

Albania

MODERATE ADVANCEMENT

In 2024, Albania made moderate advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. The State Inspectorate for Labor and Social Services implemented a memorandum of cooperation with the Ministry of Interior and the State Police for the identification of cases of forced labor and labor trafficking. Additionally, the government approved the National Action Plan on the Fight Against Trafficking in Persons for 2024–2025, and the Prime Minister issued a decree to stand up the Anti-Trafficking Steering group, headed by the deputy minister of the interior. However, despite these efforts, Albania’s legal framework does not explicitly prohibit using, procuring, or offering children for illicit activities, nor does it criminally prohibit the use of children for prostitution. In addition, children from Roma and Balkan Egyptian communities, children with disabilities, and displaced children face significant barriers to accessing education in the country. Moreover, existing social programs are inadequate to address the problem in all sectors in which child labor has been identified, including in agriculture and construction.

PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Statistics on Children’s Work and Education			Working Children by Sector, Ages 5-14	
Children	Age	Percent and Population	Sector/Industry	Percent of Population
Working	5 to 14	4.6% (23,665)	Agriculture	87.5%
Hazardous Work by Children	15 to 17	Unavailable	Industry	2.9%
Attending School	5 to 14	92.5%	Services	9.6%
Combining Work and School	7 to 14	5.2%		

Children in Albania are subjected to the worst forms of child labor, including use in illicit activities and forced begging, and in commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking. Children also perform dangerous tasks in scavenging, including scavenging for chromium near mines.

Overview of Children’s Work by Sector and Activity	
Agriculture	Farming.
Industry	Scavenging near mining sites,† construction, and working in the textile, garment, and footwear sectors.
Services	Begging, street work, including vending and washing vehicles, collecting recyclable materials on the street and in landfills, working in hotels and restaurants, and working in call centers.
Categorical Worst Forms of Child Labor‡	Use in illicit activities, including burglary and drug trafficking, commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking, and forced begging.

† 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.

SUGGESTED GOVERNMENT ACTIONS TO ELIMINATE CHILD LABOR

The suggested government actions below would close gaps USDOL has identified in Albania’s implementation of its international commitments to eliminate the worst forms of child labor.

Area	Suggested Action
Legal Framework	Criminally prohibit the use, procurement, and offering of children under age 18 for illicit activities, including in the production and trafficking of drugs.
	Criminally prohibit the use of children in prostitution.

Area	Suggested Action
Enforcement	Permit labor inspectors to inspect the informal sector in which child labor is known to occur, including private homes, private farms, or unregistered businesses.
	Provide adequate resources to law enforcement entities to allow for the prosecution of child labor cases and speed up court proceedings to ensure that there are no delays in the process that might allow perpetrators to avoid accountability and justice for the victims.
	Develop a government-wide framework for tracking child labor cases, sharing information among law enforcement and service providers, and ensuring that children receive adequate protection and support services.
Coordination	Increase coordination between the State Inspectorate for Labor and Social Services and the Albanian State Police.
Social Programs	Collect and publish comprehensive data on the extent and nature of child labor in Albania. In particular, gather data on the prevalence and conditions of child labor in sectors of heightened concern, such as the agriculture and construction sectors, to support the development of social programs.
	Provide adequate transportation resources for all children who face transportation-related barriers to school attendance.
	Enhance efforts to eliminate barriers and make education accessible for all children, including children from Roma and Balkan Egyptian communities, and children with disabilities, by removing all school-related fees and ensuring that children without documentation do not face obstacles to enrolling in school.
	Provide necessary documentation for entry into school and translation services for all children.
	Increase the number of shelters for victims of the worst forms of child labor, in particular for unhoused children living and working in forced begging rings on the streets.
	Institute programs to assist children who are victims of forced child labor and human trafficking.
	Increase funding and human resources for social programs for child labor and appropriately allocate centralized social funds to municipalities to adequately carry out programs.

CHILDREN AT HIGHER RISK

Some Roma and Balkan Egyptian children in Albania are at higher risk for child labor and collect recyclables or are forced to engage in street begging. In addition, economically vulnerable children informally scavenge chromium ore from debris found around hazardous mines and sometimes carry these heavy rocks for miles.

