

Senegal

The Government of Senegal participates in programs to combat the worst forms of child labor. However, law enforcement and inspection capacity remain insufficient. Children are engaged in the worst forms of child labor, they work in dangerous conditions in agriculture and are trafficked into a number of occupations, including forced begging.

Statistics on Working Children and School Attendance

Children	Age	Percent
Working	5-14 yrs.	30.0*
Attending School	5-14 yrs.	47.9
Combining Work and School	7-14 yrs.	16.9

* Population of working children: 857,353



Prevalence and Sectoral Distribution of the Worst Forms of Child Labor

Children in Senegal are engaged in the worst forms of child labor.⁵⁰⁵⁷ They work in dangerous conditions in agriculture and are trafficked into a number of occupations, including forced begging.⁵⁰⁵⁸ Children's work in agriculture commonly involves using dangerous machinery and tools, carrying heavy loads and applying harmful pesticides. Limited evidence suggests that children in rural areas also work in forestry and cattle herding, which may expose them to disease or injury.⁵⁰⁵⁹

Many children work in the fishing sector.⁵⁰⁶⁰ In Senegal, fishing commonly involves the use of explosives to kill large quantities of fish.⁵⁰⁶¹ Children involved in fishing may be exposed to other dangers, including severe weather and drowning.

Children are also engaged in domestic service in homes where they may work long hours and may be exposed to physical and sexual exploitation by their employers.⁵⁰⁶² Many are victims of human trafficking. Girls as young as

age 10 are brought from abroad and from rural areas in Senegal to work as domestics in the country's urban centers.⁵⁰⁶³ Similarly, children are trafficked domestically and internationally for work in prostitution and sex tourism.⁵⁰⁶⁴ Both girls and boys are involved in commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes with the involvement of adult pimps.⁵⁰⁶⁵

In Senegal, it is traditional practice to send boys to Koranic teachers called *marabouts* to receive education, which may include vocational training and apprenticeship. Some *marabouts* force their students, called *talibés*, to beg on the streets for money and food and to surrender their earnings.⁵⁰⁶⁶ *Marabouts* typically set a daily quota that *talibés* must meet or face beatings.⁵⁰⁶⁷ Some who fail to meet quotas are forced to spend the night on the street.⁵⁰⁶⁸ Tens of thousands of *talibés*, mostly under age 12, are estimated to be in situations of forced begging. On the streets, they work long hours and are vulnerable to car accidents, disease and severe weather, including scorching heat.⁵⁰⁶⁹ These boys often live in overcrowded, unsanitary conditions; receive inadequate food and medical care; and are vulnerable to sexual exploitation.⁵⁰⁷⁰

Talibés are typically trafficked to major cities from rural areas within Senegal and from neighboring countries.⁵⁰⁷¹ Senegalese children are also trafficked to The Gambia and Mauritania for forced begging by religious teachers.⁵⁰⁷² Although evidence is limited, there is reason to believe some *talibés* are used to harvest cashews, mangos and oranges. These children typically work long hours. In the Casamance region, *talibés* working in the fields are exposed to land mines left from a 27-year conflict in the region.⁵⁰⁷³ In Thies, *talibés* collect garbage from homes, sometimes carrying very heavy loads.⁵⁰⁷⁴

Other children engage in street work independently. They typically vend goods, shine shoes and wash cars.⁵⁰⁷⁵ Children working on the streets may be exposed to multiple dangers including severe weather, vehicle accidents and criminal elements.

