

In 2017, Albania made a moderate advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. The government passed the Regulation on Protection of Children at Work, which provides a list of hazardous occupations for children under age 18. The Office of the National Coordinator for the Fight Against Trafficking in Human Beings conducted an awareness-raising campaign. In addition, the government passed the Albanian National Agenda for Children's Rights, which aims to support development and social inclusion of children, and 101 children were assisted in shelters. However, children in Albania engage in the worst forms of child labor, including in mining and forced begging. Although the government made meaningful efforts in all relevant areas during the reporting period, the law does not explicitly prohibit using, procuring, or offering children for illicit activities. In addition, the Labor Inspectorate needs to be strengthened to conduct adequate inspections in all sectors in which child labor is known to occur.



I. PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Children in Albania engage in the worst forms of child labor, including in mining and forced begging. (1; 2; 3; 4; 5; 6; 7; 8; 9) Table 1 provides key indicators on children's work and education in Albania.

Table 1. Statistics on Children's Work and Education

Children	Age	Percent
Working (% and population)	5 to 14	4.6 (23,665)
Attending School (%)	5 to 14	92.5
Combining Work and School (%)	7 to 14	5.2
Primary Completion Rate (%)		105.6

Source for primary completion rate: Data from 2015, published by UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2018. (10)

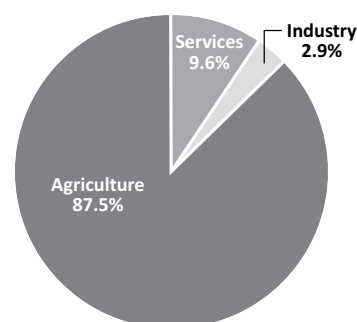
Source for all other data: Understanding Children's Work Project's analysis of statistics from National Child Labor Survey, 2010. (11)

Albania lacks recent, comprehensive data on children engaging in the worst forms of child labor, including in agriculture and construction. 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
Agriculture	Farming, activities unknown (2; 3; 4; 5; 8)
Industry	Mining,† including chromium (4; 5; 12; 13; 14; 15; 16; 7; 17; 8)
	Construction, activities unknown (1; 2; 4; 5)
	Working in the textile, garment, and footwear sectors (2; 4; 5; 18; 8; 19; 20)
	Processing fish (4; 5; 21)
Services	Begging (2; 3; 4; 5; 22; 8; 19)
	Street work, including vending, washing vehicles, busking, and shining shoes (3; 23; 8; 9; 19)
	Collecting recyclable materials on the street and in landfills (3; 5; 8; 19)
	Working in wholesale and retail trade (1; 2; 4; 5)
	Working in hotels and restaurants (1; 2; 4; 5; 8)
	Working in call centers (4; 5; 8)

Figure 1. Working Children by Sector, Ages 5-14



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Table 2. Overview of Children’s Work by Sector and Activity (cont)

Sector/Industry	Activity
Categorical Worst Forms of Child Labor†	Use in illicit activities, including burglary, drug trafficking, drug couriering, and harvesting and processing cannabis (2; 5; 3; 23; 24; 25; 26; 8; 9; 19)
	Commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking (3; 5; 26; 8)
	Forced begging, sometimes as a result of human trafficking (2; 3; 5; 6; 23; 26; 8; 9)

† Determined by national law or regulation as hazardous and, as such, relevant to Article 3(d) of ILO C. 182.

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

Children are trafficked internally in Albania and abroad to neighboring and EU countries for commercial sexual exploitation and forced labor, including forced begging. (23; 27; 28; 9) Internal child trafficking and forced begging have increased in recent years, particularly during the tourist season. (23; 26; 27; 28) Street children, especially those from Egyptian and Roma communities, are incredibly vulnerable to becoming victims of human trafficking. (2; 3; 29; 30)




In addition, children in Albania informally collect chromium around the mines where debris from mine tunnels is found, and sometimes carry heavy rocks for miles. (16; 7; 17; 8; 19; 20) The work is not coerced, and parents are aware that their children collect chromium. (8)

