

In 2014, Guinea-Bissau made a minimal advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. The Government ratified the UN CRC Optional Protocol on Armed Conflict and participated in social programs that target child labor. However, children in Guinea-Bissau are engaged in child labor, including in agriculture and in the worst forms of child labor, including in forced begging. The prohibitions on hazardous occupations and activities for children are not comprehensive. The Government has not provided law enforcement officials with appropriate training and resources to monitor, investigate, and prosecute cases of child labor. In addition, programs to combat child labor are insufficient to adequately address the extent of the problem.



## I. PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Children in Guinea-Bissau are engaged in child labor, including in agriculture. Children are also engaged in the worst forms of child labor, including in forced begging.(1-9) Table 1 provides key indicators on children's work and education in Guinea-Bissau.

**Table 1. Statistics on Children's Work and Education**

Children	Age	Percent
Working (% and population)	5-14 yrs.	47.3 (219,734)
Attending School (%)	5-14 yrs.	56.9
Combining Work and School (%)	7-14 yrs.	34.6
Primary Completion Rate (%)		64.0

Source for primary completion rate: Data from 2010, published by UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2015.(10)

Source for all other data: Understanding Children's Work Project's analysis of statistics from Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 3, 2006.(11)

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	Production of cashews*(4, 8)
	Fishing,* activities unknown (5, 6)
Industry	Mining* (5)
Services	Domestic work (4, 6)
	Street work, including car washing and shoe shining (4, 6, 7)
Categorical Worst Forms of Child Labor‡	Commercial sexual exploitation as a result of human trafficking (1, 4, 7)
	Work in domestic service, street vending, begging, and agriculture,* each as a result of human trafficking (1-4, 6, 7, 9)

\* 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 Guinea-Bissau, organized networks of former male trafficking victims affiliated with Koranic schools traffic young boys to Senegal or to a lesser extent, Mali and Guinea, where they are forced to beg for money.(6) Young boys are increasingly sent to cities within Guinea-Bissau for the same purpose.(1) It is tradition to send boys, known as *talibés* (in Wolof) and *almudus* (in Fula), away from their families to be educated by Koranic teachers, called *marabouts*. Although many teachers carry out the intended tradition of providing education, some instead force students to beg on the streets for money and food and to then surrender their earnings to their teachers.(3, 6) Teachers who force *talibés/almudus* to beg typically set a daily quota; if the students do not meet the quota,

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they may be beaten.(3, 6) Research found that politicians in Guinea-Bissau do not confront Koranic teachers for trafficking boys because of the teachers' importance in the Muslim electorate.(2)

Boys are subjected to forced labor in street vending in Guinea-Bissau, and to forced labor in agriculture in the southern Senegalese cities of Kolda and Ziguinchor.(1, 2) Girls are subjected to forced labor in street vending and domestic service and subject to sex trafficking, including sex tourism, in Guinea and Senegal. (1)




Access to education is hindered by informal school fees, such as registration and monthly charges, which are common in public schools.(3, 12) Because of such fees, many parents remove their children from public schools and send them to Koranic schools.(3) While primary school children are often allowed to enroll in school without birth registration documents, secondary school children who lack these documents are denied access to school.(4) Additionally, children often leave school for weeks or months to work in the fields during the cashew harvest season.(4, 13)

During the reporting period, Guinea-Bissau underwent free and national elections after two years of transitional rule following the 2012 coup. The newly elected officials assumed power in June, limiting the Government's ability to undertake meaningful and significant action to eliminate the worst forms of child labor during the reporting period.(14)

## II. LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR THE WORST FORMS OF CHILD LABOR

Guinea-Bissau 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	✓

In 2014, Guinea-Bissau ratified the UN CRC Optional Protocol on Armed Conflict.(15)

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	14	Article 146 of the General Labor Law (16)
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work	Yes	18	Article 148 of the General Labor Law (16)
Prohibition of Hazardous Occupations or Activities for Children	Yes		Article 148 of the General Labor Law (16)
Prohibition of Forced Labor	Yes		Article 106 of the Penal Code (17)
Prohibition of Child Trafficking	Yes		Article 4 of the Law to Prevent and Combat Human Trafficking; 2009 Child Code (1, 18)
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children	Yes		Articles 3-5 of the Law to Prevent and Combat Human Trafficking; articles 134 and 136 of the Penal Code (17, 18)
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities	Yes		Article 7 of Decree No. 2-B/93 on Narcotic Substances (19)
Minimum Age for Compulsory Military Recruitment	Yes	18	Law No. 3/80 and Decree No. 20/83 (20)

