

In 2015, Djibouti made a moderate advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. The Government drafted an updated National Action Plan on Trafficking in Persons and legislation to strengthen the legal framework on human trafficking. In addition, the Government funded and participated in programs that include the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor. However, children in Djibouti are engaged in child labor, including in street work, and in the worst forms of child labor, including in commercial sexual exploitation. The law neither establishes a minimum age for hazardous work nor fully protects children from all forms of commercial sexual exploitation. Law enforcement efforts were inadequate to prevent and combat child labor, including its worst forms.



I. PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Children in Djibouti are engaged in child labor, including in street work. Children are also engaged in the worst forms of child labor, including in commercial sexual exploitation.(1-4) Table 1 provides key indicators on children's work and education in Djibouti.

Table 1. Statistics on Children's Work and Education

Children	Age	Percent
Working (% and population)	5-14 yrs.	12.3 (23,693)
Attending School (%)	5-14 yrs.	67.4
Combining Work and School (%)	7-14 yrs.	10.2
Primary Completion Rate (%)		63.7

Source for primary completion rate: Data from 2015, published by the UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2015.(5)

Source for all other data: Understanding Children's Work Project's Analysis of Statistics from Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 3, 2006.(6)

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	Caring for livestock* (1, 2)
	Farming,* activities unknown (2)
Services	Domestic work† (1, 2, 7)
	Street work, including shining shoes,* washing and guarding cars,* cleaning storefronts,* sorting merchandise,* collecting garbage,* begging, and selling items, including khat* (1, 2, 4, 7)
	Working in restaurants, small shops, and family businesses (1, 2, 7)
Categorical Worst Forms of Child Labor‡	Commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking* (1, 2, 8, 9)
	Forced domestic work and begging, sometimes as a result of human trafficking* (1-3)
	Use in illicit activities, including theft* (2, 3)

* 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.

Research found an increase in children, younger than in previous years, who migrated through Djibouti from Ethiopia, Somalia, and Eritrea to reach Yemen and other locations in the Middle East.(3) Limited evidence suggests children, including undocumented migrant girls, experience commercial sexual exploitation in Djibouti City and the Ethiopia-Djibouti trucking corridor.(2, 9) Girls from poor Djiboutian families may engage in commercial sexual exploitation as a means of income.(1) Limited evidence suggests older children sometimes exploit younger children in commercial sexual exploitation.(2, 3)

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While primary and middle school are tuition-free, other expenses may be prohibitive for poor families.(2) Enrollment rates are lower for girls, children living in rural areas, and children living in poverty.(2, 10)

II. LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR THE WORST FORMS OF CHILD LABOR

Djibouti 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, 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	16	Article 5 of the Labor Code (11)
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work	No		
Prohibition of Hazardous Occupations or Activities for Children	Yes		Article 110 of the Labor Code (11)
Prohibition of Forced Labor	Yes		Articles 2 and 290 of the Labor Code; Article 23 of the Law Regarding Terrorism and Other Serious Crimes (11, 12)
Prohibition of Child Trafficking	Yes		Articles 2 and 6 of the Law on the Fight Against Human Trafficking; Article 23 of the Law Regarding Terrorism and Other Serious Crimes (12, 13)
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children	Yes		Articles 394 and 463 of the Penal Code (14)
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities	Yes		Article 461 of the Penal Code (14)
Minimum Age for Compulsory Military Recruitment	N/A*		
Minimum Age for Voluntary Military Service	Yes	18	National Army Amendment Decree (15)
Compulsory Education Age	Yes	16	Article 4 of the Law on the Orientation of the Education System (16)
Free Public Education	Yes		Article 16 of the Law on the Orientation of the Education System (16)

* No conscription (17)

During the reporting period, the Government drafted new legislation that strengthens the legal framework on human trafficking. The law prohibits all forms of human trafficking and prescribes sufficiently stringent penalties; however, contrary to international legal standards, it requires an element of force, fraud, or coercion for child sex trafficking offenses. The law was not passed by the end of the reporting period.(18)