Although Albania allows children without a birth certificate to enroll in public schools, some children from Roma and Egyptian families and refugees may face obstacles in obtaining birth certificates, which may affect their access to social services and school inclusion. (5; 31; 27; 32; 21; 33) Children out of school are more vulnerable to the worst forms of child labor. Some Roma and Egyptian children also experienced financial hurdles to accessing education, such as transportation and textbook costs. (5; 8; 33) Discrimination in schools or being physically separated in classrooms are also challenges faced by Roma and Egyptian students. (5; 33)

II. LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR CHILD LABOR

Albania 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 (Table 4). However, gaps exist in Albania’s legal framework to adequately protect children from child labor, including using children in illicit activities.

Table 4. Laws and Regulations on Child Labor

Standard	Meets International Standards: Yes/No	Age	Legislation
Minimum Age for Work	Yes	16	Article 98 of the Code of Labor; Article 24 of the Law for the Protection of the Rights of the Child (34; 35)
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work	Yes	18	Articles 98–101 of the Code of Labor; Article 24 of the Law for the Protection of the Rights of the Child (34; 35)

Table 4. Laws and Regulations on Child Labor (cont)

Standard	Meets International Standards: Yes/No	Age	Legislation
Identification of Hazardous Occupations or Activities Prohibited for Children	Yes		Articles 99–101 of the Code of Labor; Decree of the Council of Ministers on Defining Hazardous and Hard Work; Article 34 of the Law on Occupational Safety and Health at Work; Regulation on Protection of Children at Work (34; 36; 37; 38)
Prohibition of Forced Labor	Yes		Article 8 of the Code of Labor; Article 124/b of the Criminal Code (34; 39)
Prohibition of Child Trafficking	Yes		Article 128/b of the Criminal Code (39)
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children	Yes		Articles 114–115, 117, and 128/b of the Criminal Code; Article 26 of the Law for the Protection of the Rights of the Child (35; 39)
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities	No		Article 129 of the Criminal Code; Articles 24–25 of the Law for the Protection of the Rights of the Child (35; 39)
Prohibition of Military Recruitment			
State Compulsory	N/A*		Article 9 of the Law on Military Service (40)
State Voluntary	Yes	19	Article 9 of the Law on Military Service (40)
Non-state	Yes		Article 28 of the Law for the Protection of the Rights of the Child (35)
Compulsory Education Age	Yes	16	Article 22 of the Law on Pre-University Education System (41)
Free Public Education	Yes		Article 57 of the Constitution of the Republic of Albania; Article 5 of the Law on Pre-University Education System (41; 42)

* No conscription (40)

In 2017, the Government of Albania passed the Regulation on Protection of Children at Work. The law provides a list of hazardous occupations for children under age 18. (38) In addition, the government adopted the Criminal Justice for Children Code, which prescribes a child-friendly approach to the justice system, such as providing psychologists for trials that involve a minor. (9; 43) The Law on the Protection of the Rights of the Child, also passed during the reporting period, creates an integrated system to prevent the abuse and exploitation of children in employment and codifies rights for children. (35) The government is also drafting bylaws to this law for the identification and referral process for street children. (8)

The law in Albania does not explicitly prohibit using, procuring, or offering children under age 18 for illicit activities, including in the production and trafficking of drugs. (30) Article 129 of the Criminal Code prohibits only inducing or encouraging children under age 14 to participate in criminality. (39)

III. ENFORCEMENT OF LAWS ON CHILD LABOR

The government has established institutional mechanisms for the enforcement of laws and regulations on child labor (Table 5). However, gaps exist within the operations of the Ministry of Finance, Economy, and Labor that may hinder adequate enforcement of their child labor laws.

