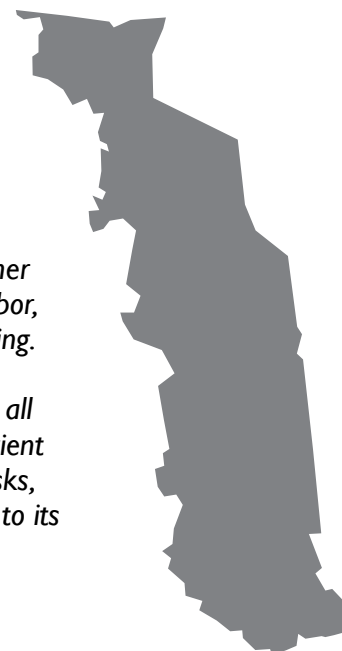


In 2022, Togo made moderate advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. The government launched the Savanes Emergency Plan, which by strengthening education access and social welfare in the areas of the north affected by violent extremism, also addresses poverty, conflict, and lack of educational access as root causes of child labor. Meanwhile, the Safety Nets and Basic Services Project provided meals to school children in vulnerable communities and expanded unconditional cash transfers to 83,681 program participants. Furthermore, Togo eliminated fees for birth certificates, which may improve access to education and other social services. However, children in Togo are subjected to the worst forms of child labor, including in commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking. Children also perform dangerous tasks in domestic work. The government has not devoted sufficient resources to allow the labor inspectorate to conduct inspections in all sectors and fully enforce the law. In addition, hazardous work regulations are insufficient because they allow children as young as 15 to perform some types of hazardous tasks, including carrying heavy loads. Finally, the government does not publish data related to its criminal enforcement efforts with regard to laws on the worst forms of child labor.



## I. PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Table 1 provides key indicators on children's work and education in Togo. 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	44.4 (Unavailable)
Attending School (%)	5 to 14	89.0
Combining Work and School (%)	7 to 14	50.4
Primary Completion Rate (%)		94.0

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 Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 6 (MICS 6), 2017. (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 in agriculture, including spraying pesticides† and handling fertilizers† (3) Herding animals (3,4)
Industry	Working in gravel quarries and sand mines, including excavating and carrying heavy loads† (3-5) Construction (6) Production of charcoal (3)
Services	Domestic work† (3,7) Begging and working as vendors and porters in the markets, sometimes carrying heavy loads† (2,3,5,6) Work as motorcycle repairmen (6,8,9) Garbage scavenging (6,8) Working at restaurants, sometimes at night (3,10)
Categorical Worst Forms of Child Labor‡	Forced begging (5,8,11) Commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking (3,11,12) Forced labor in agriculture, including in the production of coffee, cocoa, and cotton; in mining; in mechanic shops; in domestic work; in quarries; and in markets (7,11-13) Use in illicit activities, including the transportation and sale of drugs, sometimes as a result of human trafficking (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.

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Togo is a source, transit, and destination country for child trafficking. Children from Benin and Ghana are trafficked to Togo for forced labor, including commercial sexual exploitation, while Togolese children are often trafficked to neighboring West African countries, where they are subjected to commercial sexual exploitation and forced labor in agriculture and domestic work. (11,12,14) Children are also trafficked within Togo, primarily for domestic work, work in agriculture and markets, and commercial sexual exploitation. (15,16) The rural areas in central and northern Togo are major source regions for child trafficking. Traffickers illicitly and deceptively recruit children by promising impoverished parents lucrative employment for their children. (11,12,17) In addition, in a practice known as *confiage*, parents sometimes send their children to live with a friend or relative in a larger town or city. These children are often not sent to school and are subjected to labor exploitation and sexual abuse. (3,7,13,18) Research suggests that the economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic in Togo may have led to an increase in children subjected to labor and sexual exploitation in recent years. (3)

