

In 2016, Bahrain made a moderate advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. The Government shared labor and criminal law enforcement data, as well as information regarding the coordination activities of the Child Protection Center. In addition, the Labor Market Regulatory Authority posted inspectors at the airport to prevent migrant children from working in domestic service, mandated using only the recruitment agencies that have been vetted by the Government, and more than doubled the number of labor inspectors. Although the problem does not appear to be widespread, children in Bahrain engage in the worst forms of child labor, including in commercial sexual exploitation. The Government has not conducted research to determine the nature and extent of the worst forms of child labor in the country, and it also lacks a policy to address the worst forms of child labor.



I. PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Although the problem does not appear to be widespread, children in Bahrain engage in the worst forms of child labor, including in commercial sexual exploitation.(1) Data on key indicators on children's work and education are not available from the sources used in this report (Table 1).

Table 1. Statistics on Children's Work and Education

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

Primary completion rate was unavailable from UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2016.(2)

Data were unavailable from Understanding Children's Work Project's analysis, 2016.(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	Selling products on the street (1)
	Domestic work (1, 4)
Categorical Worst Forms of Child Labor [‡]	Commercial sexual exploitation (1)

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

The Government of Bahrain has not conducted or participated in research to determine the extent to which children are engaged in child labor, including its worst forms.(5)

In Bahrain, citizenship is derived from the father. As a result, children of Bahraini mothers and non-Bahraini fathers may be stateless.(6) In a limited number of cases, stateless children who lack legal documents, such as birth certificates, have been prevented from enrolling in schools.(7, 8)




Bahrain

MODERATE ADVANCEMENT

II. LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR THE WORST FORMS OF CHILD LABOR

Bahrain 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). However, gaps exist in Bahrain's legal framework to adequately protect children from child labor.

Table 4. Laws and Regulations on Child Labor

Standard	Meets International Standards: Yes/No	Age	Legislation
Minimum Age for Work	No	15	Article 24 of the Labor Law (9)
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work	Yes	18	Article 27 of the Labor Law (9)
Identification of Hazardous Occupations or Activities Prohibited for Children	Yes		Articles 1 and 2 of Ministerial Order No. 23 of 2013 (10)
Prohibition of Forced Labor	Yes		Article 1 of the Law on Combating Trafficking in Persons (11)
Prohibition of Child Trafficking	No		Article 1 of the Law on Combating Trafficking in Persons (11)
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children	No		Article 1 of the Law on Combating Trafficking in Persons; Article 39 of the Child Law (11, 12)
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities	Yes		Articles 59 and 68 of the Child Law; Article 30 of the Law on Hallucinogenic Substances and Drugs (12, 13)
Minimum Age for Military Recruitment			
State Compulsory	N/A*		
State Voluntary	Yes	18	Article 24 of the Defense Force Act (14)
Non-state Compulsory	Yes		Article 59 of the Child Law; Article 113 of the Penal Code (12, 15)
Compulsory Education Age	Yes	15	Article 1 of the Education Act (16)
Free Public Education	Yes		Article 7 of the Education Act (16)

* No conscription (14)

The minimum age protection in the Labor Law does not apply to children in certain sectors, such as domestic work in third-party homes.⁽⁹⁾ Laws related to child trafficking are not sufficient as trafficking for the purposes of child commercial sexual exploitation is not criminally prohibited.

The law does not sufficiently prohibit commercial sexual exploitation, as the use of children for prostitution, and the offering, procuring, and use of children for production of pornography and pornographic performances are not criminally prohibited.

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). However, gaps in labor law and criminal law enforcement remain and some enforcement information is not available.

Table 5. Agencies Responsible for Child Labor Law Enforcement

Organization/Agency	Role
Ministry of Labor and Social Development	Enforce child labor laws, along with the Labor Market Regulatory Authority. Take the lead role in initial mediation to resolve violations of the Labor Law.(1) Refer violations that are not resolved through mediation to the Public Prosecutor's Office. Maintain a hotline to receive criminal complaints of child labor, including its worst forms.(1)
Labor Market Regulatory Authority	Issue work visas to ensure that individuals coming to Bahrain as migrant workers are at least age 18.(5) Enforce the Law on Combating Trafficking in Persons.(1) Maintain a hotline to assist migrant workers.(17)
Police Department of the Ministry of Interior	Enforce criminal laws that prohibit the worst forms of child labor. Oversee the 12-person Criminal Investigations Directorate that investigates potential cases of human trafficking and commercial sexual exploitation.(18) Refer any identified child victims of human trafficking or illicit activities to the Center for Child Protection.(5) Maintain a hotline to receive criminal complaints of child trafficking.(19)
Public Prosecutor's Office	Prosecute crimes related to child labor and human trafficking.(20)

