

Jordan

MODERATE ADVANCEMENT

In 2024, Jordan made moderate advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. The government enacted the Juvenile Protection System No. 63 of 2024 law which includes protections for potential child trafficking victims, child beggars, street children, and children collecting garbage. It formally launched and began implementation of a new National Strategy to Combat Human Trafficking for 2024 to 2027. In addition, it established a coordinating committee, led by the National Council for Family Affairs, to monitor and evaluate the implementation plans of the National Strategy to Combat Child Labor. However, despite these efforts, Syrian children still face barriers to accessing education due to socioeconomic pressures, bullying, and the costs associated with transportation and supplies, among other issues. The high number of labor inspections per inspector also raises concerns that inspectors may not have the time to adequately identify and remediate labor law violations. Additionally, the scope of government programs is insufficient to fully address the extent of child labor, including in construction and street vending. Moreover, the legal framework does not criminally prohibit the use of children in prostitution.

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	1% (33,182)	Agriculture	43.2%
Hazardous Work by Children	15 to 17	Unavailable	Industry	14.2%
Attending School	5 to 14	94.8%	Services	42.6%
Combining Work and School	7 to 14	1%		

Children in Jordan are subjected to the worst forms of child labor, including in forced labor in agriculture and forced begging. Children also engage in child labor in farming.

Overview of Children’s Work by Sector and Activity	
Agriculture	Farming, forestry, and fishing, including packing fruits and vegetables, harvesting, applying pesticides and fertilizer, assisting with irrigation, and grazing and feeding of livestock.
Industry	Manufacturing, including packing and sanitation work. Construction,† including cleaning, and assisting with carpentry and metalwork. Mining† and quarrying.†
Services	Street work,† including vending and begging. Domestic work.† Scavenging scrap metal and waste† and maintenance and repair of motor vehicles.† Working in retail, including cleaning shops, and food services, including working in restaurants and bakeries and selling coffee.
Categorical Worst Forms of Child Labor‡	Commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking, and use in illicit activities, including drug trafficking. Forced labor in agriculture 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 Jordan’s implementation of its international commitments to eliminate the worst forms of child labor.

Area	Suggested Action
Legal Framework	Ensure that the law criminally prohibits the use of children in commercial sexual exploitation.
	Ensure that the law criminally prohibits the recruitment of children under age 18 into non-state armed groups.
	Ensure that laws establishing free public education apply to all children.

Area	Suggested Action
Enforcement	Increase the number of labor inspectors from 188 to 202 to ensure adequate coverage of the labor force of approximately 3 million people.
	Publish information on criminal law enforcement efforts such as the number of investigations initiated into suspected cases of the worst forms of child labor, prosecutions, and convictions.
	Ensure that children arrested on drug charges are screened as potential victims of human trafficking.
	Ensure that the number of inspections conducted by labor inspectors is commensurate to the size of the labor inspectorate to ensure adequate quality and scope of inspections and remediate labor law violations, especially in the agricultural sector.
	Publish information on the number of penalties for child labor violations that were collected.
Social Programs	Continue to expand access to education for all children, including Syrian and non-Syrian refugees, ensuring that students have transportation, are able to purchase supplies and uniforms, and are not bullied or harassed, and that school hours are extended.
	Institute programs to address the worst forms of child labor in construction and street vending.
	Provide dedicated services, including shelter, for victims of child labor, including child trafficking.

CHILDREN AT HIGHER RISK

The majority of working children in Jordan are engaged in the agricultural sector, making children from rural areas vulnerable to exploitation. They perform tasks such as weeding, planting, and harvesting on non-industrial scale farms and are exposed to hazardous conditions. Additionally, Syrian children are vulnerable to exploitation and are sometimes forced to work alongside their families in agriculture and service industries. According to the UN, the percentage of working Syrian children has nearly tripled since 2021, with 21 percent of families having at least one working child. More than one-third of these child workers experience abuse at work, and over 40 percent work in hazardous conditions.

BARRIERS TO EDUCATION ACCESS

Non-Jordanian children in Jordan, including those from Syria, Iraq, Yemen, Sudan, and Somalia, and children of non-Jordanian fathers face administrative burdens in accessing education due to a lack of identity documents. Children from Yemen, Sudan, and Somalia face additional barriers, as they are barred from registering as refugees with the UN, making it difficult to obtain identity documentation. Children may be admitted to school for a grace period without identification; however, after the grace period has lapsed, they are placed in non-formal education programs. Children in Jordan sometimes face *de facto* barriers to education, including a lack of schools in rural areas, teacher shortages, a lack of adequate public transportation, and bullying. To alleviate the pressures of overcrowding, the government continued to provide double-shift schools, with Jordanian children attending in the morning and Syrian children attending in the afternoon. However, both Jordanian and Syrian children attending double-shift schools were vulnerable to child labor because school hours are considerably shorter, and fewer school hours leave more time for work.

LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR CHILD LABOR

Jordan has ratified all key international conventions concerning child labor. However, Jordan's laws do not meet international standards on the prohibition of military recruitment of children by non-state armed groups.