Children in Senegal work in dangerous conditions in gold mines. Though the extent of the problem is unknown, children also work in salt mines and rock quarries.⁵⁰⁷⁶ They are exposed to unsafe and unhealthy working conditions such as carrying heavy loads, sifting through dirt using mercury to attract precious metals and working without protective gear.⁵⁰⁷⁷ Children also perform dangerous work in construction, automobile repair, metal and wood work and at dumpsites.⁵⁰⁷⁸

Laws and Regulations on the Worst Forms of Child Labor

The Labor Code sets the minimum age for employment, including apprenticeships, at 15.⁵⁰⁷⁹ *Arrêté ministériel n° 3750* and *3751* prohibit children from working in hazardous conditions and identify circumstances in which children under age 18 cannot work or can only work under certain conditions.⁵⁰⁸⁰ An exception within these laws allows boys under age 16 to work in underground mines and quarries if they are doing “light work,” such as sorting and loading ore, handling and hauling trucks within specified weight limits and handling ventilation

	C138, Minimum Age	✓
	C182, Worst Forms of Child Labor	✓
	CRC	✓
	CRC Optional Protocol on Armed Conflict	✓
	CRC Optional Protocol on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution, and Child Pornography	✓
	Palermo Protocol on Trafficking in Persons	✓
	Minimum Age for Work	15
	Minimum Age for Hazardous Work	18
	Compulsory Education Age	16
	Free Public Education	Yes

equipment.⁵⁰⁸¹ However, limiting children to “light work” does not protect against common dangers associated with underground mining, including noise-induced hearing loss, heat stroke, rock falls, fires, explosions, equipment accidents, entrapment, electrocution and radon exposure.⁵⁰⁸² *Arrêté ministériel n° 3749* prohibits activities considered to be worst forms of child labor and includes, among others, forced labor, slavery, prostitution, begging for a third party, drug trafficking, scavenging garbage, slaughtering animals, work with dangerous products and work that imperils the health, safety or morality of children.⁵⁰⁸³

The Constitution bans forced labor.⁵⁰⁸⁴ During the reporting period, Senegal adopted a law defining slavery as a crime against humanity.⁵⁰⁸⁵ Military recruits must be age 18 or older.⁵⁰⁸⁶

The Penal Code prohibits the procurement of a person into prostitution or acting as an intermediary for prostitution. If the crime involves a minor younger than age 13, sentences are more severe.³¹ Law n° 2005-06 prohibits all forms of

trafficking and provides stringent penalties.⁵⁰⁸⁸ Law n° 2005-02 proscribes begging and establishes penalties for those who enable, coerce or force others to beg for their profit.⁵⁰⁸⁹

The Constitution mandates state provision of free education.⁵⁰⁹⁰ Law n°2004-2037 requires children to attend school through age 16.⁵⁰⁹¹

Institutional Mechanisms for Coordination and Enforcement

The Government of Senegal has established several bodies tasked with coordinating efforts to combat worst forms of child labor. The National Intersectoral Committee, chaired by the Ministry of Labor (MOL), is responsible for coordinating initiatives to address child labor.⁵⁰⁹² The committee is comprised of employers' organizations, 20 ministries, religious leaders, international agencies and governors from various regions.⁵⁰⁹³ However, the committee does not meet regularly and is not actively pursuing its mandate.⁵⁰⁹⁴

The Ministry of Family also coordinates another national committee against child labor.⁵⁰⁹⁵ Further, the Partnership for the Withdrawal and Reinsertion of Street Children (PARRER) coordinates efforts to address the problem of street children, including *talibés*. PARRER comprises government ministries, civil society, religious groups and aid agencies.⁵⁰⁹⁶ Redundancy between these bodies creates confusion and hinders effective collaboration and implementation of efforts.⁵⁰⁹⁷

The MOL is responsible for enforcing child labor laws through the Labor Inspections Office and the use of social security inspectors.⁵⁰⁹⁸ Labor inspectors monitor and enforce minimum age and all other labor laws in the formal wage sector, which includes state-owned corporations, private enterprises and cooperatives.⁵⁰⁹⁹ If an incident of child labor is found during an inspection, the inspector informs the business owner that the child should be removed from work. If the child

is not removed within the specified timeframe, the case is turned over to a local tribunal for adjudication.⁵¹⁰⁰ As this process does not penalize violators on their first offense, it may not deter employers from exploiting children in the workplace.

