

In 2014, Bahrain made a minimal advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. The Government adopted the National Action Plan to Combat Human Trafficking to support the implementation of the Law on Combating Trafficking in Persons. Although the problem does not appear to be widespread, children are engaged in the worst forms of child labor, including in commercial sexual exploitation. The Government has not conducted research to determine the extent and nature of the worst forms of child labor in the country. Furthermore, the Government has not published information on enforcement or established mechanisms to coordinate its efforts to address child labor, including all its worst forms.



I. PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Although the problem does not appear to be widespread, children are engaged in the worst forms of child labor, including in commercial sexual exploitation, in Bahrain.(1) Data on key indicators on children's work and education are not available from the sources used in this report.

Table 1. Statistics on Children's Work 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 (%)		Unavailable

Primary completion rate was unavailable from UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2014.(2)

Data were unavailable from Understanding Children's Work Project's analysis, 2014.(3)

Based on a review of available information, Table 2 provides an overview of children's work by sector and activity.

Table 2. Overview of Children's Work by Sector and Activity

Sector/Industry	Activity
Services	Street begging* (4)
	Domestic work* (1)
Categorical Worst Forms of Child Labor‡	Commercial sexual exploitation* (1)

* Evidence of this activity is limited and/or the extent of the problem is unknown.

‡ Child labor understood as the worst forms of child labor *per se* under Article 3 (a) – (c) of ILO C. 182.

In 2014, the Government did not conduct or participate in research to determine the extent to which children are engaged in the worst forms of child labor.(1)

In 2014, there were cases of children who traveled to Bahrain with falsified documents to work as domestic workers.(1)

In Bahrain, citizenship is derived from the father. As a result, children of Bahraini mothers and non-Bahraini fathers may be stateless. However, depending on the laws of the father's country of origin, children of non-Bahraini fathers may be able to acquire the citizenship of another country.(5) While no law or official policy prohibits stateless children from accessing government-funded education, stateless children cannot register at schools due to lack of legal documents such as birth certificates.(6-8)




Bahrain

MINIMAL ADVANCEMENT

II. LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR THE WORST FORMS OF CHILD LABOR

Bahrain has ratified all key international conventions concerning child labor (Table 3).

Table 3. Ratification of International Conventions on Child Labor

Convention	Ratification
 ILO C. 138, Minimum Age	✓
ILO C. 182, Worst Forms of Child Labor	✓
 UN CRC	✓
UN CRC Optional Protocol on Armed Conflict	✓
UN CRC Optional Protocol on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography	✓
 Palermo Protocol on Trafficking in Persons	✓

The Government has established laws and regulations related to child labor, including its worst forms (Table 4).

Table 4. Laws and Regulations Related to Child Labor

Standard	Yes/No	Age	Related Legislation
Minimum Age for Work	Yes	15	Article 24 of the Labor Law (9)
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work	Yes	18	Article 27 of the Labor Law (9)
Prohibition of Hazardous Occupations or Activities for Children	Yes		Articles 1 and 2 of the Ministerial Order No. 23 of 2013 (10)
Prohibition of Forced Labor	Yes		Article 1 of the Law on Combating Trafficking in Persons (11)
Prohibition of Child Trafficking	Yes		Article 1 of the Law on Combating Trafficking in Persons (11)
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children	Yes		Articles 324–327 of the Penal Code; Article 39 of the Child Law (12, 13)
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities	Yes		Articles 59 and 68 of the Child Law (12)
Minimum Age for Compulsory Military Recruitment	N/A*		
Minimum Age for Voluntary Military Service	Yes	18	Article 24 of the Defense Force Act (14)
Compulsory Education Age	Yes	15	Article 1 of the Education Act (15)
Free Public Education	Yes		Article 7 of the Constitution (16)

* No conscription (14)