Laws and Regulations on Child Labor			
Standard	Age	Meets International Standards	Legislation
Minimum Age for Work	16	✓	Article 73 of the Labor Code
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work	18	✓	Article 74 of the Labor Code; Article 2 of the Ministerial Order of 2011

Laws and Regulations on Child Labor			
Standard	Age	Meets International Standards	Legislation
Identification of Hazardous Occupations or Activities Prohibited for Children		✓	Article 2 of the Ministerial Order of 2011
Prohibition of Slavery, Debt Bondage, and Forced Labor		✓	Articles 3(a) and 3(b) of the Law on the Prevention of Human Trafficking
Prohibition of Child Trafficking		✓	Articles 3(a) and 8–11 of the Law on the Prevention of Human Trafficking
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children		✗	Articles 3(a) and 3(b) of the Law on the Prevention of Human Trafficking; Article 310 of the Penal Code
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities		✓	Article 8 of the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act
Minimum Age for Voluntary State Military Recruitment	16	✓	Article 5(b) of the Military Service Act; Article 13(b) of the Officer's Service Act
Prohibition of Compulsory Recruitment of Children by (State) Military		✓	Article 3(a) of the National Service Act
Prohibition of Military Recruitment by Non-state Armed Groups		✗	
Compulsory Education Age	16	✓	Articles 7(a.2) and 10(b) of the Education Act
Free Public Education		✗	Article 10(a) of the Education Act; Article 20 of the Constitution; Article 10 of the Rules for Accepting and Transferring Jordanian and non-Jordanian Students

In 2024, the government enacted the Juvenile Protection System No. 63 of 2024 law, which includes protections for potential child trafficking victims, child beggars, street children, and children collecting garbage. While Jordan criminally prohibits trafficking of children for sexual exploitation, it does not criminally prohibit the use of children in prostitution. Jordan also does not meet the international standard for free public education as free education is guaranteed only for Jordanian citizens, leaving non-citizen children unable to access public education and vulnerable to child labor.

ENFORCEMENT OF LAWS ON CHILD LABOR

In 2024, labor and criminal law enforcement agencies in Jordan took actions to address child labor. However, insufficient resources and a high number of labor inspections per labor inspector hindered enforcement efforts.

Agencies Responsible for Child Labor Law Enforcement
Ministry of Labor (MOL), Central Inspection Directorate: Enforces labor laws, including those on child labor. Identifies cases of child labor through worksite inspections and registers instances of child labor in a National Child Labor Database, which allows ministries to monitor and track children as they are identified and referred to social services. Maintains a hotline, website, and mobile app to receive labor-related complaints, including complaints of child labor.
Public Security Directorate, Criminal Investigation Unit: Investigates and prosecutes violations of the Penal Code, including allegations of the worst forms of child labor. Includes the Joint Anti-Trafficking Unit with MOL that investigates cases of human trafficking and forced labor, refers cases for prosecution, and coordinates with foreign embassies to identify victims of human trafficking and, when needed, to repatriate foreign workers.

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	Unknown

In 2024, **188** labor inspectors conducted inspections of **27,109** worksites, finding **139** child labor violations. The government also conducted **4** investigations into alleged forced child labor crimes in garment factories; it is **unknown** whether prosecutions were initiated or perpetrators were convicted in cases involving the worst forms of child labor during the reporting period.

COORDINATION, POLICIES, AND PROGRAMS

Jordan established a mechanism to coordinate its efforts to address child labor.

Key Mechanism to Coordinate Government Efforts on Child Labor
National Committee on Child Labor: Formulates new policies, amends legislation as necessary, and oversees the implementation of child labor policies. Led by MOL, members include three other ministries, plus international and civil society organizations. In 2024, the National Committee on Child Labor held five regular meetings, organized discussion sessions with stakeholders, and conducted four training workshops.

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

Key Policies Related to Child Labor
National Strategy for the Reduction of Child Labor (2022–2030): Outlines the roles and responsibilities of key government agencies, including the Ministries of Education, Labor, and Social Development; NGOs; and other stakeholders involved in identifying and responding to cases of child labor. Based on the Framework to Reduce Child Labor, MOL inspectors monitor child labor and refer cases to the Ministry of Social Development (MOSD) and the Ministry of Education for the provision of services. In 2024, the government established a coordinating committee, led by the National Council for Family Affairs, to monitor and evaluate the implementation plans of the strategy.
National Strategy to Prevent Human Trafficking (2024–2027): Drafted and implemented by the National Committee to Prevent Human Trafficking and its Technical Committee. Aims to address trafficking in persons through prevention, prosecution, protection, and partnership. Includes goals such as raising awareness of trafficking issues in the media and among workers, developing the legal framework and training law enforcement, alleviating poverty, and preventing truancy. Additionally, intends to reduce child begging. The policy was approved in 2023 and formally launched in 2024. Since the beginning of 2024, the committee implemented several activities related to the key areas of the strategy, including awareness campaigns, capacity building, and the improvement of frontline capabilities. For example, the Labor Department within the Counter-Trafficking Unit conducted five training courses to raise community awareness about forced labor indicators, as well as two training courses for law enforcement agencies.

Jordan funded and participated in programs that include the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor. However, the scope of these programs does not fully address the extent of the problem, including the worst forms of child labor in construction and street vending.

Key Social Programs to Address Child Labor

Child Labor Units:‡ Consist of Child Labor Units within MOSD and MOL. The MOSD unit provides support to children engaged in child labor, returns them to school, and provides services to their families; provides vocational training for youth; organizes training on child labor for families; and maintains the website of the National Child Labor Database. Provides services to children engaged in child begging through centers in Madaba and Deileil (Zarqa). The MOL unit coordinates government campaigns against child labor, conducts training, and raises awareness about child labor issues. Manages the Child Labor Monitoring System, a case management tool that helps coordinate efforts by relevant government agencies and civil society organizations to ensure that children are removed from child labor and provided with critical social and educational services. Active in 2024.

‡ Program is funded by the Government of Jordan.
† The government had other social programs that may have included the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor.

For references, please visit dol.gov/ChildLaborReports