

In 2015, Turkey made a moderate advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. The Government implemented a project in cooperation with the ILO that provided services to more than 1,000 children working in commercial hazelnut production and amended the Labor Law to provide protections for children working in the arts and commercial advertising. However, children in Turkey are engaged in child labor in street work and mobile seasonal work in agriculture. The Government does not have laws that protect children working in agricultural enterprises employing fewer than 50 workers. Although the Government took important steps to increase Syrian refugee children's access to education and other services nationwide, many Syrian refugee children in urban areas of Turkey had low or no access to education and other social services, leaving significant numbers at increased risk of exploitation in the worst forms of child labor.



I. PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Children in Turkey are engaged in child labor, including in street work and mobile seasonal work in agriculture. (1-27) Table 1 provides key indicators on children's work and education in Turkey.

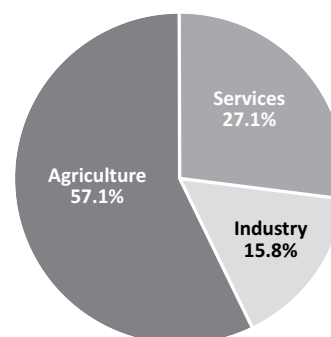
Table 1. Statistics on Children's Work and Education

Children	Age	Percent
Working (% and population)	6-14 yrs.	2.6 (320,254)
Attending School (%)	6-14 yrs.	92.4
Combining Work and School (%)	6-14 yrs.	1.6
Primary Completion Rate (%)		99.8

Source for primary completion rate: Data from 2012, published by UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2015.(28)

Source for all other data: Understanding Children's Work Project's analysis of statistics from Child Labor Survey, 2006.(29)

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, pulses, apricots,* melons,* and cherries* (1-17, 26, 27)
Industry	Production of furniture, bricks,* shoes,* leather goods,* and textiles* (11, 13, 19, 21-23, 26, 30-35) Auto repair*† (11, 13, 21) Mining*† (12, 36)
Services	Street work, including vending small items, carrying bundles in market areas, cleaning car windshields, collecting recyclable materials, and begging (11-13, 18-26, 37) Working in restaurants and small shops* (19, 35)
Categorical Worst Forms of Child Labor‡	Commercial sexual exploitation sometimes as a result of human trafficking (21, 38-40) Use in armed conflict by non-state armed groups, sometimes as a result of forced recruitment* (40-43)

* 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.

A range of sources reported an increase in child labor in Turkey in 2015, primarily as a result of the growing number of Syrian refugees in the country, more than 2.5 million of whom had relocated to Turkey by the end of the reporting period.(12) Poverty in

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the refugee community and a lack of legal employment opportunities caused some parents to rely on children as major or primary contributors to the family income, making these children extremely vulnerable to child labor.(20, 44, 45) Some refugee children may be subject to a range of abuses, including child labor, sexual exploitation, human trafficking, and begging.(24, 44, 46, 47) Monitoring and collecting data on child labor in refugee communities remained a challenge, and NGOs in Turkey reported difficulty in conducting independent research on the conditions of Syrian refugees, including children.(12)

Due to the seasonal nature of agricultural work throughout the country, farmworkers often migrate with their families for up to seven months of the year. Significant numbers of children engaged in seasonal agricultural work, as well as children whose parents are seasonal migrant workers, may have limited access to health care and education.(1, 5, 8, 9, 14, 21, 30) Research found that children of Syrian refugee families were particularly vulnerable to exploitation in this sector and tended to receive lower pay and live in worse conditions than Turkish workers.(14)

Evidence suggests that the number of child laborers involved in manufacturing has considerably declined over the past decade. However, in 2015 there were increased reports of children, particularly Syrian refugees, engaged in manufacturing work such as the production of shoes, furniture, and textiles.(12, 13, 23, 31, 34, 35) Children engaged in child labor in the manufacturing sector often work long hours and earn wages as little as half of what an employer would pay an adult.(23, 31, 35)




Some children have been reportedly recruited by Kurdish terrorist groups that have been fighting in Turkey for nearly three decades. A ceasefire in place since March 2013 broke down in July 2015, leading to an escalating cycle of conflict between the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) and its affiliates and Turkish security forces that continued at year's end.(48) Government and media reports indicated that the recruitment and use of children under age 18 continued in 2015.(40-43) Research did not find a reliable estimate of the current number of child soldiers in Kurdish terrorist groups.