The minimum age protection in the Bahraini Labor Law does not apply to children working in certain industries, such as domestic work.⁽⁹⁾ However, some Government policies help prevent child labor in domestic work. For example, visa policies require all individuals seeking to migrate to Bahrain and work to be at least 18 years of age. Similarly, children already in Bahrain as dependents of migrants cannot obtain a work visa.⁽¹⁷⁾

Under Article 326 of the Penal Code, which penalizes commercial sexual exploitation, children ages 15-18 may be prosecuted for commercial sexual exploitation.^(13, 18) However, it is standard practice in Bahrain in those situations for the children to be placed in a rehabilitation center and not prosecuted.⁽¹⁷⁾ Additionally, Articles 1.26 and 1.27 of the Ministerial Order No. 23 of 2013 prohibit the employment of minors in bars and nightclubs which are sectors particularly vulnerable to commercial sexual exploitation.⁽¹⁰⁾ This reduces children’s vulnerability to commercial sexual exploitation and the likelihood of prosecution.

III. ENFORCEMENT OF LAWS ON THE WORST FORMS OF CHILD LABOR

The Government has established institutional mechanisms for the enforcement of laws and regulations on child labor, including its worst forms (Table 5).

Table 5. Agencies Responsible for Child Labor Law Enforcement

Organization/Agency	Role
Ministry of Labor	Enforce child labor laws, along with the Labor Market Regulatory Authority.(19) Inspectors often take the lead role in initial mediation to resolve violations of the labor law. Violations that are not resolved through mediation are referred to the Public Prosecutor's office.(1)
Labor Market Regulatory Authority	Issue work visas to ensure that individuals coming to Bahrain as migrant workers are at least 18 years of age.(1) Plans to include hotline operators who can communicate with victims in additional languages.(20)
Ministry of Social Development (MOSD)	Maintain a hotline to receive complaints on child labor and child abuse.(21)
Police Department of the Ministry of the Interior	Enforce criminal laws that prohibit the worst forms of child labor in coordination with MOSD, the Ministry of Justice and Islamic Affairs, and the Public Prosecutor's Office, as needed. Oversee the 12-person Criminal Investigations Directorate that investigates potential cases of human trafficking and commercial sexual exploitation.(19) Refer any identified child victims of human trafficking or illicit activities to the Center for Child Protection.(1) Maintain a hotline to receive criminal complaints of child labor, including its worst forms.(21)
Public Prosecutor's Office	Prosecute all crimes related to child labor and human trafficking.(22)

Law enforcement agencies in Bahrain took actions to combat child labor, including its worst forms.

Labor Law Enforcement

In 2014, the Ministry of Labor employed 33 labor inspectors as a part of its regular inspection process. Given the size of the workforce in Bahrain, the number of labor inspectors is insufficient. All inspectors received training on the Labor Law, including issues related to child labor.(1) In 2014, they carried out more than 11,000 inspections and found no violations of child labor laws. (1) Article 13 of the Resolution on Inspection authorizes inspectors to visit work sites, including unannounced visits.(23) It is not known how many of the inspections conducted in 2014 entailed worksite visits and whether such visits were announced or not. Likewise, research did not reveal information on the type of inspections, or on the number of complaints received on the Ministry of Social Development's hotline, including complaints that may have been related to child labor.(21)

Criminal Law Enforcement

In 2014, research did not find information on the number of investigators. Police officers attended several trainings during the reporting period, both in Bahrain and internationally, on combatting human trafficking.(1) From 2012 until the end of 2014, 34 judges and members of the Public Prosecutor's Office also participated in three sessions that covered child labor, child trafficking, and commercial sexual exploitation.(22) In 2014, the Public Prosecutor's Office investigated 21 cases of human trafficking, including 16 cases of commercial sexual exploitation.(20) None of the investigations involved the worst forms of child labor.(21) Of the seven cases that were referred to the court in 2013, six sentences and one acquittal were issued.(20) It is not known how many of the seven cases may have involved children.

IV. COORDINATION OF GOVERNMENT EFFORTS ON THE WORST FORMS OF CHILD LABOR

Although the Government has established the National Committee on Combating Human Trafficking, research found no evidence of mechanisms to coordinate its efforts to address child labor, including all its worst forms (Table 6).

