farming, including weeding, planting, spraying pesticides, applying fertilizer, and harvesting tomatoes and olives (3-8)
Industry	Mining† and quarrying† (4,7)
	Construction,† including building and painting homes (4,6-8)
	Manufacturing, including packing (4,7-9)
Services	Maintenance and repair of motor vehicles† (3,4,6,8,9)
	Driving animals to transport tourists (10)
	Street work,† including vending (3,9,11,12)
	Scavenging scrap metal and waste† (7,13,14)
	Begging (3,11,15)
	Domestic work† (9)
	Food services, including working in restaurants and bakeries and selling coffee (4,7-9)
	Hotel services† (4,7,9)
	Working in retail, including cleaning shops (3,4,7)

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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†	Use in illicit activities, including drug trafficking (8,16,17)
	Forced begging (3,8,11,15,18,19)
	Commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking (8,20,21)
	Forced labor in agriculture (21)

† 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.




The majority of children working in Jordan are engaged in the agricultural and services sectors. (7) In agriculture, children perform tasks such as weeding, planting, and harvesting on non-industrial scale farms and are exposed to hazardous conditions. (3,7,22) In the services sector, children work in small retail shops, auto-repair shops, domestic work, and street work, such as peddling goods. (3) Children in Jordan are also subjected to forced labor in agriculture, forced begging, and use in illicit activities. (21) Sources indicate that, rather than attending school, Syrian refugee children are sometimes forced to work alongside their families in agriculture and the services industries. (6,18,23) In addition, child beggars are sometimes used to sell drugs. (16) In the one reported case of commercial sexual exploitation, the children were trafficked by their mother. (8)

In 2022, Jordan once again waived a requirement for identity documentation to expand access to education for Syrian children for the 2022–2023 school year. (8) The government provided double-shift schools to address overcrowding, with Jordanian children attending in the morning and Syrian children in the afternoon. (3,17,23,24) However, both Jordanian and Syrian children attending double-shift schools were vulnerable to child labor because school hours are considerably shorter, and fewer school hours leave more time for work. Despite a government guarantee of equality of access to education, children still sometimes face *de facto* barriers to education, including bullying and harassment, and the costs of transportation, uniforms, and school materials. (3,14,23,25,26) In addition, children of Jordanian mothers and non-Jordanian fathers, as well as non-Jordanian children who do not belong to refugee groups, lack access to public education. (17)

## II. LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR CHILD LABOR

Jordan 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 Jordan’s legal framework to adequately protect children from the worst forms of child labor, including the lack of prohibitions related to the military recruitment of children by non-state armed groups.

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

Standard	Meets International Standards	Age	Legislation
Minimum Age for Work	Yes	16	Article 73 of the Labor Code (27)
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work	Yes	18	Article 74 of the Labor Code; Article 2 of the Ministerial Order of 2011 (27,28)
Identification of Hazardous Occupations or Activities Prohibited for Children	Yes		Article 2 of the Ministerial Order of 2011 (28)
Prohibition of Forced Labor	Yes		Articles 3(a) and 3(b) of the Law on the Prevention of Human Trafficking (29)
Prohibition of Child Trafficking	Yes		Articles 3(a) and 8–11 of the Law on the Prevention of Human Trafficking (29)
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children	Yes		Articles 298, 299, 306, 310, 311, 315, and 319 of the Penal Code; Articles 3(a) and 3(b) of the Law on the Prevention of Human Trafficking (29,30)
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities	Yes		Article 8 of the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act (31)
Minimum Age for Voluntary State Military Recruitment	Yes	16	Article 5(b) of the Military Service act; Article 13(b) of the Officer's Service Act (32,33)
Prohibition of Compulsory Recruitment of Children by (State) Military	Yes		Article 3(a) of the National Service Act (34)
Prohibition of Military Recruitment by Non-state Armed Groups	No		Article 141 of the Penal Code (30)
Compulsory Education Age	Yes	16	Articles 7(a.2) and 10(b) of the Education Act (35)
Free Public Education	Yes		Article 10(a) of the Education Act; Article 20 of the Constitution (35,36)

In 2022, the government amended the Penal Code and increased the penalty for enabling or encouraging a child under the age of 16 to beg or collect donations to a period of no less than 3 months imprisonment and not more than 12 months for the first offense, and no less than 6 months and not more than 12 months for subsequent offenses. The amendment also specifies imprisonment of not less than 2 years for forcing a child under the age of 16 to beg or collect donations. (8) Additionally, the amended Penal Code now stipulates 2-year minimum prison sentences for forced begging in cases that do not reach the legal threshold to be prosecuted under the human trafficking law. (8)