The Government of Turkey continued to make significant progress in educating hundreds of thousands of Syrian children, enrolling roughly 350,000 in formal education, a large increase over the year prior.(49) However, an estimated 650,000 Syrian refugee children are not formally enrolled in schools, including between 75 and 85 percent of Syrian children living in Turkish cities.(13, 35) The Government has taken several important steps to increase Syrian refugee children's access to education. These have included, among others, opening the Turkish public school system to Syrian children with government-issued IDs, lifting residency permit requirements for children to register in school, providing stipends to Arabic-language teachers for Syrian children, and accrediting a system of temporary education centers that offer a Syrian curriculum.(12, 13) As a result of these efforts, approximately 90 percent of school-aged Syrian children living in refugee camps regularly attend school.(13) However, the barriers to education access for the 85 percent of Syrian refugee children who live in urban areas remain significant. Some schools for Syrian children charge tuition fees or transportation costs that many families are unable to afford.(13, 19, 35) Many Syrian children struggle with integrating into Turkish schools due to the language barrier and do not have access to accelerated Turkish language programs.(13) Many families have not received sufficient information on how to enroll their children in Turkish schools, and some schools refuse entry to Syrian children despite national directives requiring that Syrian children be provided with education.(13)

II. LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR 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 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	15	Article 71 of the Labor Law (50)
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work	Yes	18	Articles 71–73 of the Labor Law; Annex 3 of the Regulation on Methods and Principles for Employment of Children and Young Workers (50, 51)
Prohibition of Hazardous Occupations or Activities for Children	Yes		The Regulation on the Principles and Procedures Governing the Employment of Children and Young Workers (12, 51)
Prohibition of Forced Labor	Yes		Articles 80 and 117 of the Penal Code (52)
Prohibition of Child Trafficking	Yes		Article 80 of the Penal Code (52)
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children	Yes		Articles 77, 103, 226, and 227 of the Penal Code (52)
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities	Yes		Articles 37–38 and 188 of the Penal Code (52)
Minimum Age for Compulsory Military Recruitment	Yes	21	Article 2 of the Law on Military Service (53, 54)
Minimum Age for Voluntary Military Service	NA*		
Compulsory Education Age	Yes	17‡	Article 3 of the Primary Education Law; Education Reform Law (55-57)
Free Public Education	Yes		Article 2 of the Primary Education Law; Article 42 of the Constitution of the Republic of Turkey (46, 56, 58)

* No voluntary military service (57)

‡ Age calculated based on available information

In April 2015, Article 71 of the Labor Law was reportedly amended to institute regulations for children's work under the age of 15 in arts, culture, and commercial advertising. The amendment reportedly requires that children under age 15 working in these sectors receive permission from both a guardian and the MoLSS, and specifies acceptable conditions of work.(12)

As stated in Article 4 of the Labor Law, the provisions of the Labor Law do not apply to children working in agricultural enterprises employing 50 or fewer workers.(50) This gap in the law leaves children vulnerable to exploitative conditions without legal protection.(21, 27)

Although the Penal Code prohibits the use of another person in the commission of a crime, and the production and trafficking of drugs is criminally prohibited, the law does not explicitly prohibit the use or procuring of children for the production and trafficking and drugs.(59)

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 workplaces under its jurisdiction.(12) 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.(12)
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.(12)
Turkish National Police	Enforce the Penal Code, including criminal laws related to the worst forms of child labor.(12)

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Table 5. Agencies Responsible for Child Labor Law Enforcement (cont)

