

In 2013, Bahrain made a minimal advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. The Government issued an updated list of hazardous occupations prohibited for children. Although the problem does not appear to be widespread, children are engaged in commercial sexual exploitation. Minors working in family enterprises are exempt from some provisions of the Labor Law. In addition, the Government has not conducted research to determine the extent and nature of the worst forms of child labor in the country. Furthermore, the Government has no policies or coordinating mechanisms to address all worst forms of child labor, nor does it have programs to address child labor in domestic service.



## I. PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Children in Bahrain are engaged in the worst forms of child labor in commercial sexual exploitation, although there is no evidence to suggest that this problem is widespread.(1) Data on key indicators on children's work and education are not available from the sources used in this report.

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

Children	Age	Percent
Working (%)	5-14 yrs.	Unavailable
Attending School (%)	5-14 yrs.	Unavailable
Combining Work and School (%)	7-14 yrs.	Unavailable
Primary Completion Rate (%)		Unavailable

Source for primary completion rate: UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2014.(2)

Source for all other data: Understanding Children's Work Project's analysis, 2014.(3)

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
Services	Street begging* (4)
	Domestic service* (5)
Categorical Worst Forms of Child Labor‡	Commercial sexual exploitation* (1)

\* Evidence of this activity is limited and/or the extent of the problem is unknown.

‡ Child labor understood as the worst forms of child labor *per se* under Article 3(a) – (c) of ILO C. 182

There is no evidence that the Government has conducted or participated in research to determine the extent to which children are engaged in the worst forms of child labor.(1)




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

Bahrain has ratified all key international conventions concerning child labor (Table 3).

# Bahrain

## MINIMAL ADVANCEMENT

**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, 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 50 of the Labor Law; Article 24 of Law No. 36 of 2012, Promulgation of the Labor Law in the Private Sector (6, 7)
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work	Yes	18	Article 51 of the Labor Law; Article 27 of Law No. 36 of 2012, Promulgation of the Labor Law in the Private Sector (6, 7)
List of Hazardous Occupations Prohibited for Children	Yes		Ministerial Order No. 23 of 2013 (8)
Prohibition of Forced Labor	Yes		Article 13 of the Constitution (9)
Prohibition of Child Trafficking	Yes		Article 1 of the Law to Combat Trafficking in Persons; Law (10, 11)
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children	Yes		Articles 324–325 of the Penal Code; Article 39 of Law No. 37 of 2012 Promulgating the Child Law (12-14)
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities	Yes		Article 59 of Law No. 37 of 2012 Promulgating the Child Law (14)
Minimum Age for Compulsory Military Recruitment	N/A*		(15)
Minimum Age for Voluntary Military Service	Yes	18	Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict (1, 15)
Compulsory Education Age	Yes	15	Education Act No. 27 (4)
Free Public Education	Yes		Article 7 of the Constitution (9)

\* No conscription or no standing military.

In 2013, the Government issued an updated list of hazardous occupations that are prohibited to children.(8)

Minors working in enterprises that employ only family members are exempt from the Labor Law, leaving them vulnerable to hazardous work.(7) The Penal Code states that any person who relies on prostitution or immorality for his or her livelihood will be punished with imprisonment.(12, 13) This prohibition may enable the prosecution of child victims of commercial sexual exploitation.

The Government has issued Ministerial Orders requiring employers to maintain employment contracts for any domestic workers.(16, 17) The 2012 private-sector labor law extended some provisions, such as annual leave, to domestic workers.(6, 7, 18, 19)

### 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 child labor laws along with Labor Market Regulatory Authority (LMRA). Share information with LMRA on child labor cases, including through systems for referring cases to the judiciary when warranted.(1) 24 MOL labor inspectors investigate labor law violations, including violations of child labor laws.(1)
LMRA	Enforce child labor laws with the MOL. LMRA inspectors may also perform labor inspections, particularly concerning foreigners' work permits and working situations.(20, 21)
Ministry of the Interior	Enforce criminal laws that prohibit the worst forms of child labor in coordination with the Ministry of Social Development (MOSD), the Ministry of Justice and Islamic Affairs, and the Office of the Public Prosecutor, as needed. Through the Criminal Investigation Directorate, oversee a 12-person unit that investigates potential cases of trafficking and commercial sexual exploitation.(1)

Law enforcement agencies in Bahrain took actions to combat child labor, including its worst forms, during the reporting period.