Based on the most recent data available, approximately 147 MOL employees are charged with carrying out labor inspections.⁵¹⁰¹ MOL's Child Labor Unit is responsible for maintaining a database of child labor violations and monitoring and evaluating child labor activities. However, the unit does not receive sufficient budgetary support. The unit's work is carried out through part-time contributions of MOL staff whose primary responsibilities are to other units.⁵¹⁰² No child labor violations were reported as a result of inspections during the reporting period.⁵¹⁰³

The Ministry of Justice and police lead enforcement efforts involving child trafficking, begging, commercial sexual exploitation and the use of children for illicit activities.⁵¹⁰⁴ However, with few exceptions, Koranic schools are not subject to government regulation or inspection.⁵¹⁰⁵ The Ministry of Education intends to create a *daara* inspection unit, increase monitoring and integrate religious schools into the national education system.⁵¹⁰⁶

The Children's Unit of the police force specializes in child protection. However, the unit's territorial jurisdiction is limited to Dakar and the office employs only two agents.⁵¹⁰⁷ Though other police stations in Senegal are expected to report cases involving children to the unit, research found no evidence that this occurs regularly.⁵¹⁰⁸ There is also a police vice squad responsible for combating sex tourism, including sex tourism related to children. The vice squad patrols tourist areas, including beaches, hotels, bars, nightclubs and massage parlors.⁵¹⁰⁹ Local police and *gendarmes* are responsible for intervening in cases where children face physical abuse in forced labor situations.⁵¹¹⁰

During the reporting period, seven Koranic teachers were convicted of forcing students to engage in begging. The convictions marked the first application of the 2005 law outlawing forced begging.⁵¹¹¹ The teachers were sentenced to 6 months imprisonment with a suspended sentence and a fine of \$200.⁵¹¹² However, the sentence does not conform to penalties stipulated by the 2005 law, which mandates a 2- to 5-year prison sentence and a fine of at least \$1,090. The law also prohibits that a sentence be suspended when the offence is committed against a child.⁵¹¹³

Government Policies on the Worst Forms of Child Labor

The Government has developed a national action plan on trafficking in persons that will focus on implementing trafficking prevention and awareness campaigns and enhancing law enforcement and victim protection. However, the action plan remains in draft form and is awaiting cabinet approval.⁵¹¹⁴

The Government has integrated child labor issues into several relevant development policies, including its United Nations Development Assistance Framework (2007–2011);⁵¹¹⁵ the Ten-Year Education and Training Program (2000–2015), which aims to provide universal quality primary education to all children by 2015;⁵¹¹⁶ the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (2006–2010), which promotes better conditions for *talibés* and focuses on social protection and risk management for vulnerable groups, including children;⁵¹¹⁷ and its National Social Protection Strategy (2005–2015), which classifies children as a specific vulnerable group and includes provisions for their protection against harmful practices, exploitation and violence.⁵¹¹⁸

Social Programs to Eliminate or Prevent the Worst Forms of Child Labor

The Government has established a program to combat trafficking and the worst forms of child labor. Coordinated by the Ministry of the

Family, the program aims to enhance government capacity to design and implement local initiatives to address child trafficking and other worst forms of child labor, particularly forced begging, forced labor of girls and commercial sexual exploitation.⁵¹¹⁹ At the local level, technical monitoring committees, composed of public and private stakeholders, oversee implementation of the project. As a result of the program, some departmental governments have developed individual action plans to address child labor.⁵¹²⁰

The Government currently participates in several multimillion dollar projects to eliminate the worst forms of child labor, including a 4-year, \$5.2 million regional Spanish-funded project and a 3-year, \$1.79 million UN-funded project to ameliorate the conditions of at-risk children in Senegal.⁵¹²¹

The Government continues to participate in a 3-year, \$7.9 million regional project funded by USDOL. The program is designed to strengthen ECOWAS's Child Policy and Strategic Plan of Action and to develop programs focusing on child trafficking as it pertains to the strategic plan.⁵¹²² In December 2010, the Government began participating in a second USDOL-funded regional project. The \$5 million, 3-year program is meant to expand and extend the work of the initial project.⁵¹²³