Organization/Agency	Role
Department for Protection of Victims of Human Trafficking within the Directorate General for Migration Management	Coordinate the identification of human trafficking victims, including victims of child trafficking.(40)
Ministry of Justice	Prosecute cases of child labor and child exploitation.(12)
Ministry of Family and Social Policy (MFSP)	Coordinate and provide services to children living or working on the street through the Directorate General of Child Services.(12)
'ALO 170' Hotline within MOLSS	Receive complaints about labor law violations, including child labor.(12)
'ALO 183' Hotline within MFSP	Receive complaints about child rights violations, including child labor.(12)
'157' Hotline for Victims of Trafficking	Provide 24-hour, toll-free support in multiple languages for human trafficking victims. Advertise services through awareness-raising campaigns.(47)

Labor Law Enforcement

In 2015, labor law enforcement agencies in Turkey took 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* (57)	Unknown* (12)
Number of Labor Inspectors	970 (57)	977 (12)
Inspectorate Authorized to Assess Penalties	Yes (25)	Yes (12)
Training for Labor Inspectors		
■ Initial Training for New Employees	Yes (57)	Yes (12)
■ Training on New Laws Related to Child Labor	Unknown	Unknown
■ Refresher Courses Provided	Unknown	No (12)
Number of Labor Inspections	Unknown	19,255 (12)
■ Number Conducted at Worksite	Unknown	19,255 (12)
■ Number Conducted by Desk Reviews	Unknown	0 (12)
Number of Child Labor Violations Found	22 (25)	Unknown
Number of Child Labor Violations for Which Penalties Were Imposed	Unknown	27 (12)
■ Number of Penalties Imposed That Were Collected	Unknown	Unknown* (12)
Routine Inspections Conducted	Yes (57)	Yes (12)
■ Routine Inspections Targeted	Yes (57)	Yes (12)
Unannounced Inspections Permitted	Yes (57)	Yes (12)
Unannounced Inspections Conducted	Yes (57)	Yes (12)
Complaint Mechanism Exists	Yes (57)	Yes (12)
Reciprocal Referral Mechanism Exists Between Labor Authorities and Social Services	Yes (57)	Yes (12)

*The Government does not make this information publicly available.

† Data are from January 1, 2014 to September 31, 2014.

In 2015, the number of labor inspectors authorized to conduct inspections remained insufficient. According to the ILO's recommendation of one labor inspector for every 15,000 workers in industrializing economies, Turkey should employ approximately 1,960 labor inspectors to fully enforce the country's labor laws.(49, 60, 61) The Ministry of Labor and Social Security (MOLSS) in 2015 initiated a recruitment drive to hire additional inspectors. The impact of the recruitment drive, which continued after the end of the reporting period, should be clearer in 2016.(12) Labor inspectors spend the first 3 years of their careers as assistant inspectors. They receive on-the-job training that includes modules to raise their awareness of child labor and of the legal provisions and enforcement mechanisms to address it.(57)

In 2015, employers who violated prohibitions were subject to administrative fines of approximately \$400. Fine amounts are adjusted annually but are widely believed to be insufficient to deter violations.(12)

Although there is no formal referral mechanism, research found that children discovered to be in child labor situations during the course of inspections were referred for social services.(12, 57)

Criminal Law Enforcement

In 2015, criminal law enforcement agencies in Turkey 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	Yes (24)	Yes (40)
Number of Investigations	Unknown	Unknown
Number of Violations Found	Unknown	Unknown
Number of Prosecutions Initiated	Unknown	Unknown
Number of Convictions	Unknown	Unknown
Reciprocal Referral Mechanism Exists Between Criminal Authorities and Social Services	Yes (12)	Yes (40)

Research found that the enforcement of laws against child trafficking, particularly pertaining to identification of victims, was insufficient.(24, 62) The Department for Protection of Victims of Human Trafficking, which assumed principal responsibility for identifying victims of human trafficking from the Police during the reporting period, reported an increase in number of identified victims in 2015. Of 108 victims identified in 2015, 26 were children.(40)

In 2015, the Government reported that 989 Directorate General for Migration Management (DGMM) employees and 880 police officers received training on issues related to trafficking in persons, including victim identification, provision of support to victims, and the legal framework on human trafficking.(40)

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 8).

