

In 2022, the Solomon Islands made moderate advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. The Government of the Solomon Islands ratified the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography and the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict. A national survey on the state of inclusive education was also conducted and a new national education action plan was launched. However, children in the Solomon Islands are subjected to the worst forms of child labor, including in commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking. Research shows that children are also involved in the harvesting of palm oil fruits. The minimum age for work of 12 years does not meet the international standard of 14 years, and the Solomon Islands has not established a minimum age for hazardous work or delineated the types of work considered hazardous for children. Furthermore, there is no law that makes education compulsory, which increases children's vulnerability to child labor. The government also did not publish labor and criminal law enforcement data for the reporting year.



I. PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Table 1 provides key indicators on children's work and education in the Solomon Islands. 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 (%)		85.7

Source for primary completion rate: Data from 2019, published by UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2023. (1)
Data were unavailable from International Labor Organization'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	Working on plantations, including harvesting palm oil fruits (3,4)
	Harvesting of seafood, including deep-sea diving (3,4)
Industry	Alluvial mining† (3,4)
	Furniture construction (3,4)
	Construction on roads and buildings (3,4)
Services	Domestic work, including working as cooks (3,4)
	Working in nightclubs, casinos, and motels (5)
Categorical Worst Forms of Child Labor‡	Commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking (5-7)
	Forced harvesting of seafood (5)
	Use in illicit activities, including in the cultivation and trafficking of drugs (5)
	Forced domestic work, including working as cooks (5)
	Forced pickpocketing (5)

† 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.

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In the Solomon Islands, the commercial sexual exploitation of both boys and girls is prevalent near logging camps; near or aboard fishing vessels; and at hotels, casinos, and entertainment establishments. (5,6) Children also are forced to assist in manufacturing and transporting drugs. (5) Children in the country are vulnerable to forced labor in the agriculture sector, including on palm oil plantations, and in the harvesting of seafood. (3,5)

In 2022, the Government of the Solomon Islands, in partnership with UNICEF, conducted a national survey on the state of inclusive education. (8,9) This survey found that only a small number of schools nationwide have classrooms that are accessible and safe for people with disabilities, and only about half of schools have sanitation facilities that are accessible and safe for all. (9) Furthermore, although there is a Fee-Free Basic Education Policy, which provides free education up to grade nine, research revealed that the policy was not implemented and the Minister of Education and Human Resource Development asked parents to pay school fees. (10) In addition, teacher absenteeism and transportation limitations also make it challenging for some children to access education. (11,12) There are no nationally representative data available on the prevalence and nature of child labor in the Solomon Islands. Research found no evidence that the government funded or participated in social programs that include the goal of preventing or eliminating child labor.

II. LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR CHILD LABOR

The Solomon Islands has ratified most 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	

In 2022, the Government of the Solomon Island ratified the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography. (13) It also ratified The Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict (OPAC) in early 2023. (13,14)

The government has established laws and regulations related to child labor (Table 4). However, gaps exist in the Solomon Islands' legal framework to adequately protect children from the worst forms of child labor, including the lack of a minimum age for hazardous work.

Table 4. Laws and Regulations on Child Labor

Standard	Meets International Standards	Age	Legislation
Minimum Age for Work	No	12	Article 46 of the Labor Act (15)
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work	No		Articles 47–49 of the Labor Act. (15)
Identification of Hazardous Occupations or Activities Prohibited for Children	No		Articles 47–49 of the Labor Act (15)
Prohibition of Forced Labor	Yes		Article 6 of the Constitution; Articles 251 and 256 of the Penal Code; Articles 70–79 of the Immigration Act (16,17)
Prohibition of Child Trafficking	No		Articles 70–79 of the Immigration Act; Article 145 of the Penal Code (17,18)

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

Standard	Meets International Standards	Age	Legislation
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children	Yes		Articles 136, 141, 143, and 144 of the Penal Code (17)
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities	No		
Minimum Age for Voluntary State Military Recruitment	N/A†		
Prohibition of Compulsory Recruitment of Children by (State) Military	N/A†		
Prohibition of Military Recruitment by Non-state Armed Groups	No		
Compulsory Education Age	No		
Free Public Education	No		

† Country has no standing military (19)