BARRIERS TO EDUCATION ACCESS

Children in Albania face a number of barriers to accessing education, which increases their vulnerability to child labor. Children from Roma, Balkan Egyptian, and other communities face discrimination and bullying in schools, including from school staff. Families living in poverty have difficulty purchasing uniforms and other necessities for school. Although Albania allows children without a birth certificate to enroll in public schools, some children from Roma and Balkan Egyptian families and others without proper birth documentation may still face obstacles in obtaining access to social services and education. Roma and Balkan Egyptian children also experience discrimination in schools when placed in separate classrooms, and face other hurdles to accessing education, such as a lack of access to reliable transportation. Rural schools often lack the infrastructure and resources to accommodate children with disabilities.

LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR CHILD LABOR

Albania has ratified all key international conventions concerning child labor. However, Albania's laws do not meet international standards on the use of children in illicit activities because they do not explicitly prohibit using, procuring, or offering children for illicit activities. In addition, the law does not criminally prohibit the use of children for prostitution.

Laws and Regulations on Child Labor			
Standard	Age	Meets International Standards	Legislation
Minimum Age for Work	16	✓	Article 98 of the Code of Labor; Articles 3.4 and 24 of the Law for the Protection of the Rights of the Child
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work	18	✓	Articles 98–101 of the Code of Labor; Article 24 of the Law for the Protection of the Rights of the Child
Identification of Hazardous Occupations or Activities Prohibited for Children		✓	Articles 99–101 of the Code of Labor; Decree of the Council of Ministers on Defining Hazardous and Hard Works; Article 34 of the Law on Occupational Safety and Health at Work; Regulation on Protection of Children at Work
Prohibition of Slavery, Debt Bondage, and Forced Labor		✓	Articles 8 and 202 of the Code of Labor; Articles 124/b and 128/b of the Criminal Code
Prohibition of Child Trafficking		✓	Article 128/b of the Criminal Code
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children		✗	Articles 114, 117, and 128/b of the Criminal Code; Article 26 of the Law for the Protection of the Rights of the Child
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities		✗	Article 129 of the Criminal Code; Articles 24 and 25 of the Law for the Protection of the Rights of the Child
Minimum Age for Voluntary State Military Recruitment	18	✓	Articles 3.4 and 28 of the Law for the Protection of the Rights of the Child
Prohibition of Compulsory Recruitment of Children by (State) Military		N/A	
Prohibition of Military Recruitment by Non-state Armed Groups		✓	Article 28 of the Law for the Protection of the Rights of the Child
Compulsory Education Age	16	✓	Article 22 of the Law on Pre-University Education
Free Public Education		✓	Article 57 of the Constitution of the Republic of Albania; Article 5 of the Law on Pre-University Education System

Albania does not explicitly prohibit using, procuring, or offering children under age 18 for illicit activities, including in the production and trafficking of drugs. Article 129 of the Criminal Code only prohibits inducing or encouraging children under age 14 to participate in criminality. Additionally, Article 25 of the Law for the Protection of the Rights of the Child provides for protection of children against the use of alcohol and drugs, as well as the illicit production and trafficking of these substances, but does not criminalize inducing a child to participate in these acts. The law also does not criminally prohibit the use of children for prostitution.

ENFORCEMENT OF LAWS ON CHILD LABOR

In 2024, labor and criminal law enforcement agencies in Albania took actions to address child labor. However, the lack of inspections in the informal sector hindered enforcement efforts.

Agencies Responsible for Child Labor Law Enforcement
State Inspectorate for Labor and Social Services: Enforces laws related to child labor and receives and responds to child labor complaints through the State Social Services Agency. The 241 Child Protection Units located throughout the country at the municipal level identify at-risk children, conduct initial evaluations of each case, and refer children to appropriate social services.