Table 5. Agencies Responsible for Child Labor Law Enforcement

Organization/Agency	Role
Ministry of Finance, Economy, and Labor	Enforce laws related to child labor and hazardous work, and monitor the quality of social services provided through the State Inspectorate for Labor. (8)
Ministry of Health and Social Care	Develop policies and laws related to child protection, previously managed by the State Agency for the Protection of Children's Rights. (8) Receive, document, and respond to child labor complaints through the State Social Services (SSS) Agency. (8)
Ministry of Interior	Enforce all laws, including laws related to the worst forms of child labor through protection officers. (4; 8) Coordinate the work of the Regional Police Directorate through the General Directorate of State Police. Establish the government's policy on combating human trafficking through the State Committee Against Trafficking in Persons, chaired by the Interior Minister. (44)

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Table 5. Agencies Responsible for Child Labor Law Enforcement (cont)

Organization/Agency	Role
Office of the Prosecutor General	Investigate and prosecute child trafficking cases through the Serious Crimes Prosecution Office. (2; 45)
Child Protection Units (CPUs)	Identify at-risk children, take case referrals from enforcement agencies, and conduct initial evaluations of each case at the municipal level. Manage cases of at-risk children and refer them to appropriate social services. (2; 46; 47) Receive referrals from state police responsible for identifying and referring high-risk children. Every municipality or administrative unit with at least 3,000 children is required to have at least 1 CPU. (8) There were 221 CPUs in 2017. (8)

Child Protection Units (CPUs) are generally staffed by one individual, and a majority of CPU staff are not able to focus on child protection issues full-time. (48) The State Social Services Agency was moved from the Ministry of Social Welfare and Youth, causing delays in funding and lack of senior-level guidance on social issues. (9)

Labor Law Enforcement

In 2017, labor law enforcement agencies in Albania took actions to combat child labor (Table 6). However, gaps exist within the operations of the Ministry of Finance, Economy, and Labor that may hinder adequate labor law enforcement, including inspection planning and human resource allocation for all relevant sectors in which child labor is known to occur.

Table 6. Labor Law Enforcement Efforts Related to Child Labor

Overview of Labor Law Enforcement	2016	2017
Labor Inspectorate Funding	\$1,375,851.85 (8)	\$1,419,891.50 (8)
Number of Labor Inspectors	110 (8)	113 (8)
Inspectorate Authorized to Assess Penalties	Yes (5)	Yes (8)
Training for Labor Inspectors		
Initial Training for New Employees	Yes (5)	Yes (8)
Training on New Laws Related to Child Labor	Yes (5)	No (8)
Refresher Courses Provided	No (5)	No (8)
Number of Labor Inspections Conducted	171 (5)	168 (8)
Number Conducted at Worksites	69 (5)	74 (8)
Number of Child Labor Violations Found	21 (5)	71 (8)
Number of Child Labor Violations for Which Penalties were Imposed	10 (5)	39 (8)
Number of Child Labor Penalties Imposed that were Collected	N/A	0 (8)
Routine Inspections Conducted	Yes (5)	Yes (8)
Routine Inspections Targeted	Yes (5)	Unknown (8)
Unannounced Inspections Permitted	Yes (5)	Yes (8)
Unannounced Inspections Conducted	Yes (5)	Yes (8)
Complaint Mechanism Exists	Yes (5)	Yes (8)
Reciprocal Referral Mechanism Exists Between Labor Authorities and Social Services	Yes (5)	Yes (8)

The government has an annual plan to conduct inspections to identify potential dangers to employees. During the summer tourist season, the inspections focus on child labor in tourist areas. (5) However, the plan for 2017 did not include other sectors in which child labor is known to occur, specifically the agricultural, wholesale and retail trade, hotel restaurants, mining, and informal sectors. (8) Also, the complaint mechanism received only one complaint during the reporting period, indicating that it has not been promoted strongly by the Labor Inspectorate. (48)

In addition, the Director of the Labor Inspectorate was dismissed at the end of 2017 and was not replaced, which will affect the ability to pursue an adequate inspection strategy for 2018. (8) The government noted in 2017 that the budget did not cover all resources needed for labor inspectors, such as vehicles and office space. (8; 9)

If a child is exploited for labor, the identifying agency or individual refers the child to the CPU to create a child care plan. The CPU then refers the child to social services offered by the government or NGOs. (8) In 2017, CPUs identified and managed 586 cases of street children involved in begging. (8)

Criminal Law Enforcement

In 2017, criminal law enforcement agencies in Albania took actions to combat child labor (Table 7). However, gaps exist within the operations of the criminal enforcement agencies that may hinder adequate criminal law enforcement, including human resource allocation.

