

In 2022, Senegal made moderate advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. In cooperation with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, the government developed and finalized new standard operating procedures on the identification and investigation of trafficking in persons cases. In an effort to prevent forced begging, the government also spent \$603,000 to assist over 10,934 children in Koranic schools, or *daaras*, that met basic standards of care and child protection. Finally, it coordinated with the international partners in the launch of the Programs to Counter Sex Trafficking in Kédougou. However, children in Senegal are subjected to the worst forms of child labor, including in commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking, and in forced begging. Children also perform dangerous tasks in gold mining. Hazardous work prohibitions do not include domestic work or street work, areas in which there is evidence of potential harm to child workers. In addition, Senegal does not have a current national action plan, or a national coordinating body for the elimination of child labor.



I. PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Table 1 provides key indicators on children's work and education in Senegal. 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	22.3 (Unavailable)
Attending School (%)	5 to 14	53.0
Combining Work and School (%)	7 to 14	13.9
Primary Completion Rate (%)		63.0

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 Demographic and Health Survey (DHS), 2015. (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	Fishing, activities unknown (3)
	Farming, including during harvest season (3)
Industry	Mining gold and iron, including washing ore, crushing rocks, using mercury, and carrying heavy loads† (3-5)
Services	Welding and auto repair (3,6)
	Domestic work (3,7)
	Street work, including vending (3)
Categorical Worst Forms of Child Labor‡	Forced labor in domestic work and gold mining (3,5,7-9)
	Commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking (3,5,7-9)
	Forced begging (3,4,8,10,11)

† 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.

Forced begging remains a significant problem in Senegal. (3,4,9) It is a traditional practice to send boys to Koranic schools called *daaras*, where students known as *talibés* receive a Koranic education from teachers known as

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marabouts. The traditional Islamic practice of asking for alms has in certain instances been corrupted, and some *daaras* force children to beg, often for long hours, to collect money to enrich the *marabouts*. (3,4,8,10,12) An estimated 100,000 *talibés* are subjected to forced begging, including over 30,000 in Dakar alone. (10) *Talibés* are often forced to live in overcrowded, unsanitary conditions, receive inadequate food and medical care, and are vulnerable to physical and sexual abuse. (3,4,10,11) Children from rural areas in Senegal and neighboring countries including The Gambia, Mali, Guinea-Bissau, and Guinea, are particularly vulnerable to this practice and are sometimes subjected to human trafficking. (3,8,10,13)




Children in Senegal are also exploited in domestic servitude and forced labor in gold mines and are subjected to commercial sexual exploitation. (3,7,8) Adolescent girls are often transported from other countries, including Nigeria, for the purpose of commercial sexual exploitation around the gold mines in Kédougou. Research shows that human traffickers often tell girls that they are going to Europe, then withhold their identity documents, and use debt bondage to force them into commercial sexual exploitation in Senegal. (3,5,7,8) Additionally, under a system known as *confiage*, Senegalese parents sometimes send their children, primarily young girls, to live with relatives or family friends to have better educational and economic opportunities, often in exchange for domestic labor. However, some girls are not sent to school, and are subjected to forced labor and sexual exploitation. (3,7-9)

While Senegalese law provides for free and compulsory education from ages 6 to 16, approximately one-third of children in this age group do not attend school. (14) In practice, only primary school is tuition-free, and supplementary fees are often charged for secondary school. (14,15) Other barriers to education include lack of birth registration documents, lack of schools and lack of access to transportation, and lack of accommodations for students with disabilities. (6,14,16) Poor sanitation infrastructure, including lack of running water and bathrooms, and sexual harassment in schools force some girls to leave school early. (14,17-19) According to one NGO, sexual harassment and abuse is widespread in secondary schools in Senegal. In certain cases, when girls attempted to reject their male teachers' advances, they were penalized with lower grades, and excluded from class activities. (14,17-19)

II. LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR CHILD LABOR

Senegal 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 Senegal's legal framework to adequately protect children from the worst forms of child labor, including the lack of prohibition of military recruitment by non-state armed groups.