Agencies Responsible for Child Labor Law Enforcement

Ministry of Interior: Enforces laws related to the worst forms of child labor through protection officers. The Albanian State Police is the predominant law enforcement and investigative agency, with specialized units such as the Judicial Police and National Bureau of Investigations supporting the General Prosecution Office and Special Prosecution Office, respectively. Within the Albanian State Police, the Criminal Police Department's Directorate of Investigations' Anti-Trafficking Unit and the Department for Border and Migration are responsible for human trafficking cases. Each of the State Police's 12 regional police directorates also maintain a section that investigates human trafficking. Establishes the government's policy on addressing human trafficking through the State Committee Against Trafficking in Persons, chaired by the Interior Minister.

Enforcement Mechanisms and Efforts

Has a Labor Inspectorate	Yes
Able to Assess Civil Penalties	Yes
Routinely Conducted Worksite Inspections	Yes
Unannounced Inspections Permitted	Yes
Has a Complaint Mechanism	Yes
Imposed Penalties for Child Labor Violations	Yes
Conducted Criminal Investigations for Worst Forms of Child Labor Crimes	Yes
Imposed Penalties for Worst Forms of Child Labor Crimes	Yes

In 2024, **118** labor inspectors conducted **9,860** worksite inspections, finding **23** child labor violations. The government also conducted **244** investigations into suspected cases of the worst forms of child labor, initiated **17** prosecutions, and convicted **18** perpetrators; however, 12 of those individuals were given suspended sentences and placed on probation.

COORDINATION, POLICIES, AND PROGRAMS

Albania established a mechanism to coordinate its efforts to address child labor. However, limited coordination between the State Inspectorate for Labor and Social Services and the Albanian State Police hindered efforts.

Key Mechanism to Coordinate Government Efforts on Child Labor

State Agency for the Rights and Protection of Children: Oversees implementation of the government's child rights protection policies, including monitoring the National Agenda for the Rights of the Child. Manages cases of at-risk children and refers them to appropriate social services. In 2024, held joint coordinating meetings with 11 municipalities. Also, as of September 2024, established databases in 12 municipalities to track children involved in street work and refer them to services.

Albania established policies that are consistent with relevant international standards on child labor.

Key Policies Related to Child Labor

National Action Plan on the Fight Against Trafficking in Persons (2024–2025):* Aims to coordinate government, international organizations, and civil society in efforts to combat human trafficking. Includes the Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Justice, State Inspectorate for Labor and Social Services, and other government ministries along, with consultation from civil society organizations and survivors of human trafficking. Calls for a focus on prevention and protection of child trafficking victims. Approved in October 2024. In December 2024, the Prime Minister issued a decree to stand up the Anti-Trafficking Steering group, headed by the deputy minister of the interior.

National Agenda for the Rights of the Child (2021–2026): Aims to protect and promote children's rights by supporting physical and psychosocial development, and the social inclusion of children. Other goals include eliminating all forms of violence against children and creating child-friendly systems and services in education, justice, health, and social protection. Active in 2024.

National Youth Strategy and Action Plan (2022–2029): Aims to improve the social, physical, and psychological wellbeing of youth. Active in 2024.

* Policy was approved during the reporting period.

† The government had other policies that may have addressed child labor issues or had an impact on child labor.

Albania funded and participated in programs that include the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor. However, these social programs are inadequate to address the problem in all sectors in which child labor has been identified, including in agriculture and construction.

Key Social Programs to Address Child Labor
Program of Cooperation for Sustainable Development (2022–2026): UN program that aims to increase access to education for vulnerable children and improve protections for child survivors of human trafficking. Active in 2024, including rebuilding and repairing schools.
Cash Transfer Program (Ndhurma Ekonomike): † Government-funded cash transfer program that provides an allowance for families receiving economic aid through the Law on Social Assistance and Services. During the reporting period, the government continued to provide regular cash payments to qualifying families.
World Vision Albania Centers (Children’s City Program): ‡ The municipalities of Durrës, Maliq, and Korçë collaborated with World Vision Albania to construct centers for children in high-risk situations, including violence, abuse, and various forms of exploitation. Active in 2024.

‡ Program is funded by the Government of Albania.
† The government had other programs that may have addressed child labor issues or had an impact on child labor.

For references, please visit dol.gov/ChildLaborReports