The Solomon Islands' minimum age for work, 12, is not in compliance with international standards. (15) Additionally, although the Labor Act prohibits all children under age 18 from working at night and regulates work in mines and on ships, it does not clearly establish a minimum age for hazardous work or delineate the types of work considered hazardous for all children. (6,15) The legal framework also does not prohibit dangerous work in scavenging or in agricultural activities for which there is evidence of children being exposed to injuries, extreme temperatures, and chemicals. (15,4) The Penal Code includes heightened penalties if an offense is committed against a child, but has insufficient prohibitions against child trafficking because the transfer of children is not criminalized. (17,20) Furthermore, the law also does not criminally prohibit the use of children in illicit activities. (11) Finally, education is not compulsory, which increases children's vulnerability to child labor exploitation, and there are no laws that provide free basic education. (10,21)

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. Additionally, research found no evidence that law enforcement agencies in the Solomon Islands took actions to address child labor.

Table 5. Agencies Responsible for Child Labor Law Enforcement

Organization/Agency	Role & Activities
Ministry of Commerce, Industry, Labor and Immigration (MCILI)	Enforces child labor laws. (11,12) Through its Immigration Division, leads efforts to address human trafficking, including the trafficking of children. (4,22)
Royal Solomon Islands Police	Enforce criminal laws against the worst forms of child labor. (12) Jointly investigate human trafficking cases along with the Solomon Islands Immigration Division. (23)

Labor Law Enforcement

Research did not find information on whether labor law enforcement agencies in the Solomon Islands took actions to address 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 (4)	Unknown (24)
Number of Labor Inspectors	Unknown (4)	Unknown (24)
Mechanism to Assess Civil Penalties	Yes (15)	Yes (15)
Training for Labor Inspectors Provided	Unknown (4)	Unknown (24)
Number of Labor Inspections Conducted at Worksite	Unknown (4)	Unknown (24)

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

Overview of Labor Law Enforcement	2021	2022
Number of Child Labor Violations Found	Unknown (4)	Unknown (24)
Number of Child Labor Violations for Which Penalties Were Imposed	Unknown (4)	Unknown (24)
Number of Child Labor Penalties Imposed that Were Collected	Unknown (4)	Unknown (24)
Routine Inspections Conducted	Unknown (4)	Unknown (24)
Routine Inspections Targeted	Unknown (4)	Unknown (24)
Unannounced Inspections Permitted	Yes (15)	Yes (15)
Unannounced Inspections Conducted	Yes (4)	Unknown (24)
Complaint Mechanism Exists	Yes (4)	Yes (4)
Reciprocal Referral Mechanism Exists Between Labor Authorities and Social Services	Unknown (4)	Unknown (24)

The Government of the Solomon Islands did not respond to requests for information related to its labor law enforcement efforts for inclusion in this report. (24) Insufficient resources likely hamper the labor inspectorate’s capacity to enforce child labor laws. (4,21) While the number of labor inspectors is unknown, research indicates that the Solomon Islands does not have an adequate number of labor inspectors to carry out their mandated duties. (11,25)

Criminal Law Enforcement

Research did not find information on whether criminal law enforcement agencies in the Solomon Islands took actions to address 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	Unknown (4)	Unknown (24)
Number of Investigations	Unknown (4)	Unknown (24)
Number of Prosecutions Initiated	Unknown (4)	Unknown (24)
Number of Convictions	Unknown (4)	Unknown (24)
Imposed Penalties for Violations Related to the Worst Forms of Child Labor	Unknown (4)	Unknown (24)
Reciprocal Referral Mechanism Exists Between Criminal Authorities and Social Services	Unknown (4)	Unknown (24)

The Government of the Solomon Islands did not respond to requests for information related to its criminal law enforcement efforts for inclusion in this report. (24)

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 lack of efficacy in accomplishing mandates.

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

Coordinating Body	Role & Activities
National Advisory and Action Committee on Children (NAACC)	Coordinates the government and NGOs to address child trafficking and commercial sexual exploitation of children. (27) Comprises representatives from several ministries, including the Ministry of Women, Youth, Children and Family Affairs; MCILL; and the Ministry of Home Affairs. Several NGOs participate, including Save the Children, UNICEF, and WHO. (27) Research was unable to determine whether NAACC was active during the reporting period.

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 coverage of all worst forms of child labor.