Labor Law Enforcement

In 2016, labor law enforcement agencies in Bahrain 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	2015	2016
Labor Inspectorate Funding	Unknown	Unknown
Number of Labor Inspectors	33 (5)	70 (4)
Inspectorate Authorized to Assess Penalties	Yes (21)	Yes (4)
Training for Labor Inspectors		
Initial Training for New Employees	Unknown	Unknown
Training on New Laws Related to Child Labor	N/A	N/A
Refresher Courses Provided	Yes (1)	Yes (4)
Number of Labor Inspections	Unknown (1)	8,212‡ (4)
Number Conducted at Worksite	Unknown	Unknown
Number Conducted by Desk Reviews	Unknown	Unknown
Number of Child Labor Violations Found	Unknown (1)	0 (4)
Number of Child Labor Violations for Which Penalties Were Imposed	Unknown (1)	N/A
Number of Penalties Imposed That Were Collected	Unknown (1)	N/A
Routine Inspections Conducted	Unknown	Yes (4)
Routine Inspections Targeted	Unknown	Yes (4)
Unannounced Inspections Permitted	Yes (22)	Yes (4)
Unannounced Inspections Conducted	Unknown	Yes (4)
Complaint Mechanism Exists	Yes (19)	Yes (4)
Reciprocal Referral Mechanism Exists Between Labor Authorities and Social Services	Unknown	Yes (4)

‡ Data are from January 1, 2016, to October 30, 2016.(4)

Criminal Law Enforcement

In 2016, criminal law enforcement agencies in Bahrain 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	2015	2016
Training for Investigators		
Initial Training for New Employees	Unknown	Unknown
Training on New Laws Related to the Worst Forms of Child Labor	Unknown	N/A
Refresher Courses Provided	Yes (1)	Yes (4)
Number of Investigations	Unknown (1)	1 (4)
Number of Violations Found	Unknown	0 (4)

Bahrain

MODERATE ADVANCEMENT

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

Overview of Criminal Law Enforcement	2015	2016
Number of Prosecutions Initiated	Unknown (1)	0 (4)
Number of Convictions	Unknown (1)	N/A
Reciprocal Referral Mechanism Exists Between Criminal Authorities and Social Services	Yes (5)	Yes (5)

In 2016, the Labor Market Regulatory Authority employed 70 inspectors to conduct 15,000 to 17,000 inspections to ensure compliance with laws, including the Law on Combating Trafficking in Persons. No cases of worst forms of child labor were detected in the reporting period.(4)

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. Key Mechanisms to Coordinate Government Efforts on Child Labor

Coordinating Body	Role & Description
Child Protection Center	Meet weekly and coordinate efforts of five government ministries to address cases of child abuse, including child trafficking and commercial sexual exploitation. Led by the Ministry of Labor and Social Development.(4)
National Committee on Combating Trafficking in Persons	Coordinate policies and laws to combat human trafficking and organize educational and outreach campaigns to raise awareness on trafficking in persons.(23) Led by the Labor Market Regulatory Authority; other members include representatives from eight state entities, plus NGOs.(1)

V. GOVERNMENT POLICIES ON THE WORST FORMS OF CHILD LABOR

Research found no evidence that the Government has established policies to address child labor, including its worst forms.

VI. SOCIAL PROGRAMS TO ADDRESS CHILD LABOR

In 2016, the Government of Bahrain funded programs that include the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor, including its worst forms (Table 9).

Table 9. Key Social Programs to Address Child Labor

Program	Description
Child Protection Center†	In charge of coordination; also provides services, including educational and psychological services and, in extreme cases, placement in foster care.(24)

† Program is funded by the Government of Bahrain.

The Labor Market Regulatory Authority has detected isolated cases of children entering Bahrain with falsified documents to work as domestic workers. In response, this agency posted inspectors at the Bahrain airport to monitor migrant workers and prevent suspected cases of child recruitment.(4) It also mandated using 1 of the 120 preferred recruitment agencies to ensure compliance with laws and regulations.(4, 25)

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 10).

Table 10. Suggested Government Actions to Eliminate Child Labor, Including its Worst Forms

Area	Suggested Action	Year(s) Suggested
Legal Framework	Ensure that the law's minimum age provisions do not exclude children in certain sectors, including in domestic work.	2014 – 2016
	Ensure that child trafficking laws criminally prohibit the trafficking of children for the purpose of commercial sexual exploitation.	2016
	Ensure that laws criminally prohibit all aspects of commercial sexual exploitation of children.	2016

Table 10. Suggested Government Actions to Eliminate Child Labor, Including its Worst Forms (cont)

Area	Suggested Action	Year(s) Suggested
Enforcement	Publish data on the labor inspectorate funding, the initial training for new inspectors, and the number of inspections conducted at worksites.	2009 – 2016
	Publish data on the initial training for new criminal investigators.	2013 – 2016
Government Policies	Adopt a policy that addresses all relevant worst forms of child labor, such as commercial sexual exploitation.	2009 – 2016
Social Programs	Conduct a comprehensive study of children's activities to determine the extent to which children may be engaged in or at risk for involvement in child labor, including its worst forms.	2009 – 2016
	Ensure universal access to education, particularly for stateless children.	2010 – 2016

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