

Djibouti

The Government of Djibouti continued efforts to combat child trafficking. However, Djibouti lacks laws to protect children from exploitation in hazardous work and has not established a coordinating mechanism to address child labor. Children in Djibouti continue to engage in the worst forms of child labor, including domestic service and street work.

Statistics on Working Children and School Attendance

Children	Age	Percent
Working	5-14 yrs.	12.3*
Attending School	5-14 yrs.	67.4
Combining Work and School	7-14 yrs.	10.2

* Population of working children: 23,693



Prevalence and Sectoral Distribution of the Worst Forms of Child Labor

Children in Djibouti are engaged in the worst forms of child labor,¹⁶⁹⁵ including domestic service and street work.¹⁶⁹⁶ Child work in these sectors occurs predominantly in urban areas, where the majority of the Djiboutian population is concentrated.¹⁶⁹⁷ Child domestic labor may involve long hours of work and dangerous activities, often exposing children to physical and sexual exploitation by their employers.

Street children, including migrant children from neighboring countries, commonly engage in vending, shining shoes, begging and washing and guarding cars.¹⁶⁹⁸ Some children also work in prostitution and drug dealing, including glue, pills, marijuana and a legal drug, called *khat*.¹⁶⁹⁹ Children working on the streets may be exposed to many dangers, including severe weather, vehicle accidents and criminal elements.¹⁷⁰⁰

Rural children in Djibouti care for and herd livestock, which may expose them to injury or disease from contact with animals.¹⁷⁰¹

A small number of girls from poor Djiboutian families, refugees and voluntary Ethiopian and Somali migrants passing through Djibouti are trafficked into prostitution in Djibouti City and along trucking routes on the Ethiopia-Djibouti corridor. This trafficking is often carried out by older children or women who promise to give the victims jobs as housekeepers.¹⁷⁰² Girls may also be trafficked for domestic service.¹⁷⁰³

Laws and Regulations on the Worst Forms of Child Labor

The Labor Code (*Loi n°133/AN/05/5ème L, Republic of Djibouti 2006*) sets the minimum age for employment in Djibouti at 16 and the minimum age for night work at 18.¹⁷⁰⁴ The law limits the number of consecutive hours children younger than age 18 can work, mandating 12 consecutive hours of rest between shifts. However, the National Council of Work, Labor and Vocational Training is authorized to exempt a young person from the rest requirement or restrictions on night work.¹⁷⁰⁵ The Labor Code also prohibits children younger than age 18 from working in certain sectors, including domestic service, hotels and bars.¹⁷⁰⁶ However, Djiboutian

law does not define hazardous work or establish a minimum age for hazardous work. Additionally, the Government has not developed a list of hazardous occupations prohibited for children.

	C138, Minimum Age	✓
	C182, Worst Forms of Child Labor	✓
	CRC	✓
	CRC Optional Protocol on Armed Conflict	No
	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	No
	Compulsory Education Age	16
	Free Public Education	Yes

The Labor Code prohibits forced and bonded labor.¹⁷⁰⁷ Djiboutian law proscribes the procurement of minors for prostitution or pornography and the use of minors in the transportation and sale of drugs.¹⁷⁰⁸

Loi n°210/AN/07/5ème L, Regarding the Fight Against Human Trafficking, prohibits all internal and transnational trafficking of persons younger than age 18.¹⁷⁰⁹

Djibouti has no compulsory military service, and the minimum age for voluntary recruitment is 18.¹⁷¹⁰

The Djiboutian Education System Act of 2000 ensures the right of compulsory basic education for children between ages 6 and 16.¹⁷¹¹

Institutional Mechanisms for Coordination and Enforcement

Research found no evidence that the Government of Djibouti has established a coordinating mechanism to combat the worst forms of child labor.

The Labor Inspectorate, under the Ministry of Labor, is primarily responsible for enforcing child labor laws and regulations.¹⁷¹² Labor inspectors can sanction businesses that employ children illegally. Additionally, the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Labor can require medical exams, as appropriate, to determine if work is beyond a young person's capabilities and can prohibit young people from being employed in other types of work deemed beyond their capabilities.¹⁷¹³ Based on the most recent data available, the Labor Inspectorate employs approximately one labor inspector and six controllers.¹⁷¹⁴

The Ministry of Justice and the Police Vice Squad (*Brigade des Moeurs*) are responsible for investigating criminal offences related to child labor, including forced labor, commercial sexual exploitation and prostitution.¹⁷¹⁵ The Police Vice Squad also works with the Ministry of Health to refer victims of child prostitution to service providers.¹⁷¹⁶

Research found no evidence that the Government releases public reports on inspections, prosecutions or convictions related to child labor.

