

In 2012, the Federation of Russia made a minimal advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. The Government approved a National Children's Strategy until 2017 that covers issues such as child protection and access to quality education, and contains a listing of responsible agencies and timelines for its implementation. Russian law, however, still lacks provisions that criminalize the possession of child pornography. Russia also continues to lack a mechanism to coordinate nationwide efforts to combat the worst forms of child labor. Children in Russia continue to be found in the worst forms of child labor, including in work on the streets and in commercial sexual exploitation, and many of these children are victims of human trafficking.



These children are forced into begging or commercial sexual exploitation.⁽⁴⁾ The primary victims of commercial sexual exploitation are street children, including those who are homeless and orphaned. Child pornography remains a problem in Russia.⁽⁵⁾

Although evidence is limited, children are found working in the agricultural sector.^(5, 11, 12) Children working in agriculture may use dangerous tools, carry heavy loads, and apply harmful pesticides.^(13, 14)

Laws and Regulations on the Worst Forms of Child Labor

The Labor Code sets the minimum age of employment at 16. Exceptions to the minimum age exist for 15-year-olds who have completed primary education or 14 year olds with the approval of a parent or a guardian, if such work does not interfere with the child's health or welfare. Children under age 14 are permitted to work in the performing arts, if such work will not harm their health or moral development.⁽¹⁵⁾ Children under age 18 are prohibited from engaging in night work, dangerous work, underground work, or work that may be harmful to their health or moral development. This includes carrying heavy loads; gambling; working at night cabarets and clubs; and producing, transporting, and selling toxic substances (including tobacco, alcohol, and drugs).⁽¹⁵⁾

The Constitution and the Criminal Code prohibits forced labor. The Criminal Code explicitly outlaws engaging a known minor (a person under 18 years old) in slave labor.^(16, 17) Article 127.1 of the Criminal Code prohibits the purchase, sale, recruitment, transportation, harboring, and receiving of a person for the purpose of exploitation, with higher penalties imposed when the victim is a known minor. Involving a minor in the commission of a crime is punishable under article 150 of the Criminal Code.⁽¹⁷⁾ Article 228.1 of the Criminal Code prohibits using a minor to make, sell, or transport illegal narcotic drugs or other psychotropic substances.⁽¹⁷⁾

Statistics on Working Children and Education

Children	Age	Percent
Working	5-14 yrs.	Unavailable
Attending School	5-14 yrs.	Unavailable
Combining Work and School	7-14 yrs.	Unavailable
Primary Completion Rate		97.9

Sources:

Primary completion rate: Data from 2009, published by UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2013.⁽¹⁾

All other data: Understanding Children's Work Project's analysis, 2013.⁽²⁾

Prevalence and Sectoral Distribution of the Worst Forms of Child Labor

Children in Russia are found in the worst forms of child labor, including in work on the street and in commercial sexual exploitation.⁽³⁻⁵⁾ Children are engaged in work on the streets in Russia. The Government has recognized children working on the streets as a worst form of child labor in the country.⁽⁶⁻⁸⁾ Migrant families face language and cultural barriers that may make it difficult to seek or receive social assistance.^(4, 5) Regional authorities often deny school access to unregistered children, including Roma, asylum seekers, and migrants.⁽⁵⁾ The inability to access education and other social services may make children in these groups especially vulnerable to the worst forms of child labor.

Commercial sexual exploitation of children, especially in large cities, remains a concern.^(4, 9-11) Moscow and St. Petersburg are hubs of child trafficking and child commercial sexual exploitation.⁽⁴⁾ Children, both boys and girls, are trafficked internally from rural to urban centers and between regions.

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International Conventions and Selected Laws on Child Labor and Education

	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	No
	Palermo Protocol on Trafficking in Persons	✓
	Minimum Age for Work	16
	Minimum Age for Hazardous Work	18
	Compulsory Education Age	15
	Free Public Education	Yes

Involving a minor in prostitution and creating or circulating pornography depicting a known minor are also punishable under the Criminal Code. Although there was a proposal to amend the Criminal Code to define and criminalize possession of child pornography in the first half of 2011, the authorities did not approve the original draft and proposed new legislation.⁽¹²⁾ The new legislation, which went into effect on February 29, 2012, includes a broader range of penalties for child exploitation and tougher penalties for crimes committed against children under age 14 and crimes that are committed against minors by their parents or other official guardians.⁽¹⁸⁾ However, the law excludes a definition of child pornography and a provision that criminalizes possession of child pornography, items which were the initial bill's main objectives.⁽¹²⁾ Lack of a definition for child pornography and failure to criminalize possession of child pornography may hamper enforcement efforts.

The Government signed the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography on September 28, 2012.⁽⁴⁾ The Government also signed the Council of Europe Convention on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse on October 1, 2012.^(4, 19) The Conventions were not ratified during the reporting period.

The minimum age for both voluntary and compulsory military recruitment in Russia is 18.⁽²⁰⁾ Education is free and compulsory for children up to age 15.^(21, 22)

Institutional Mechanisms for Coordination and Enforcement

The Government of Russia has not established a coordinating mechanism to combat the worst forms of child labor.