Table 4. Laws and Regulations on Child Labor

Standard	Meets International Standards	Age	Legislation
Minimum Age for Work	Yes	15	Article L. 145 of the Labor Code; Article 6 of the Decree Establishing the Scale of Penalties for Violations of the Labor Code and Associated Rules for Application (20,21)
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work	Yes	18	Articles 1–3 of the Ministerial Order No. 3749 Determining and Prohibiting the Worst Forms of Child Labor; Article 1 of the Ministerial Order No. 3750 Determining the Types of Hazardous Work Prohibited for Children and Youth; Articles 1–3 of the Ministerial Order No. 3751 Determining the Categories of Business and Work Prohibited to Children and Youth (22-24)
Identification of Hazardous Occupations or Activities Prohibited for Children	Yes		Article 2 of the Ministerial Order No. 3749 Determining and Prohibiting the Worst Forms of Child Labor; Ministerial Order No. 3750 Determining the Types of Hazardous Work Prohibited to Children and Youth; Article 2 of the Ministerial Order No. 3751 Determining the Categories of Business and Work Prohibited to Children and Youth (22-24)
Prohibition of Forced Labor	Yes		Articles L. 4 and L. 279 of the Labor Code; Articles 2 and 4 of the Ministerial Order No. 3749 Determining and Prohibiting the Worst Forms of Child Labor; Articles 1 and 2 of the Law Concerning the Fight Against Trafficking in Persons and Similar Practices and the Protection of Victims (20,24,25)
Prohibition of Child Trafficking	Yes		Article 1 of the Law Concerning the Fight Against Trafficking in Persons and Similar Practices and the Protection of Victims (25)
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children	Yes		Article 2 of the Ministerial Order No. 3749 Determining and Prohibiting the Worst Forms of Child Labor; Articles 323 and 324 of the Penal Code (24,26)
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities	No		Article 2 of the Ministerial Order No. 3749 Determining and Prohibiting the Worst Forms of Child Labor (24)
Minimum Age for Voluntary State Military Recruitment	Yes	18	Article 19 of Law No. 2008-28 (27)
Prohibition of Compulsory Recruitment of Children by (State) Military	Yes		Article 19 of Law No. 70-23 on the Organization of National Defense; Law No. 2008-23.(27,28)
Prohibition of Military Recruitment by Non-state Armed Groups	No		
Compulsory Education Age	Yes	16	Article 3 of Law No. 2004-37 (29)
Free Public Education	Yes		Article 3 of Law No. 2004-37; Articles 21 and 22 of the Constitution (29,30)

Ministerial Order No. 3749 Determining and Prohibiting the Worst Forms of Child Labor bans the use of children in illicit activities, but neither this law, the Penal Code, nor the Labor Code define specific criminal penalties for this offense. (24-26) The 2005 anti-trafficking law criminalizes forced begging. However, Section 245 of the Penal Code provides that “the act of seeking alms on days, in places and under conditions established by religious traditions does not constitute the act of begging”, which makes it unclear whether forced begging under these religious traditions is criminally prohibited. (4,25,26) Furthermore, the types of hazardous work prohibited for children do not include domestic work or street work, areas in which there is evidence of potential harm, including sexual abuse, to child workers. (7,22,24) Because the minimum age for work is lower than the compulsory education age, children may be encouraged to leave school before the completion of compulsory education. (20,21,29)

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.

