

# Turkey

## MODERATE ADVANCEMENT

In 2013, Turkey made a moderate advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. The Government published a national child labor survey and increased the number of labor inspectors by 41, from 958 to 999. In addition, the Government established child labor units in five provinces, which are charged with monitoring and coordinating all child labor projects. The projects specifically target children working in mobile and temporary agriculture, on the streets, and in small and medium sized companies. The Government also approved the 2013 Foreigners and International Protection Law, which includes strengthening coordination mechanisms and services to address human trafficking. However, children in Turkey continue to engage in child labor in agriculture, mostly in mobile seasonal work. The Government does not have laws that protect children working in agricultural enterprises employing fewer than 50 workers or small shops employing up to three persons. It also lacks legal protections for children involved in domestic service and work on the street.



### I. PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Children in Turkey are engaged in child labor in agriculture, mostly in mobile seasonal work.(1) During the reporting period the Government released a 2012 Child Labor Force Survey, which revised the 2006 survey according to 2008 based population projection. Data from the survey indicates one-third of working children are ages 6–14 and two-thirds are ages 15–17.(2) The report found that from 2006 to 2012, the incidence of child labor in rural areas increased from 44.9 percent to 55.2 percent while child labor in urban areas decreased from 55.1 percent to 44.8 percent.(2) Table 1 provides key indicators on children’s work and education in Turkey.

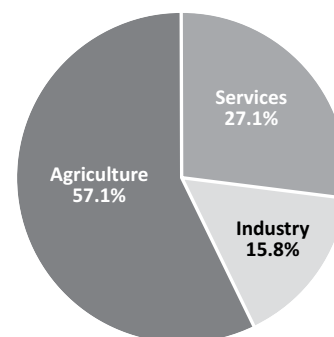
**Table 1. Statistics on Children’s Work and Education**

Children	Age	Percent
Working (% and population)	5-14 yrs.	2.6 (320,254)
Attending School (%)	6-14 yrs.	92.4
Combining Work and School (%)	6-14 yrs.	1.6
Primary Completion Rate (%)		102.5

Source for primary completion rate: Data from 2011, published by UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2014.(1)

Source for all other data: Understanding Children’s Work Project’s analysis of statistics from Child Labor Survey, 2006.(2)

**Figure 1. Working Children by Sector, Ages 10-14**



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 cotton, hazelnuts, citrus fruits, sugar beets, cumin, peanuts, and pulses (3-14)
Industry	Production of furniture, bricks,* shoes,* leather goods* (4, 14, 15) Auto repair*† (14, 15)
Services	Street work, including selling facial tissue packets or flowers, carrying bundles in market areas, cleaning car windshields, and begging (1, 4, 14, 15)
Categorical Worst Forms of Child Labor‡	Commercial sexual exploitation sometimes as a result of human trafficking (14-17) Criminal recruitment of children for sexual exploitation and for the drug trade (18) Use of child soldiers as a result of recruitment by Kurdish militant groups* (14, 19-21)

\* 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.

Evidence suggests that the number of child laborers involved in the production of furniture has considerably declined in the past decade, although the significance of the decline is unknown.(1) With the exception of the hazelnut harvest, which occurs during school vacation, children working in agriculture often migrate with their families for much of the year and may have limited access to health care and education.(3, 11, 12, 15)

Girls are trafficked into Turkey primarily from ex-Soviet countries for commercial sexual exploitation.(17)







There are also reports that children are recruited by Kurdish militant groups that have been fighting in Turkey for nearly three decades.(14, 19-21) A ceasefire has been in effect since March 2013 but militant groups reportedly remain equipped to attack government forces should the ceasefire unravel.(21, 22) During the reporting period, Kurdish groups made a commitment to ensure that 16–18 year olds are not used in combat zones, but media reported that recruitment of under-18s continued.(21) The current number of child soldiers in Kurdish militant groups is unknown. (14)

The Syrian Conflict has resulted in hundreds of thousands of Syrian refugees relocating to Turkey, some in government camps principally along the southern border and some moving into urban areas throughout Turkey. Due to their high level of vulnerability, some refugee children in urban areas are subject to a range of abuses including child labor, sexual exploitation, and trafficking.(1, 23) Some reports indicate that Syrian girls are sold into marriages.(23) During the reporting period, the Government finalized plans to issue biometric identity cards to Syrians, to provide occupational training, and to allow Syrians to work without usual permit formalities, hoping that parents' access to work will alleviate child labor abuses.(24)

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

Turkey 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 relevant laws and regulations related to child labor (Table 4).