While free public primary education is guaranteed under Togolese law, due to funding shortages, some primary schools charge supplemental fees to pay volunteer teachers not employed directly by the government. (19) Free education is not yet guaranteed at the secondary level. As a result, there is a significant decline in school enrollment between primary and secondary school, leaving children vulnerable to child labor. (20,21) In 2022, for the second year in a row, the government announced that school fees would not be collected for public secondary schools for the 2022–2023 academic year. (10,22,23) Even when school fees are not charged, associated costs—including uniforms, books, and school supplies—make education prohibitively expensive for many families. (15,19,24) Research found that insufficient numbers of schools; poor school infrastructure, including inadequate sanitation and lack of access to toilets and water; physical and sexual violence; and long travel distances to school pose additional barriers for some children, especially in rural areas. (3,19,20,25) In northern Togo, in the Savanes region, the government issued a state of security emergency in June 2022 due to terrorist threats. Additionally, seasonal floods ruined crops, resulting in internal displacement and increased child vulnerability. (11) The government closed several schools due to the security crisis. Moreover, both refugees and internally-displaced people face difficulty registering children for school due to lack of identity documents. (3) In early 2022, however, the government eliminated fees for birth registration. This initiative addresses a barrier to education, and thus may ultimately reduce children's vulnerability to labor exploitation. (3,26)

## II. LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR CHILD LABOR

Togo 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 Togo's legal framework to adequately protect children from the worst forms of child labor, including the lack of guaranteed free basic education.

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

Standard	Meets International Standards	Age	Legislation
Minimum Age for Work	Yes	15	Articles 192, 193, and 354 of the Labor Code; Article 262 of the Children's Code; Article 881.1a of the Penal Code (27-29)
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work	Yes	18	Articles 2, 192, 193, and 354 of the Labor Code; Arrêté 1556 Determining Dangerous Work Forbidden for Children (28,30)
Identification of Hazardous Occupations or Activities Prohibited for Children	Yes		Articles 2, 263, and 264 of the Children's Code; Article 319.9 of the Penal Code; Articles 192 and 193 of the Labor Code; Articles 1–11 and annex of Arrêté 1556 Determining Dangerous Work Forbidden for Children (27-30)
Prohibition of Forced Labor	Yes		Articles 7, 19, and 192 of the Labor Code; Articles 2, 264, and 411 of the Children's Code; Articles 150.3 and 151 of the Penal Code (27-29)
Prohibition of Child Trafficking	Yes		Articles 192 and 356 of the Labor Code; Articles 2–6 and 10-11 of Law No. 2005-009 Suppressing Child Trafficking in Togo; Articles 2, 264, and 411–414 of the Children's Code; Articles 150.3, 151, 317–323, and 882 of the Penal Code (27-29,31)
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children	Yes		Article 192 of the Labor Code; Articles 264, 276.f, and 387–390 of the Children's Code; Article 224 of the Penal Code (27-29)
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities	Yes		Articles 192 and 356 of the Labor Code; Articles 2, 264, 276.i, and 405 of the Children's Code; Articles 317.7, 318, 319, and 329 of the Penal Code (27-29)
Minimum Age for Voluntary State Military Recruitment	Yes	18	Article 426 of the Children's Code; Article 6, 7, and 42 of Law No. 2007-010 Regarding the General Statute of the Togolese Armed Forces (27,32)
Prohibition of Compulsory Recruitment of Children by (State) Military	Yes*		Articles 2 and 426 of the Children's Code; Articles 146.14, 147.11, and 342 of the Penal Code (27,29)
Prohibition of Military Recruitment by Non-state Armed Groups	Yes		Articles 2 and 426 of the Children's Code; Articles 146.14, 147.11, and 342 of the Penal Code (27,29)
Compulsory Education Age	Yes	15	Article 35 of the Constitution; Article 255 of the Children's Code (27,33)
Free Public Education	No		Article 35 of the Constitution; Law No. 97-16 For the Creation of a Support Fund for Education; Décret 2008-129/PR for the Abolition of School Fees in Pre-Primary and Primary Schools (33-35)

\* Country has no conscription (32)