The Federal Labor and Employment Service and the Public Prosecutor are responsible for enforcing laws relating to child labor, and the two agencies formally coordinate joint inspections.⁽⁴⁾ The Ministry of Internal Affairs (MVD), the Federal Security Service, the Investigative Committee, and other law enforcement entities are responsible for enforcing criminal laws against forced child labor, trafficking, commercial sexual exploitation, and the use of children in illicit activities.⁽¹²⁾ The Government of Russia also has a federal office to protect children's rights in the Office of the Children's Rights Ombudsman in all existing 83 regions.⁽¹²⁾ Regional Ombudsmen have the authority to investigate potential violations of children's rights, monitor offices dealing with minors, and evaluate legislation affecting children.⁽³⁾

The Federal Labor and Employment Service (FLES) employs approximately 1,700 labor inspectors whose responsibilities also include enforcement of child labor laws. According to FLES, the number of labor inspectors is insufficient to effectively enforce labor laws.^(4, 12) In 2011, the most recent period for which statistics are available, FLES conducted 3,600 inspections out of which 3,400 child labor violations were found. As a result of these inspections, 257 children were removed from work because of labor safety violations.⁽⁴⁾ Child labor violations resulted in fines totaling \$64,530 in 2011.⁽⁴⁾ However, it is unknown whether the assessed fine is a sufficient deterrent for preventing child labor violations. Research did not reveal information on the number of labor inspections or penalties assessed in 2012.

In recent years, the Government of Russia stepped up efforts to monitor and combat child pornography, initiating several criminal cases against individuals suspected of producing and disseminating child pornography.⁽¹²⁾ In 2012, the MVD brought at least 25 criminal cases against the trade of child pornography on peer-to-peer- file sharing networks.⁽⁴⁾

In addition, the Government continues to cooperate with the private sector and nongovernment institutions to combat the dissemination of child pornography on the Internet.⁽⁴⁾ Under

this initiative, cyber watch volunteers enabled the initiation of 150 criminal cases in 2012 on the distribution of child pornography and sexual abuse of children.(4)

However, official data is unavailable on the number of investigations, prosecutions, or convictions for child trafficking or other crimes relating to the worst forms of labor.(4) Based on unofficial sources, there were criminal cases prosecuting criminals for trafficking 21 child victims in 2012 under article 127.1.(23) The specific data based on type of crime and the number of minors victimized under each relevant article of the Criminal Code is lacking.(23) The ILO Committee of Experts has noted that the Government repeatedly failed to provide information on the impact of its efforts to prevent child trafficking.(24)

Government Policies on the Worst Forms of Child Labor

The Government of Russia does not have a national plan or policy that specifically addresses the worst forms of child labor, but has policies focused on child protection. In 2012, the Government established a National Children's Strategy through 2017 that covers issues such as child protection, accessibility of quality education, and the need for child-friendly healthcare, equal opportunities for children in need of special care by the State, and a child rights protection system.(4) Lack of access to quality education and other State services increases children's vulnerability to involvement in the worst forms of child labor. The Government designated responsible agencies and created tasks and timelines for its implementation.(4)

During the reporting period, the Government provided regular training designed to guide government officials in handling trafficking cases. However, there was no regular framework

to direct officials on how to proactively identify trafficking victims or to refer them to available services.(23) Currently, trafficking victims cases are assessed by law enforcement on a case-by-case basis, which involves a long process before cases are adjudicated.

The Government of Russia does not collect national statistics on child labor that would enable the development of relevant policy and programs to combat the problem.(12)

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

The Government of Russia does not have specific programs to combat the worst forms of child labor. However, the Government continued the Child Support Fund for Children in Difficult Life Circumstances, a child welfare program it initiated in 2008. Among other goals, the Fund helps rehabilitate orphaned, disadvantaged, and homeless children through social programs and activities.(12)

Children receive assistance through some of the Fund's programs, including mobile crisis centers, psychological centers, and social and physical rehabilitation services. There is no information available on the total Fund's budget for 2012, however the Fund's budget for 2011 was approximately \$32 million.(4) No assessment of these programs' impact on the worst forms of child labor has been identified.

There is no complete information available about government financial assistance for Trafficking in Person related programs in 2012 or the number of trafficking victims assisted during the reporting period.(4, 9, 12, 23) Reportedly, the Government's sole provision of funding for trafficking victims was the allocation of space for an eight-bed shelter in St. Petersburg.(23)

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

Area	Suggested Actions	Year(s) Action Recommended
Laws and Regulations	Criminalize possession of child pornography.	2009, 2010, 2011, 2012
	Codify a legal definition of child pornography.	2009, 2010, 2011, 2012
	Ratify the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography.	2012
Coordination and Enforcement	Establish a coordinating mechanism to combat the worst forms of child labor.	2009, 2010, 2011, 2012

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Area	Suggested Actions	Year(s) Action Recommended
Coordination and Enforcement	Determine whether the assessed fine for a child labor violation is a sufficient deterrent in preventing child labor violations.	2012
	Gather, report, and make statistics on the investigation and prosecution of child labor violations publicly available, including the worst forms of child labor.	2009, 2010, 2011, 2012
	Increase the number of labor inspectors and inspect the sites where child labor is most likely to be found.	2009, 2010, 2011, 2012
Policies	Collect data on the nature and prevalence of child labor to guide the design of policy and programming.	2009, 2010, 2011, 2012
	Develop formal procedures at the national level to educate and guide law enforcement officials, labor inspectors, and other professionals on trafficking cases, victim identification, assistance, and referrals.	2011, 2012
	Set up the process of registration for undocumented families and children and provide easier access to the registration process.	2012
Social Programs	Assess the impact of the Child Support Fund on addressing the worst forms of child labor.	2009, 2010, 2011, 2012
	Implement programs to combat all relevant worst forms of child labor, especially child victims of commercial sexual exploitation.	2010, 2011, 2012
	Fund anti-trafficking efforts that include financing to shelters for victims of human trafficking.	2011, 2012

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