**Table 4. Laws and Regulations Related to Child Labor (cont)**

Standard	Yes/No	Age	Related Legislation
Minimum Age for Voluntary Military Service	Yes	17	Article 31 of Law No. 4/99 (15)
Compulsory Education Age	Yes	15	Article 6 of the Basic Education Law (21)
Free Public Education	Yes		Article 6 of the Basic Education Law (21)

The General Labor Law prohibits children under age 18 from conducting heavy work, work in unhealthy or dangerous conditions, and underground work; however, this legislation is not specific enough to facilitate enforcement.(16)

The use of children ages 16 to 18 for commercial sexual exploitation is not prohibited.(20) Additionally, although the Law to Prevent and Combat Human Trafficking prohibits the production of and benefit from pornography, it does not prohibit possession and distribution of child pornography.(18)

Research did not uncover a public version of the Child Code, Law No. 3/80, Decree No. 20/83, and Law No. 4/99 for review.

### 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 Justice and Ministry of Civil Service and Labor, in collaboration with the National Institute for Women and Children (INMC)	Enforce child labor legislation.(6)
Inspectorate General of Labor and Social Security	Monitor compliance with the provisions of the labor law, including child labor.(20)
Ministry of Interior's Public Order Police	Lead efforts to combat child trafficking.(6, 8)
Police and National Guard	Conduct child labor prevention and enforcement, including preventing traffickers from entering or exiting the country with children. With INMC and UNICEF, maintain data on child trafficking.(8, 22)

Law enforcement agencies in Guinea-Bissau did not take actions to combat child labor, including its worst forms.

#### *Labor Law Enforcement*

Information is not available on the number of labor inspectors employed in Guinea-Bissau during the reporting period. Moreover, labor inspectors lack appropriate training and resources to carry out child labor inspections.(14) In addition, research found no evidence that labor inspections occurred during the reporting period. According to the Government, there were no child labor violations found and no penalties were issued.(14) Referral mechanisms do not exist between labor enforcement and social welfare services.(8)

#### *Criminal Law Enforcement*

During the reporting period, there was no information available on the number of investigators, investigations, prosecutions, or convictions related to the worst forms of child labor.(14) Although research found that one group of National Guard officers were trained on human trafficking issues during the reporting period, research did not find any evidence of child labor training for other criminal law enforcement officials.(9)

Referral mechanisms do not exist between the police and social welfare services.(8)

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

The Government has established mechanisms to coordinate its efforts to address child labor, including its worst forms (Table 6).

**Table 6. Mechanisms to Coordinate Government Efforts on Child Labor**

Coordinating Body	Role & Description
National Institute for Women and Children (INMC)	Coordinate and monitor NGOs and activities of other rehabilitation partners to defend and protect children.(6)
The Inter-Ministerial Steering Committee on Trafficking	Coordinate government efforts to combat human trafficking. Led by the INMC and includes representatives from the Ministries of Interior, Justice, Health, Education, and Transportation, as well as various NGOs.(22) The Inter-Ministerial Steering Committee on Trafficking did not meet during the reporting period.(9)
Ministry of Public Function, Work, and Modernization of the State (MFPTME)	Implement and coordinate actions to combat child labor in Guinea-Bissau. Comprised of the General Inspector of Public Administration; the General Inspector of Social Security; the General Directorate of Public Function; the General Directorate of Work, Employment, and Professional Training; and the National Institute of Social Security.(7)

### V. GOVERNMENT POLICIES ON THE WORST FORMS OF CHILD LABOR

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

**Table 7. Policies Related to Child Labor**

Policy	Description
Community of Portuguese-Speaking Countries (CPLP) Action Plan to Combat Child Labor	Establishes four target areas to combat child labor: (1) the exchange of information and experiences; (2) awareness-raising campaigns; (3) use of statistical methodologies to collect child labor data; and (4) technical cooperation and training.(23, 24)
National Action Plan on Trafficking	Aims to guide implementation of the Law to Prevent and Combat Human Trafficking. The Inter-Ministerial Steering Committee on Trafficking did not make any progress on implementation of the action plan during the reporting period.(8)
UNDAF (2013–2017)	Strengthens the Government's capacity to ensure respect, promotion, and protection of social rights. Assists in the effective implementation of a national action plan against child labor within the framework of the Decent Work Country Program.(25)
Education for All Action Plan (2000–2015)*	Guides Guinea-Bissau's efforts to ensure universal access to free and compulsory education, and facilitate interagency coordination.(7, 26)
Political Letter for Educational Sector (2010–2020)*	Outlines actions to be developed for preschool, primary, and secondary school education; additional higher education; technical/professional training; and higher education and science studies.(7)
National Strategy for Social Protection of Children	Provides orientation to the Government and to national and international partners to adequately address social protection for vulnerable children, including orphans, children who are HIV positive, working children, and children who have been exploited or trafficked for financial gain.(7)
National Action Plan for Birth Registration*	Provides free birth registration to children.(12) The Ministry of Justice partners with civil society organizations to implement mobile birth registration units in rural and urban areas.(27)
National Strategy for Poverty Reduction (2011–2015)	Seeks to reduce poverty from 69.3 percent in 2010 to 59 percent by 2015, and extreme poverty from 33 percent in 2010 to 20 percent by 2015, by improving access to basic services and generating income and employment opportunities. Strengthens government coordination and mechanisms to protect at-risk children, including those engaged in child labor.(28)