While Togo's Arrêté 1556 prohibits several types of hazardous work for children under age 18, it still permits children as young as age 15 to perform some hazardous tasks, such as transporting heavy loads. This permission violates Article 3(3) of Convention 138, which permits children as young as age 16 (but not age 15) to perform hazardous tasks as long as their health, safety, and morals are fully protected, and they receive adequate training. (30,34,35) In addition, the law provides for free schooling only through primary school, while basic education is a total of 9 years and includes 3 years of lower secondary school. The failure to provide for complete free basic education may increase the risk of children's involvement in the worst forms of child labor. (33-36)

### 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 Civil Service, Labor, and Social Dialogue	Conducts labor inspections and enforces labor laws, including child labor laws. (10) Runs a Committee for Social Reintegration of Children, which coordinates efforts on child trafficking. (3) Through its National Cell for the Elimination of Child Labor, coordinates the day-to-day operations of the National Steering Committee to Combat Child Labor, withdraws children from child labor situations, raises awareness, and collects data. (3,37)

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**Table 5. Agencies Responsible for Child Labor Law Enforcement (Cont.)**

Organization/Agency	Role & Activities
Ministry of Justice and Government Relations	Enforces criminal laws related to the worst forms of child labor and prosecutes violators. (3,10)
Ministry of Security's General Directorate of Judicial Police	Investigates crimes involving child victims, including child trafficking. Operates as part of the National Police in all five regions of Togo. (10,15,38)

### Labor Law Enforcement

In 2022, labor law enforcement agencies in Togo took actions to address child labor (Table 6). However, gaps exist within the operations of the Ministry of Civil Service, Labor, and Social Dialogue 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	\$39,061 (10)	\$62,683 (3)
Number of Labor Inspectors	123 (10)	125 (3)
Mechanism to Assess Civil Penalties	Yes (28)	Yes (28)
Training for Labor Inspectors Provided	No (10)	Yes (3)
Number of Labor Inspections Conducted at Worksite	Unknown (10)	906 (3)
Number of Child Labor Violations Found	Unknown (10)	21 (3)
Number of Child Labor Violations for Which Penalties Were Imposed	Unknown (10)	Unknown (3)
Number of Child Labor Penalties Imposed that Were Collected	Unknown (10)	Unknown (3)
Routine Inspections Conducted	Yes (10)	Yes (3)
Routine Inspections Targeted	Unknown (10)	Unknown (3)
Unannounced Inspections Permitted	Yes (28)	Yes (28)
Unannounced Inspections Conducted	Yes (10)	Yes (3)
Complaint Mechanism Exists	Yes (10)	Yes (3)
Reciprocal Referral Mechanism Exists Between Labor Authorities and Social Services	Yes (10)	Yes (3)

The Ministry of Civil Service, Labor, and Social Dialogue lacks sufficient resources for fuel and transportation, which may hinder its ability to conduct inspections. (3) Routine inspections were conducted in the formal sector; however, the majority of child labor occurs in the informal sector, in which inspectors are legally allowed to inspect but rarely do. (6,39) Although they are legally permitted to do so, inspectors did not inspect private farms or homes, in which children work in agriculture and domestic work. (3,28,40) While a mechanism exists to refer survivors of child labor to social services, during the reporting year, social assistance was not provided in the 21 cases of child labor found by labor inspectors. (3)

### Criminal Law Enforcement

In 2022, criminal law enforcement agencies in Togo 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 deficient structures for investigation and prosecution planning.

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

Overview of Criminal Law Enforcement	2021	2022
Training for Criminal Investigators Provided	Yes (10)	Yes (11)
Number of Investigations	Unknown (10)	Unknown (3)
Number of Prosecutions Initiated	Unknown (10)	Unknown (3)
Number of Convictions	Unknown (10)	Unknown (3)
Imposed Penalties for Violations Related to the Worst Forms of Child Labor	Unknown (10)	Unknown (3)
Reciprocal Referral Mechanism Exists Between Criminal Authorities and Social Services	Yes (10)	Yes (3)

In June 2022, 80 law enforcement and judicial actors attended trainings on trafficking in persons. (11) In December 2022, criminal law enforcement arrested a seamstress in Sokode, Central Region, for subjecting five apprentices, all girls, to commercial sexual exploitation and forced labor as waitresses in her bar at night. (3)

