

In 2017, Jordan made a moderate advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. The government increased the budget of the Ministry of Labor’s Directorate of Labor Affairs and Inspection, which allowed for over 4,000 more labor inspections. In addition, the government continued to provide shelter, educational, and financial services to children engaged in child labor, including in the city of Madaba and in Marka, the Palestinian refugee camp. However, children in Jordan engage in the worst forms of child labor, including in street work and other hazardous activities in the service sector. Children also perform dangerous tasks in agriculture. Insufficient resources hampered the Ministry of Labor’s capacity to ensure compliance with child labor laws in the agricultural sector. In addition, Syrian children still face barriers to accessing education due to costs associated with transportation, school fees, and supplies, among other issues.



## I. PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Children in Jordan engage in the worst forms of child labor, including in street work and other hazardous activities in the service sector. (1; 2; 3; 4) Children also perform dangerous tasks in agriculture. (5; 6; 7) Based on the 2016 National Child Labor Survey, approximately 70,000 children ages 5 to 17 are engaged in child labor, most commonly in agriculture and retail trade. Approximately 80 percent of child laborers are Jordanian and about 15 percent are Syrian. (6) Boys constitute nearly 90 percent of those involved in child labor. (6) Table 1 provides key indicators on children’s work and education in Jordan.

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

Children	Age	Percent
Working (% and population)	5 to 14	1.0 (33,182)
Attending School (%)	5 to 14	94.8
Combining Work and School (%)	7 to 14	1.0
Primary Completion Rate (%)		Unavailable

Primary completion rate was unavailable from UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2018. (8)

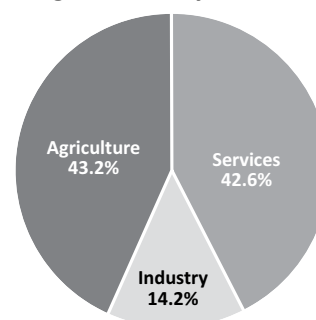
Source for all other data: Understanding Children’s Work Project’s analysis of statistics from National Child Labor Survey, 2016. (9)

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	Farming, including weeding, planting, and harvesting tomatoes and olives (5; 6; 1; 10; 11; 12; 13; 7; 14)
Industry	Mining† and quarrying† (6; 1)
	Construction,† including building and painting homes (6; 1; 2; 10; 7; 15; 16)
	Manufacturing (6; 10; 4)
	Carpentry† (1; 2; 15; 16)
	Blacksmithing† (2; 15)
Services	Repairing automobiles† (6; 2; 11; 16)
	Attending donkeys, camels, and horses to transport tourists (17; 18)
	Street work,† including selling items, washing cars, and begging (1; 2; 3; 10; 11; 15; 16; 17)
	Scavenging scrap metal (19; 4)
	Domestic work† (10; 11; 20)
	Food services, including working in restaurants and bakeries (6; 1; 11; 15)

**Figure 1. Working Children by Sector, Ages 5-14**



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

Sector/Industry	Activity
Services	Hotel services† (6; 4)
	Hairdressing (1; 10; 17)
	Working in retail, including cleaning shops (6; 1; 10; 21; 14)
Categorical Worst Forms of Child Labor‡	Forced begging, sometimes as a result of human trafficking (22; 23)
	Commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking (10; 24; 25; 23; 26)

† 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.




While Syrian children are granted access to Jordanian public schools, an estimated 67,000 Syrian refugee children were not enrolled in formal or informal education in academic year 2016–2017. (4) These children face barriers to education, including the costs of transportation, uniforms, and school materials, and they are unprepared for their appropriate grade level due to interruptions in their early years of schooling. (7; 27; 28)

To expand education access for Syrian children, in 2017 Jordan waived a requirement for documentation for school enrollment. The government also continued to address the overcrowding of classrooms by providing double-shifted schools. (29; 30) In 2016, out of approximately 3,700 schools in the country, Jordan had nearly 500 double-shifted schools; 198 of the latter are for refugee children, mainly Syrian. (31; 4) At these double-shifted schools, Jordanian children attend in the morning and Syrian children attend in the afternoon. (22; 32) However, Jordanian and Syrian children attending double-shifted schools are vulnerable to child labor because the school hours are considerably shorter, and fewer school hours leave more time for work. (31; 33)

## II. LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR CHILD LABOR

Jordan 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 (Table 4). However, gaps exist in Jordan’s legal framework to adequately protect children from the worst forms of child labor, including non-state armed groups’ recruitment of children.

