

In 2013, Lebanon made a moderate advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. The Government adopted the National Action Plan on the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labor and carried out a National Child Labor Survey. The Government also initiated an education program for Syrian refugee children and continued to provide funding for the country's poverty alleviation program, which included paying school registration fees on behalf of 19,000 children from households living in extreme poverty. However, children in Lebanon continue to engage in child labor in agriculture and in the worst forms of child labor in commercial sexual exploitation. Labor law enforcement is weakened due to a lack of resources. In addition, enforcement agencies do not maintain enforcement data. Furthermore, gaps in Lebanese law prevent officials from entering private homes, making children who work in these settings unprotected and vulnerable to child labor.



I. PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Children in Lebanon engage in child labor in agriculture and in the worst forms of child labor in commercial sexual exploitation.(1-7) Refugee children and Lebanese children work in agriculture, mainly in the districts of Akkar, Hermel, and Baalbek.(6, 8-11) They often work without pay alongside their families and often do not attend school during harvesting and planting seasons.(10, 11) Working in the streets is especially common for foreign-born children, including Palestinian, Iraqi, Egyptian, Kurdish, Dom (an ethnic minority), and increasingly, Syrian children.(1, 3, 5, 12-16)

Table 1 provides key indicators on children's work and education in Lebanon. Data on some of these indicators are not available from the sources used in this report.

Table 1. Statistics on Children's Work and Education

Children	Age	Percent
Working (% and population)	5-14 yrs.	Unavailable
Attending School (%)	5-14 yrs.	Unavailable
Combining Work and School (%)	7-14 yrs.	Unavailable
Primary Completion Rate (%)		86.2

Source for primary completion rate: Data from 2012, published by UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2013.(17)

Source for all other data: Understanding Children's Work Project's analysis, 2013.(18)

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	Picking olives,* bananas,* and citrus fruit*† (6, 8, 9)
	Picking and bagging potatoes* (6)
	Production of tobacco† (5, 8, 11, 19-21)
	Clearing rocks from planting fields* (6)
	Fishing, activities unknown*† (5)

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

Sector/Industry	Activity
Industry	Construction,† including carpentry† and welding*† (2, 4, 5, 8, 20-22)
	Rock quarrying* (23)
Services	Street work,† including peddling and begging,* washing car windshields,* garbage scavenging,* and shining shoes (1-6, 13)
	Maintenance and repair of motor vehicles† (2, 4, 6, 8, 20)
	Building maintenance, including painting and cleaning† (6)
	Domestic service*† (3, 5, 8)
	Cleaning sewage† (6)
	Food service† (5)
	Working in the preparation of bodies for funerals and burials*† (24)
Categorical Worst Forms of Child Labor‡	Drug trafficking† (25)
	Armed guarding† (26)
	Forced begging† (7, 27)
	Begging as the result of human trafficking† (27)
	Domestic service sometimes as a result of human trafficking (11, 13, 28)
	Commercial sexual exploitation sometimes as a result of human trafficking (6, 13, 28, 29)

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

† 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.

There is evidence that children working on the streets may increasingly become victims of trafficking. Sometimes, they are forced into commercial sexual exploitation and illicit work by criminal gangs and acquaintances.(1-4, 13) A 2011 study found that boys working on the street are at a high risk of sexual exploitation by peers and by men.(13)

Lebanon is a source country for children, especially girls, trafficked for commercial sexual exploitation, domestic service, and criminal activity.(7, 11, 13, 27) Lebanon is also a destination country for children trafficked for commercial sexual exploitation.(13) Syrian girls, particularly, are trafficked to Lebanon for the purpose of commercial sexual exploitation under the guise of fake or temporary marriage.(7)

The Syrian conflict has caused a large influx of refugees to Lebanon. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) reported that as of mid-2013, nearly half of the 800,000 Syrians who have sought refuge in Lebanon are children.(16, 23, 30) These children have limited access to education and other services. Their families face extreme poverty, forcing many of these children to work and making them vulnerable to the worst forms of child labor.(5-7, 9, 31, 32) Agencies estimate that the number of school-age Syrian refugee children in Lebanon is likely to exceed the number of Lebanese children enrolled in the public school system soon. Reports indicate that Lebanese schools would have to double their capacity to absorb the demand.(6, 33-35)