Government Policies on the Worst Forms of Child Labor

Djibouti's Poverty Reduction Strategy prioritizes vulnerable children, including those living in poverty and on the streets. It aims to raise parents' livelihoods, thereby allowing children to allocate time to education rather than work.¹⁷¹⁷ Further, it

mandates the provision of legal and social safety nets for street children.¹⁷¹⁸ However, whether this policy has an impact on child labor does not appear to have been addressed.

The Government of Djibouti maintains a policy of offering free public education. However, associated expenses are often prohibitively high for poor families, contributing to low primary school attendance rates.¹⁷¹⁹

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

During the reporting period, the Government participated in workshops to sensitize Djiboutian authorities about irregular migration flows.¹⁷²⁰ In early 2011, with funding from the Government of Japan, a Migration Response Center opened in Northern Djibouti to raise awareness about irregular migration, including human trafficking,

and develop programs, including those to aid victims of trafficking and unaccompanied minors.¹⁷²¹ The Government is also participating in a 20-month, \$280,000 program funded by the USDOJ to expand and strengthen the enforcement of anti-trafficking laws.¹⁷²² Though the Government of Djibouti has participated in programs to combat trafficking, research found no evidence of programs to assist children in other worst forms of child labor, such as domestic labor, street work, prostitution or illicit activity.

The Government also participates in the Urban Poverty Reduction Project, funded by the African Development Bank. The program aims to promote socioeconomic development in Djibouti's towns and cities, where over 80 percent of its population is concentrated, including the majority of child workers.¹⁷²³ The question of whether this program has an impact on child labor does not appear to have been addressed.

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

IN THE AREA OF LAWS AND REGULATIONS:

- Establish a minimum age for hazardous work, and develop and publish a list of hazardous occupations.

IN THE AREA OF COORDINATION AND ENFORCEMENT:

- Establish a coordinating mechanism to combat the worst forms of child labor.
- Publicly report on inspections, prosecutions and convictions related to child labor.

IN THE AREA OF POLICIES:

- Assess the impact that the Poverty Reduction Strategy has on child labor.
- Explore ways to fully and effectively implement free public education policy.

IN THE AREA OF PROGRAMS:

- Institute programs to assist children in domestic labor, street work, prostitution and illicit activities.
- Assess the impact the Urban Poverty Reduction Project may have on child labor.

¹⁶⁹⁵ 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, 2005-2011. Data provided are from 2006. 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.

¹⁶⁹⁶ U.S. Embassy- Djibouti, *reporting, February 1, 2010*, para 3. See also U.S. Department of State, "Djibouti," in *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices- 2010*, Washington, DC, April 8, 2011, section 7d; available from <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2010/af/154343.htm>.

¹⁶⁹⁷ U.S. Embassy- Djibouti, *reporting, February 1, 2010*, paras 3, 5. See also World Bank, *International Development Association on a Country Assistance Strategy for the Republic of Djibouti*, Washington, DC, March 30, 2009; available from http://www-wds.worldbank.org/external/default/WDSContentServer/WDSP/IB/2009/04/10/000334955_20090410051613/Rendered/PDF/472730CAS0GJ0P101Official0Use0Only1.pdf. See also African Development Bank, *Urban Poverty Reduction Project*, [online] 2010 [cited February 25, 2011]; available from <http://www.afdb.org/en/projects-operations/project-portfolio/project/p-dj-ie0-002/>.

¹⁶⁹⁸ eStandards Forum, *Country Brief- Djibouti*, [online] May 27, 2010 [cited February 25, 2011], 5; available from <http://www.estandardsforum.org/system/briefs/250/original/brief-Djibouti.pdf?1277490973>. See also U.S. Embassy- Djibouti, *reporting, February 1, 2010*, para 3.