**Table 4. Laws and Regulations on Child Labor**

Standard	Meets International Standards: Yes/No	Age	Legislation
Minimum Age for Work	Yes	16	Article 73 of the Labor Code (34)
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work	Yes	18	Article 74 of the Labor Code; Article 2 of Ministerial Order of 2011 (34; 35)
Identification of Hazardous Occupations or Activities Prohibited for Children	Yes		Article 2 of the Ministerial Order of 2011 (35)
Prohibition of Forced Labor	Yes		Article 3(a)–(b) of the Law on the Prevention of Human Trafficking; Articles 17 and 77 of the Labor Code (34; 36)

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

Standard	Meets International Standards: Yes/No	Age	Legislation
Prohibition of Child Trafficking	Yes		Article 3(a) of the Law on the Prevention of Human Trafficking (36)
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children	Yes		Articles 298–299, 306, 310–311, 315, and 319 of the Penal Code; Article 3(b) of the Law on the Prevention of Human Trafficking (36; 37)
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities	Yes		Article 8 of the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act (38)
Prohibition of Military Recruitment			
State Compulsory	Yes	18	Article 3(a) of the National Service Act (39)
State Voluntary	N/A*		
Non-state	No		
Compulsory Education Age	Yes	16	Articles 7(a.2) and 10(b) of the Education Act (40)
Free Public Education	Yes		Article 20 of the Constitution (41)

\* No volunteers are accepted to join the armed forces (42)

### III. ENFORCEMENT OF LAWS ON CHILD LABOR

The government has established institutional mechanisms for the enforcement of laws and regulations on child labor (Table 5). However, gaps exist within the operations of the Ministry of Labor that may hinder adequate enforcement of their child labor laws.

**Table 5. Agencies Responsible for Child Labor Law Enforcement**

Organization/Agency	Role
Ministry of Labor, Directorate of Labor Affairs and Inspection	Enforce labor laws, including those on child labor. Maintain a hotline to receive labor-related complaints, including complaints of child labor. (4) Identify cases of child labor through worksite inspections and refer cases to the relevant services. Register instances of child labor in a National Child Labor Database, which allows ministries to monitor and track children as they are identified and referred to services. (43)
Ministry of Labor, Child Labor Unit	Coordinate government efforts to campaign against child labor, conduct training, and raise awareness about child labor issues. (22) In 2017, the Child Labor Unit broadcast five radio and television interviews to raise awareness on child labor. (4)
Public Security Directorate, Criminal Investigation Unit	Investigate and prosecute violations of the Penal Code, including allegations of the worst forms of child labor. Operate a section to combat human trafficking. (4)
Joint Anti-Trafficking Unit of the Ministry of Labor and Public Security Directorate	Investigate cases of human trafficking and forced labor, refer cases for prosecution, and coordinate with foreign embassies to identify victims of human trafficking and repatriate workers. (44)

#### *Labor Law Enforcement*

In 2017, labor law enforcement agencies in Jordan took actions to combat child labor (Table 6). However, gaps exist within the operations of the Ministry of Labor that may hinder adequate labor law enforcement, including inspection planning.

