

In 2022, Morocco made moderate advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. The government convicted five civil servants on charges related to the sexual exploitation of children or forced child labor. It also drafted a national strategy against human trafficking and developed a guide to help government ministries identify trafficking victims. Additionally, the government increased the number of labor inspectors by over 23 percent, from 404 in 2021 to 500 in 2022. However, children in Morocco are subjected to the worst forms of child labor, including forced domestic work and commercial sexual exploitation. The Labor Code's minimum age for work provisions do not meet international standards as children 15 years of age and under are not protected when working in traditional artisan and handicraft sectors. Furthermore, the scope of government social programs is insufficient as they do not fully address children exploited through domestic work and commercial sexual exploitation.

I. PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

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

Table 1. Statistics on Children's Work and Education

Children	Age	Percent
Working (% and population)	10 to 14	4.5 (150,178)
Attending School (%)	6 to 14	82.9
Combining Work and School (%)	10 to 14	0.7
Primary Completion Rate (%)		107.7

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

Source for all other data: International Labor Organization's analysis of statistics from *Enquête sur la Population et la Santé Familiale (DHS), 2003–2004*. (2)

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

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

Sector/Industry	Activity
Agriculture	Farming, activities unknown (3)
	Fishing (3)
	Forestry, activities unknown(3)
Industry	Textiles (4)
	Construction† (5)
	Production of artisanal crafts (6)
Services	Domestic work (3,4,7)
	Maintenance and repair of motor vehicles (4)
Categorical Worst Forms of Child Labor‡	Commercial sexual exploitation, as a result of human trafficking (3,4)
	Forced domestic work (4,7,8)
	Forced begging (4,6)
	Forced labor in artisanal crafts, textile, construction, and mechanics (4)
	Use in illicit activities, including the trafficking of drugs, sometimes as a result of human trafficking (3,4)

† 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 2 percent of Moroccan children, between the ages of 7 and 17, are economically active, with more children working in rural areas than urban areas. (3) Of these economically active children, 6 out of 10 are performing hazardous work. (9) Roughly 80 percent of child labor victims are boys from rural areas. (3) Rural Moroccan girls, some as young as age 8, are recruited for domestic work in private urban homes, a practice known locally as *petites bonnes*. (8,10) Some of these girls are subjected to physical and verbal abuse, excessive working hours, confiscation of identity papers, and denial of access to educational opportunities by their employers. (7-11) In addition, exploitation in domestic work makes children vulnerable to child sex trafficking within Morocco and elsewhere, such as Spain and the Persian Gulf. (12)

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Research identified an increase in migrant children—both Moroccan natives and sub-Saharan Africans immigrating through Morocco—traveling to Europe, particularly Spain. Most of these children were unaccompanied and lacked access to stable housing, exposing them to poverty and social exclusion, increasing their vulnerability to child labor. (13,14) Children in Morocco, particularly in rural areas, also face barriers to education, including the cost of school materials, poor facilities, and transportation issues. (15) Approximately 85 percent of children who are economically active have left schooling. (3) Some children must reside in boarding houses to attend school due to long commutes, and some families are reluctant to allow children—particularly girls—to make the daily journey for fear of exposure to risks associated with traveling to school. Other barriers to education include fees associated with after-school activities and the required documentation for school enrollment. (15) Identification documents are sometimes denied to children in rural areas who are born to unmarried parents. (16)

II. LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR CHILD LABOR

Morocco 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 Morocco's legal framework to adequately protect children from the worst forms of child labor, including a minimum age for work that does not meet international standards.