The law's minimum age provisions do not apply to children working outside formal employment relationships.(11, 19)

The Labor Code prohibits the employment of children between ages 16 and 18 in domestic work, hotels, and bars; however, the types of hazardous work prohibited for children do not include street work, an area where there is evidence of work in an unhealthy environment which may expose children to hazardous substances, agents, or processes damaging to their health.(11, 19)

The law does not sufficiently prohibit the commercial sexual exploitation of children because using and offering a child for prostitution, pornography, and pornographic performances are not criminally prohibited. Additionally, the law does not criminally prohibit possessing child pornography and procuring and benefiting from a monetary or in-kind transaction involving the sexual exploitation of a child for the production of pornography and for pornographic performances.(14)

The Penal Code criminalizes the use of children to commit crimes; however, the law does not criminalize using, procuring, and offering a child in both the production and trafficking of drugs.(14)

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 Labor (MOL)	Enforce all labor laws, including child labor laws and regulations.(4)
National Police, including the Vice Squad	Enforce criminal laws and investigate criminal offenses related to the worst forms of child labor.(20)
Ministry of Justice	Prosecute child labor cases after they have been referred by the MOL.(4)
National Commission on Human Rights	Receive complaints and investigate cases of human rights violations, including the worst forms of child labor.(21, 22) Assist victims in obtaining legal aid to prosecute violators.(21)

Labor Law Enforcement

In 2015, labor law enforcement agencies in Djibouti did not take actions to combat child labor, including its worst forms (Table 6).

Table 6. Labor Law Enforcement Efforts Related to Child Labor

Overview of Labor Law Enforcement	2014	2015
Labor Inspectorate Funding	Unknown	Unknown
Number of Labor Inspectors	4 (20)	13 (18)
Inspectorate Authorized to Assess Penalties	Unknown	Yes (4)
Training for Labor Inspectors		
■ Initial Training for New Employees	Unknown	No (18)
■ Training on New Laws Related to Child Labor	Unknown	N/A
■ Refresher Courses Provided	Unknown	No (18)
Number of Labor Inspections	Unknown	30 (18)
■ Number Conducted at Worksite	Unknown	30 (18)
■ Number Conducted by Desk Reviews	Unknown	0 (18)
Number of Child Labor Violations Found	0 (20)	0 (4)
Number of Child Labor Violations for Which Penalties Were Imposed	N/A	N/A
■ Number of Penalties Imposed That Were Collected	N/A	N/A
Routine Inspections Conducted	Unknown	No (4)
■ Routine Inspections Targeted	Unknown	Unknown
Unannounced Inspections Permitted	No (20)	Yes (18)
Unannounced Inspections Conducted	N/A	No (18)
Complaint Mechanism Exists	No (20)	No (4)
Reciprocal Referral Mechanism Exists Between Labor Authorities and Social Services	No (20)	No (4)

In 2015, the Government found the number of labor inspectors inadequate. According to the MOL, the labor inspectorate has insufficient funding and training to adequately enforce child labor laws.(2, 4)

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Criminal Law Enforcement

In 2015, criminal law enforcement agencies in Djibouti took actions to combat the worst forms of child labor (Table 7).

Table 7. Criminal Law Enforcement Efforts Related to the Worst Forms of Child Labor

Overview of Criminal Law Enforcement	2014	2015
Training for Investigators		
■ Initial Training for New Employees	Unknown	Unknown
■ Training on New Laws Related to the Worst Forms of Child Labor	Unknown	Unknown
■ Refresher Courses Provided	Unknown	Yes (23)
Number of Investigations	Unknown (20)	0 (4)
Number of Violations Found	Unknown	N/A
Number of Prosecutions Initiated	0 (20)	0 (4)
Number of Convictions	0 (20)	0 (4)
Reciprocal Referral Mechanism Exists Between Criminal Authorities and Social Services	No (20)	No (4)