**Table 4. Laws and Regulations Related to Child Labor**

Standard	Yes/No	Age	Related Legislation
Minimum Age for Work	Yes	15	Article 71 of the Labor Law (25)
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work	Yes	18	Regulation on Methods and Principles for Employment of Children and Young Workers (26)
List of Hazardous Occupations Prohibited for Children	Yes		Regulation on the Principles and Procedures Governing the Employment of Children and Young Workers; Regulation on Heavy and Dangerous Work (26)
Prohibition of Forced Labor	Yes		Article 80 of the Penal Code (17)
Prohibition of Child Trafficking	Yes		Articles 80 & 201/b of the Penal Code; Law 4771 of 2002 (1)
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children	Yes		Article 80 of the Penal Code; Law 4800 of 2003; Law 4804 of 2003 (1)

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

Standard	Yes/No	Age	Related Legislation
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities	Yes		Penal Code (1)
Minimum Age for Compulsory Military Recruitment	Yes	21	Law on Military Service (27, 28)
Minimum Age for Voluntary Military Service	Yes	18	Law on Military Service (28)
Compulsory Education Age	Yes	16	Education Reform Law; “4+4+4” Policy (1, 6)
Free Public Education	Yes		Education Reform Law (1)

In 2013, the Government extended the minimum wage to workers of all ages.(1) This allows for equal pay for all workers, including 15-year-olds who were not previously included in minimum wage laws, and further discourages legally hiring children below the age of 15 if employers believe that they can pay a lower wage.(24)

Under the National Defense Service Law 3634, 15- to 18-year-olds can be deployed in civil defense forces in the event of a national emergency.(27, 28)

As stated in Article 4 of the Labor Code, labor Laws does not cover children who work in agricultural enterprises employing 50 or fewer workers or in small shops employing up to three persons.(11, 15, 25) These gaps in the labor law leave children vulnerable to exploitative conditions without legal protection. The Government also lacks legal protections for children working in domestic service and working without an employment contract, including those that work on the streets, as stated in Articles 1 and 4 of the Labor Code.

The 2013 ‘Foreigners and International Protection Law’ established the new Department of Protection of Human Trafficking victims within the new General Directorate for Migration Management (GDMM); outlined a new process for identifying human trafficking victims; created a new system to allow human trafficking victims to be eligible for renewable residential permits; and provided funding for three NGO-implemented human trafficking victims shelters in Istanbul, Ankara, and Antalya.(23)

### 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
Labor Inspection Board Presidency within the Ministry of Labor and Social Security (MOLSS)	Implement laws on child labor and hazardous child labor, including regulating work environments and conditions for children. Monitor the implementation of the Labor Law provisions in work places under its jurisdiction. Conduct joint inspections with the Mentoring and Inspection Presidency to find children under legal working age who have dropped out of school and direct them back into education.(1)
Mentoring and Inspection Presidency within MOLSS	Monitor compliance with laws related to social security of all workers, including child workers. Conduct joint inspections with the Labor Inspection Board Presidency to find children under legal working age who have dropped out of school and refer them to education services.(1)
Turkish National Police (TNP)	Enforce laws defining criminal activity.(1)
Ministry of Justice	Prosecute legal cases regarding child labor or exploitation of children.(1)
Ministry of Family and Social Policy (MFSP)	Receive all referred child laborers in need of assistance. Directorate General of Child Services within MFSP coordinates services targeted to children living and/or working on the streets.(1)

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

#### *Labor Law Enforcement*

In 2013, the Government continued to increase the number of labor inspectors authorized to conduct inspections, including on child labor, from 958 to 999. While the number of inspectors is still considered inadequate to fully

enforce Turkey's labor laws, the Government has made a significant effort to meet the demand, nearly doubling the size of the labor inspection force since 2008.(1) Labor inspectors spend the first three years of their careers as assistant inspectors. They receive on-the-job training that includes modules to raise their awareness on child labor and on legal provisions and enforcement mechanisms to address it.(1)

In 2013, 23,504 inspections were conducted involving 2,209,565 workers, including 397 children. Child labor penalties were levied on the 56 violations in 49 workplaces, and approximately \$27,000 was collected in fines.(24) However, the majority of child labor in Turkey does not take place in areas and establishments where labor officers have jurisdiction to conduct inspections. This includes small agricultural and forestry enterprises of fewer than 50 employees and small shops employing up to three persons.(1) Social security inspectors, within the Mentoring and Inspection Presidency, do visit businesses of all sizes, and can relay findings of child labor to the Labor Inspection Board Presidency.(24)

Complaints about child labor can be made by phone to a hotline operated by the Directorate General of Child Services within the Ministry of Family and Social Policy (MFSP) or through the Prime Minister's Office Communications Center Web site.(29) Research did not uncover how many calls were made to the hotline.