Table 7. Criminal Law Enforcement Efforts Related to Child Labor

Overview of Criminal Law Enforcement	2016	2017
Training for Investigators		
Initial Training for New Employees	Yes (5)	Yes (8)
Training on New Laws Related to the Worst Forms of Child Labor	N/A	Yes (8)
Refresher Courses Provided	Yes (44)	Yes (8)
Number of Investigations	19 (5)	20 (8)
Number of Violations Found	Unknown (8)	19 (8)
Number of Prosecutions Initiated	17 (5)	19 (8)
Number of Convictions	8 (5)	1 (8)
Reciprocal Referral Mechanism Exists Between Criminal Authorities and Social Services	Yes (5)	Yes (8)

In 2017, police officers from the Illicit Trafficking Police, State Police, and Border Police, were trained on child protection and trafficking in persons, including in the context of migrant flows through the Western Balkans. (8) In addition, the Office of the National Coordinator for the Fight Against Trafficking in Human Beings (ONAC) and the State Agency for the Rights and Protection of Children trained 240 local government professionals, including police, CPUs, and educators, on child protection and child trafficking. (30) An additional 160 teachers were trained on the prevention of trafficking organized by ONAC and the Ministry of Education. (8) Other training was organized by regional anti-trafficking committees. (8; 9)

NGOs noted that, due to police turnover, frequent training for police officers is needed to improve identification of child trafficking victims and street children, including child beggars trafficked from neighboring countries. (9; 48)

If a child is trafficked for labor exploitation, the agency identifying the child refers the child to the police and state social services and then to an anti-trafficking shelter. (8) Standard operating procedures (SOPs) exist to identify and refer victims of trafficking, including children. Although the SOPs are being reviewed to align with the new legal framework and institutional changes, border police did not consistently identify trafficking victims. (48; 9; 30) In addition, gaps exist in the screening of minors, including migrants traveling to and from neighboring countries. (48; 33)

IV. COORDINATION OF GOVERNMENT EFFORTS ON CHILD LABOR

The government has established mechanisms to coordinate its efforts to address child labor (Table 8). However, gaps exist that hinder the effective coordination of efforts to address child labor, including coordination between agencies.

Table 8. Key Mechanisms to Coordinate Government Efforts on Child Labor

Coordinating Body	Role and Description
State Agency for the Protection of Children's Rights	Oversee implementation of the government's child rights protection policies, including monitoring the National Action Plan for the Identification and Protection of Children in Street Situations. (4; 5) Manage cases of at-risk children and refer them to appropriate social services. (2; 46; 47) Sanction those who fail to protect children from violence and exploitation. (46)

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Table 8. Key Mechanisms to Coordinate Government Efforts on Child Labor (cont)

Coordinating Body	Role and Description
Office of the National Coordinator for the Fight Against Trafficking in Human Beings (ONAC)	Coordinate all anti-trafficking efforts in Albania. Oversee 12 regional anti-human trafficking committees that carry out local action plans in cooperation with civil society partners. (5) Lead data collection and report writing for the National Database for Human Trafficking Victims/Potential Victims. (5) Runs the Close Case Task Force with the Serious Crimes Prosecution Office and Albanian State Police. (9)
National Referral Mechanism	Coordinate the identification, protection, referral, and rehabilitation of trafficking victims between government and civil society organizations. (27) Chaired by the Ministry of the Interior's ONAC. (27; 49)

During the reporting period, the ONAC conducted one national awareness-raising campaign. (48) The Closed Case Task Force resumed meetings at the beginning of the year and reviewed two cases, which were used to conduct training for police and prosecutors. However, meetings tapered off by the end of the year due to government reorganization. (48)

Coordination between the State Inspectorate for Labor, State Social Services, and the Albanian State Police has traditionally been sporadic. (48) In 2017, the National Anti-Trafficking Coordinator position was vacated and replaced by the Director General for Asylum and Trafficking, which may have affected the government's ability to respond to issues related to human trafficking. (9)

V. GOVERNMENT POLICIES ON CHILD LABOR

The government has established policies that are consistent with relevant international standards on child labor (Table 9).