### 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 (MOL), Central Inspection Directorate	Enforces labor laws, including those on child labor. Identifies cases of child labor through worksite inspections and registers instances of child labor in a National Child Labor Database, which allows ministries to monitor and track children as they are identified and referred to social services. (37) Maintains a hotline, website, and mobile app to receive labor-related complaints, including complaints of child labor. (13,17) The hotline has operators during office hours, although operators who speak foreign languages were not always available. The hotline has an automated message recording after 3 p.m. (38,39) The phone number is difficult to locate and, based on available information, operators rarely responded to voicemails left after working hours. (38,39)
Public Security Directorate, Criminal Investigation Unit	Investigates and prosecutes violations of the Penal Code, including allegations of the worst forms of child labor. Operates a section to combat human trafficking. (13,21)

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Organization/Agency	Role & Activities
Joint Anti-Trafficking Unit of MOL and the Public Security Directorate	Investigates cases of human trafficking and forced labor, refers cases for prosecution, and coordinates with foreign embassies to identify victims of human trafficking and, when needed, to repatriate foreign workers. (23)

### Labor Law Enforcement

In 2022, labor law enforcement agencies in Jordan took actions to address child labor (Table 6). However, gaps exist within the operations of the Ministry of Labor (MOL) that may hinder adequate labor law enforcement, including insufficient financial resource allocation.

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

Overview of Labor Law Enforcement	2021	2022
Labor Inspectorate Funding	\$353,107 (3)	\$423,000 (8)
Number of Labor Inspectors	170 (3)	172 (8)
Mechanism to Assess Civil Penalties	Yes (27)	Yes (8)
Training for Labor Inspectors Provided	Yes (3)	Yes (8)
Number of Labor Inspections Conducted at Worksite	71,686 (3)	37,741 ‡ (8)
Number of Child Labor Violations Found	923 (3)	374 (8)
Number of Child Labor Violations for Which Penalties Were Imposed	97 (3)	98 (8)
Number of Child Labor Penalties Imposed that Were Collected	Unknown (3)	98 (8)
Routine Inspections Conducted	Yes (3)	Yes (8)
Routine Inspections Targeted	Yes (3)	Yes (8)
Unannounced Inspections Permitted	Yes (3)	Yes (8)
Unannounced Inspections Conducted	Yes (3)	Yes (8)
Complaint Mechanism Exists	Yes (3)	Yes (8)
Reciprocal Referral Mechanism Exists Between Labor Authorities and Social Services	Yes (3)	Yes (8)

‡ Data are from January 1, 2022, to October 31, 2022.

In 2022, MOL facilitated training for its labor inspectors and officials in the inspections and complaints department on trafficking in persons. (40) However, research indicates that Jordan does not have an adequate number of labor inspectors to carry out their mandated duties. (8,41) Additionally, the high number of inspections per inspector raises concerns that inspectors may not have the time to adequately identify and remediate labor law violations. In addition, MOL reported that inspections in the agricultural sector were insufficient to meet the demands of Agricultural Workers Bylaw No. 19. (3) While the government increased the inspectorate's budget by almost 20 percent in 2022, sources report that the inspectorate has insufficient financial resources to hire a sufficient number of labor inspectors. (8)

### Criminal Law Enforcement

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

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

Overview of Criminal Law Enforcement	2021	2022
Training for Criminal Investigators Provided	Unknown	Yes (8)
Number of Investigations	Unknown	Unknown (8)
Number of Prosecutions Initiated	Unknown	Unknown (8)
Number of Convictions	Unknown	Unknown (8)
Imposed Penalties for Violations Related to the Worst Forms of Child Labor	Unknown	Unknown (8)
Reciprocal Referral Mechanism Exists Between Criminal Authorities and Social Services	Yes (19)	Yes (8)

The government did not provide complete information on its criminal law enforcement efforts for inclusion in this report. However, criminal law enforcement agencies investigated a case of child sex trafficking involving two girls during the reporting period. The girls' mother was charged under the trafficking law and remained imprisoned through the end of the reporting period. The government further stated that the trafficker was aided by foreigners who subsequently left the country. (8) A further 42 cases involving the use of children to sell, distribute, and promote drugs were investigated. (8) Additionally, the Counter-Trafficking Unit and the Ministry of Social Development (MOSD) referred a total of five cases of forced child labor to shelter services. (40)