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Table 5. Agencies Responsible for Child Labor Law Enforcement

Organization/Agency	Role & Activities
Ministry of Labor, Social Dialogue, and Institutional Relations (MOL)	Identifies and investigates labor code violations, including child labor cases. (3,20) Empowered to refer criminal cases to the Police or Gendarmerie. (17)
Ministry of Justice (MOJ)	Responsible for the enforcement and prosecution of all criminal laws, including criminal violations of child labor laws. (3,31) Through its Criminal Affairs and Pardons Branch, collects information and statistics on criminal cases involving forced child labor, child trafficking, and the commercial sexual exploitation of children. (3,31)
Ministry of the Interior and Public Security	Oversees all law enforcement agencies, including police officials who investigate cases of human trafficking and forced child begging, and arrests perpetrators of the worst forms of child labor. Houses the Children's Unit, located in Dakar, which employs three officers who specialize in child protection, victim identification, and reintegration. (31) Through its Children's Unit, receives assistance from the Vice Squad in child protection cases. Through its Air and Border Police (<i>Police de l'air et des frontières</i>), focuses on migrant smuggling and transnational crimes. (31)

Labor Law Enforcement

In 2022, labor law enforcement agencies in Senegal took actions to address child labor (Table 6). However, gaps exist within the operations of enforcement agencies that may hinder adequate labor law enforcement, including the insufficient allocation of human resources.

Table 6. Labor Law Enforcement Efforts Related to Child Labor

Overview of Labor Law Enforcement	2021	2022
Labor Inspectorate Funding	Unknown (17)	Unknown (3)
Number of Labor Inspectors	68 (17)	Unknown (3)
Mechanism to Assess Civil Penalties	Yes (20)	Yes (20)
Training for Labor Inspectors Provided	Yes (17)	Yes (3)
Number of Labor Inspections Conducted at Worksite	Unknown (17)	Unknown (3)
Number of Child Labor Violations Found	0 (17)	0 (3)
Number of Child Labor Violations for Which Penalties Were Imposed	N/A (17)	N/A (3)
Number of Child Labor Penalties Imposed that Were Collected	N/A (17)	N/A (3)
Routine Inspections Conducted	Yes (17)	Yes (3)
Routine Inspections Targeted	Yes (17)	Yes (3)
Unannounced Inspections Permitted	Yes (20)	Yes (20)
Unannounced Inspections Conducted	Yes (17)	Yes (3)
Complaint Mechanism Exists	No (17)	No (3)
Reciprocal Referral Mechanism Exists Between Labor Authorities and Social Services	Yes (17)	Yes (3)

The labor inspectorate has assigned one inspector and one controller, who assists the labor inspector in their duties, to child labor cases. (17,20) While no new labor inspectors were hired in 2022, research was unable to confirm the total number of labor inspectors currently employed in Senegal. (3,32) While labor inspectors are allowed to conduct inspections in private homes and farms, where child labor is widespread, there were no inspections of these sites during the reporting period. (3) Anecdotal reports also indicate that there is a lack of child labor law enforcement in the informal sector, which employs the most children. Research suggests that the labor inspectorate only has sufficient funding to inspect the formal sector. (17) The Ministry of Labor, Social Dialogue, and Institutional Relations does not have a dedicated hotline or complaint mechanism to receive reports of child labor. (17)

Criminal Law Enforcement

In 2022, criminal law enforcement agencies in Senegal 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 insufficient training for criminal investigators.

Table 7. Criminal Law Enforcement Efforts Related to Child Labor

Overview of Criminal Law Enforcement	2021	2022
Training for Criminal Investigators Provided	Yes (17)	Yes (3,33)
Number of Investigations	Unknown	Unknown (3)
Number of Prosecutions Initiated	Unknown	Unknown (3)
Number of Convictions	Unknown	Unknown (3)
Imposed Penalties for Violations Related to the Worst Forms of Child Labor	Unknown	Unknown (3)
Reciprocal Referral Mechanism Exists Between Criminal Authorities and Social Services	Yes (17)	Yes (3)

In 2022, the government implemented new standard operating procedures (SOPs) for the identification and referral of trafficking cases. The government also held a 4-day training on the SOPs for agencies responsible for criminal law enforcement, including the Ministry of Justice and the Ministry of the Interior and Public Security (MOI). (3,9,33)

