

Oman

The Government of Oman appears to have eliminated child labor in camel racing. However, children engaged in the informal economy, particularly the agriculture and fishing industries may be vulnerable to the worst forms of child labor. Further legislation is needed to ensure adequate protection of children employed in hazardous conditions.

Statistics on Working Children and School Attendance

Children	Age	Percent
Working	5-14 yrs.	Unavailable
Attending School	5-14 yrs.	Unavailable
Combining Work and School	7-14 yrs.	Unavailable



Prevalence and Sectoral Distribution of the Worst Forms of Child Labor

There is little evidence that children are engaged in the worst forms of child labor⁴⁴⁹¹ in Oman.

Children reportedly work in the informal economy, particularly in agriculture and fishing.⁴⁴⁹² Children's work in agriculture commonly involves unsafe activities, such as using dangerous machinery and tools, carrying heavy loads and applying harmful pesticides. Working in fishing may expose children to risks such as drowning.

Although prevalent until a few years ago, there is no current evidence that children younger than age 18 are engaged in camel racing, a cultural tradition historically practiced by Omani children and adults.⁴⁴⁹³

Research has found little evidence of any children in Oman involved in human trafficking.

Laws and Regulations on the Worst Forms of Child Labor

The minimum age for most employment in Oman is 15.⁴⁴⁹⁴ Children younger than age 18 may not engage in mining, quarrying or other occupations deemed hazardous by the Occupational Safety and Health Committee.⁴⁴⁹⁵ The labor law also restricts work that can be performed by children younger than age 16.⁴⁴⁹⁶ Omani law bars children from working between 6 p.m. and 6 a.m. or for more than six hours a day on weekends and holidays.⁴⁴⁹⁷ The 2010 ILO Committee of Experts Report claims that the Government is developing a list of 43 hazardous occupations prohibited for children younger than age 18.

The Omani Equestrian and Camel Federation (OECF) stipulated that all camel jockeys must be at least age 18 to participate in races by the 2009-2010 racing season. This regulation took effect in 2005 and required the camel-racing industry to raise the minimum age of camel jockeys from 14 to 18 by 2009.⁴⁴⁹⁸

	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

The Penal Code prohibits trafficking in children and inciting a child to prostitution; both are punishable by imprisonment.⁴⁴⁹⁹ The Penal Code also makes it a crime for a person to produce, keep, distribute or expose pornographic letters or pictures.⁴⁵⁰⁰

The Government prohibits forced or compulsory labor, including work by children.⁴⁵⁰¹

The military is voluntary; the minimum age to join is 18.⁴⁵⁰²

While education in Oman is free and universal up to age 16, it is not compulsory, which makes children more susceptible to child labor.⁴⁵⁰³

Institutional Mechanisms for Coordination and Enforcement

Oman’s human trafficking law established the National Committee for Combating Human Trafficking (NCCHT), which is chaired by the Inspector General of the Royal Oman Police (ROP). NCCHT raises awareness on human trafficking through public forums, training programs, media campaigns and interviews.⁴⁵⁰⁴

Research found no evidence of a coordinating mechanism to address other worst forms of child labor.

The Ministry of Manpower (MOM) and ROP are responsible for monitoring and enforcing child labor laws.⁴⁵⁰⁵ The Inspection Department of MOM conducts regular visits to private sector establishments to ensure their implementation of laws and the protection of laborers rights.⁴⁵⁰⁶ The department employs 180 inspectors. Child labor compliance is monitored during routine inspections of private sector establishments.⁴⁵⁰⁷

MOM and ROP share information on labor cases if criminal penalties are sought.⁴⁵⁰⁸ During the reporting period, MOM received 4,503 labor violation complaints and further action was sought in 1,614 of these cases.⁴⁵⁰⁹ There were no cases of child labor during the reporting period.⁴⁵¹⁰

Under the Labor Law, inspectors have jurisdiction to inspect private sector entities for labor noncompliance.⁴⁵¹¹ Research was unable to determine if any mechanisms exist to assure labor compliance in the informal sector, where underage child labor occurs.