Table 9. Key Policies Related to Child Labor

Policy	Description & Activities
National Education Action Plan (2022–2026)†	Outlines key priorities and strategies to achieve the nation's educational goals. (28)
National Action Plan Against Human Trafficking and People Smuggling (2020–2025)	Establishes a coordinated effort to eliminate human trafficking and people smuggling on the Solomon Islands. Led by the Anti-Human Trafficking Advisory Committee. (26,29) Research was unable to determine whether activities were undertaken to implement the National Action Plan during the reporting period.
United Nations Pacific Strategy (2018–2022)	Multinational strategic framework, comprising 14 South Pacific nations, created to address, develop, and implement strategic economic development priorities in the South Pacific, including eliminating the worst forms of child labor. (30) Research was unable to determine what actions were taken to implement the United Nations Pacific Strategy during the reporting period.

† Policy was launched during the reporting period.

Although the Solomon Islands has adopted the National Action Plan Against Human Trafficking and People Smuggling, research found no evidence of a policy on other worst forms of child labor.

VI. SOCIAL PROGRAMS TO ADDRESS CHILD LABOR

Research found no evidence that the government funded or participated in social programs that include the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor.

For information about USDOL's projects to address child labor around the world, visit <https://www.dol.gov/agencies/ilab/ilab-project-page-search>

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 the Solomon Islands (Table 10).

Table 10. Suggested Government Actions to Eliminate Child Labor

Area	Suggested Action	Year(s) Suggested
Legal Framework	Ratify the Palermo Protocol on Trafficking in Persons.	2014 – 2022
	Raise the minimum age for employment to comply with international standards.	2009 – 2022
	Establish age 18 as the minimum age for hazardous work.	2009 – 2022
	Determine the types of hazardous work prohibited for children, including the types of work for which there is evidence of hazards, such as in scavenging and agriculture.	2009 – 2022
	Establish by law a compulsory age of education that aligns with the international standard for the minimum age for employment.	2009 – 2022
	Ensure that the law criminally prohibits the transfer of children for the purpose of child trafficking.	2016 – 2022
	Ensure that the law criminally prohibits using, procuring, and offering a child for illicit activities, including in the production and trafficking of drugs.	2011 – 2022
	Ensure that the law criminally prohibits the recruitment of children under age 18 by non-state armed groups.	2016 – 2022
Enforcement	Establish by law free basic public education.	2018 – 2022
	Publish information on child labor law enforcement efforts undertaken, including labor inspectorate funding, the number and type of labor inspections conducted, violations found, information about the training system for labor inspectors, and penalties imposed and collected.	2009 – 2022
	Publish information on criminal law enforcement efforts undertaken, including the number of child labor investigations initiated, the number of prosecutions initiated, the number of convictions secured, and the sentences imposed.	2009 – 2022
	Publish data about reciprocal referral mechanisms between labor and criminal authorities and social services.	2021 – 2022
	Employ at least 9 labor inspectors to ensure adequate coverage of the labor force of approximately 369,000 people.	2020 – 2022
	Publish information about child labor-related training for labor inspectors and criminal investigators.	2021 – 2022
Ensure that the labor inspectorate has sufficient resources to enforce child labor laws.	2022	

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Table 10. Suggested Government Actions to Eliminate Child Labor (Cont.)

Area	Suggested Action	Year(s) Suggested
Coordination	Ensure that the National Advisory Action Committee on Children is able to successfully coordinate government and NGO efforts to address child trafficking and commercial sexual exploitation of children and publish information regarding the Committee's efforts.	2020 – 2022
Government Policies	Adopt a policy that incorporates eliminating child labor and the worst forms of child labor as an objective.	2016 – 2022
	Publish activities undertaken to implement the United Nations Pacific Strategy and the National Action Plan Against Human Trafficking and People Smuggling.	2018 – 2022
Social Programs	Establish and participate in programs to prevent, address, and eliminate child labor.	2018 – 2022
	Collect and publish data on the extent and nature of child labor to inform policies and programs.	2013 – 2022
	Eliminate barriers to basic education, including by eliminating school-related fees and teacher absenteeism, improving access to school transportation, and by ensuring that all schools are equipped with proper sanitation facilities and are accessible for students with disabilities.	2014 – 2022

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