The Government runs the Ginndi Center, which provides shelter and counseling for children, including runaway *talibés* and other street children. During the reporting period, the Center assisted 2,536 children, 786 of whom were victims of forced begging.⁵¹²⁴ The Center operates a toll-free child protection hotline through which the public can report violations of children's rights, including instances of child labor abuses.⁵¹²⁵ The Government also oversees Senegal's NGO-run children's shelters. However, these shelters are often filled to capacity and the total number of facilities is insufficient in relation to the number of children on the streets.⁵¹²⁶

The Government participates in a variety of initiatives aimed at combating child trafficking. During the reporting period, for example, the Government engaged in training to strengthen cooperation between national agencies and nongovernmental institutions to enhance identification and protection of child victims.⁵¹²⁷

The Government coordinates several programs that specifically target *talibés*. During the reporting period, the government participated in seminars to raise awareness about forced begging among local officials, NGOs and civil society. The Ministry of Women, Family, Social Development and Women's Entrepreneurship and the Ministry of Education provide support to religious schools that do not force their students to beg and meet national education standards.⁵¹²⁸ Two prominent efforts include a pilot project that provides the

boys food and educational services and an \$8 million Japan-funded project to withdraw and prevent children from forced work.⁵¹²⁹ During the reporting period, the Government funded PARRER with \$50,000 to continue prevention programs, including a public awareness campaign.⁵¹³⁰ Given the rising number of *talibés* in forced begging, current Government programs are not extensive enough to effectively combat the problem.⁵¹³¹

Despite the efforts discussed above, existing programs are unable to reach all children in the worst forms of child labor, including those engaged in commercial sexual exploitation, domestic service and hazardous work in agriculture, mining and forestry.

Based on the reporting above, the following actions would advance the reduction of the worst forms of child labor in Senegal:

IN THE AREA OF LAWS AND REGULATIONS:

- Amend the law to prohibit all children under age 18 from engaging in any work in underground mines and quarries.

IN THE AREA OF COORDINATION AND ENFORCEMENT:

- Consolidate coordinating mechanisms on child labor by:
 - Ensuring responsible bodies are meeting regularly and actively functioning to meet mandates.
 - Eliminating redundancy and defining distinct scopes of responsibility.
- Penalize labor law violators on their first offense to create a stronger disincentive to illegally employ children.
- Assess the sufficiency of resources provided to authorities tasked with enforcing child labor laws, particularly the Child Labor Unit of the MOL.
- Act swiftly to create and adequately equip a *daara* inspection unit to increase monitoring and remediation of forced begging practices in Koranic schools.
- Expand the jurisdiction and capacity of the police's children's unit or implement systems to connect local police forces and the unit to better track and combat child labor.
- Carry out sentences mandated by Law n° 2005-02, which prohibits forced begging.

IN THE AREA OF POLICIES:

- Approve and adopt the National Action Plan on Trafficking in Persons.

IN THE AREA OF PROGRAMS:

- Develop new and expand existing programs to combat the worst forms of child labor, by:
 - Opening more shelters and service centers for street children, including former *talibés*.
 - Establishing more extensive programming to address the most pressing worst forms of child labor such as forced begging, commercial sexual exploitation, domestic service and hazardous work in agriculture, mining and forestry.

⁵⁰⁵⁷ Data provided in the chart at the beginning of this country report are based on UCW analysis of ILO SIMPOC, UNICEF MICS, and World Bank surveys, Child Economic Activity, School Attendance, and Combined Working and Studying Rates, 2005-2010. Data on working children, school attendance, and children combining work and school are from 2005. Reliable data on the worst forms of child labor are especially difficult to collect given the often hidden or illegal nature of the worst forms. As a result, statistics and information on children's work in general are reported in this section, which may or may not include the worst forms of child labor. For more information on sources used, the definition of working children, and other indicators used in this report, please see the "Children's Work and Education

Statistics: Sources and Definitions" section of this report.