### *Criminal Law Enforcement*

The Turkish National Police (TNP) handle all issues related to the treatment and protection of children but do not have a specific unit focused on child labor exploitation.(30) The TNP also investigates cases of human trafficking.(30) The Ministry of Justice, the TNP, and Ministry of Labor and Social Security (MOLSS) provide anti-trafficking training to their employees.(30) These agencies refer child victims to MFSP services.(31) The Government identified 15 adult trafficking victims, all of whom were victims of forced prostitution, and prosecuted 33 individuals on charges related to trafficking. There were no child trafficking victims identified, and no children were placed in child protection institutions during the reporting period.(23) The Ministry of Interior and NGOs provided training to law enforcement, judicial, and Ministry of Interior officials on human trafficking and the law, the referral system for human trafficking victims, and victim identification of human trafficking victims.(23)

## **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 Steering Committee (NSC) on child labor issues	Coordinate and monitor programs and projects to be implemented nationwide to prevent child labor, primarily in its worst forms.(1) Chaired by the MOLSS Undersecretary and includes senior government officials, workers, employers, and NGOs. Coordinate the Time-bound National Policy and Program Framework for the Prevention of Child Labor.(1)
Advisory Board on child labor issues	Develop solutions for preventing child labor and exchange information among institutions regarding their work on child labor. Chaired by MOLSS and composed of representatives from government ministries, workers' unions, employers' organizations, NGOs, and universities as well as ILO and UNICEF representatives who participate as observers.(1, 32)
Child Labor Branch of the Employment Policies Directorate within MOLSS	Coordinate all child labor programs and efforts of the Ministry of Education, the Child Services Directorate General in MFSP, the Ministry of the Interior, the Ministry of Justice, and NGOs.(1, 24, 29, 33)
The Child Services Directorate General	Coordinate services for children living and working on the streets; located within the MFSP.(31, 34)
Task Force on Human Trafficking	Coordinate the implementation of the National Action Plan on Combating Human Trafficking. Located within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) and coordinated by an ambassadorial-level official; includes officials from six ministries as well as representatives from NGOs, the IOM, and municipalities.(35, 36)

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In 2013, MOLSS launched new offices with dedicated personnel in five priority pilot provinces: Gaziantep, Adana, Sanliurfa, Ordu, and Kocaeli. The offices are charged with monitoring and coordinating all projects and programs in each province while ensuring no overlaps among government departments.(1) In addition, the City Council of Adana formed a Committee to Combat Child Labor and Monitor Working Children.(1)

The Task Force on Human Trafficking has not met since 2012 and did not generate any reports in 2013.(23) However, the Government announced that the Ministry of Interior will create a new GDDM, which will house a new Department of Protection of Human Trafficking Victims. The GDDM will cover migration, asylum, and trafficking in person issues and was expected to be operational in April 2014.(23) When the GDDM is operational, it is expected to create a Coordination Board that will subsume responsibilities of the current Task Force on Human Trafficking.(23)

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

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

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

Policy	Description
Time-bound National Policy and Program Framework for the Prevention of Child Labor	Aims to eliminate the worst forms of child labor by 2015. MOLSS, through the National Steering Committee, is the coordinating institution.(1, 37) Prioritizes reducing poverty, improving the quality and accessibility of education, and increasing social awareness and sensitivity to child labor.(1) Priority target groups include children working on the streets, heavy and dangerous work in small- and medium-sized enterprises, and mobile and seasonal agricultural work, except in family businesses. Articulates objectives, indicators, outputs, target groups, activities, and responsibilities for the elimination of the worst forms of child labor.(1)
Second National Action Plan on Combating Human Trafficking	Refines the strategy for the prevention of human trafficking and develops sector-specific action plans.(23)
Ninth Development Plan, 2007–2013	Includes priorities of poverty alleviation and decent work which have an impact on preventing child labor.(1, 38) In July 213, the Tenth Development Plan, 2014–2018, was adopted by the General Assembly of Parliament and includes a focus on increasing equality of opportunity in education and increasing attendance in pre-school education.(39)
Strategic Plan for the Ministry of National Education, 2010–2014	Includes objectives to increase participation rates from pre-school to secondary education, promote vocational education, and terminate gender, and regional disparities.(40)
The Rural Development Plan, 2010–2013	Aims to enhance the living and working conditions of the rural population through sustainable agricultural development and was prepared by the Ministry of Food, Agriculture, and Livestock.(41) Addresses child labor in agriculture and focuses specifically on seasonal migrant labor.(42)

