

In 2022, Oman made moderate advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. The National Committee to Combat Human Trafficking launched a new website in English and Arabic with information on how to report human trafficking crimes in 14 languages. Additionally, in cooperation with United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, the government drafted a new law to address human trafficking. It also continued its prosecution of two foreign nationals suspected of exploiting a Pakistani child in commercial sexual exploitation under the Law to Combat Human Trafficking. Child labor is not visible in Oman, although a small number may work informally with their families, including in fishing and farming. Survey data are needed on the extent and nature of child labor to inform policies and programs.



I. PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

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

Table 1. Statistics on Children's Work and Education

Children	Age	Percent
Working (% and population)	5 to 14	Unavailable
Attending School (%)	5 to 14	Unavailable
Combining Work and School (%)	7 to 14	Unavailable
Primary Completion Rate (%)		99.2

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

Source for all other data: Data were unavailable from ILO's analysis, 2023. (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, activities unknown (3)

II. LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR CHILD LABOR

Oman 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	✓

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The government's laws and regulations are in line with relevant international standards (Table 4).

Table 4. Laws and Regulations on Child Labor

Standard	Meets International Standards	Age	Legislation
Minimum Age for Work	Yes	15	Articles 1, 8, and 75 of the Labor Law (4)
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work	Yes	18	Articles 45, 46, and 71 of the Child Law; Article 2 of Ministry of Manpower Order 217/2016 (5,6)
Identification of Hazardous Occupations or Activities Prohibited for Children	Yes		Article 5 of Ministry of Manpower Order 217/2016 (5)
Prohibition of Forced Labor	Yes		Articles 1, 2, 8, and 9 of the Anti-Trafficking Law; Article 3 bis of the Labor Law (4,7)
Prohibition of Child Trafficking	Yes		Articles 1, 2, 8, and 9 of the Anti-Trafficking Law (7)
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children	Yes		Articles 1, 2, 8, and 9 of the Anti-Trafficking Law; Articles 254, 255, and 267 of the Penal Code (7,8)
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities	Yes		Articles 58 and 74 of the Child Law; Article 43 of the Law on Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (6,9)
Minimum Age for Voluntary State Military Recruitment	Yes	16	Article 55 of the Child Law (6)
Prohibition of Compulsory Recruitment of Children by (State) Military	Yes*		Article 55 of the Child Law (6)
Prohibition of Military Recruitment by Non-state Armed Groups	Yes		Articles 1(f), 55, and 72 of the Child Law (6)
Compulsory Education Age	Yes	15‡	Article 36 of the Child Law (6,10)
Free Public Education	Yes		Article 13 of the Basic Law; Article 36 of the Child Law (6,11)

* Country has no conscription (12)

‡ Age calculated based on available information (6,10)

In cooperation with UNODC, the government drafted and reviewed a new law to address human trafficking during the reporting period; enactment of the law is expected in 2023. (13)

III. ENFORCEMENT OF LAWS ON CHILD LABOR

The government has established relevant 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
Ministry of Labor (MOL)	Monitors and enforces child labor laws, conducts labor inspections, and shares information with the Royal Oman Police on labor and criminal law violations when penalties are pursued. (14) According to the government, MOL conducts yearly inspections of all private institutions and re-inspections of workplaces found to be in violation of labor laws. Labor inspections are also conducted following a complaint. (14,15) If a violation is found, the institution is given a set period of time to address the problem. If an institution fails to address the violation, a fine may be levied. (14,15) MOL can refer cases of child labor to the Ministry of Social Development (MOSD) if the child is under the minimum age for work. MOL and MOSD can also coordinate with the Royal Oman Police to shelter child victims and refer suspected violators for criminal investigation. (14) In addition, the labor inspectorate has a specialized unit composed to two people to conduct inspections related to suspected human trafficking. The unit is charged with bringing indicators of trafficking to the ministry and transferring cases to the Public Prosecutor's Office for further investigation. (16)
Royal Oman Police	Monitor and enforce the Child Law, including its provisions related to child labor, and refer cases to the Office of the Public Prosecutor. (14) In 2022, the National Committee on Human Trafficking provided more than 20 trainings on preventing, identifying, reporting, investigating, and prosecuting human trafficking cases to police personnel and others in the government and private sector, including military attaches, airport security officers, labor inspectors, prosecutors, and hotel staff. (13)
Office of the Public Prosecutor	Investigates and prosecutes human trafficking and sexual exploitation cases with assistance from the Royal Oman Police. Maintains specialized interview rooms for child witnesses and assigns social workers to guide children through their interactions with the government. (16,17) During the reporting period, the government continued its prosecution of two foreign nationals suspected of exploiting a Pakistani child in prostitution under the Law to Combat Human Trafficking.

Labor Law Enforcement

In 2022, the government's labor law enforcement agencies appeared to function adequately in addressing child labor (Table 6).