\* Child labor elimination and prevention strategies do not appear to have been integrated into this policy.

### VI. SOCIAL PROGRAMS TO ADDRESS CHILD LABOR

In 2014, the Government of Guinea-Bissau funded and participated in programs that include the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor, including its worst forms (Table 8).

**Table 8. Social Programs to Address Child Labor**

Program	Description
Eliminating the Worst Forms of Child Labor in West Africa and Strengthening Sub-Regional Cooperation through ECOWAS I & II	USDOL-funded regional projects that supported ECOWAS to strengthen its role in combating the worst forms of child labor in the West Africa sub-region by providing policy and capacity building support for all ECOWAS states.(29, 30)
Prevention and Elimination of Child Labor in West Africa	\$5.5 million Government of Spain-funded, 5-year project implemented by ILO-IPEC in collaboration with the Government of Guinea-Bissau.(31) Aimed to strengthen the institutional and legal environment, build local capacity, and improve the knowledge base around child labor through a national child labor survey, conducted with MFPTME.(7, 31)
UNICEF/UN Population Fund Program	Joint UNICEF/UN Population Fund program in collaboration with the Government, to prevent and combat child trafficking in the most disadvantaged communities through social safety nets, education, and other social protection mechanisms. Has rescued 317 <i>talibés</i> and provided them with psychosocial support and community reintegration assistance; has intercepted 139 children at risk of exploitation and human trafficking at border crossings and referred them to social services.(27)
Decent Work Country Program (2012–2015)	Targets the expansion of the social protection system, particularly for women in the informal economy and child victims of the worst forms of child labor. Specific objectives include adopting a national action plan against child labor and publishing results from the national survey on child labor.(13)
School Lunch Program*	Government, WFP, and U.S. Department of Agriculture-funded program implemented by International Partnership for Human Development that provides school lunches to more than 200,000 children.(14)

\* The impact of this program on child labor does not appear to have been studied.

Research did not find whether results of the national child labor survey had been published.

Although Guinea-Bissau has programs that target child labor, the scope of these programs is insufficient to fully address the extent of the problem.

## 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 Guinea-Bissau (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 prohibits specific hazardous occupations or activities for children in order to facilitate enforcement.	2009 – 2014
	Ensure the legal framework fully prohibits use of all children in commercial sexual exploitation and provides penalties for possessing and distributing child pornography.	2013 – 2014
	Make publicly available the Child Code, Law No. 3/80, Decree No. 20/83, and Law No. 4/99.	2014
Enforcement	Make information regarding the number of labor inspectors, criminal law enforcement investigators, investigations, prosecutions, and convictions publicly available.	2009 – 2014
	Ensure law enforcement officials receive proper training and resources so that they are able to monitor, investigate, and prosecute cases of child labor.	2009 – 2014
	Establish referral mechanisms between labor and criminal law enforcement agencies and social welfare services.	2014
Coordination	Ensure that the Inter-Ministerial Steering Committee on Trafficking meets regularly in order to coordinate efforts to combat human trafficking.	2014
Government Policies	Increase free birth registration for all children to ensure higher primary and secondary school enrollment.	2014
	Allocate appropriate funding to the National Action Plan on Trafficking to ensure its proper implementation.	2014
	Integrate child labor elimination and prevention strategies into existing policies.	2013 – 2014

**Table 9. Suggested Government Actions to Eliminate Child Labor, Including its Worst Forms (cont)**

Area	Suggested Action	Year(s) Suggested
Social Programs	Develop social welfare programs to ensure that informal fees do not hinder access to education.	2011 – 2014
	Assess the impact that the school lunch program may have on child labor.	2013 – 2014
	Publish the results of the national child labor survey.	2013 – 2014
	Expand existing programs to address the scope of the child labor problem.	2009 – 2014

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