

In 2011, the Government of Algeria made no advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. The Government has yet to adopt a child protection law, drafted in 2007, that includes a hazardous work list. Algeria lacks adequate statistics on the prevalence and nature of the worst forms of child labor; however, children in Algeria are known to engage in the worst forms of child labor.

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		96.0

Sources:

Primary completion rate: Data from 2010, published by UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2012.(1)

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

Prevalence and Sectoral Distribution of the Worst Forms of Child Labor

Children in Algeria are reportedly engaged in the worst forms of child labor. UNICEF's Childinfo Web site, most recently updated in January 2012, provides data on child labor in Algeria based on the results of a 2006 Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS).(3) These data were not analyzed in time for use in this report, so they were not included in the table above. According to UNICEF's data table, 5 percent of children ages 5 to 14 are economically active.(3)

Although recent evidence on the prevalence of child labor in particular sectors is limited, Algerian children reportedly work in the construction sector and in mechanic shops, where they may face health and safety risks from work with heavy, motorized equipment and harmful materials. There have been past reports that children work on the streets as vendors and messengers, exposing them to multiple dangers including severe weather, vehicle accidents and criminal elements.(4-8) Algerian children also work in dangerous activities in agriculture.(5, 8, 9) Children working in agriculture may use dangerous tools, carry heavy loads and apply harmful pesticides.(8)



Children also work as domestic servants.(4, 5) Child domestic labor commonly involves long hours and may expose children to physical and sexual exploitation by their employer.(8) There have been reports of children being trafficked through or from Algeria to other countries, however, the extent of this problem is unknown.(6, 10)

Laws and Regulations on the Worst Forms of Child Labor

Algeria's Labor Code sets the minimum age for employment at age 16, but permits apprenticeships at age 15 under the authorization of a legal guardian.(11, 12) Even without the authorization of a legal guardian, the Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare may also grant permission for children ages 15 to 18 to work in certain fixed-term temporary jobs in the context of an apprenticeship.(13) Article 15 of Algeria's Labor Code prohibits minors from participating in dangerous, unhealthy or harmful work, or in work that may jeopardize their morality.(12) However, the Code fails to define a minor or establish hazardous occupations prohibited to minors. The Code also only covers contract-based employment and thus would not apply to informal work arrangements more likely to involve children.(6)

In 2007, the Ministry of Justice announced that it had drafted a child protection law that included strict clauses regarding the employment of children under age 16 and contained a hazardous work list; however, as of this reporting period, the Parliament has not yet adopted the legislation.

	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	16
	Minimum Age for Hazardous Work	No
	Compulsory Education Age	16
	Free Public Education	Yes

The Algerian Constitution implicitly prohibits forced labor through a stipulation that the country's laws are subject to international treaty obligations. Algeria has ratified ILO Convention 29 (Abolition of Forced Labor).(14) The Penal Code explicitly forbids forced or bonded child labor.(15) Under the January 2009 amendment to the Penal Code, all forms of trafficking in persons are outlawed and the trafficking of children is considered an aggravated offense.(16) Algeria's Penal Code bars the use or recruitment of minors under age 18 for prostitution, and child pornography is prohibited.(9, 15)

The minimum age for compulsory military recruitment is age 19.(17) The minimum age for voluntary recruitment is age 18; however, children age 17 with a *baccalauréat* (high school diploma) may be voluntarily recruited with parental consent.(18)

Education is compulsory to age 16.(4, 11)

Institutional Mechanisms for Coordination and Enforcement

The Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare's Intersectoral Commission Relative to the Prevention of and Fight Against Child Labor is designated to coordinate the Government's actions to prevent and eliminate child labor.(11, 19, 20) According to a speech made by the Minister of Labor and Social Security on June 12, 2011, the Commission has been active since 2003. Since then, the Commission organized

hundreds of open-door seminars on child labor and education programs affecting 400,000 children and apprentices, as well as strengthened the labor inspection services.(21) However, research could not determine whether these events took place during the reporting period.

The Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare leads the Government's efforts to investigate child labor cases and enforce minimum age laws.(19) Labor inspectors are empowered to conduct regular inspections or special visits to investigate general labor conditions or a specific issue.(19) During the reporting period, the Ministry conducted some inspections of public sector enterprises and, in a few cases, conducted investigations of companies suspected of employing underage workers.(9) Most inspectors are concentrated in urban areas, although more hazardous child labor is found in rural areas.(15) The ILO reported a decrease in the number of labor inspectors working to inspect public sector enterprises, including those working in the field.(6) However, the Government has not made available the number of inspectors employed to enforce child labor laws. The ILO emphasized that it is difficult to quantify coverage since the number of enterprises subject to inspection is not known.(6)

The Ministry of Interior's National and Border Police and the Ministry of Defense's *Gendarmerie* police force have law enforcement responsibilities relating to criminal child labor violations, including trafficking.(5) The Ministry of Justice is charged with bringing trafficking cases through the criminal justice system; however, the Government has yet to prosecute any trafficking cases.(22)

The Government has indicated that enforcement statistics are kept but has declined to make this information available.(6)

Government Policies on the Worst Forms of Child Labor

Algeria guarantees free education through the secondary level and has articulated steps to achieve universal education access through a National Action Plan (2008–2015). This plan, which addresses child development in general, calls for the implementation of specific activities to combat child labor, including some of the worst forms.(5, 23, 24) As of February 2011, the Government had not met its timetable for reporting on the implementation of this plan.(22) The Agency for Family and Women's Affairs has a child protection strategy for 2009–2012.(16) The question of whether these policies impact child labor does not appear to have been analyzed.

During the reporting period, the Government adopted a national strategy on trafficking for 2011-2013, which is implemented by a National Coordinator working with regional offices; reportedly, this mechanism has not operated effectively.⁽¹⁰⁾ Research found no evidence that the Government of Algeria has systematic data collection and analysis regarding the prevalence and nature of the worst forms of child labor.⁽¹⁶⁾ The Minister of Labor and Social Security said in his June 2011 remarks that “the Government has collected data showing the incidence of child labor in Algeria is very low.”⁽²¹⁾ Although the Government may have a system for collecting and analyzing data on child labor, it has not published its findings or information on how it compiles its data.

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

Research has not identified any social programs supported by the Government to address specific worst forms of child labor or provide services to children engaged in informal work not governed by the Labor Code. Many of Algeria’s programmatic efforts were undertaken with the assistance of UNICEF, but the sustainability of these programs is unknown. Programs conducted cooperatively with UNICEF began in 2007 and were set to end in 2011.⁽²⁵⁾ The Ministry of Labor and the Ministry of National Education implemented awareness-raising campaigns on child labor. The Ministry of National Solidarity provided grants and school supplies to low-income families to encourage school attendance.⁽¹¹⁾ However, the question of whether this program has an impact on child labor does not appear to have been explored.

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

Area	Suggested Actions	Year(s) Action Recommended
Laws and Regulations	Adopt the child protection law drafted by the Ministry of Justice, establish a list of hazardous occupations forbidden to all children and make sure this law has an official definition of the term, “child.”	2009, 2010, 2011
	Establish the minimum age for hazardous work as age 18 in the Labor Code.	2009, 2010, 2011
Coordination and Enforcement	Evaluate the Intersectoral Commission Relative to the Prevention of and Fight Against Child Labor to ensure proper coordination among relevant Ministries.	2011
	Ensure that child labor laws are effectively enforced in all geographic areas and sectors.	2009, 2010, 2011
	Make publicly available enforcement statistics regarding the worst forms of child labor.	2009, 2010, 2011
Policies	Systematically collect, analyze and make available data on the prevalence and nature of the worst forms of child labor.	2009, 2010, 2011
	Actively monitor the progress of the National Action Plan to ensure objectives are being met according to the plan’s timetable for action.	2011
	Develop child labor-focused policies that address all relevant worst forms of child labor.	2009, 2010, 2011
Social Programs	Integrate more activities that specifically address the worst forms of child labor into the agendas of relevant Ministries, for long-term sustainability of program efforts.	2009, 2010, 2011
	Assess the impact that existing programs have on child labor.	2010, 2011
	Institute programs to address the worst forms of child labor in the informal sector, to ensure services are provided to children not covered by the protections of the Labor Code.	2009, 2010, 2011

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