Table 9. Key Policies Related to Child Labor

Policy	Description
The Albanian National Agenda for Children's Rights (2017–2020) [†]	Aims to protect and promote children's rights by supporting physical and psychosocial development, and social inclusion of children. (50) Objectives include improving children's access to services and enhancing legal and institutional mechanisms for child protection. (50; 8) Rests on promoting, respecting, and protecting children's rights through governance; eliminating all forms of violence against children; and creating child-friendly systems and services in education, justice, health, and social protection. (8; 9)
Strategy for Combating Trafficking in Persons Action Plan (2014–2017)	Outlined a plan to improve law enforcement and prosecutions, build the capacity of programs that provide services to trafficking victims, improve interagency coordination, and train professionals working with street children. (28; 51; 52) ONAC and IOM met three times in 2017 to begin updating it for the next cycle. (9)
The Action Plan for the Social-Economic Reintegration of Women and Girl Victims (2016–2020)	Increases resources available to victims and attempts to reintegrate girl trafficking victims by providing education and social services to combat future forced labor and trafficking. (53) Part of the Strategy for Combating Trafficking in Persons Action Plan. (5) Active in 2017. (48)
Instruction No. 10 on Cooperation and Intervention Procedures for Assisting Vulnerable Children for Institutions and Structures in Charge of Child Protection	Describes child protection responsibilities of the state police, Ministry of Education, regional Directorates of Social Services, regional Departments of Education, schools, municipal governments, and CPUs. (46) Requires all agencies to refer known and suspected cases of child abuse and exploitation to CPUs. Outlines principles for case management and evaluation. (46) Active in 2017. (48)
Action Plan for the Identification and Protection of Children in Street Situations (2015–2017)	Defines the roles and responsibilities of various ministries and stakeholders in identifying and providing assistance to children living and working on the street. (4; 51) Active in 2017. (48)
White Paper on the Future of the Integrated Child Protection System in Albania	Clarifies roles and responsibilities of government agencies involved in child protection, makes government policy recommendations on child protection accountability, addresses mechanisms, and creates a child-friendly justice system. (4; 54)
National Action Plan for Roma and Egyptian Community Reintegration (2016–2020)	Aims to provide Roma and Egyptian children full access to education, reduce discrimination, enhance social inclusion, and promote intercultural dialog between different actors in the community. (28; 55) Active in 2017. (48)

[†] Policy was approved during the reporting period.

In 2017, the government and Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) continued to draft an action plan for the Identification and Protection of Children Subject to Economic Exploitation, Including Children

in Street Situations (2018–2020). (8; 9; 48) Once implemented, it will seek to build capacity for child protection and law enforcement institutions, as well as promote access to education for children vulnerable to trafficking. (56)

VI. SOCIAL PROGRAMS TO ADDRESS CHILD LABOR

In 2017, the government funded and participated in programs that include the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor (Table 10). However, gaps exist in these social programs, including with the adequacy of programs to address the problem in all sectors.

Table 10. Key Social Programs to Address Child Labor[‡]