¹⁶⁹⁹ Ilmi Awaleh Elabeh, Souraya Hassan Houssein, Olivier Belbeoch, and Georges Gonzales, *La Pauvreté et les Disparités chez les Enfants à Djibouti*, online, UNICEF and Ministère de la Promotion de la Femme du Bien-Être Familial et des Affaires Sociales, December 2009; available from http://www.unicef.org/infobycountry/files/Rapport_National_Djibouti_Pauvrete_des_Enfants.pdf. See also U.S. Department of State, «Djibouti,» in *Trafficking in Persons Report- 2010*, Washington, DC, June 14, 2010; available from <http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/142982.pdf>. See also U.S. Embassy- Djibouti, *reporting, February 1, 2010*, para 3. See also U.S. Department of State, "Country Reports- 2010: Djibouti," section 7d. See also Association Porte Ouverte- Open Door Association official, Interview with USDOL consultant, August 9, 2006.

¹⁷⁰⁰ Caritas Djibouti official, Interview with USDOL consultant, July 16, 2006.

¹⁷⁰¹ U.S. Embassy- Djibouti, *reporting, February 1, 2010*, para 3.

¹⁷⁰² Association Porte Ouverte- Open Door Association official, Interview, August 9, 2006. See also U.S. Department of State, "Trafficking in Persons Report- 2010: Djibouti."

¹⁷⁰³ U.S. Embassy- Djibouti, *reporting, February 1, 2010*, para 3. See also U.S. Department of State, "Trafficking in Persons Report- 2010: Djibouti."

¹⁷⁰⁴ Government of Djibouti, *Loi n°133/AN/05/5ème L portant Code du Travail*, (January 26, 2006), articles 5, 94; available from http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_protect/---protrav/---ilo_aids/documents/legaldocument/wcms_126983.pdf.

¹⁷⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, articles 94, 96.

¹⁷⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, article 110.

¹⁷⁰⁷ U.S. Embassy- Djibouti, *reporting, February 1, 2010*, para 4. See also Government of Djibouti, *Loi n°133/AN/05/5ème L*, article 2.

¹⁷⁰⁸ U.S. Embassy- Djibouti, *reporting, February 1, 2010*, para 4.

¹⁷⁰⁹ Government of Djibouti, *Loi n°210/AN/07/5ème L relative à la Lutte Contre le Trafic des Etres Humains*, (October 2, 2007), articles 1-6; available from <http://www.presidence.dj/jo/2007/loi210an07.php>.

¹⁷¹⁰ Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers, "Djibouti," in *Child Soldiers Global Report 2008*, London, 2008; available from http://www.childsoldiersglobalreport.org/files/country_pdfs/FINAL_2008_Global_Report.pdf.

¹⁷¹¹ Right to Education Project, *National law and policies on minimum ages - Djibouti*, [online] 2008 [cited February 16, 2011]; available from <http://www.right-to-education.org/country-node/423/country-minimum>.

¹⁷¹² U.S. Embassy- Djibouti, *reporting, February 1, 2010*, para 5.

¹⁷¹³ Government of Djibouti, *Loi n°133/AN/05/5ème L*, articles 70, 71, 110, 111, 112.

¹⁷¹⁴ 20 U.S. Embassy- Djibouti, *reporting, February 1, 2010*, para 5.

¹⁷¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁷¹⁶ *Ibid.*, para 6.

¹⁷¹⁷ International Monetary Fund, *Djibouti: Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper*, Washington, DC, July 2009, 22 and 35; available from <http://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/scr/2009/cr09203.pdf>.

¹⁷¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 40.

¹⁷¹⁹ U.S. Department of State, “Country Reports- 2010: Djibouti,” section 6. See also International Monetary Fund, *Djibouti: Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper*, 17.

¹⁷²⁰ International Organization for Migration, *IOM Hosts Capacity Building Workshop in Djibouti on Irregular Migration*, Press Briefing, Djibouti, August 13, 2010; available from <http://iom.ch/jahia/Jahia/media/press-briefing-notes/pbnAF/cache/offonce;jsessionid=3E933637A2FFF3C3D0277C43EE35388E.worker01?entryId=28130>.

¹⁷²¹ International Organization for Migration, *Director General visits Djibouti Opens Migration Response Centre*,

Press Briefing, Djibouti, February 2, 2011; available from <http://iom.ch/jahia/Jahia/media/press-briefing-notes/pbnAF/cache/offonce;jsessionid=3E933637A2FFF3C3D0277C43EE35388E.worker01?entryId=28130>.

¹⁷²² U.S. Department of State, *Anti-Trafficking Projects Awarded During Fiscal Years 2009 and 2010*, Washington, DC, 2010; available from <http://www.state.gov/g/tip/rls/other/2010/149560.htm>.

¹⁷²³ African Development Bank, *Urban Poverty Reduction Project*.