In 2015, the Vice Squad included four officers, but they lacked sufficient training and resources to effectively enforce laws related to the worst forms of child labor.⁽⁴⁾ The Government collaborated with international organizations to train law enforcement officials on the definitions of human trafficking versus smuggling, and issues related to the protection of unaccompanied migrant children.⁽²³⁾ However, no child victims were identified or referred to social services.⁽⁴⁾

The Government continued to detain street children, including potential child trafficking victims, following sweeps to clear the streets in advance of holidays and national events. After detention, immigration officials transported children identified as Ethiopian or Somali to the Ethiopian border, leaving them abandoned and vulnerable to re-trafficking.⁽³⁾

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

Although the Government has established a Senior Human Trafficking Taskforce, research found no evidence of mechanisms to coordinate its efforts to address child labor, including all its worst forms (Table 8).

Table 8. Mechanisms to Coordinate Government Efforts on Child Labor

Coordinating Body	Role & Description
Human Trafficking Taskforce	Coordinate efforts to combat human trafficking. Led by the Ministry of Justice. ⁽³⁾
National Council for Children (CNE)	Promote children's rights and oversee the implementation of the National Strategic Plan for Children in Djibouti (PASNED). Members include six ministers, two representatives of the Youth Parliament, two representatives of the private sector, and two representatives of women's associations. ⁽²⁴⁾

V. GOVERNMENT POLICIES ON THE WORST FORMS OF CHILD LABOR

The Government of Djibouti has established policies related to child labor, including its worst forms (Table 9).

Table 9. Policies Related to Child Labor

Policy	Description
PASNED (2011–2015)	Aims to create a protective environment for all children to ensure the protection of their human rights and equitable access to basic services. Interventions to combat the worst forms of child labor include a study on the worst forms of child labor, awareness campaigns, and social services for victims of human trafficking and other worst forms of child labor. ^(25, 26)
National Action Plan on Trafficking in Persons (2014–2020)	Aims to strengthen the legislative framework to combat human trafficking, protect and assist human trafficking victims, and establish a national referral mechanism between law enforcement officials and social service providers. ⁽²⁷⁾ In 2015, the Ministry of Justice drafted an updated plan that extends the Government's anti-human-trafficking strategy through the year 2020. ⁽²³⁾
UNDAF (2013–2017)	Provides access to basic social services in order to protect children against all forms of violence and exploitation. Includes plans for boys and girls in both rural and urban areas to have equal and quality access to basic education. ⁽²⁸⁾

Table 9. Policies Related to Child Labor (cont)

Policy	Description
National Strategy (2013–2017)*	Supports street children and other marginalized populations through an emphasis on protecting the rights of children and developing social programs.(1, 29)
Education Sector Strategic Plan (2014–2017)*	Incorporates strategies to address the needs of children who have not previously attended school and children living in the most impoverished areas.(29)

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

VI. SOCIAL PROGRAMS TO ADDRESS CHILD LABOR

In 2015, the Government of Djibouti funded and participated in programs that may contribute to the prevention or elimination of child labor (Table 10).