Table 4. Laws and Regulations on Child Labor

Standard	Meets International Standards	Age	Legislation
Minimum Age for Work	No	15	Articles 4, 143, and 151 of the Labor Code; Article 6 of Law No. 19-12 (17,18)
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work	Yes	18	Articles 147 and 150 of the Labor Code; Article 6 of Law No. 19-12 (17,18)
Identification of Hazardous Occupations or Activities Prohibited for Children	Yes		Hazardous Child Labor List, Decree No. 2-10-183; Articles 179 and 181 of the Labor Code (17,19)
Prohibition of Forced Labor	Yes		Articles 448.1, 448.4, and 448.5 of the Law on Trafficking in Human Beings; Articles 10 and 12 of the Labor Code; Article 467-2 of the Penal Code (17,20,21)
Prohibition of Child Trafficking	Yes		Articles 448.1, 448.4, and 448.5 of the Law on Trafficking in Human Beings (21)
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children	No		Articles 497–499, and 503-2 of the Penal Code; Articles 448.1 and 448.4 of the Law on Trafficking in Human Beings (20,21)
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities	Yes		Law number 1-73-282; Article 467-2 of the Penal Code; Articles 448.1 and 448.4 of the Law on Trafficking in Human Beings (20-22)
Minimum Age for Voluntary State Military Recruitment	No		

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

Standard	Meets International Standards	Age	Legislation
Prohibition of Compulsory Recruitment of Children by (State) Military	Yes		Article 4 of Law No. 44-18 (23)
Prohibition of Military Recruitment by Non-state Armed Groups	Yes		Articles 448.1 and 448.4 of the Law on Trafficking in Human Beings (21)
Compulsory Education Age	Yes	15	Article I of Law No. 04-00 (24)
Free Public Education	Yes		Article I of Law No. 04-00 (24)

The 2016 Law on Setting Up Employment Conditions of Domestic Workers prohibits employing children under the age of 18 in domestic work with a transition period of five years. During the reporting period, the minimum age for domestic work was 16. (18) However, the Labor Code does not apply to children who work in traditional artisan or handicraft sectors for family businesses with five or fewer employees. (17)

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 Economic Inclusion, Small Business, Employment and Skills (MEIPEEC)	Enforces child labor laws with its 54 inspection offices throughout the country. (3,6) Partners with civil society organizations working to remove children from child labor and provide them with an education or vocational training. (3,25) MEIPEEC's priorities in the 2022 National Labor Inspection Plan include upholding workers' representation rights and focusing inspections on temporary work agencies, security, gardening, construction, and cleaning companies. (3)
Ministry of the Interior	Through the General Directorate of National Security, enforces prohibitions on trafficking in persons, prostitution, and other exploitative crimes involving minors, as established in the Penal Code. (3)
General Prosecutor	Prosecutes criminal offenses against children and processes cases involving children in the court system. Serves independently as a judiciary body separate from the Ministry of Justice. (3)

Labor Law Enforcement

In 2022, labor law enforcement agencies in Morocco took actions to address child labor (Table 6). However, gaps exist within the authority of the Ministry of Economic Inclusion, Small Business, Employment and Skills (MEIPEEC) that may hinder adequate labor law enforcement, including an insufficient number of labor inspectors.

Table 6. Labor Law Enforcement Efforts Related to Child Labor

Overview of Labor Law Enforcement	2021	2022
Labor Inspectorate Funding	Unknown (6)	\$750,000 (3)
Number of Labor Inspectors	404 (6)	500 (3)
Mechanism to Assess Civil Penalties	Yes (6)	Yes (3,17,20)
Training for Labor Inspectors Provided	Yes (6)	Yes (3)
Number of Labor Inspections Conducted at Worksite	18,776 (6)	29,068 (3)
Number of Child Labor Violations Found	998 (6)	522 (3)
Number of Child Labor Violations for Which Penalties Were Imposed	5 (6)	Unknown (3)
Number of Child Labor Penalties Imposed that Were Collected	Unknown (6)	Unknown (3)
Routine Inspections Conducted	Yes (6)	Yes (3)
Routine Inspections Targeted	Yes (6)	Yes (3)

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Table 6. Labor Law Enforcement Efforts Related to Child Labor (Cont.)