**Table 6. Labor Law Enforcement Efforts Related to Child Labor**

Overview of Labor Law Enforcement	2016	2017
Labor Inspectorate Funding	\$352,187 (45)	\$422,715 (4)
Number of Labor Inspectors	237 (45)	200 (4)
Inspectorate Authorized to Assess Penalties	Yes (46)	Yes (46)
Training for Labor Inspectors		
Initial Training for New Employees	Yes (31)	N/A
Training on New Laws Related to Child Labor	N/A	N/A
Refresher Courses Provided	Yes (45)	Yes (4)
Number of Labor Inspections Conducted	1,857 (45)	6,337 (4)
Number Conducted at Worksites	Unknown	Unknown

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**Table 6. Labor Law Enforcement Efforts Related to Child Labor (cont)**

Overview of Labor Law Enforcement	2016	2017
Number of Child Labor Violations Found	1,442 (45)	553 (4)
Number of Child Labor Violations for Which Penalties were Imposed	1,210 (31)	Unknown
Number of Child Labor Penalties Imposed that were Collected	Unknown	Unknown
Routine Inspections Conducted	Yes (45)	Yes (4)
Routine Inspections Targeted	Yes (45)	Yes (4)
Unannounced Inspections Permitted	Yes (46)	Yes (4)
Unannounced Inspections Conducted	Yes (45)	Yes (4)
Complaint Mechanism Exists	Yes (45)	Yes (4)
Reciprocal Referral Mechanism Exists Between Labor Authorities and Social Services	Yes (5)	Yes (5)

In 2017, the Ministry of Labor increased its budget and conducted over 4,000 more inspections than the previous year. (45) When a labor inspector identifies a child laborer, the inspector issues a warning and a fine and asks the employer to send the child home while the inspector is still present. (31) A warning requires the employer to sign a pledge declaring that he or she will cease employing children. Without the pledge, the Ministry of Labor can close the business. (22) The information about the child is then shared with the Ministry of Social Development, which contacts the family to identify the appropriate social services needed. If a child labor violation has been identified, the labor inspector conducts unannounced follow-up inspections at the worksite to ensure compliance. (31) During the reporting period, the Ministry issued 381 warnings, and 338 businesses signed pledges declaring that they will cease employing children. (45)

Insufficient regulations and resources and the migratory nature of the agricultural sector hampered the Ministry of Labor's capacity to ensure compliance with child labor laws in the agriculture sector. (4; 47) Based on the 2016 National Child Labor Survey, 43 percent of child laborers ages 5 to 14 work in agriculture. (6) The Ministry of Labor has not issued regulations on labor inspections in agriculture, which limits its oversight in this sector, in addition to ongoing national budget constraints. (31; 47)

Jordanian children identified during labor inspections are referred to the Child Labor Unit of the Ministry of Social Development. (31; 48) In contrast, Syrian refugee children who are identified during labor inspections are separated from their families and taken to the Azraq refugee camp. (31; 49; 50) Save the Children operates a 24-hour reception center in Azraq that receives Syrian refugee children picked up for both labor and other law infractions. If the child has extended family in the camp, Save the Children places the child in the family members' home. (51) Otherwise, the child stays in Save the Children's group housing at the reception center where they are provided with a full range of services while Save the Children negotiates with Jordanian officials to return the child to their family outside the camp, which may take days to months. (51) Consequently, families that live in the Zaatari refugee camp must travel a long distance to Azraq to reunite with their children. (31; 49; 50) Those that live in host communities (i.e., about 80 percent of all Syrian refugees) may fear that by presenting themselves at Azraq, they may also be forced to stay at the Azraq camp and lose some benefits. (49; 50)

### ***Criminal Law Enforcement***

In 2017, criminal law enforcement agencies in Jordan took actions to combat child labor (Table 7). However, gaps exist within the operations of the criminal enforcement agencies that may hinder adequate criminal law enforcement, including lack of information about investigations of forced child begging and commercial sexual exploitation of children.