Table 8. Mechanisms to Coordinate Government Efforts on Child Labor

Coordinating Body	Role & Description
National Steering Committee (NSC) on child labor issues	Coordinate and monitor implementation of the Time-bound National Policy and Program Framework for the Prevention of Child Labor, including programs and projects initiated under the auspices of this framework.(12) Chaired by the MOLSS; includes senior government officials, workers, employers, and NGOs.(12)
Advisory Board on Child Labor Issues	Develop solutions for preventing child labor and ensure that institutions share information 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.(12)
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.(12)
The Child Services Directorate General Within MFSP	Coordinate services for children living and working on the streets.(12)
Directorate General for Migration Management (DGMM)	Coordinate the implementation of migration law, including laws related to irregular migration, refugees, and human trafficking.(63, 64)
National Task Force on Combating Human Trafficking	Coordinate policy on human trafficking. Chaired by the DGMM, which plans to transition the task force to a national commission under the Ministry of Interior.(24, 40)

The DGMM suffered from inadequate capacity in 2014, its first year of functioning.(63) During the reporting period, however, the DGMM took steps to develop its infrastructure and increase its capacity, including opening offices in each of Turkey's 81 provinces. The DGMM efficiently registered Syrian refugees through provincial offices, with an estimated 90 percent of Syrians registered by year's end.(33, 40)

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 9).

Table 9. Policies Related to Child Labor

Policy	Description
Time-bound National Policy and Program Framework for the Prevention of Child Labor (2005–2015)	Aimed to eliminate the worst forms of child labor by 2015. MOLSS, through the NSC, is the coordinating institution.(46) Prioritizes reducing poverty, improving the quality and accessibility of education, and increasing social awareness and sensitivity to child labor.(46) Priority target groups included children working on the streets, in heavy and dangerous work in small- and medium-sized enterprises, and in mobile and seasonal agricultural work, except in family businesses. Articulated objectives, indicators, outputs, target groups, activities, and responsibilities for the elimination of the worst forms of child labor.(46) An updated policy for 2016 – 2023 is expected to be finalized in 2016.(12)
Second National Action Plan on Combating Human Trafficking	Outlines Turkey’s strategy for the prevention of human trafficking. Identifies children as an exceptionally vulnerable group and calls for special security precautions for children at shelters for victims and increased international cooperation on preventing child trafficking.(47, 65)
National Employment Strategy (2014–2023)	Aims to identify and solve labor market issues, with the goal of job creation and sustained economic growth. Includes the prevention of child labor, especially hazardous work in agriculture, as a focus of the plan, and advocates for increased access to education and strengthened social services as a means of preventing child labor.(66)
Tenth Development Plan (2014–2018)	Identifies Turkey’s strategy and goals for economic development. Includes the priorities of alleviating child poverty and increasing equal opportunity in education.(67) Includes provisions for the prevention of the worst forms of child labor.(57)
National Child Rights Strategic Document and Action Plan (2013–2017)	Sets out the framework and actions for promoting services for children in fields such as health care and education.(68) Includes a section addressing child labor issues.(44, 57)

VI. SOCIAL PROGRAMS TO ADDRESS CHILD LABOR

In 2015, the Government of Turkey funded and participated in programs that include the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor, including its worst forms (Table 10).