Labor inspectors were trained over the reporting period on the enforcement of new labor reforms and monitoring anti-trafficking activities.⁴⁵¹² Research did not identify if training specific to child labor occurred during the reporting period.

The OECF conducts unannounced visits to race tracks to ensure that children younger than age 18 are not participating in camel races.⁴⁵¹³ All camel jockeys are required to provide the OECF with their names and provide proof of age. There were no reports of children engaging in camel racing during the reporting period.⁴⁵¹⁴

ROP takes the lead on developing human trafficking cases for court. It has recently opened a new and permanent shelter for victims of trafficking, providing them with rehabilitation and victim reintegration services.⁴⁵¹⁵ In 2010, indictments and convictions of trafficking did not include any underage children.⁴⁵¹⁶

Government Policies on the Worst Forms of Child Labor

NCCHT oversees the National Plan for Combating Human Trafficking (NPCHT), which outlines the Government's human trafficking procedures and their application according to Omani law. The NPCHT lays out the roles and responsibilities of governmental organizations that are involved in combating trafficking.⁴⁵¹⁷ Although the Government of Oman has adopted the NPCHT, research found no evidence of policies on other worst forms of child labor.

In 2010, the ILO Committee of Experts expressed concern over the lack of national research on the prevalence of child trafficking.⁴⁵¹⁸ In addition, the Government lacks information on the prevalence and conditions of child labor in the informal sectors, such as agriculture and fishing.

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

While research has not identified programs that directly address child labor, some Government

programs may serve to prevent or alleviate the problem.

The Government began a Decent Work Program 2010-2013 during the reporting period that strives to build the employability of Oman's workforce through programs such as small- and medium-enterprise support services. The Government also strengthened vocational education and training programs.⁴⁵¹⁹

No evidence was found of research into the question of whether these initiatives impact child labor.

The NPCHT's anti-trafficking efforts include the implementation of awareness-raising activities on human trafficking in schools and among the general population, the provision of social services for trafficking victims and coordination with international organizations on trafficking developments.⁴⁵²⁰

During 2010, ILO assisted the Government and key stakeholders in efforts to combat human trafficking.⁴⁵²¹

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:

- Develop a list of hazardous occupations for children younger than age 18.
- Establish a compulsory age for school that is consistent with the minimum age for employment.

IN THE AREA OF COORDINATION AND ENFORCEMENT:

- Establish a coordinating mechanism to combat the worst forms of child labor.

IN THE AREA OF POLICIES:

- Adopt a policy that addresses all relevant worst forms of child labor.
- Conduct in-depth research on child labor in agriculture and the fishing industry.

IN THE AREA OF SOCIAL PROGRAMS:

- Assess the impact existing programs may have on child labor.

⁴⁴⁹¹ Data provided in the chart at the beginning of this country report are not available from the data sources that are used in this report. Reliable data on the worst forms of child labor are especially difficult to collect given the often hidden 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.

⁴⁴⁹² Child Rights Information Network, *Oman: Children’s Rights References in the Universal Periodic Review*, March 30, 2011, 4; available from <http://www.crin.org/resources/infoDetail.asp?ID=23906>. See also International Trade Union Confederation, *Internationally Recognized Core Labour Standards in the Sultanate of Oman: Report for the WTO General Council Review of Trade Policies of the Sultanate of Oman*, General Council Review of Trade Policies Report, Geneva, June 2008, 1.

⁴⁴⁹³ U.S. Embassy- Muscat, *reporting, January 31, 2011*, para c. See also S.K. Vaidya, “Child Trafficking in GCC ‘Eradicated,’” *Gulf News*, February 17, 2010; available from <http://gulfnews.com/news/gulf/oman/child-trafficking-in-gcc-eradicated-1.584526>.

⁴⁴⁹⁴ U.S. Department of State, “Oman,” in *Country Report on Human Rights Practices- 2010*, Washington, DC, April 8, 2011, section 6d; available from <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2010/nea/154470.htm>

⁴⁴⁹⁵ ILO Committee of Experts, *Individual Observation concerning Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182) Oman (ratification: 2001) Published: 2010*, April 3, 2011, para 1; available from <http://www.ilo.org/ilolex/cgi-lex/pdconv.pl?host=status01&textbase=iloeng&document=10395&chapter=6&query=Oman%40ref&highlight=&querytype=bool>.