An increasing problem noted during the reporting period was the recruitment and exploitation of children in political protests and militant activities in North Lebanon and some areas of Beirut.(5) Child labor is common in Palestinian refugee camps, where some children work as armed guards.(5, 26, 36)

Violence and the protracted nature of these camps have caused the Government to block the establishment of formal refugee camps for Syrian refugees. As a result, Syrian refugee children have limited access to education and other services, customarily provided in refugee camps, making these children more vulnerable to the worst forms of child labor.(6, 36)

II. LEGAL FRAMEWORK ON THE WORST FORMS OF CHILD LABOR

Lebanon has ratified most 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 of Lebanon has established relevant 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 22 of the Labor Code (37)
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work	Yes	17	Decree 8987 (38)
List of Hazardous Occupations Prohibited for Children	Yes		Decree 8987 (38)
Prohibition of Forced Labor	Yes		Law 422; Trafficking in Persons Law, Law 164 (39, 40)
Prohibition of Child Trafficking	Yes		Trafficking in Persons Law, Law 164 (40)
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children	Yes		Law 422; Articles 523–527 of the Penal Code; Statutory Rape Law 505–506 of the Penal Code; Trafficking in Persons Law, Law 164 (39, 41)
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities	Yes		Law 422; Articles Penal Code 509–510; Trafficking in Persons Law, Law 164 (39-41)
Minimum Age for Compulsory Military Recruitment	N/A*		
Minimum Age for Voluntary Military Service	Yes	17	Lebanese National Defense Law (5, 42)
Compulsory Education Age	Yes	12	Law No. 686 of 1998 (17)
Free Public Education	Yes		Article 10 of the Constitution, Law No. 686 of 1998 (43, 44)

*No conscription or no standing military.

Lebanon's Higher Council for Childhood (HCC), funded by the Government and the UN, continued implementing a project to identify gaps in the child protection legal framework.(3)

The Lebanese Constitution guarantees the right to compulsory, free education for children. Law No. 686 of 1998, however, limits free education to Lebanese citizens under 12.(43, 45) Lebanese law only confers citizenship to children whose fathers are Lebanese nationals.(1, 44) Formal school drop-out rates in Lebanon are high because of education-related expenses such as transportation, books, and uniforms.(3, 46, 47) The denial of free education to many children and these education-related expenses may prevent families from sending children to school, increasing their vulnerability to child labor. In addition, children ages 12-14 are particularly vulnerable to the worst forms of child labor, as they are not required to be in school, but are not legally permitted to work.(3)

Lebanese law is not consistent in its treatment of children working as beggars. In the Penal Code, child begging is criminalized.(12) Conversely, Law 422 stipulates that child begging endangers children and that child beggars are entitled to protective measures.(3, 12) However, because of an insufficient number of juvenile protection facilities (especially for non-Lebanese children), child beggars often end up detained in adult jails while authorities determine how to address their specific situations.(12, 13, 25)

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Inspections of child labor at informal work sites are only authorized if a complaint is filed and the accused fails to respond to a summons from the Child Labor Unit (CLU).(3, 48) No mechanism exists to investigate complaints of child domestic labor, since social workers—the only officials allowed to enter a private home—may only assess the overall welfare of the family and not the workplace conditions.(48)

According to limited sources, penalties for violating child labor and other related laws are not sufficient to reduce the problem.(5)

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

The Government of Lebanon 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 (MOL)	Enforce child labor laws through workplace inspections.(19)
Ministry of Justice's Internal Security Forces (ISF)	Enforce laws regarding the worst forms of child labor through the Morals Protection Bureau.(3, 5, 21)
Ministry of Social Affairs (MOSA)	Refer children identified by the Child Labor Unit (CLU) to protective institutions such as shelters.(11)
Ministry of Justice's Union for Protection of Juveniles in Lebanon (UPEL)	Refer ill-treated children, children in conflict with the law, and child victims of human trafficking and other forms of worst forms of child labor to services. (3, 11) Coordinate juvenile justice procedures and advise juvenile court judges on referring child labor victims to appropriate social services. Has six offices throughout Lebanon.(11, 21, 27)