The authorities have had limited success in prosecuting cases related to forced begging due to a lack of government coordination, resource constraints, and lack of political support. (4,10,17,34,35) Judicial officials often drop, or reduce charges against Koranic teachers due to social and political pressures. (3,10) Although police stations in Senegal are expected to report cases involving children to MOI's Children's Unit, research found no evidence that this occurs regularly. Research was unable to determine how police stations handled cases that were not referred to the Children's Unit. (34) Many law enforcement and judicial personnel demonstrate insufficient understanding of Senegal's 2005 anti-trafficking law. Research also indicates that training for criminal investigators, which included content covering child labor laws and child protection, was cursory and insufficient to fully enforce existing laws protecting children against labor abuses. (3,8) The government's anti-trafficking database, Systraitte, collects law enforcement and victim protection data. It thus far has only been expanded to four regions, and the government has limited capacity to collect comprehensive criminal law enforcement data. (3,8,33,36,37)

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 the lack of an entity dedicated to coordinating efforts to address child labor.

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

Coordinating Body	Role & Activities
National Task Force Against Trafficking in Persons (CNLTP)	Leads efforts to address trafficking in persons, including child trafficking. (3,33) Housed under MOJ. Includes elected officials and representatives from the Ministry of Women, Family, Gender, and Child Protection, the National Police, and the Department of Social Services. (3,17,35) There are no representatives from MOL on the Task Force. (3) In 2022, in cooperation with UNODC, CNLTP developed standard operating procedures for the identification, investigation, and referral of cases concerning trafficking in persons. (9,33)

While various bodies coordinated efforts to address forced child begging and the commercial sexual exploitation of children, there is no comprehensive coordinating body dedicated to preventing and eliminating all worst forms of child labor, including in agriculture and domestic work. (17)

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 the lack of a national policy covering all worst forms of child labor.

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Table 9. Key Policies Related to Child Labor

Policy	Description & Activities
National Action Plan to Combat Trafficking in Human Beings (2021–2023)	Drafted and implemented by the National Task Force Against Trafficking in Persons (CNLTP). (3,17) Structured around four priority areas: (1) prevention; (2) protection and care of survivors; (3) pursuit; and (4) research, monitoring, evaluation, and partnerships. (38) Goals include raising awareness and advocating for legislation, conducting public awareness campaigns, improving the capacity of shelters and services for survivors, strengthening the capacity of criminal law enforcement and the judicial system, and improving regional cooperation. (38) In 2022, the government attended the Economic Community of West African States' annual summit on trafficking in persons; cooperated with INTERPOL in its activities to counter trafficking in persons; and coordinated with the U.S. Department of State and the African Programming and Research Initiative to End Slavery in efforts to address sex trafficking in the Kédougou region. (33)
National Strategy on Child Protection	Aims to strengthen child protection systems in Senegal. Organized around the pillars of prevention, care, and promotion of children's rights. (31) During the reporting year, the government, in coordination with the Child Protection Committee in the Dakar region, continued its program for the withdrawal and social reintegration of street children. (3)

Although Senegal has adopted national policies on trafficking in persons and child protection, research found no evidence of a comprehensive policy to address child labor and its worst forms.

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 inadequate programs to address the full scope of the problem.