⁴⁴⁹⁶ Government of Oman, *Regulation of Occupational Safety and Health for Establishments Governed by the Labour Law*, 286, (2008), article 5.5.

⁴⁴⁹⁷ International Trade Union Confederation, *Internationally Recognized Core Labour Standards*.

⁴⁴⁹⁸ ILO Committee of Experts, *Individual Observation C182: Oman (2010)*, paragraphs 2-5. See also U.S. Embassy-Muscat, *reporting, January 31, 2011*, para 7.1.

⁴⁴⁹⁹ Government of Oman, *Anti-Trafficking Law*, Royal Decree No. 126, (2008), articles 2-4. See also Government of Oman, “Oman,” in *Legislation of Interpol Member States on Sexual Offences against Children 2007*, section 3, article 220; available from www.interpol.int/public/Children/SexualAbuse/NationalLaws/csaOman.asp.

⁴⁵⁰⁰ Government of Oman, “Oman,” section 5, article 224.

⁴⁵⁰¹ International Trade Union Confederation, *Internationally Recognized Core Labour Standards*, 5.

⁴⁵⁰² Government of Oman, “Oman,” in *Legislation on Oman Military Service Age and Obligation*, 2010; available from http://www.indexmundi.com/oman/military_service_age_and_obligation.html.

⁴⁵⁰³ Child Rights Information Network, *Oman: Children’s Rights References in the Universal Periodic Review*, 1. See also U.S. Department of State, “Country Reports- 2010: Oman.”

⁴⁵⁰⁴ U.S. Embassy- Muscat, *reporting, March 28, 2011*, section 13b.

⁴⁵⁰⁵ U.S. Embassy- Muscat, *reporting, January 31, 2011*, para 4.1.

⁴⁵⁰⁶ Sultanate of Oman Ministry of Manpower, *Inspection Department*, [online] [cited April 1, 2011]; available from www.manpower.gov.om/en/inspection_dept.asp.

⁴⁵⁰⁷ U.S. Embassy- Muscat, *reporting, January 31, 2011*, para 5.

⁴⁵⁰⁸ U.S. Embassy- Muscat, *reporting, February 10, 2010*, para 2c.

⁴⁵⁰⁹ U.S. Embassy- Muscat, *reporting, March 11, 2011*, section 13b.

⁴⁵¹⁰ U.S. Embassy- Muscat, *reporting, January 31, 2011*, para 4.2.

⁴⁵¹¹ International Trade Union Confederation, *Internationally Recognized Core Labour Standards*, 5.

⁴⁵¹² ILO, *Sultanate of Oman: Decent Work Country Programme 2010- 2013*, Country Program June 2010, 10; available from <http://www.ilo.org/public/english/bureau/program/dwcp/download/oman.pdf>.

⁴⁵¹³ ILO Committee of Experts, *Individual Observation C182: Oman (2010)*, para 3.

⁴⁵¹⁴ U.S. Embassy- Muscat, *reporting, January 31, 2011*, para 1c. See also Vaidya, “Child Trafficking in GCC ‘Eradicated.’”

⁴⁵¹⁵ U.S. Embassy- Muscat, *reporting, March 11, 2011*, paras 13b and 14d.

⁴⁵¹⁶ *Ibid.*, para 14.3.

⁴⁵¹⁷ National Committee for Combating Human Trafficking Sultanate of Oman, *National Plan for Combating Human Trafficking*, September 2009, 17-18.

⁴⁵¹⁸ Child Rights Information Network, *Oman: Children’s Rights References in the Universal Periodic Review*, para 18.

⁴⁵¹⁹ ILO, *Sultanate of Oman: Decent Work Country Programme 2010-2013*, 1, 11.

⁴⁵²⁰ Sultanate of Oman, *National Plan for Combating Human Trafficking*, 19-21.

⁴⁵²¹ ILO, *Sultanate of Oman: Decent Work Country Programme 2010-2013*, 25.