Overview of Labor Law Enforcement	2021	2022
Unannounced Inspections Permitted	Yes (17)	Yes (3,17)
Unannounced Inspections Conducted	Yes (6)	Yes (3)
Complaint Mechanism Exists	Yes (6)	Yes (3)
Reciprocal Referral Mechanism Exists Between Labor Authorities and Social Services	No (6)	No (3)

Between January 2022 and February 2023, 522 children were removed from hazardous working conditions, with 332 of these children being younger than 15 years of age. (3) The National Observatory for Children's Rights also established an online portal and reporting mechanisms on its website to provide more ways to report child abuse, including child labor. This complements the hotline already in use for formal child labor complaints. (26) In 2022, the government increased the number of labor inspectors by over 23 percent, from 404 to 500 in total. (3,6) Of the 500 labor inspectors in Morocco, 101 are contractors rather than public servants. (3) Due to the instability of contract employment, the authority and training of these labor inspectors may be called into question. Despite this increase in inspectors, research indicates Morocco does not have an adequate number of labor inspectors to carry out their mandated duties. (27-29)

The official procedure to process a child labor violation requires the participation of several agencies, which places considerable administrative burden on labor inspectors. In some areas, there are informal referral mechanisms between labor inspectors and social services maintained through the court system, but coordination varies from region to region. (3,30) Despite the existence of regulations on implementing the 2016 Law on Setting Up Employment Conditions of Domestic Workers, enforcement remains challenging, as unannounced inspections of private residences, in which many child domestic workers are employed, cannot be conducted without a court order in accordance with 2018 Labor Law (Law 19-12). (6,31) Penalties for employing children in hazardous work are also insufficient to act as a deterrent to child labor, as labor inspectors generally recommend removing children from their employers before imposing any penalties, and may not impose penalties if the employer ends the employment of children. (15,32,33)

Criminal Law Enforcement

In 2022, criminal law enforcement agencies in Morocco 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 publication of criminal law enforcement data.

Table 7. Criminal Law Enforcement Efforts Related to Child Labor

Overview of Criminal Law Enforcement	2021	2022
Training for Criminal Investigators Provided	Yes (6)	Yes (3)
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	No (30)	Yes (26,34)

In 2022, law enforcement agencies identified 27 child victims of servitude and forced labor, and 66 child victims of commercial sexual exploitation. (26,35) Also during the year, five civil servants were convicted on charges related to sexual exploitation or forced labor of minors. (35) However, the government did not provide information on the number of investigations conducted, prosecutions initiated, convictions achieved, or penalties imposed for the worst forms of child labor for inclusion of this report. (3)

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 a lack of coordinating bodies to address all forms of child labor.

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

Coordinating Body	Role & Activities
National Commission for the Coordination of Measures to Combat and Prevent Trafficking in Persons	Coordinates the government's efforts to address trafficking in persons. Led by the Ministry of Justice, with 22 members representing various ministries and civil society organizations. (3,4,26) In 2022, the Commission completed a guide for human trafficking indicators to help government ministries identify trafficking victims and organized a workshop on establishing strong national referral mechanisms for trafficking victims. (35) In March 2023, the Commission also enacted a new trafficking strategic plan. (34)

Although Morocco has a committee to coordinate efforts to address trafficking in persons, as well as the Technical Committee Under the Special Ministerial Commission for Children for the Protection and Improvement of Childhood to address child protection in general, it does not have an active coordinating mechanism to address all forms of child labor. (3)

V. GOVERNMENT POLICIES ON CHILD LABOR

The government has established policies that are consistent with relevant international standards related to child labor (Table 9).