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- ⁵⁰⁵⁹ U.S. Embassy- Dakar, reporting, March 2, 2011. See also Government of Senegal, *Enquete Nationale sur le Travail des Enfants*, 74-77. See also U.S. Department of State, «Country Reports- 2010: Senegal,» section 7d.
- ⁵⁰⁶⁰ U.S. Embassy- Dakar, reporting, March 2, 2011. See also Government of Senegal, *Enquete Nationale sur le Travail des Enfants*, 74-77, 79. See also UN Special Rapporteur on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution, and Child Pornography, Mission to Senegal, 5. See also U.S. Department of State, «Country Reports- 2010: Senegal,» section 7d.
- ⁵⁰⁶¹ U.S. Embassy- Dakar, reporting, February 23, 2009.
- ⁵⁰⁶² U.S. Department of State, «Trafficking in Persons Report- 2010: Senegal.» See also U.S. Department of State, «Country Reports- 2010: Senegal,» section 7d. See also UN Special Rapporteur on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution, and Child Pornography, Mission to Senegal, 5. See also U.S. Embassy- Dakar, reporting, March 2, 2011.
- ⁵⁰⁶³ U.S. Embassy- Dakar, reporting, March 2, 2011. See also U.S. Department of State, «Trafficking in Persons Report- 2010: Senegal.» See also U.S. Embassy- Dakar, reporting, March 7, 2011. See also IOM, «Traditional Practices being Abused to Exploit Children in West Africa, warns IOM», IOM, [online], November 22, 2006 [cited May 5, 2011]; available from <http://www.iom.int/jahia/Jahia/newsArticleAF/cache/offonce?entryId=12007>.
- ⁵⁰⁶⁴ U.S. Embassy- Dakar, reporting, March 8, 2010. See also U.S. Embassy- Dakar, reporting, March 7, 2011. See also UN Special Rapporteur on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution, and Child Pornography, Mission to Senegal, 5. See also IOM, «Traditional Practices being Abused to Exploit Children in West Africa, warns IOM».
- ⁵⁰⁶⁵ U.S. Embassy- Dakar, reporting, March 7, 2011.
- ⁵⁰⁶⁶ Human Rights Watch, *Off the Backs of Children: Forced Begging and Other Abuses against Talibes in Senegal*, New York, April 2010, 2, 15, 17, 26, 30. See also Emily Delap, *Begging for Change: Research findings and recommendations on forced child begging in Albania/ Greece, India and Senegal*, 2009, 6-7, 10, 11; available from http://www.antislavery.org/includes/documents/cm_docs/2009/b/beggingforchange09.pdf. See also IOM, «Traditional Practices being Abused to Exploit Children in West Africa, warns IOM». See also International Trade Union confederation, *Internationally Recognized Core Labour Standards in Niger and Senegal: Report for the WTO General Council Review of the Trade Policies of Niger and Senegal*, Geneva, November 11, 2009, 11.
- ⁵⁰⁶⁷ Human Rights Watch, *Off the Backs of Children*, 37-41. See also IOM, «Traditional Practices being Abused to Exploit Children in West Africa, warns IOM». See also Delap, *Begging for Change*, 10.
- ⁵⁰⁶⁸ Human Rights Watch, *Off the Backs of Children*, 41.
- ⁵⁰⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 25.
- ⁵⁰⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 42, 45.
- ⁵⁰⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 25, 27-28. See also U.S. Embassy- Dakar, reporting, March 2, 2011. See also U.S. Department of State, «Country Reports- 2010: Senegal,» section 7d. See also Integrated Regional Information Networks, «Child trafficking on the decline say local authorities», IRINnews.org, [online], October 15, 2008 [cited May 5, 2011]; available from <http://www.irinnews.org/Report.aspx?ReportId=80928>.
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- ⁵⁰⁷³ U.S. Embassy- Dakar, reporting, March 10, 2010. See also ILO-IPEC, *The Worst Forms of Child Labor in Conflict and Post Conflict Settings: Results from a research project*, Geneva, 2010, 12, 14. See also U.S. Department of State, «Country Reports- 2010: Senegal,» section 7d.
- ⁵⁰⁷⁴ U.S. Embassy- Dakar, reporting, March 10, 2010.
- ⁵⁰⁷⁵ U.S. Embassy- Dakar, reporting, March 2, 2011. See also U.S. Department of State, «Country Reports- 2010: Senegal,» section 7d.
- ⁵⁰⁷⁶ U.S. Department of State, «Country Reports- 2010: Senegal,» section 7d. See also ILO, «In their own words... Senegal: Famara regrets leaving school to mine gold», ILO.org, [online], June 2006 [cited May 5, 2011]; available from <http://www.ilo.org/ipecinfo/product/viewProduct.do?productId=4175>. See also ILO, «In their own words... How Awa dreads salt season», ILO.org, [online], June 2006 [cited May 5, 2011]; available from <http://www.ilo.org/ipecinfo/product/viewProduct.do?productId=4170>. See also ILO, *Child labour in salt mining: The problem*, June 2006; available from <http://www.ilo.org/ipecinfo/product/download.do?sessionId=0a038009ce955b2d1476aae475d8e07d5a095d4550f>. See also U.S. Embassy- Dakar, reporting, March 2, 2011.
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- ⁵⁰⁷⁸ U.S. Department of State, «Country Reports- 2010: Senegal,» section 7d. See also U.S. Embassy- Dakar, reporting, March 8, 2010. See also Godefroid Nimbona and Kristoffel Lieten, *Child Labour Unions: AEJT Senegal*, 2007, 38.