The Government of Turkey reports that they review the impact of policies on child labor when renewing or updating a policy. However, they do not make their assessments publicly available.(24)

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

In 2013, the Government of Turkey 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
Activation of Local Sources on Preventing Child Labor†	MOLSS-implemented 3-year program to support the Time-bound Framework through enhancing local capacity and building an effective monitoring system.(31) Targets children working in dangerous activities in small and medium-sized companies, children working in the streets, and children working in mobile and temporary agricultural work.(1) In 2013, established child labor monitoring units in five provinces to provide coordination and collaboration with other organizations and institutions in the province.(1) Sustain current and direct new efforts to prevent child labor, especially in its worst forms, to include assessments, guidance and direction, reporting, capacity building, and raising awareness. Identified 500 children to receive services.(1)

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

Program	Description
Elimination of Worst Forms of Child Labor in Seasonal Commercial Agriculture in Hazelnut <sup>†</sup>	Association of Chocolate, Biscuit and Confectionery Industries of Europe (CAOBISCO)-funded 2-year project that focuses on child labor in hazelnut harvesting in the Black Sea province of Ordu. Aims to raise awareness of the importance of education and the hazards of child labor among farm worker families, farm owners and supervisors, and local administrators and educators in partnership with provincial and municipal government entities and local NGOs.(1, 43) In 2013, withdrew or prevented 252 children from work and counseled 330 seasonal worker families. Effectiveness measurement will be taken in the harvest season of 2014.(44) Documentary video, Pikolo, was produced by the MOLSS-ILO-Ordu partners to raise awareness on child labor in other localities.(1)
Global Action Program on Child Labor Issues Project	USDOL-funded project implemented by the ILO in approximately 40 countries to support the priorities of the Roadmap for Achieving the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labor by 2016 established by the Hague Global Child Labor Conference in 2010. Aims to improve the evidence base on child labor through data collection and research in Turkey.(45)
Improving the Work and Social Lives of Seasonal Mobile Agricultural Labor (METIP) <sup>‡</sup>	Government program to provide educational opportunities, including transportation, school supplies, and uniforms, to children of migrant laborers in order to prevent child labor in temporary agricultural work.(1) In 2013, Government budgeted \$4.5 million to the project and explored ways to incorporate the program into provincial social services to ensure long-term sustainability and expansion to all 81 provinces.(1)
Child and Youth Centers <sup>‡</sup>	MFSP's Directorate General of Child Services program operates 37 Child and Youth Centers and six homes which provide rehabilitation services to children working on the streets. Provide health screening, psychosocial support, occupational training, and education programs including social, cultural, artistic, and sports activities.(34, 42, 46) Provide financial support to families to help with the child's education.(42)
Conditional Education and Health Care Assistance Program <sup>‡</sup>	Government program that aims to reduce poverty through cash transfers.(34) Condition for families to participate in the program is for children between ages 6 and 15 to regularly attend primary school.(29) Provides milk to all primary school children and distributes books free of charge.(31)
Shelters for Victims of Trafficking <sup>‡</sup>	MFA program funded shelters for human trafficking victims in Istanbul, Ankara, and Antalya. Operated by NGOs and provide psychological, medical, and legal services for human trafficking victims.(23)
'157' Hotline for Victims of Trafficking <sup>‡</sup>	MFA and IOM funded and operated 24-hour toll-free hotline in multiple languages for human trafficking victims. Advertised through government awareness raising campaigns in airports and other points of entry into Turkey.(23)
Improving Social Integration and Employability of Disadvantaged Persons <sup>†‡</sup>	\$12.2 million European Union and Government of Turkey jointly funded grant aims to address poverty, lack of education, unemployment, and housing problems for Roma citizens. Includes activities of providing official identity cards to Roma citizens and supporting parents into the labor market to combat child labor.(24, 47)

<sup>†</sup> Program was launched during the reporting period.

<sup>‡</sup> Program is funded by the Government of Turkey.

The Government of Turkey reports that they review the impact of a program on child labor when renewing or updating that program. However, they do not make their assessments publicly available.(24)

## 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 Turkey (Table 9).

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

Area	Suggested Action	Year(s) Suggested
Laws	Revise the law to expand protections against hazardous and dangerous work for children in agriculture and small businesses.	2009 – 2013
	Amend laws to provide protections for children working as domestic workers and working without a contract, including children working on the street.	2010 – 2013
Policies	Make assessments about the impact of policies on child labor publicly available.	2013
Social Programs	Make assessments about the impact of existing programs on child labor publicly available.	2010 – 2013

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