Table 10. Social Programs to Address Child Labor

Program	Description
Piloting the USDA Guidelines in the Hazelnut Supply Chain in Turkey*	USDOL-funded project implemented by the Fair Labor Association in partnership with Nestle and its main hazelnut suppliers in Turkey. Aims to pilot a sustainable program to implement the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Guidelines for Eliminating Child and Forced Labor in Agricultural Supply Chains in 1,000 hazelnut plantations in Ordu and Sakarya, with a particular focus on preventing migrant children from entering into child labor in hazelnut production.(69)
Integrated Model for the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labor in Seasonal Agriculture in Hazelnut Harvesting (2012–2017)*	ILO and MOLSS-implemented project funded by the Association of Chocolate, Biscuit, and Confectionery Industries of Europe (CAOBISCO). Takes an integrated approach to preventing children from working by increasing access to education and improving living conditions of children vulnerable to the worst forms of child labor in hazelnut harvesting; building capacity of local and national institutions to prevent child labor, and raising awareness of industry stakeholders and the public.(12) In 2015, the project provided 1,165 children with services. 202 families received individual or group counseling, and 719 children were transitioned from work to school and provided with clothing, school supplies, and school lunches. The project also engaged with local leadership and employers to raise awareness about the worst forms of child labor.(12)
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.(70)
Conditional Education and Health Care Assistance Program†	Government program that aims to reduce poverty through cash transfers.(71) Requires children between ages 6 and 15 of participating families to regularly attend primary school.(72) Provides milk to all primary school children and distributes books free of charge.(73)
Shelters for Victims of Trafficking†	Government-funded, NGO-operated shelters for human trafficking victims in Ankara, Antalya, and Istanbul. Provides psychological, medical, and legal services to human trafficking victims.(47, 57)
Protecting Victims of Human Trafficking (2014–2016)	\$1.9 million EU-funded project co-managed by the DGMM and the IOM. Focuses on improving the Government’s ability to identify victims of human trafficking through training and capacity-building.(40)

Table 10. Social Programs to Address Child Labor (cont)

Program	Description
Project for Combating Human Trafficking and Organized Crimes	EU-funded project implemented by the DGMM and the International Center for Migration Policy Development. Provided basic training on human trafficking and data analysis to the DGMM and law enforcement through August 2014, and now focuses on improving victim identification and protection by strengthening national referral mechanisms.(40)
Improving Social Integration and Employability of Disadvantaged Persons†	\$34 million project jointly funded by the EU and the Government of Turkey. Aims to address poverty, lack of education, unemployment, and housing problems for socially vulnerable and disadvantaged citizens through services and grants, including a specific allocation of grant funding for projects targeting the Roma population.(57, 74, 75) Includes the goal of combating child labor by supporting the entry of working children's parents into the labor market.(74, 75)

* Program was launched during the reporting period.

† Program is funded by the Government of Turkey.

The Activation of Local Sources on Preventing Child Labor project, which was implemented from 2012–2014, provided services to more than 2,000 children at risk of entering child labor, and conducted direct interventions with almost 800 parents of working children.(57) The project was not implemented in 2015, leaving a major gap in Turkey's programming to address child labor. In 2015, the MOLSS proposed a second phase of the Activation of Local Sources on Preventing Child Labor project, which would take place in 2016-2018 and incorporate an expanded geographical scope and increased budget. Consideration of the proposal remained ongoing at year's end.(12)

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 11).

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

Area	Suggested Action	Year(s) Suggested
Legal Framework	Ensure that the law provides protections for children working in small agricultural enterprises.	2009–2015
	Ensure that the use of children in the production and trafficking of drugs is explicitly criminally prohibited.	2015
Enforcement	Make information on the Labor Inspectorate's funding, training for investigators, and the number of penalties collected, publicly available.	2015
	Increase the number of labor inspectors responsible for enforcing laws related to child labor in order to provide adequate coverage of the workforce.	2014–2015
	Increase the penalties for violation of child labor laws to an amount sufficient to deter violations.	2014–2015
	Make disaggregated data on the number of investigations, prosecutions, and convictions related to child trafficking publicly available.	2014
	Ensure that laws prohibiting the trafficking of children are enforced, including by taking sufficient steps to identify victims of child trafficking.	2015
Social Programs	Institute programs to increase access to education and health care for children working in mobile seasonal agriculture.	2014–2015
	Expand provision of affordable education to Syrian refugee children, including by enforcing national directives affording Syrian children access to the Turkish school system at the local level.	2014–2015
	Institute programs to address child labor in the sectors where it is most prevalent, including mobile seasonal agriculture, street work, and small manufacturing enterprises.	2015

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