

Lebanon

The Government of Lebanon has implemented programs that assist vulnerable families and children and provide incentives for school attendance. However, hazardous child labor continues in tobacco farming and domestic service. Gaps remain in the legal framework and enforcement efforts to combat the worst forms of child labor.

Statistics on Working Children and School Attendance

Children	Percent
Working	Unavailable
Attending School	Unavailable
Combining Work and School	Unavailable



Prevalence and Sectoral Distribution of the Worst Forms of Child Labor

Although evidence is limited, there is reason to believe that children in Lebanon are exploited in the worst forms of child labor in some tobacco production.²⁸²⁹²⁸³⁰ They may engage in physically arduous tasks for long hours, sometimes with dangerous equipment or pesticides, and without proper protection such as work gloves.²⁸³¹ According to a UNDP report on the state of human development in Lebanon, working children across sectors report psychological pressure, long hours, and adverse working conditions.²⁸³² According to the ILO, some tobacco farmers were provided with free machines that automatically align and thread tobacco leaves in 2009. This process is normally done by children, so these machines reportedly contributed to a decrease in the number of children in the fields that year.²⁸³³

A growing number of children are believed to be working as domestic servants.²⁸³⁴ Child domestics may work long hours and are at risk for physical and sexual exploitation by their employer. Child labor is predominant in the informal sectors of the economy, including small businesses, mechanical workshops, carpentry, construction, welding, and fisheries.²⁸³⁵ Children also work on the streets in tasks such as vending and washing car windshields.²⁸³⁶ Children working on the streets are often forced to do so by

“employers” who take the child’s earnings at the end of the day.²⁸³⁷ They are exposed to a variety of risks, which may include severe weather, accidents caused by proximity to vehicles, and vulnerability to criminal elements.

A growing number of children are believed to be exploited in prostitution and in the drug trade.²⁸³⁸ Lebanon is a transit country for Eastern European children trafficked to other Middle Eastern countries for forced prostitution.²⁸³⁹






Although children are not known to participate in the Lebanese Armed Forces, there are reports that children living in Palestinian refugee camps in Lebanon are involved with various armed groups operating in the country.²⁸⁴⁰

Laws and Regulations on the Worst Forms of Child Labor

The Labor Code sets the minimum age for employment at 14, prohibits children below age 16 from industrial, arduous, or unhealthy work, and provides a detailed list of work prohibited to children under age 16, including work handling tobacco.²⁸⁴¹ Children age 14 and over require a medical certificate proving they are fit for their designated job. For all working children, the Labor Code regulates work hours, and provides basic protections, such as limiting working

to 6 hours per day, with 1 hour of rest every 4 hours worked.²⁸⁴² Once children turn age 16, the law treats them as working adults. A draft list of work hazardous for all children under age 18 was formulated by the Government in 2008; however, until it is finalized, children age 16 to 17 may be legally exposed to all the hazards that list seeks to prohibit.²⁸⁴³

Small family farms are also exempted from the provisions of the Labor Code that regulate hazardous work.

	C138, Minimum Age	✓
	C182, Worst Forms of Child Labor	✓
	CRC	✓
	CRC Optional Protocol on Armed Conflict	No
	CRC Optional Protocol on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution, and Child Pornography	✓
	Palermo Protocol on Trafficking in Persons	✓
	Minimum Age for Work	14
	Minimum Age for Hazardous Work	15
	Compulsory Education Age	15
	Free Public Education	Yes

The Penal Code prohibits forced labor and involuntary servitude.²⁸⁴⁴ The Penal Code also prohibits the commercial sexual exploitation of children and financial gain from the prostitution of others.²⁸⁴⁵ The minimum age for voluntary recruitment into the Armed Forces is 18 for soldiers, non-commissioned personnel, and officers.²⁸⁴⁶ Lebanon also has a law against using children in illicit activities.²⁸⁴⁷

Currently, Lebanon has no laws that address human trafficking, but various other laws are used to address related offenses.²⁸⁴⁸ Such laws stipulate penalties for committing abduction, with increased penalties if the abduction is for the purposes of sexual exploitation.²⁸⁴⁹ An anti-trafficking-in-persons law drafted by the Ministry of Justice (MOJ) in collaboration with UNODC was submitted to the Cabinet in December 2009.²⁸⁵⁰

Institutional Mechanisms for Coordination and Enforcement

The Child Labor Unit (CLU) of the Ministry of Labor (MOL) coordinates Government efforts to combat the worst forms of child labor. These efforts include policy setting, awareness raising, and outreach to local communities.²⁸⁵¹ The CLU works with government offices and civil society groups as well as regional and international organizations working in Lebanon.²⁸⁵²