Table 6. Labor Law Enforcement Efforts Related to Child Labor

Overview of Labor Law Enforcement	2021	2022
Labor Inspectorate Funding	Unknown (14)	Unknown
Number of Labor Inspectors	282 (18)	Unknown
Mechanism to Assess Civil Penalties	Yes (4,5,19)	Yes (4,5,19)
Training for Labor Inspectors Provided	Yes (18)	Unknown
Number of Labor Inspections Conducted at Worksites	Unknown (14)	Unknown
Number of Child Labor Violations Found	Unknown (14)	Unknown
Number of Child Labor Violations for Which Penalties Were Imposed	Unknown (14)	Unknown
Number of Child Labor Penalties Imposed that Were Collected	Unknown (14)	Unknown
Routine Inspections Conducted	Yes (14)	Unknown
Routine Inspections Targeted	Yes (14)	Unknown
Unannounced Inspections Permitted	Yes (19)	Yes (19)
Unannounced Inspections Conducted	Yes (14)	Unknown
Complaint Mechanism Exists	Yes (14)	Yes (14)
Reciprocal Referral Mechanism Exists Between Labor Authorities and Social Services	Yes (14)	Yes (14)

In 2022, the Ministry of Labor carried out labor inspections, including in sectors where child labor may be found such as street vending. (20,21) Additionally, the government did not provide labor law enforcement data for inclusion in this report.

Criminal Law Enforcement

In 2022, the government's criminal law enforcement agencies appeared to function adequately in addressing child labor (Table 7).

Table 7. Criminal Law Enforcement Efforts Related to Child Labor

Overview of Criminal Law Enforcement	2021	2022
Training for Criminal Investigators Provided	Yes (14)	Unknown
Number of Investigations	2 (22,23)	Unknown
Number of Prosecutions Initiated	2 (23,24)	Unknown
Number of Convictions	2 (22,23)	Unknown
Imposed Penalties for Violations Related to the Worst Forms of Child Labor	Yes (23,24)	Unknown
Reciprocal Referral Mechanism Exists Between Criminal Authorities and Social Services	Yes (14)	Yes

During the reporting period, the government continued its prosecution of two foreign nationals suspected of exploiting a Pakistani child in prostitution under the Law to Combat Human Trafficking. (16) Additionally, the government did not publish criminal law enforcement data for inclusion in this report.

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).

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

Coordinating Body	Role & Activities
National Child Protection Committee	Consists of representatives from MOSD, the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Education, and the Royal Oman Police. Receives complaints and reports of child labor and investigates reported cases to determine whether children are engaged in prohibited activities or whether working has negative effects on their health or education. Also refers children who are victims of abuse, neglect, or other related issues to social services, and works with UNICEF on several projects related to child protection. (3) Active in 2022. (25)

Oman additionally has a National Council on Combating Human trafficking (NCCHT), which consists of relevant government ministries, the Oman Human Rights Council, the Oman Chamber of Commerce, and the General Federation of Oman Workers. The NCCHT oversees the implementation of the National Action Plan for Combating Human Trafficking. (26)

V. GOVERNMENT POLICIES ON CHILD LABOR

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

Table 9. Key Policies Related to Child Labor

Policy	Description & Activities
National Action Plan for Combating Human Trafficking (2021–2023)	Aims to educate stakeholders on their rights and responsibilities, trains authorities on addressing human trafficking, coordinates government services for survivors, and develops new policies and best practices. In 2022, the government held events and trainings on human trafficking issues throughout the country. (27)

VI. SOCIAL PROGRAMS TO ADDRESS CHILD LABOR

In 2022, the government funded and participated in programs that include the goal of preventing child labor (Table 10).

Table 10. Key Social Programs to Address Child Labor

Program	Description & Activities
Social Security Cash Transfer Program†	Provides assistance to children in low-income families, including educational services. (14) Annual benefits under the program exceed \$278 million. In 2022, 73,790 individuals benefited from the program, including 2,300 orphans and 59,030 students. (25)
Dar al-Wifaq Shelter†	MOSD operates a shelter, Dar al Wifaq, for women and child victims of human trafficking; 15 of the shelter's beds are allocated for children. The shelter provides a number of services for victims of human trafficking that include psychological counseling, health care, and pro bono legal advocacy through the Lawyers Association. (13) In 2022, the shelter accommodated several child trafficking victims from Pakistan and Yemen. (13)

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 Oman.

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 Oman (Table 11).

Table 11. Suggested Government Actions to Eliminate Child Labor

Area	Suggested Action	Year(s) Suggested
Enforcement	Collect and publish data on labor and criminal law enforcement efforts taken to address child labor.	2013 – 2022
Social Programs	Collect and publish data on the extent and nature of child labor to inform policies and programs.	2017 – 2022

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