**Table 7. Criminal Law Enforcement Efforts Related to Child Labor**

Overview of Criminal Law Enforcement	2016	2017
Training for Investigators		
Initial Training for New Employees	Unknown	N/A (51)
Training on New Laws Related to the Worst Forms of Child Labor	Unknown	N/A
Refresher Courses Provided	Unknown	Yes (52)
Number of Investigations	1 (53)	Unknown
Number of Violations Found	2 (53)	0 (51)

**Table 7. Criminal Law Enforcement Efforts Related to Child Labor (cont)**

Overview of Criminal Law Enforcement	2016	2017
Number of Prosecutions Initiated	Unknown	0 (47)
Number of Convictions	Unknown	0 (47)
Reciprocal Referral Mechanism Exists Between Criminal Authorities and Social Services	Yes (22)	Yes (22)

In 2017, the Joint Anti-Trafficking Unit investigated 291 cases, 23 of which were found to be human trafficking cases. The Ministry of Justice prosecuted 94 cases, including cases initiated in prior years. (47) A number of defendants were convicted of human trafficking and 33 defendants were acquitted or convicted of other crimes. (47) However, none of these cases involved child trafficking. (51) Research was unable to determine whether investigations were conducted on cases of forced begging or commercial sexual exploitation of children.

#### IV. COORDINATION OF GOVERNMENT EFFORTS ON CHILD LABOR

The government has established mechanisms to coordinate its efforts to address child labor (Table 8).

**Table 8. Key Mechanisms to Coordinate Government Efforts on Child Labor**

Coordinating Body	Role and Description
National Committee on Child Labor	Formulate new policies, amend legislation as necessary, and oversee the implementation of child labor policies, including the National Framework to Combat Child Labor. Led by the Ministry of Labor, members include three other ministries, plus international and civil society organizations. (54) Research was unable to determine whether the National Committee on Child Labor was active during the reporting period.
National Committee for the Prevention of Human Trafficking	Coordinate government efforts to combat human trafficking; chaired by the Ministry of Justice. Other members include representatives from 10 state agencies, including the Counter Trafficking Unit in charge of human trafficking investigations. (53) Research was unable to determine whether the National Committee for the Prevention of Human Trafficking was active during the reporting period.

#### V. GOVERNMENT POLICIES ON CHILD LABOR

The government has established policies that are consistent with relevant international standards on child labor (Table 9).

**Table 9. Key Policies Related to Child Labor**

Policy	Description
National Framework to Combat Child Labor	Outlines the roles and responsibilities of key government agencies, including the ministries of Education, Labor, and Social Development; NGOs; and other stakeholders involved in identifying and responding to cases of child labor. Based on the Framework, Ministry of Labor inspectors monitor child labor and refer cases to the ministries of Social Development and Education for the provision of services. (55) In 2017, the Framework's child labor monitoring system was upgraded. It will be rolled out in 2018. (4)
Jordan Response Plan for the Syria Crisis (2016–2018)	Integrates a refugee-oriented humanitarian response with a strategic plan for increasing resilience of local communities. The plan has a particular focus on economic strengthening, education, and social protection. (28) In academic year 2016–2017, a total of 125,000 Syrian refugee children were enrolled in formal education and an additional 67,000 in non-formal education. (56)
Plan of Action to Eliminate Child Labor in Tourism in Petra	Employs counselors to respond to children at risk of truancy, raise children's awareness of the hazards of child labor and the significance of education, incorporate child labor prevention strategies into mainstream programs for legally employed children ages 16 and older, and inform students about high-quality employment in the tourism sector. (57) In 2017, meetings between the local authorities and the community took place on implementation strategies. (47)

#### VI. SOCIAL PROGRAMS TO ADDRESS CHILD LABOR

In 2017, the government funded and participated in programs that included the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor (Table 10). However, gaps exist in these social programs, including the adequacy of services to address child labor in all sectors.

