

Oman

The Government of Oman has improved the Ministry of Manpower's enforcement capacity by increasing the number of labor inspectors. However, gaps remain regarding enforcement of child labor laws, and the absence of a compulsory age for education hinders efforts to address the worst forms of child labor. Children reportedly continue to work in the informal agriculture and fishing sectors, where they may be exposed to occupational health and safety risks.

Statistics on Working Children and School Attendance

Children	Percent
Working	Unavailable
Attending School	Unavailable
Combining Work and School	Unavailable



Prevalence and Sectoral Distribution of the Worst Forms of Child Labor³⁸⁸²

There is limited evidence regarding the worst forms of child labor in Oman.³⁸⁸³

Children reportedly work in the informal economy, particularly in agriculture and fishing.³⁸⁸⁴ There is a lack of information on the kinds of dangerous work children perform, and these children may be exposed to unsafe and unhealthy activities.

Camel racing is a part of the Bedouin cultural heritage, and traditionally young boys have participated as jockeys on a voluntary basis, which could involve the risk of injury during a race.³⁸⁸⁵ There were no reports in 2009 of boys under 18 working as camel jockeys.³⁸⁸⁶

Because of limited data, it is difficult to ascertain whether child prostitution, pornography, or trafficking exists in Oman. In 2009, the Government reported that the sale of children, child prostitution, and child pornography was not a “perceptible problem.”³⁸⁸⁷ However, the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child has raised concerns about the possibility that some children may be trafficked among migrant workers entering Oman.³⁸⁸⁸

Laws and Regulations on the Worst Forms of Child Labor

According to Oman's Labor Law and the Sultan's Royal Decree No. 35/2003, the minimum age for admission to work is 15.³⁸⁸⁹ However, for certain hazardous occupations the minimum age for work is 18.³⁸⁹⁰

The Government has identified 43 hazardous occupations, including camel jockeying, that are prohibited for children under age 18, but the full list of occupations has not been made available to the ILO.³⁸⁹¹ As of 2007, camel jockeys have been required to register in person with the Omani Camel Racing Federation and show proof of age by submitting a birth certificate, photographs, and a passport.³⁸⁹²

Oman's labor law also governs hours and conditions of employment under which juveniles may work.³⁸⁹³ The labor law bars juveniles from working between 6 p.m. and 6 a.m., or for more than 6 hours per day.³⁸⁹⁴ The Minister of Manpower (MOM) has the authority to determine the occupations and industries in which juveniles may work and what the minimum age of employment in these occupations should be.³⁸⁹⁵

Royal Decree No. 126/2008 prohibits the trafficking of children.³⁸⁹⁶ Inciting a child to carnality or prostitution is punishable by imprisonment under Article 220 of the Penal Code.³⁸⁹⁷ Article 224 of the Penal Code also makes it a crime for a person to produce, possess, or distribute obscene pictures or other pornographic objects.³⁸⁹⁸

In Oman, children receive free primary education, but attending school is not compulsory under the law.³⁸⁹⁹ In 2008, UNESCO estimated that 28 percent of the primary school age children in Oman were out of school.³⁹⁰⁰ Thus, some children under age 15 may be more susceptible to engagement in the worst forms of child labor.³⁹⁰¹

	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	15
	Minimum Age for Hazardous Work	18
	Compulsory Education Age	No
	Free Public Education	Yes

Institutional Mechanisms for Coordination and Enforcement

Research was inconclusive in regard to whether the Government of Oman has established a coordinating mechanism to combat the worst forms of child labor in Oman.

The Ministry of Manpower (MOM) has the responsibility for monitoring employer compliance with the labor laws, including laws on child labor.³⁹⁰²

Omani labor law (Royal Decree 25/2003) applies to all companies with a license from the Government to conduct business.³⁹⁰³ In practice, enforcement of the labor law often does not extend to the informal sectors, such as agriculture, fishing, and small family businesses, where children may work.³⁹⁰⁴ In general, compliance with child labor laws is monitored during routine labor inspections by the labor inspectorate. Monitoring can also be triggered by complaints registered directly with the MOM or through information sharing on labor cases between the MOM and Royal Oman Police (ROP).³⁹⁰⁵ The Government operates a 24-hour hotline to allow citizens to report claims of labor abuses, including trafficking. However, in 2009, there were no reports of complaints related to child labor.³⁹⁰⁶