#### 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 Committee on Child Labor	Formulates new policies, amends legislation as necessary, and oversees the implementation of child labor policies. Led by MOL, members include three other ministries, plus international and civil society organizations. (8) In 2022, the National Committee on Child Labor helped draft the National Strategy for the Reduction of Child Labor (2022–2030). (8)

#### 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.

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

Policy	Description & Activities
National Strategy for the Reduction of Child Labor (2022–2030) †	Outlines the roles and responsibilities of key government agencies, including the Ministries of Education, Labor, and Social Development; NGOs; and other stakeholders involved in identifying and responding to cases of child labor. Based on the Framework to Reduce Child Labor, MOL inspectors monitor child labor and refer cases to the Ministry of Social Development (MOSD) and the Ministry of Education for the provision of services. (42,43) Approved in 2022. (8)
Jordan Response Plan for the Syria Crisis (2018–2022)	Integrated a refugee-oriented humanitarian response with a strategic plan for increasing the resilience of local communities. The plan had a particular focus on economic strengthening, education, and social protection. (44) Active in 2022. (45)

† Policy was approved during the reporting period.

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

The government has yet to implement the Plan of Action to Eliminate Child Labor in Tourism in Petra since passing it in 2015. (46)

#### VI. SOCIAL PROGRAMS TO ADDRESS CHILD LABOR

In 2022, the government funded and participated in programs that include the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor (Table 10). However, gaps exist in these social programs, including the inadequacy of services to address child labor in all sectors.

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

Program	Description & Activities
Child Labor Units†	Consists of Child Labor Units within MOSD and MOL. The MOSD unit provides support to children engaged in child labor, returns them to school, and provides services to their families; provides vocational training for youth; organizes training on child labor for families; and maintains the website of the National Child Labor Database. (47) Provides services to children engaged in child begging through centers in Madaba and Deleil (Zarqa). (39) Active in 2022. (8) The MOL unit coordinates government campaigns against child labor, conducts training, and raises awareness about child labor issues. (7) Manages the Child Labor Monitoring System, a case management tool that helps coordinate efforts by relevant government agencies and civil society organizations to ensure that children are removed from child labor and provided with critical social and educational services. (23)

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**Table 10. Key Social Programs to Address Child Labor (Cont.)**

Program	Description & Activities
Addressing the Worst Forms of Child Labor in the Agriculture Sector†	Aims to reduce child labor in the agriculture sector, taking into consideration vulnerabilities of children and their families, with field visits by joint teams of MOL inspectors and behavior monitors from MOSD and the Family Healthcare Institute of the Noor Al Hussein Foundation. (48) Works in informal tented settlement communities in rural and remote parts of Mafraq and the Jordan Valley that have not received child labor protection support. (3)
Program to End the Worst Forms of Child Labor in Zarqa and Amman	Funded by UNICEF, implemented by the Rowad al Khair Society and with the participation of MOL, this program aims to identify 400 of the most vulnerable children in Zarqa and Amman to receive psychosocial support, access to education, and other training to reduce the number of children subjected to the worst forms of child labor. (49)

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 Jordan.

‡ The government had other social programs that may have included the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor. (13,17,51-53)

Although Jordan has programs that target child labor, the scope of these programs does not fully address the extent of the problem, including child labor in construction and street vending.

## 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 Jordan (Table 11).

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

Area	Suggested Action	Year(s) Suggested
Legal Framework	Ensure that the law criminally prohibits the recruitment of children under age 18 into non-state armed groups.	2016 – 2022
Enforcement	Improve the quality of the Ministry of Labor's hotline by making it easier to locate and ensuring that operators, including those who speak foreign languages, are available outside of business hours, and that all messages are addressed.	2018 – 2022
	Increase the number of labor inspectors from 172 to 195 to provide adequate coverage of the labor force of approximately 2.9 million people.	2020 – 2022
	Publish information on criminal law enforcement efforts, including the number of investigations, prosecutions, and convictions.	2019 – 2022
	Ensure that the labor inspectorate has sufficient resources to fulfill its mandate.	2021 – 2022
	Ensure that the number of inspections conducted per labor inspector affords inspectors enough time to adequately identify and remediate labor law violations, including in the agricultural sector.	2019 – 2022
Government Policies	Implement the Plan of Action to Eliminate Child Labor in Tourism in Petra.	2018 – 2022
Social Programs	Continue to expand access to education for all children including Syrian and non-Syrian refugees, ensuring that students have transportation, are able to purchase supplies and uniforms, students are not bullied or harassed, and school hours are extended.	2013 – 2022
	Institute programs to address the worst forms of child labor in construction and street vending.	2013 – 2022

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