The Higher Council for Childhood (HCC) coordinates the work of public committees and civil society to ensure children's rights under the CRC. The HCC is presided over by the Minister of Social Affairs and implements the overall principles of children's rights, including dealing with child labor issues.²⁸⁵³ The HCC develops interventions to assist child laborers, establishes strategies for dealing with the issue, and creates education policy initiatives to reach delinquent students and reduce the dropout rate.²⁸⁵⁴

The CLU also enforces child labor laws.²⁸⁵⁵ Inspectors conduct routine inspections of workplaces in the formal sector. Much of the agricultural sector is composed of small family farms that are excluded from the labor law, but, according to MOL officials, such workplaces can be inspected if a complaint is received and the employer refuses requests to meet with investigators at the Unit's office.²⁸⁵⁶ With regard to child domestics, there is no mechanism to investigate complaints since social workers—the only officials allowed to enter a private home—may only assess the overall welfare of the family and not working conditions for domestic laborers.²⁸⁵⁷

At the end of 2009, the CLU employed approximately 130 labor inspectors and assistant inspectors.²⁸⁵⁸ The Government does not maintain statistics on the number of inspections carried out by the CLU, the number of violations, sanctions against violators, or the number of children assisted.²⁸⁵⁹ According to the MOL, the number of CLU inspectors is inadequate. Further, while training was reportedly provided during 2009, the MOL still reports that inspectors are often unaware of the requirements for reporting violations.²⁸⁶⁰

Several government ministries enforce criminal laws regarding the worst forms of child labor. The Ministry of Interior's Internal Security Forces, MOL, MOJ, and the HCC all have responsibility for enforcing laws related to child trafficking and the use of children in

illicit activities, such as commercial sexual exploitation of children.²⁸⁶¹ The Surete Generale (General Security) is the lead agency in dealing with international guest workers and processing cases of exploitation which encompasses international human trafficking.²⁸⁶² The Government does not track the number of investigations or prosecutions of crimes related to trafficking in children.²⁸⁶³

During the reporting period, the HCC worked with World Vision to provide six trafficking awareness workshops for social workers around Lebanon. The U.S. Embassy's International Narcotics and Law Enforcement assistance program trained 1,195 Internal Security Forces cadets to identify and assist victims of trafficking.²⁸⁶⁴

Government Policies on the Worst Forms of Child Labor

In 2004, the Government of Lebanon launched the National Policy and Programming Framework for the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labor. The plan outlined various actions, including creating a national database on child labor, sensitizing the general public and policy makers on the issue of child labor, and providing alternative education opportunities.²⁸⁶⁵ These initiatives were subsequently taken up through a partnership with ILO-IPEC which implemented a program to support the National Policy.²⁸⁶⁶

The Government incorporates child labor issues into broader development policies. "For example, the Social Action Plan: Toward Strengthening Social Safety Nets and Access to Basic Social Services, targets households with working children because they are a group living in acute poverty.²⁸⁶⁷ The Plan allows around 6,500 families to access cash assistance of about \$600, conditional upon keeping children in school.²⁸⁶⁸ It also includes a plan to address child labor through vocational and life skills training programs as well as encouraging school enrollment by reducing the cost of incidental expenses involved with education.²⁸⁶⁹

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

The Government has participated in donor-funded projects that sought to strengthen Government and civil society's capacity to combat child labor through education in small, family-owned business, street work, and agriculture with a specific focus on tobacco farming.²⁸⁷⁰ A USDOL-funded regional project that ended in 2008 established a database system to document all educational and livelihoods interventions and developed a child's game called "My Rights Game" to raise awareness of child labor and acceptable child work.²⁸⁷¹

Currently, the Government participates in an Italian Development Cooperation Office project slated to run from 2009 to 2011. The project targets north Lebanon and the Bekaa governorates and aims to prevent and withdraw 1,000 children from exploitive and hazardous labor through educational and other services.²⁸⁷² The Government is also collaborating with the ILO on skills development, employment services, and local socioeconomic recovery with a particular emphasis on helping vulnerable groups such as children working in the worst forms of child labor.²⁸⁷³

In 2009, the HCC conducted awareness campaigns and training sessions on child labor throughout Lebanon. The Council also worked with World Vision to facilitate six workshops to raise awareness of child trafficking.²⁸⁷⁴ The MOSA has contracted 14 NGOs to provide health, education, and rehabilitation services to vulnerable children. In 2009, the Government contributed approximately \$5 million to organizations providing these services.²⁸⁷⁵

The Government does not appear to provide protective services to children working as domestics, a vulnerable population.