Table 6. Mechanisms to Coordinate Government Efforts on Child Labor

Coordinating Body	Role & Description
National Committee on Combating Human Trafficking	Coordinate trafficking policies and organize educational and outreach campaigns to raise awareness on trafficking in persons.(24) Led by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, other members include representatives from Ministry of Labor, Ministry of the Interior, Ministry of Justice, MOSD, Ministry of Information, Labor Market Regulatory Authority, and representatives from non-governmental organizations, including the Migrant Workers Protection Society.(21) Met regularly in 2014.(20)

V. GOVERNMENT POLICIES ON THE WORST FORMS OF CHILD LABOR

The Government of Bahrain has established policies related to child labor, including its worst forms (Table 7).

Bahrain

MINIMAL ADVANCEMENT

Table 7. Policies Related to Child Labor

Policy	Description
National Action Plan to Combat Human Trafficking (2014 – 2015)†	Supports the implementation of the Law on Combating Trafficking in Persons.(21)

† Policy was approved during the reporting period.

Although the Government of Bahrain has adopted the National Action Plan to Combat Human Trafficking, research found no evidence of a policy to combat other worst forms of child labor.

VI. SOCIAL PROGRAMS TO ADDRESS CHILD LABOR

In 2014, the Government of Bahrain funded programs that include the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor, including its worst forms. The Government has other programs that may have an impact on child labor, including its worst forms (Table 8).

Table 8. Social Programs to Address Child Labor

Program	Description
Dar al Aman Shelter‡	MOSD shelter that provides legal, medical, and psychological services to victims of human trafficking, labor exploitation, and commercial sexual exploitation.(1, 20)
Child Protection Center‡	Government center that provides treatment and counseling to child victims of abuse, including sexual exploitation.(4, 25) Receives referrals of child victims of human trafficking and commercial sexual exploitation from the Ministry of the Interior.(1)
Social Welfare Dignity Home‡	Government program that provides services to homeless persons and beggars, including children.(4)

‡ Program is funded by the Government of Bahrain.

Although the Government has implemented programs to assist victims of human trafficking, commercial sexual exploitation, and begging, research found no evidence of programs specifically aimed at protecting children engaged in domestic work.

VII. SUGGESTED GOVERNMENT ACTIONS TO ELIMINATE THE WORST FORMS OF CHILD LABOR

Based on the reporting above, suggested actions are identified that would advance the elimination of child labor, including its worst forms, in Bahrain (Table 9).

Table 9. Suggested Government Actions to Eliminate Child Labor, Including Its Worst Forms

Area	Suggested Action	Year(s) Suggested
Legal Framework	Ensure that the law’s minimum age provisions do not exclude children working in certain industries, including in domestic work.	2014
	Ensure that laws do not allow the prosecution of child victims of commercial sexual exploitation.	2010 – 2014
Enforcement	Increase the number of labor inspectors responsible for enforcing laws related to child labor in order to provide adequate coverage of the workforce.	2014
	Collect and make publicly available data on the notification system for labor inspectors, the type and quality of inspections, as well as the number of investigators responsible for cases related to the worst forms of child labor.	2009 – 2014
	Gather the number of complaints made to the MOSD hotline and disaggregate the number of complaints to discern how many of them relate to child labor.	2013 – 2014
Coordination	Establish coordinating mechanisms to combat child labor, including in all its worst forms.	2009 – 2014
Government Policies	Adopt a policy that addresses all relevant worst forms of child labor, such as commercial sexual exploitation.	2009 – 2014
Social Programs	Conduct a comprehensive study of children’s activities to determine the extent to which children are engaged in or at risk for involvement in child labor, including the worst forms of child labor.	2010 – 2014
	Ensure universal access to education, particularly for stateless children.	2014
	Develop programs to address the issue of children working in domestic work.	2010 – 2014

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