### *Labor Law Enforcement*

Ministry of Labor inspectors received some training from the ILO on international standards on child labor.(1) Research did not reveal information on funding levels of any agencies responsible for labor law enforcement, number of inspections, and number of child labor law violations found or citations issued.

### *Criminal Law Enforcement*

The Ministry of the Interior's Criminal Investigation Directorate (CID) investigated cases of trafficking of children for commercial sexual exploitation. The Office of the Public Prosecutor investigated cases of trafficking referred from CID and LMRA, though it is not clear whether any of those cases involved children.(1) No information on the number of cases investigated, violations found, citations issued, or prosecutions pursued was found.

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

Although the Government has established the National Committee on Combating Human Trafficking, research found no evidence of coordinating mechanisms to combat other forms of child labor, including its worst forms (Table 6).

**Table 6. Mechanisms to Coordinate Government Efforts on Child Labor**

Coordinating Body	Role & Description
National Committee on Combating Human Trafficking	Coordinate trafficking policies and organize educational and outreach campaigns to raise awareness on trafficking in persons.(22, 23)

The National Committee on Childhood protects children's rights and promotes the educational, social, cultural, and psychological development of children.(4, 24) In 2013, the National Committee on Combating Human Trafficking finalized its work plan for 2013–2014.(25, 26)

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

Research found no evidence of any policies to address child labor, including its worst forms.

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

In 2013, the Government of Bahrain funded programs that include the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor, including its worst forms (Table 7).

**Table 7. Social Programs to Address Child Labor**

Program	Description
Dar al Aman Shelter*‡	NGO-run shelter provides legal, medical, and psychological services for victims (including children) of trafficking, labor exploitation, and commercial sexual exploitation.(11, 13)
Child Protection Center*‡	Government center that provides treatment and counseling to child victims of abuse, including economic exploitation.(4, 27)

**Table 7. Social Programs to Address Child Labor (cont)**

Program	Description
Social Welfare Dignity Home*‡	Government program that provides services to homeless persons and beggars, including children.(4)
Toll-Free Hotline*‡	MOSD hotline that receives calls on reported cases of child abuse and child labor.(1, 28)

\*The impact of this program on child labor does not appear to have been studied.

‡ Program is funded by the Government of Bahrain.

The MOSD’s hotline for reporting suspected cases of child labor has primarily been used to report suspected cases of physical or sexual abuse of children.(23, 28) It is unknown how many complaints were received, or how many were related to child labor. Despite the programs listed in Table 7, research found no evidence of programs specifically aimed at protecting children engaged in domestic service.

## 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 Bahrain (Table 8).

**Table 8. Suggested Government Actions to Eliminate Child Labor, Including Its Worst Forms**

Area	Suggested Action	Year(s) Suggested
Laws	Ensure there are protections against hazardous work for children in family businesses.	2012 – 2013
	Ensure that child victims of commercial sexual exploitation are not prosecuted under the Penal Code.	2010 – 2013
Enforcement	Make data on child labor law enforcement publicly available.	2009 – 2013
Coordination	Establish a mechanism to coordinate government efforts to combat child labor.	2009 – 2013
Government Policies	Develop a national plan of action to address the worst forms of child labor, including in commercial sexual exploitation and domestic service.	2009 – 2013
Social Programs	Assess the impact that existing programs may have on child labor.	2013
	Gather the number of complaints made to the MOSD hotline and disaggregate the number of complaints to discern how many of them relate to child labor.	2013
	Develop programs to address the issue of children working in domestic service.	2010 – 2013
	Conduct research to determine the scope of children’s involvement in the worst forms of child labor in Bahrain.	2010 – 2013

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