Table 10. Social Programs to Address Child Labor

Program	Description and Objectives
Strengthening the National Criminal Justice System's Response to Trafficking in Persons in Djibouti*	\$500,000 USDOS-funded program, implemented by UNODC in partnership with the Government, to establish a national referral mechanism for victims of human trafficking, establish a mechanism for data collection, raise awareness of human trafficking, and conduct law enforcement trainings.(23)
National Family Solidarity Program*†	Government-funded program implemented by the State Secretariat for National Solidarity that establishes cash transfers to support Djiboutian households in extreme poverty.(30)
UNICEF Country Program (2013–2017)	UNICEF program in collaboration with the Government that promotes access to quality education for children, especially from rural and poor urban areas, increases birth registration, and provides support for orphans and vulnerable children.(29, 31)
Humanitarian Action for Children	UNICEF-funded program in partnership with the Government that identifies the needs of vulnerable women and children. In 2015, the program provided migrant and street children with access to non-formal education, vocational training, and recreational activities.(32)
IOM Program	IOM program in partnership with the Government to address the risks of irregular migration, including a Migrant Response Center along the route most frequently traveled by undocumented migrants from Somalia and Ethiopia on their way to Yemen.(1, 20, 23) In 2015, the program worked with local and international actors to identify appropriate solutions for unaccompanied and separated children who were victims of human trafficking or at risk of being trafficked upon arrival in Djibouti after conflict broke out in Yemen. The program reintegrated and rehabilitated a number of children into their communities of origin in Ethiopia.(33)
Enhancing Income Opportunities Program (2015–2019)*	World Bank-funded program in partnership with the Government that aims to provide training and business opportunities for youth. One objective is to provide at least 2,200 youth with basic life-skill training and coaching in business plan development and link these youth with technical training centers.(34)
Access to Quality Education Project	Global Partnership for Education-funded program in collaboration with the World Bank and Government to improve the learning environment in the first 3 years of primary education.(10, 35) Aims to construct classrooms, rehabilitate and extend schools in rural areas, train teachers, procure student learning materials, and distribute hearing aids and glasses to students who need them.(10)
School Meal Program	WFP-funded project in partnership with the Government that provides daily meals at schools in rural parts of Djibouti for 15,000 children. Distributes take-home rations to girls to encourage regular school attendance.(36)
Urban Poverty Reduction Program	African Development Bank program implemented by the Government to promote socioeconomic development in Djibouti's towns and cities, where the majority of working children live.(29, 37)

* Program was launched during the reporting period.

† Program is funded by the Government of Djibouti.

Although the Government of Djibouti has implemented programs that target migrant and street children, research found no evidence that it has carried out programs specifically designed to assist children involved in domestic work and commercial sexual exploitation.

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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 Djibouti (Table 11).

Table 11. Suggested Government Actions to Eliminate Child Labor, Including its Worst Forms

Area	Suggested Action	Year(s) Suggested
Legal Framework	Establish a minimum age for hazardous work and ensure that the hazardous occupations and activities prohibited for children are comprehensive.	2009 – 2015
	Ensure that all children are protected by law, including children working outside formal employment relationships.	2015
	Ensure that laws criminally prohibit using and offering a child for prostitution, pornography, and pornographic performances; possessing child pornography; and procuring and benefiting from a monetary or in-kind transaction involving the sexual exploitation of a child for the production of pornography and for pornographic performances.	2012 – 2015
	Ensure that using, procuring, and offering a child in both the production and trafficking of drugs are criminally prohibited.	2015
Enforcement	Make law enforcement information publicly available, including the labor inspectorate's funding and training for criminal investigators.	2010 – 2015
	Strengthen the labor inspectorate by training new employees and providing refresher courses, initiating routine inspections, and establishing a mechanism to receive child labor complaints.	2015
	Provide additional resources to the labor inspectorate and criminal law enforcement agencies so that more inspectors and officers can be hired and receive adequate training, including on identifying victims of child labor, commercial sexual exploitation, and human trafficking.	2011 – 2015
	Cease the detention of street children and establish referral mechanisms between labor and criminal law enforcement agencies and social service providers so that exploited children, particularly victims of child trafficking, receive the appropriate care and reintegration services.	2014 – 2015
Coordination	Establish coordinating mechanisms to combat child labor, including in all its worst forms.	2009 – 2015
Government Policies	Integrate child labor elimination and prevention strategies into existing policies.	2014 – 2015
Social Programs	Conduct research to determine the activities carried out by children working in agriculture in order to inform policies and programs.	2013 – 2015
	Ensure that all vulnerable children, particularly girls, have access to education.	2015
	Implement programs to specifically address children involved in domestic work and commercial sexual exploitation.	2009 – 2015

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