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

Labor Law Enforcement

As of December 2013, the Ministry of Labor (MOL) employed 109 labor inspectors, 25 of whom were designated to focus on child labor inspections. Limited evidence suggests however, that many labor inspectors lack training in child labor issues and do not enforce child labor law in their inspections.(5, 9, 49) Additionally, the MOL does not have the resources for office equipment or the transportation necessary for inspectors to enforce child labor laws.(5, 49)

Officials state that estimated 4,000–5,000 children are removed from labor per year and are referred to NGOs and municipalities for services. However, the MOL does not maintain statistics on the number of inspections completed and reports indicate that continued political gridlock slows the administrative procedures necessary to enforce child labor laws.(5, 24)

Criminal Law Enforcement

The Internal Security Forces (ISF) employed nine investigators to enforce criminal laws against child trafficking and commercial sexual exploitation who carried out four investigations involving the worst forms of child labor.(5)

During the reporting period the Union for Protection of Juveniles in Lebanon provided training to some of the 26 ISF Morals Protection Bureau enforcement officials on how to handle child trafficking cases.(5) Various government agencies, including the ISF and the Ministries of Justice, Interior, and Social Affairs, participated in a 3-year training program with international and grassroots organizations, to enhance Lebanon's anti-trafficking effort.(28) In March of the reporting period, the group presented a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) Guide. The SOP presents measures to identify, protect, legally assist and return trafficking victims to their home countries; the document is awaiting Cabinet approval.(28) The Ministry of Justice (MOJ) prosecuted six cases of trafficking of children.(27) However, the number of investigations does not seem sufficient to address the scope of the problem effectively.(5)

The government allocated minimal resources to protecting victims and did not have victim protection policies in place.(7) A source indicates that victims of trafficking are not referred to protection services; instead they are detained for unlawful acts committed as a direct result of being trafficked, such as immigration violations or prostitution.(7)

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

The Government of Lebanon 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
MOL's National Committee to Combat Child Labor	Implement MOL's national strategy to combat child labor and draft child labor-related amendments to the Labor Law.(3, 50) Comprises representatives from relevant ministries including Ministries of Social Affairs, Public Health, Agriculture and Justice; the ISF; worker and employer groups; and civil society organizations.(5, 11, 21, 51, 52)
MOL's Child Labor Unit (CLU)	Raise awareness, coordinate communication between agencies, establish standard practices, and recommend changes to law.(52)
The Inter-Ministerial Task Force on Trafficking	Coordinate efforts against human trafficking, including child trafficking.(41)

The National Committee to Combat Child Labor was active and met a number of times during 2013.(5)

The UN coordinates efforts to address needs of children affected by the Syrian refugee crisis in Lebanon and maintains interagency standards for child protection. Its agents identify crucial concerns, especially factors that make children vulnerable to child labor, and makes recommendations on the use of resources, including referral services.(6, 53)

V. GOVERNMENT POLICIES ON THE WORST FORMS OF CHILD LABOR

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

Table 7. Policies Related to Child Labor

Policy	Description
National Action Plan on the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labor (2013–2016)†	Establishes strategies for addressing the worst forms of child labor. Includes a National Awareness Strategy to be carried out by the ILO. Full funding for the \$23 million implementation budget has not been secured.(5, 54)
National Social Development Strategy	Establishes a plan for a comprehensive social, health, and educational program.(3, 55) Includes the protection of working children and the implementation of HCC's strategy to address the needs of street children.(56)
Ministry of Economy's (MOEs) Education Sector Development Plan*	Aims to improve retention and educational achievement in areas with high drop-out rates. Funded by the EU.(3)
MOSA's Higher Council for Childhood (HCC)	Implements children's rights policies, including combating child labor.(1, 27)

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

† Policy was launched during the reporting period.