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- ⁵⁰⁸⁰ Government of Senegal, Arrêté ministériel n° 3751 MFPTEOP-DTSS en date du 6 juin 2003, fixant les catégories d'entreprises et travaux interdits aux enfants et jeunes gens ainsi que l'âge limite auquel s'applique l'interdiction, (June 6, 2003), articles 1-3; available from <http://www.ilo.org/dyn/natlex/docs/SERIAL/64612/64952/F364251671/SEN64612.pdf>. See also Government of Senegal, Arrêté ministériel n° 3750 MFPTEOP-DTSS en date du 6 juin 2003, fixant la nature des travaux dangereux interdits aux enfants et jeunes gens, (June 6, 2003), articles 10, 12; available from <http://www.ilo.org/dyn/natlex/docs/SERIAL/64611/64953/F1229124862/SEN64611.pdf>.
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- ⁵⁰⁸⁴ U.S. Embassy- Dakar, reporting, March 2, 2011.
- ⁵⁰⁸⁵ UN Special Rapporteur on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution, and Child Pornography, Mission to Senegal, 9.
- ⁵⁰⁸⁶ Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers, "Senegal," in *Child Soldiers Global Report 2008*, London, 2008; available from http://www.childsoldiersglobalreport.org/files/country_pdfs/FINAL_2008_Global_Report.pdf. See also U.S. Embassy- Dakar, reporting, March 2, 2011.
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- ⁵⁰⁹⁰ Government of Senegal, Constitution of the Republic of Senegal, (January 22, 2001), articles 21, 22. See also Right to Education Project, National constitutional provisions-Senegal, [online] 2008 [cited June 2, 2011]; available from <http://www.right-to-education.org/country-node/390/country-constitutional>. See also Right to Education Project, Free or free in Africa, [online] 2008 [cited June 2, 2011]; available from <http://www.right-to-education.org/node/301>.
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- ⁵⁰⁹⁹ U.S. Embassy- Dakar, reporting, March 8, 2010. See also U.S. Embassy- Dakar, reporting, March 10, 2010.
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- ⁵¹⁰¹ Ibid.
- ⁵¹⁰² ILO-IPEC, Senegal IPEC Evaluation- December 2007, 10-11. See also U.S. Embassy- Dakar official, E-mail communication, July 7, 2011.
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