While there is a referral mechanism between criminal law enforcement and social services, shortcomings exist in the coordination between police, social workers, and the justice system during the prosecution process. (12,16) Research suggests that the absence of trafficking focal points for trafficking issues within the Gendarmerie and Ministry of Interior was a barrier to effective coordination of law enforcement. (12) Assize Courts in Lomé and Kara handle all human trafficking cases, but research indicates that the courts are overburdened and slow, which deters victims from participating. (11,12,16) In addition, investigators lacked resources to adequately enforce the law. (3,10) Research indicates that trafficking survivors are often reluctant to testify or assist with prosecution because their family members were complicit in the trafficking case. (16) Cases involving child trafficking may be settled outside of court due to difficulties gathering evidence. Also, Ministry of Justice officials may be reluctant to impose fines or prison sentences in cases in which parents are involved due to a fear of perpetuating the poverty that originally led the parents to violate child trafficking laws. (5,15,40)

#### 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). However, gaps exist that hinder the effective coordination of efforts to address child labor, including insufficient allocation of financial resources.

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

Coordinating Body	Role & Activities
National Steering Committee to Combat Child Labor	Serves as the coordinating government body for child labor issues. Includes representatives from 17 ministries and NGOs. (3) Was active during the reporting period reviewing and promoting the 2020–2024 National Action Plan for the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labor. (3)

The National Committee for the Reception and Social Reintegration of Child Victims of Trafficking gathers data on child trafficking and coordinates protection for survivors. The committee is housed under the Ministry of Labor and includes representatives from the Ministries of Justice, Health, Security, and Foreign Affairs. (16) Research suggests that despite receiving funds from the ILO, UNICEF, and Expertise France, the committee faced operational challenges due to lack of financial resources. (16) In 2022, the committee held training workshops on trafficking in persons for local elected officials in the Savanes, Kara, and Plateau regions. (11) In addition, the National Commission Against Trafficking in Persons, created in 2021, has a mandate to coordinate government-wide efforts to address child trafficking. (12) In 2022, the government appointed 13 officials to serve as members of the Commission, including the Ministry of Social Action's Director-General of Child Protection as the chair. (11)

#### 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 incorporation of child labor prevention and elimination strategies into the National Education Plan.

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

Policy	Description & Activities
National Action Plan for the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labor (2020–2024)	Taking a multisectoral approach, aims to take into account the formal and informal economies in the effort to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. (4,15,35) During the reporting period, the government carried out awareness-raising activities for the plan in all five regions of the country. (3)
Savanes Emergency Plan, 2022–2025 ( <i>Programme d'Urgence pour les Savanes</i> )†	Aims to strengthen community resilience in communities affected by violent extremism and terrorist attacks in the northern region. Activities include strengthening access to quality education and social welfare. (3) During the reporting period, the government established and began implementing this policy. (3)

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**Table 9. Key Policies Related to Child Labor (Cont.)**

Policy	Description & Activities
Trilateral Agreement to Combat Child Trafficking	Trilateral agreement between the Governments of Togo, Benin, and Burkina Faso to address child trafficking. Lays out specific responsibilities for origin, transit, and destination countries and aims for enhanced border controls and regional coordination (6,16,41) In December 2022, Togo cooperated with the Governments of Burkina Faso and Benin, as well as that of Côte d'Ivoire, on a joint operation that resulted in the arrest of 15 suspected traffickers and the release and reintegration of 90 child trafficking survivors. (42)

† Policy was approved during the reporting period.