Table 10. Key Social Programs to Address Child Labor

Program	Description & Activities
Removal and Socioeconomic Reintegration Program for Children in Street Situations†	\$47 million Government of Senegal-funded and operated program to oversee the removal and socioeconomic reintegration of street children, many of whom are victims of forced begging. (3) Provides assistance to <i>daaras</i> to curb forced begging. Aids child victims by returning them to their families, providing shelter in government-sponsored centers, or placing them in foster families. (3) During the reporting year, the government spent \$603,000 to assist over 10,934 children in <i>daaras</i> that met basic standards. (3) However, sometimes rehabilitated street children who are returned to their families end up again being subject to forced begging in <i>daaras</i> . (3,17,39)
Programs to Counter Sex Trafficking in Kédougou, Senegal, (2022–2024) *	Implemented by the African Programming and Research Initiative to End Slavery (APRIES) in partnership with Free the Slaves/La Lumière and the UNODC. Funded by the U.S. Department of State. (33,40) Aims to address sex trafficking of girls and women in the gold-producing Kédougou region by conducting prevalence research, and enhancing capacity for prevention, prosecution, and protection. (40) The project held a launch event in April 2022 that brought together representatives from CNLTP, UNODC, regional government officials, and other NGOs and civil society organizations. (41)
Centers and Shelters†	Includes the Ginddi Center, which serves abused and vulnerable children, including runaway <i>talibés</i> , street children, and child trafficking survivors. (6,8,13,35) Provides food, education, vocational training, family mediation, medical care, and psychological care in its shelter. (13,35) Supports a 24-hour toll-free hotline staffed by French, Wolof, and Pular speakers, which allows for anonymous reporting of cases of child trafficking and/or labor abuse. (3,8,13) Additionally, MOJ-run transit houses in Dakar, Pikine, and Saint-Louis provide monitoring, education, rehabilitation, and reintegration services for survivors of child trafficking. (6,8,31) During the reporting period, the government continued to operate these shelters. (3,8,33) Space constraints at the Ginddi Center limited the number of children that could receive care. In addition, limited shelter services outside of Dakar meant that trafficking survivors, including children, often received care from NGOs rather than the government. (8)

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 Senegal.

* Program was launched during the reporting period.

Although the Government of Senegal has implemented programs to address child trafficking and forced begging, research found no evidence that the government has carried out programs to assist children involved in domestic work, agriculture, or mining. (17)

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 Senegal (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 by non-state armed groups.	2016 – 2022
	Establish criminal penalties for the use of children in illicit activities.	2021 – 2022
	Clarify forced begging provisions in the Penal Code and the Law Concerning the Fight Against Trafficking in Persons to explicitly prohibit forced begging, including alms-seeking, under any circumstances.	2017 – 2022
	Ensure that the hazardous occupations and activities prohibited for children are comprehensive and include sectors in which child labor is known to occur and there are risks of sexual abuse, including street work and domestic work.	2016 – 2022
	Raise the minimum age for work from 15 to 16 to align with the compulsory education age.	2018 – 2022
Enforcement	Publish all relevant information on labor inspectorate funding, training conducted, and the number of inspections conducted at worksites.	2013 – 2022
	Establish a mechanism to receive child labor complaints, and track cases of child labor for referral to law enforcement or social services providers.	2014 – 2022
	Provide adequate labor inspectorate funding, employ at least 119 labor inspectors to provide adequate coverage of the labor force of approximately 4.8 million people, provide for publication the number of labor inspectors employed, and ensure that cases of child labor are formally reported.	2010 – 2022
	Ensure that labor inspections and enforcement are carried out in the informal sector, including in private homes and farms.	2014 – 2022
	Publish criminal law enforcement information on the worst forms of child labor, including the number of investigations, violations, and prosecutions, or if penalties were imposed.	2020 – 2022
	Ensure that courts have sufficient resources and coordination to be able to successfully prosecute cases.	2019 – 2022
	Ensure that criminal cases involving child victims are referred to the Ministry of the Interior and Public Security's Children's Unit.	2021 – 2022
	Ensure that training for criminal investigators adequately addresses issues related to the worst forms of child labor in Senegal.	2019 – 2022
Coordination	Establish coordinating mechanisms to prevent and eliminate child labor.	2021 – 2022
	Ensure the Ministry of Labor's participation in the National Task Force Against Trafficking in Persons.	2022
Government Policies	Adopt a national policy to address child labor.	2016 – 2022
Social Programs	Ensure that all children have access to education by eliminating school-related fees, increasing access to transportation, building additional schools, improving school infrastructure and sanitation, ensuring access for students with disabilities, providing all children with access to birth registration, and protecting children in schools from sexual harassment and abuse.	2011 – 2022
	Institute programs to address child labor in domestic work, agriculture, and mining.	2010 – 2022
	Ensure that shelter services are adequate to provide protective care to survivors of child trafficking and the worst forms of child labor.	2022
	Conduct education and awareness-raising activities among families of rescued street children to ensure children are not returned to forced begging.	2021 – 2022

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