**Table 10. Key Social Programs to Address Child Labor‡**

Program	Description
Ministry of Social Development, Child Labor Unit†	Support children engaged in child labor, return them to school, and provide services to their families; provide vocational training for youth; organize training on child labor for families; and maintain the website of the National Child Labor Database, which serves as the national child labor monitoring system. (58) In 2017, the Unit began three child labor surveys in East Amman, Petra, and Zaatar refugee camps. The Ministry of Social Development drafted a by-law detailing its Child Labor Unit's Standard Operating Procedures on treatment of child laborers and their families, which supplements current child labor enforcement by-laws. (47) The Ministry sent the draft by-law to the Ministry of Labor and the ILO for review. (47)
Child Begging Assistance in Madaba†	Ministry of Social Development's shelter in the city of Madaba provides social services to children engaged in begging. (45) The ministry conducts awareness raising for parents and links this to financial aid that the family receives. (31) In 2017, the Ministry placed children engaged in begging in the shelter and provided them with rehabilitation services and social support for their family members. (4)
Social Support Center in Marka†	ILO- and Ministry of Labor-funded center operated in cooperation with the ILO at Marka, the Palestinian refugee camp. Activities include identifying child laborers, providing services such as non-formal education, and assisting families in finding alternate forms of supplemental income. In 2017, the Center continued to provide services. (4)
National Aid Fund†	Under the Ministry of Social Development, the Fund pays families approximately \$63 a month through a conditional cash transfer program to withdraw their child from the labor market and re-enroll them in school. (4) Research was unable to determine whether activities were undertaken under the National Aid Fund during the reporting period.
Non-Formal Education Centers†	Operated by the Ministry of Education and local NGO Questscope, and funded by USAID and UNICEF, these centers throughout the country seek to bring school dropouts, including those engaged in or at risk of child labor, back into the educational system. Children attend classes 3 hours a day in a flexible learning environment, with class sizes of around 20 students and specially trained teachers. (31; 33) Targets children ages 13 and older. Upon completion of the curriculum, students receive a certificate indicating equivalency of a 10th-grade education. (33) A center in Petra provides services to children at risk of child labor in the tourism industry in Petra. (59) In academic year 2016–2017, 19,000 children received non-formal education. (4)

† Program is funded by the Government of Jordan.

‡ The government had other social programs that may have included the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor. (60)

Although Jordan has programs that target child labor, the scope of these programs does not fully address the extent of the problem, including in agriculture, construction, and street vending.

## VII. SUGGESTED GOVERNMENT ACTIONS TO ELIMINATE CHILD LABOR

Based on the reporting above, suggested actions are identified that would advance the elimination of child labor in Jordan (Table 11).

**Table 11. Suggested Government Actions to Eliminate Child Labor**

Area	Suggested Action	Year(s) Suggested
Legal Framework	Ensure that the law criminally prohibits the recruitment of children under age 18 into non-state armed groups.	2016 – 2017
Enforcement	Publish information about the number of inspections at worksites and the number of penalties imposed and collected for child labor violations.	2015 – 2017
	Ensure that Ministry of Labor inspectors have the resources needed to carry out inspections in the agricultural sector, and ensure that regulations are issued to mandate labor inspections in agriculture, including unannounced inspections, authority to assess appropriate penalties, and follow-up visits to dissuade future use of child labor.	2014 – 2017
	Ensure that refugee children identified during labor inspections are referred to social services and are not separated from their families by being taken to Azraq refugee camp.	2016 – 2017
	Ensure that investigations are conducted on forced begging and commercial sexual exploitation of children.	2015 – 2017
Coordination	Ensure all coordinating bodies are able to carry out their intended mandates.	2017
Social Programs	Continue to expand access to education for all children, including providing after-school programs or extending school hours.	2013 – 2017

**Table 11. Suggested Government Actions to Eliminate Child Labor**

Area	Suggested Action	Year(s) Suggested
Social Programs	Ensure that Ministry of Social Development's Child Labor Unit provides identified child laborers with appropriate social and educational services.	2017
	Institute programs to address the worst forms of child labor in agriculture, construction, and street vending, and ensure that the National Aid Fund is implemented.	2013 – 2017

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