While the Education Sector Plan (2020–2030) does not directly address eliminating child labor, it includes efforts to stimulate demand for education, including targeting localities where school access and retention are weak, especially for girls. It also proposes the gradual expansion of free lower secondary education for all students, and free upper secondary education for girls. (19,35)

## VI. SOCIAL PROGRAMS TO ADDRESS CHILD LABOR

In 2022, the government funded and participated in programs that may contribute to 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
Reference Center for Guidance and Care of Children in Difficult Situations	Ministry of Social Action, Promotion of Women, and Literacy (MASPFA)-run shelter in Lomé that receives child trafficking and child labor survivors referred through Allô 1011, a MASPFA-run hotline that receives reports of child abuse, including child trafficking. Provides shelter as well as legal, medical, psychological, and social services. (16) During the reporting year, the shelter received and provided services to survivors of child trafficking and child labor. (12)
Program of Cooperation UNICEF/Togo, 2019–2023	Aims to enhance child survival, education and development, child protection, and social inclusion in Togo. Includes efforts to reduce child vulnerability to exploitation, including by enhancing access to education, especially for girls. (43) During the reporting year, UNICEF coordinated with the government to identify and refer 186,190 children with undeclared births for registration. (26)
World Bank-Funded Programs	Aim to address child labor by improving social safety nets for vulnerable families and by increasing access to education. The Safety Nets and Basic Services Project, a \$29 million project implemented by MASPFA and the Ministry of Grassroots Development, aims to provide social safety nets to poor communities. (10,44) During the reporting period, the program expanded unconditional cash transfers to 83,681 program participants and provided meals to schoolchildren in vulnerable communities. (44) The Improving Quality and Equity of Basic Education Project (2020–2026) aims to enhance teaching and learning quality, to improve equitable access to basic education in select regions, particularly among girls, and to strengthen sector management. (21) During the reporting period, the program provided training for educators, carried out activities supporting the reproduction and distribution of textbooks, and completed preparatory activities for school construction in the Savanes and Kara regions. (45)

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

‡ The government had other social programs that may have included the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor. (16)

Social programs focus on alleviating poverty and promoting education rather than targeting specific sectors of child labor, such as domestic work, commercial sexual exploitation, and agriculture. The government relies heavily on NGOs and international organizations for the implementation of social programs. (3,10)

## 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 Togo (Table 11).

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

Area	Suggested Action	Year(s) Suggested
Legal Framework	Raise the minimum age for all types of hazardous work from age 15 to age 16, and ensure that children under age 18 who are engaged in hazardous work receive adequate training in the type of work being done and that the health, safety, and morals of the child are protected in accordance with international standards.	2020 – 2022
	Establish by law free basic education, including lower secondary education.	2021 – 2022
Enforcement	Ensure that labor inspectors have adequate resources, including fuel and transportation, to carry out inspections and monitoring of labor laws.	2009 – 2022
	Conduct labor inspections in the informal sector as well as private homes and farms, in which children work in agriculture and domestic work.	2021 – 2022
	Publish information on labor law enforcement efforts, including the targeting of routine inspections and numbers of child labor violations for which penalties were imposed and collected.	2021 – 2022
	Ensure that labor inspectors refer all cases of child labor found in labor inspections to social services.	2022
	Publish data on criminal law enforcement efforts, including the number of investigations conducted, criminal violations found, prosecutions initiated, convictions obtained, and penalties imposed for the worst forms of child labor.	2010 – 2022
	Ensure that criminal investigators have adequate resources to enforce laws against child labor.	2017 – 2022
	Investigate, prosecute, and impose penalties for convictions related to the worst forms of child labor.	2014 – 2022
	Ensure that court system processes for addressing child trafficking are timely so as not to deter victims from reporting.	2020 – 2022
	Ensure effective coordination between the criminal justice system and social services to allow survivors to receive adequate support during judicial proceedings.	2021 – 2022
Coordination	Ensure that the National Committee for the Reception and Social Reintegration of Child Victims of Trafficking receives adequate funding.	2021 – 2022
Government Policies	Integrate child labor elimination and prevention strategies into the Education Sector Plan.	2013 – 2022
Social Programs	Increase access to education by eliminating school-related fees; ensuring that schools are free from sexual and physical violence; increasing the number of schools; enhancing access to birth registration, including for displaced children; and improving school infrastructure and transportation, especially in rural areas.	2010 – 2022
	Ensure that social programs specifically target child labor in commercial sexual exploitation, domestic work, and agriculture in addition to alleviating poverty and promoting education.	2019 – 2022

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