In 2009, to improve its monitoring and enforcement capacity, the MOM hired over 180 new labor inspectors.³⁹⁰⁷ The Government partnered with ILO to train 180 labor inspectors on trafficking victim identification during inspections of private companies.³⁹⁰⁸

In 2009, MOM inspected 2,226 businesses.³⁹⁰⁹ No information was available to indicate whether child labor violations were found.³⁹¹⁰

Royal Decree 126/2008 directs the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) to spearhead the Government's efforts to combat trafficking,³⁹¹¹ and established the National Committee to Combat Human Trafficking (NCCHT).³⁹¹² The committee includes representatives from the Ministries of Manpower, Justice, Social Development, the Public Prosecutor, and the Royal Oman Police.³⁹¹³ The committee met regularly during the current reporting period.³⁹¹⁴ The NCCHT was made responsible for establishing a comprehensive program for combating trafficking, including programs to collect and report trafficking statistics and to care for and rehabilitate victims.³⁹¹⁵

In 2009, the Government indicted and convicted accused traffickers and imposed sentences including imprisonment with fines of \$26,000.³⁹¹⁶ The 2009 indictments and convictions did not include cases of trafficking involving underage children.³⁹¹⁷

Government Policies on the Worst Forms of Child Labor

The Government has formulated a National Plan to Combat Human Trafficking³⁹¹⁸ as called for under Royal Decree 126/2008. Action programs have been developed as a result of this decree as outlined below.

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

The Government has implemented a number of programs and initiatives to address human trafficking.³⁹¹⁹ The Government has provided legal assistance, shelter, and psychological care to sex trafficking victims; distributed brochures in numerous

languages that highlighted the rights and services workers are entitled to, the assistance available to trafficking victims and information on how to report trafficking crimes. It also launched a Web site and provided information on pertinent legislation and other matters relating to trafficking.³⁹²⁰ These efforts contribute to preventing child trafficking. In 2009, no child trafficking complaints were reported.³⁹²¹

The Government has not conducted an in-depth study on sexual exploitation and trafficking of children to determine the extent to which this is a problem in Oman.³⁹²² At the same time, there is a lack of information on the kinds of hazardous work children perform in agriculture and fishing.

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

IN THE AREA OF LAWS AND REGULATIONS:

- Make publicly available the list of all hazardous occupations and jobs prohibited for children under age 18.
- Establish a compulsory age for school that is consistent with the minimum age for employment.

IN THE AREA OF COORDINATION AND ENFORCEMENT:

- Ensure that mechanisms exist to coordinate policy and guide programs on the worst forms of child labor.
- Establish mechanisms to inspect all sectors, including small-scale agriculture, and fishing sectors for child labor violations.
- Track and report on child labor violations uncovered in labor inspections.
- Ensure that enforcement efforts to prevent child labor violations in camel racing are being undertaken and report on the results.

IN THE AREA OF SOCIAL PROGRAMS:

- Conduct a national survey to determine the extent and nature of child labor in Oman and use the results of the survey to formulate, monitor, and evaluate anti-child labor laws, policies and programs.
- Based on the evidence, establish specific programs targeted at preventing the worst forms of child labor, particularly in small-scale agriculture and fishing.

³⁸⁸² Data provided in the chart at the beginning of this country report are not available from the data sources that are used by USDOL. 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. For more information on sources used for these statistics, 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.

³⁸⁸³ U.S. Embassy- Muscat, *reporting*, February 10, 2010.

³⁸⁸⁴ International Trade Union Confederation, “Oman,” in *Internationally-Recognised Core Labour Standards in the Sultanate of Oman*, 2008; available from http://www.ituc-csi.org/IMG/pdf/TPR_OMAN.Final.pdf. See also Hamood Al Towaiya, Personal Communications on DOL’s 2007 Findings on the Worst forms of Child Labor, March 16, 2009.

³⁸⁸⁵ ILO Committee of Experts, *CEACR 2007/78th Session: Oman (ratification: 2001)*, [online] 2007; available from <http://webfusion.ilo.org/public/db/standards/normes/appl/appl-displayAllComments.cfm?conv=C182&ctry=2790&hdroff=1&lang=EN>.

³⁸⁸⁶ U.S. Embassy- Muscat, *reporting*, February 10, 2010.

³⁸⁸⁷ UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, *Consideration of Reports Submitted By States Parties - Oman*, Geneva, January 20, 2009; available from http://ww2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/crc/docs/CRC_C_OPSC_OMN_1_NEW.pdf.