Table 9. Key Policies Related to Child Labor

Policy	Description & Activities
Ministry of Solidarity, Social Inclusion, and Family (MSISF) Integrated Public Policy on the Protection of Children in Morocco	Promotes an interdisciplinary approach to respond to the exploitation of children and other issues. (36) Implemented by MEIPEEC. (3,26)
National Strategy to Address Trafficking in Persons†	Aims to raise awareness of human trafficking and improve the identification and referral of victims to services. Enacted in March 2023 with assistance from international partners. (34,35)

† Policy was approved during the reporting period.

In late 2022, MEIPEEC made arrangements with the ILO and NGOs to draft a strategic action plan to address the worst forms of child labor. (3,26)

VI. SOCIAL PROGRAMS TO ADDRESS CHILD LABOR

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

Table 10. Key Social Programs to Address Child Labor

Program	Description & Activities
Social Cohesion Support Fund†	Programs that aim to improve access to education. Include the MSISF-funded Tayssir Conditional Cash Transfer Program, which provides direct cash transfers to qualifying families whose children meet school attendance criteria. (15) These cash transfers continued in 2022. (26)
Government-Funded Projects‡	Projects that aim to assist vulnerable children, including the After-School Program for a Second Chance, which provides students with after-school educational assistance as part of non-formal education programs; Mouwakaba, a MSISF-funded project that assists nearly 2,700 at-risk youth in 6 cities with vocational training; and "Cities Without Street Children," which provides assistance to homeless children in Casablanca and Méknes. The projects remained active in 2022. (37-40)
AMAL Program	Supports the efforts of the Moroccan authorities to ensure an environment conducive to the development and autonomy of children and young people in migration and refugee status. Implemented by UNHCR, IOM, and UNICEF under the coordination of the UN's Office of the Resident Coordinator. (30,41) The AMAL program was active in 2022. (3)

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 Morocco.

‡ The government had other social programs that may have included the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor. (15)

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Although the government has programs that target child labor, the scope of these programs is insufficient to fully address the extent of the problem, including for children engaged in forced domestic work. This is especially apparent in rural areas, given the extent to which children engaged in labor and commercial sexual exploitation is likely underreported. (40)

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 Morocco (Table 11).

Table 11. Suggested Government Actions to Eliminate Child Labor

Area	Suggested Action	Year(s) Suggested
Legal Framework	Ensure that all children age 15 and under are protected by law, including children who work in the traditional artisan and handicraft sectors for family businesses.	2009 – 2022
	Ensure that the law establishes 16 as the minimum age for voluntary recruitment by the state military with safeguards for voluntariness.	2022
	Ensure that the law criminally prohibits the use of a child for prostitution.	2022
Enforcement	Increase the number of labor inspectors from 500 to 819 to provide adequate coverage of the labor force of approximately 12.3 million people.	2012 – 2022
	Ensure that the labor inspectorate is made up of public servants rather than contractors to avoid complications related to the training and authority of these inspectors.	2022
	Publish information on labor law enforcement efforts, including penalties imposed and collected for violations of the worst forms of child labor.	2015 – 2022
	Impose penalties whenever child labor violations are found.	2012 – 2022
	Reduce administrative burdens for inspectors referring children to services and streamline child labor enforcement procedures among government agencies.	2013 – 2022
	Publish information on criminal enforcement efforts, including the number of investigations, prosecutions initiated, number of convictions, and penalties imposed for violations related to the worst forms of child labor.	2012 – 2022
	Establish referral mechanisms between labor law enforcement authorities and social services where they do not currently exist and strengthen existing informal networks for this purpose to ensure effective coordination on child labor cases.	2021 – 2022
Coordination	Establish a mechanism to coordinate government efforts to address all worst forms of child labor.	2022
Social Programs	Expand existing programs to address the full scope of the child labor problem, including in rural areas and in forced domestic work and commercial sexual exploitation.	2013 – 2022
	Collect and publish information on the extent and nature of child labor to inform policies and programs, including in farming and forestry.	2016 – 2022
	Remove barriers to education, such as insufficient facilities and a lack of reliable and safe transportation, particularly in rural areas.	2013 – 2022

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