Based on the reporting above, the following actions would advance the elimination of the worst forms of child labor in Lebanon:

IN THE AREA OF LAWS AND REGULATIONS:

- Ratify the list of hazardous activities prohibited to children under age 18.
- Pass the draft comprehensive trafficking-in-persons law with adequately stringent penalties.
- Amend the laws to provide protection to children working in harmful situations on family farms and in domestic service.

IN THE AREA OF COORDINATION AND ENFORCEMENT:

- Devote more resources to the Child Labor Unit, including for training, to ensure that it is able to effectively carry out its duties.
- Track the number of inspections carried out by the Child Labor Unit and the result of each inspection to gain additional knowledge about the magnitude of the problem of exploitive child labor in the country.
- Track statistics of violations related to trafficking-in-persons.

IN THE AREA OF PROGRAMS:

- Establish efforts to provide protective services to children working in domestic service.
- Government of Lebanon, Ministry of National Defense, Army Command,. Email communication to U.S. Department of State official. June 21, 2009.

²⁸²⁹ Data provided in the chart at the beginning of this country report are not available from the data sources that are used by USDOL. Reliable data on the worst forms of child labor are especially difficult to collect given the often hidden or illegal 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.

²⁸³⁰ U.S. Department of State, “Lebanon,” in *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices- 2009*, Washington, DC, March 11, 2010, section 7d; available from <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2009/nea/136073.htm>. See also Partners for Development-Civil Group, *Baseline Study on Education and Child Labour Risks on Tobacco Plantations*, July 2007.

²⁸³¹ Partners for Development-Civil Group, *Baseline Study on Education and Child Labour Risks on Tobacco Plantations*, 6-8, 25-26. See also U.S. Embassy- Beirut, *reporting*, February 3, 2010, 1B.

²⁸³² UNDP, *The National Human Development Report: Toward a Citizen’s State*, March 2009, 57, 33; available from <http://www.undp.org/publications/lebanon-nhdr-report-summary-english.pdf>.

²⁸³³ U.S. Department of State official, E-mail communication to USDOL official, April 4, 2009.

²⁸³⁴ U.S. Embassy- Beirut, *reporting*, February 3, 2010, 2A.

²⁸³⁵ U.S. Department of State official, E-mail communication, April 4, 2009.

²⁸³⁶ Ministry of Justice Government of Lebanon, *Measures to prevent and combat trafficking in human beings: Lebanon country assessment*, May 2008, 36; available from <http://www.unodc.org/documents/human-trafficking/Lebanon-HTreport-Oct08.pdf>. See also U.S. Department of State, “Country Reports- 2009: Lebanon,” section 7d.

²⁸³⁷ Government of Lebanon, *Measures to prevent and combat trafficking in human beings: Lebanon country assessment*, 36.

²⁸³⁸ U.S. Embassy- Beirut, *reporting*, February 3, 2010, 2A.

²⁸³⁹ Ibid.

²⁸⁴⁰ Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers, “Lebanon,” in *Child Soldiers Global Report 2008*, London, 2008, 207-208; available from <http://www.childsoldiersglobalreport.org>. See also UN Security Council, *Report of the Secretary-General on Children and Armed Conflict* New York, December 21, 2007 2007, paragraphs 59, 60; available from [http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/RWfiles2007.nsf/filesbyrwdocunidfilename/egua-7bbtf3-full_report.pdf/\\$file/full_report.pdf](http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/RWfiles2007.nsf/filesbyrwdocunidfilename/egua-7bbtf3-full_report.pdf/$file/full_report.pdf).