³⁸⁸⁸ UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, *Consideration of Reports Submitted by States Parties Under Article 44 of the Convention: Concluding Observations: Oman*, CRC/C/OMN/CO/2, Geneva, September 29, 2006, sections 65 and 66(a); available from http://www.ohchr.org/english/bodies/crc/docs/co/CRC_C_OMN_CO_2.pdf.

³⁸⁸⁹ Government of Oman, *Royal Decree No. 35/2003: Oman Labour Law*, (May 3, 2003).

³⁸⁹⁰ ILO Committee of Experts, *CEACR 2007/78th Session - Oman*.

³⁸⁹¹ *Ibid.*]

³⁸⁹² UN Human Rights Council, *Implementation of General Assembly Resolution 60/251 of 15 March 2006 Entitled Human Rights Council.* “Report of the Special Rapporteur on Trafficking in Persons, especially women and children, Sigma Huda, A/HRC/4/23/Add.2, Geneva, April 25, 2007; available from <http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/docid/466d6231e.html>.

³⁸⁹³ Government of Oman, *Oman Labour Law*.

³⁸⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁸⁹⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁸⁹⁶ Government of Oman, *Royal Decree No. 126/2008: Law Combating Trafficking in Persons*, (November 23, 2008); available from <http://www.google.com/search?hl=en&q=Royal+Decree+No.126%2F2008+-+oman&BtnG=Search&aq=f>.

³⁸⁹⁷ Government of Oman, *Penal Code*, (1974); available from <http://www.interpol.int/public/Children/SexualAbuse/NationalLaws/csaOman.asp>.

³⁸⁹⁸ Hamood Al Towaiya, Letter to Marcia Eugenio, March 16, 2009.

³⁸⁹⁹ UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, *Oman (Second Periodic Report)*, Geneva, September 29, 2006; available from http://olddoc.ishr.ch/hrm/tmb/treaty/crc/reports/crc_43/crc_43_oman.pdf.

³⁹⁰⁰ UNESCO Institute for Statistics, *Global Rankings - Arab States - Rate of Primary Age Children Out Of School*, 2008; available from http://stats.uis.unesco.org/TableView/document.aspx?ReportId=125&IF_.

³⁹⁰¹ Fererico Allais & Frank Hagemann, *Child labor and education: Evidence from SIMPOC Surveys - IPEC* June 2008; available from <http://www.ilo.org/ipec>.

³⁹⁰² U.S. Embassy- Muscat, *reporting*, February 10, 2010.

³⁹⁰³ Hamood Al Towaiya, DOL’s 2007 Findings on the Worst Forms of Child Labor, March 16, 2009.

³⁹⁰⁴ International Trade Union Confederation, “Core Labor Standards in Sultanate of Oman.”

³⁹⁰⁵ U.S. Embassy- Muscat, *reporting*, February 10, 2010.

³⁹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁹⁰⁷ U.S. Embassy- Muscat official, E-mail communication to USDOL official, November 14, 2010.

³⁹⁰⁸ U.S. Department of State, “Oman (Tier 2),” in *Trafficking in Persons Report- 2010*, Washington, DC, June 2010; available from <http://www.state.gov/g/tip/rls/tiprpt/2010/index.htm>.

³⁹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁹¹⁰ *Ibid.*

³⁹¹¹ U.S. Embassy- Muscat, *reporting*, March 3, 2008.

³⁹¹² Government of Oman, *Law Combating Trafficking in Persons*.

³⁹¹³ U.S. Embassy- Muscat, *reporting*, March 3, 2008.

³⁹¹⁴ U.S. Department of State, “Trafficking in Persons Report- 2010: Oman.”

³⁹¹⁵ U.S. Embassy- Muscat, *reporting*, March 3, 2008.

³⁹¹⁶ U.S. Department of State, “Trafficking in Persons Report- 2010: Oman.”

³⁹¹⁷ U.S. Embassy- Muscat official, E-mail communication to USDOL official, November 18, 2010.

³⁹¹⁸ Government of Oman, *Law Combating Trafficking in Persons*.

³⁹¹⁹ U.S. Department of State, “Trafficking in Persons Report- 2010: Oman.”

³⁹²⁰ *Ibid.*

³⁹²¹ U.S. Embassy- Muscat, *reporting*, February 10, 2010.

³⁹²² UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, *Concluding Observations: Oman (Second Periodic Report)*.