Program	Description
Program of Cooperation for Sustainable Development (2017–2021)	UN program that aims to increase access to education for vulnerable children and protections for child victims of human trafficking. (57; 58) Program continued in 2017. (8)
Human Trafficking Hotline and Shelters	ONAC program supported by USAID, UNODC, World Vision, and the Vodafone Albania Foundation. Through the Human Trafficking Helpline, Report, and Save Mobile App, provides services to victims of crime, improves prevention of human trafficking, and serves as a public awareness tool. (27; 9) The National Shelter Coalition [†] comprises one state-run and three NGO-run shelters. The National Reception Center for Victims of Trafficking, under the supervision of the Directorate General of State Social Services, provides shelter and access to social services for human trafficking victims. (59; 9) The <i>Tjeter Vizion</i> NGO shelter provides services for minors. (9) In total, 101 minors were assisted in the shelters in 2017, including 3 Afghan minors at the <i>Tjeter Vizion</i> NGO shelter. (8; 9)
National Emergency Transition Center [†]	Government-run center that aims to provide vulnerable families with housing, health care, psychosocial and educational services, legal assistance, and employment placement aid. Accommodates 39 families. Continued to operate in 2017. (8; 30)
Child Allowance Program (<i>Ndihma Ekonomike</i>) [†]	\$46 million government-funded cash transfer program that provides an allowance for families receiving economic aid through the Law on Social Assistance and Services. Continued to operate in 2017. (8)
Identification and Protection of Children in Street Situations Action Plan (2015–2017)	UNICEF-funded program that protected children from abuse, exploitation, and neglect through an inter-agency plan for the protection of children living and working on the street. (60) Drafted by the Ministries of Social Welfare and Youth, Interior, and Education and Sports. Implemented by municipalities and monitored by the State Agency for the Protection of Children's Rights. (5; 60) Continued in 2017 and created local action plans in Durres, Elbasan, Fier, Korce, Shkoder, and Vlore. (8; 30)

[†] Program is funded by the Government of Albania.

[‡] The government had other social programs that may have included the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor. (61; 9)

During the reporting period, police sometimes referred street children or unaccompanied minors to human trafficking shelters while contacting their parents. This occasionally overburdened the shelters. (8) Some state- or NGO-run services were available for children who were forced to beg; research found no evidence that programs were carried out to assist children working in mining. (26; 49; 8)

VII. SUGGESTED GOVERNMENT ACTIONS TO ELIMINATE CHILD LABOR

Based on the reporting above, suggested actions are identified that would advance the elimination of child labor in Albania (Table 11).

Table 11. Suggested Government Actions to Eliminate Child Labor

Area	Suggested Action	Year(s) Suggested
Legal Framework	Ensure that using, procuring, and offering children under age 18 for illicit activities, including in the production and trafficking of drugs, is criminally prohibited.	2015 – 2017
Enforcement	Provide CPUs with sufficient staffing and funding to carry out their work.	2013 – 2017
	Ensure that the Labor Inspectorate has a permanent director and that the Labor Inspectorate plan is adequate, targeting sectors in which child labor is known to occur.	2010 – 2017
	Strengthen and promote the labor complaint mechanism so that the general public can report cases of child labor.	2017
	Provide the Labor Inspectorate with the necessary equipment and training so that inspections can be conducted.	2017

Table 11. Suggested Government Actions to Eliminate Child Labor (cont)

Area	Suggested Action	Year(s) Suggested
Enforcement	Ensure that labor and police investigators receive frequent training on children engaged in the worst forms of child labor.	2013 – 2017
	Ensure that the border police officers properly screen minor children, including migrants, and properly implement Standard Operating Procedures to identify victims of child trafficking.	2016 – 2017
Coordination	Ensure that all parties participate in ongoing meetings of the Closed Case Task Force, including ONAC, the Office of the General Prosecutor, and the State Police.	2016 – 2017
	Increase coordination between the State Inspectorate for Labor, State Social Services, and the Albanian State Police.	2016 – 2017
	Ensure that the position of Anti-Trafficking Coordinator is filled and responds to issues related to the commercial sexual exploitation of children.	2017
Social Programs	Conduct research to further identify children’s activities in agriculture and construction to inform policies and programs.	2013 – 2017
	Increase resources, access to civil registration, and social services available to children, including Roma and Egyptian children engaged in or at risk of engaging in child labor.	2011 – 2017
	Ensure that barriers to education, such as the prohibitive cost of school supplies and discrimination against Roma and Egyptian children, are removed.	2013 – 2017
	Increase the amount of shelters for children who are referred by police officers.	2017
	Institute programs to assist children who are used in mining chromium.	2014 – 2017

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