In March, various government agencies, including the ISF and the Ministries of Justice, Interior, and Social Affairs, presented a draft of an Anti-Trafficking National Action Plan, a multilevel response model that outlines how the plan should be, who would enforce it, and by whom each recommendation would be implemented. It also calls for a national database to facilitate counter-trafficking activities.(28) The Plan awaits Cabinet approval.(28)

The Government also has a draft National Action Plan for Human Rights. The Plan provides recommendations on child labor coordination between relevant authorities. It also proposes legislative and executive procedures on 21 human rights topics, including children's rights.(57, 58) This Plan awaits approval by Parliament.(57)

VI. SOCIAL PROGRAMS TO ADDRESS THE WORST FORMS OF CHILD LABOR

In 2013, the Government of Lebanon 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
No Lost Generation†	UN and Government joint effort that addresses needs of Syrian refugee children to increase education access, provide a protective environment, and provide life-skill building opportunities.(5, 59)
National poverty alleviation program‡*	Funded by Government, the Italian Foreign Ministry, the World Bank, and the Canadian Embassy, MOSA program that pays school registration fees for 19,000 children from households living in extreme poverty.(3, 5)
Education Program for Syrian Refugee Children†	MOE, UNHCR, and UNICEF supported War Child Holland initiative that provides education to qualified refugee children in 13 public schools in Beirut and Mount Lebanon. Supports second shift courses and informal educational activities designed to give students the necessary skills to enroll in public schools.(60)
National Child Labor Survey†	USDOL-funded and implemented by MOL and the Central Administration of Statistics during the second half of 2013 in collaboration with ILO-IPEC. Aims to make information on the scope and incidence of child labor in Lebanon more accessible to policymakers and the public.(5)

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

† Program was launched during the reporting period.

‡ Program is funded by the Government of Lebanon.

NGOs and UN agencies are the main providers of children’s social protection services, including for child victims of trafficking.(13, 61) Because of the lack of funding, government entities such as the ISF and UPEL depend on NGOs and UN agency providers to make service referrals for children.(13, 61) In addition, the scarcity of shelters for child trafficking victims results in some children being placed in juvenile detention centers.(13) The lack of shelters and resources to effectively handle child labor and trafficking cases puts children at a heightened risk of further exploitation. NGOs and officials reported that the lack of services make them less likely to pursue prosecution of cases.(13, 27)

UNHCR is working on prevention, mobilization, and awareness to reduce the vulnerability of guardians of children who are vulnerable to child labor.(5) The UN’s current goal is to provide educational opportunities to at least 100,000 Syrian refugees in 2014.(5) Lebanon lacks the programs to address child labor in agriculture, domestic service, and commercial sexual exploitation specifically, sometimes as a result of human trafficking.

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 Lebanon (Table 9).

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

Area	Suggested Action	Year(s) Suggested
Laws	Ensure that relevant child labor laws and regulations apply equally to children working in the formal and informal sectors, including children engaged in begging.	2013
	Increase fines and sentences for violations of child labor laws, especially those involving commercial sexual exploitation.	2013
	Ratify the CRC Optional Protocol on Armed Conflict	2013
	Raise the compulsory education age to harmonize it with the minimum age for work.	2013
	Ensure that Lebanese law guarantee that primary education is compulsory and free for all children.	2010 – 2013
Enforcement	Ensure inspectors have adequate training and funding for equipment and transportation.	2011 – 2013
	Fully enforce laws to ensure child victims of human trafficking are treated as victims rather than criminals.	2011 – 2013
	Approve Anti-Trafficking Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) Guide.	2013
	Increase number of juvenile protection facilities for child beggars.	2013
	Track and make publicly available the number of inspections carried out, with special attention to the incidence of child labor, incidence of trafficking of children, the number of children assisted, and any sanctions imposed as a result of child labor-related violations.	2009 – 2013

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

Area	Suggested Action	Year(s) Suggested
Government Policies	Assess the impact that the Education Sector Development Plan may have on reducing child labor.	2013
	Conduct research to determine the activities carried out by children working in fishing to inform policies and programs.	2013
	Approve the Anti-Trafficking National Action Plan.	2013
	Approve the draft National Action Plan for Human Rights.	2012 – 2013
Social Programs	Assess the impact that the National Poverty Alleviation Program may have on child labor.	2010 – 2013
	Take steps to protect refugee children from the worst forms of child labor, such as by increasing access to education.	2013
	Establish a program to specifically address child labor in agriculture, domestic service and commercial sexual exploitation sometimes as a result of human trafficking.	2013

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