- ²⁸⁴¹ Government of Lebanon, *Code du travail- Travail des enfants*, Law No. 536, (July 24, 1996), article 22 and 23, Annex I; available from <http://www.lebaneselaws.com/>. See also U.S. Department of State, “Country Reports- 2009: Lebanon,” section 7d. See also Government of Lebanon, *Report of the Government of Lebanon on Efforts by GSP Beneficiary Countries to Eliminate Worst Forms of Child Labour*, submitted in response to U.S. Department of Labor Federal Register Notice (November 8, 2007) “Request for Information on Efforts by Certain Countries to Eliminate the Worst Forms of Child Labor”, Beirut, December 21, 2007.
- ²⁸⁴² Government of Lebanon, *Code du travail*, articles 21-25.
- ²⁸⁴³ U.S. Department of State official, E-mail communication to USDOL official, September 1, 2010.
- ²⁸⁴⁴ U.S. Embassy- Beirut, *reporting, February 3, 2010*, para 4A.
- ²⁸⁴⁵ Government of Lebanon, *Measures to prevent and combat trafficking in human beings: Lebanon country assessment*, 14-15.
- ²⁸⁴⁶ Ministry of National Defense Government of Lebanon, Army Command,, Email communication to U.S. Department of State official, June 21, 2009. See also Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers, “Lebanon,” 207.
- ²⁸⁴⁷ Law Library of Congress, *Lebanon Children’s Rights: International and National Laws and Practices*, The Library of Congress, 2007; available from <http://www.loc.gov/law/help/child-rights/pdfs/childrensrights-lebanon.pdf>.
- ²⁸⁴⁸ U.S. Department of State, “Country Reports- 2009: Lebanon,” sections 6 and 7c.
- ²⁸⁴⁹ Government of Lebanon, *Measures to prevent and combat trafficking in human beings: Lebanon country assessment*, 15, 13. See also U.S. Department of State, “Country Reports- 2009: Lebanon.”
- ²⁸⁵⁰ U.S. Embassy- Beirut, *reporting, March 10, 2010*.
- ²⁸⁵¹ Government of Lebanon, *Unit for the Combat of Child Labour in Lebanon at the Ministry of Labour*, 2010; available from www.clu.gov.lb <http://www.clu.gov.lb/english/definition/index.html> <http://www.clu.gov.lb/english/international/index.html>.
- ²⁸⁵² Ibid.
- ²⁸⁵³ Higher Council for Childhood, *The Higher Council for Childhood: Get to know us*, [website] [cited September 13, 2010]; available from <http://www.atfalouna.gov.lb/en/AboutUs/Ourmission.aspx>.
- ²⁸⁵⁴ Ibid.].
- ²⁸⁵⁵ U.S. Department of State, “Country Reports- 2009: Lebanon,” section 7d.
- ²⁸⁵⁶ U.S. Embassy- Beirut, *reporting, February 3, 2010*.
- ²⁸⁵⁷ Ibid.
- ²⁸⁵⁸ Ibid., section 2C.
- ²⁸⁵⁹ Ibid.
- ²⁸⁶⁰ Ibid., para 5-8.
- ²⁸⁶¹ U.S. Department of State, “Country Reports- 2009: Lebanon,” section 6. See also U.S. Embassy- Beirut, *reporting, March 10, 2010*.
- ²⁸⁶² U.S. Embassy- Beirut, *reporting, February 3, 2010*.
- ²⁸⁶³ Ibid.
- ²⁸⁶⁴ Ibid., 8.
- ²⁸⁶⁵ ILO-IPEC, *Supporting the National Policy and Programme Framework for the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour in Lebanon and Yemen: Consolidating Action against the Worst Forms of Child Labour*, Project Document, Geneva, September 3, 2004, 8-9.
- ²⁸⁶⁶ ILO-IPEC, *Supporting the National Policy and Programme Framework (NPPF) for the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour (WFCL) in Lebanon and Yemen*, Final Technical Progress Report, Beirut, August 2008.
- ²⁸⁶⁷ Ibid., 2.
- ²⁸⁶⁸ Republic of Lebanon, *Social Action Plan: Toward Strengthening Social Safety Nets and Access to Basic Social Services*, January 2007, 15.
- ²⁸⁶⁹ ILO-IPEC, *Supporting the National Policy and Programme Framework (NPPF) for the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour (WFCL) in Lebanon and Yemen*, 2-3.
- ²⁸⁷⁰ ILO-IPEC, *Supporting the National Policy and Programme Framework, Project Document*. See also CHF International, *Alternatives to Combat Child Labor through Educational and Sustainable Services in the Middle East and North Africa Region (ACCESS-MENA)* Final Report, Beirut, August 2008.
- ²⁸⁷¹ ILO-IPEC, *Supporting the National Policy and Programme Framework (NPPF) for the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour (WFCL) in Lebanon and Yemen*, 14 and 18.
- ²⁸⁷² U.S. Embassy- Beirut, *reporting, January 15, 2009*, para 17.
- ²⁸⁷³ UN System Lebanon, *ILO UN System in Lebanon*, [online] April 2009 2009 [cited July 2, 2010]; available from <http://www.un.org.lb/Subpage.aspx?pageid=53>.
- ²⁸⁷⁴ U.S. Embassy- Beirut, *reporting, February 3, 2010*.
- ²⁸⁷⁵ Ibid.