

Solomon Islands

In 2011, the Solomon Islands made a minimal advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. The Government passed the Immigration Act 2012, which prohibits and punishes all forms of trafficking in persons and provides specific legal protections against the trafficking of children. While the Government met some goals of its National Children's Policy's National Plan of Action for 2010-2015, education is not compulsory and laws do not adequately protect all children from hazardous work and commercial sexual exploitation. The Government has also not established a body to coordinate efforts to combat child labor, and resources for enforcement are lacking. Children in the Solomon Islands continue to engage in the worst forms of child labor, including commercial sexual exploitation, particularly in association with the fishing and logging industries.

Statistics on Working Children 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

Sources:

Primary completion rate: UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2012.(1)

All other data: Understanding Children's Work Project's analysis.(2)

Prevalence and Sectoral Distribution of the Worst Forms of Child Labor

Some children in the Solomon Islands are engaged in the worst forms of child labor, primarily in commercial sexual exploitation.(3, 4) Both boys and girls are engaged in commercial sexual exploitation associated with the logging, tourism and fishing industries in areas near logging camps, on fishing boats and in the capital city of Honiara.(4-10) In particular, girls are trafficked within the Solomon Islands to logging camps for commercial sexual exploitation. There are reports that some children are brought by their parents to foreign and local fishing ships for commercial sexual exploitation with fishermen.(9, 10)

Children are involved in the sale and production of illegal, homebrewed alcohol.(11, 12) Although evidence is limited, there is some information of forced child labor on plantations.(13)



Reportedly, children are used in pornography.(5, 14, 15). Additionally, there is some evidence suggesting children are forced to work as domestic servants.(3) Children employed as domestics may work long hours and are isolated in private homes where they are susceptible to physical and sexual abuse.(16)

Laws and Regulations on the Worst Forms of Child Labor

The Labor Act permits children as young as age 12 to work. This does not meet international standards, which requires at least a minimum age of 14 for admission to employment.(17) Children under age 15 are prohibited from working in the industrial sector or on ships, and children under age 16 are prohibited from working in underground mines.(17) Further, children between ages 16 and 18 are barred from working in mines or on ships without a medical certificate and at night without specific written permission from the Commissioner of Labor.(17) Despite these provisions, the Solomon Islands does not have a comprehensive law protecting children under age 18 from hazardous work, or a comprehensive list of hazardous occupations from which children are prohibited. In addition, according to the Commissioner of Labor, the existing penalties and fines for employing children in hazardous conditions are too insignificant to serve as a deterrent.(18)

The Constitution prohibits slavery and forced labor.(19, 20) The Penal Code criminalizes the production and possession of pornographic material if the purpose is to distribute or publicly exhibit the material.(21) It does not, however, specifically prohibit the use, procurement or offer of a child for the production of pornography. Selling or hiring minors under age 15 and girls under age 18 for prostitution is punishable as a criminal offense.(21) However, these prostitution laws do not cover boys between the ages of 15 and 18 and therefore leave

them without legal protection.(21) Laws do not specifically prohibit the use of children in illicit activities such as drug trafficking.(3, 21)

	C138, Minimum Age	No
	C182, Worst Forms of Child Labor	No
	CRC	✓
	CRC Optional Protocol on Armed Conflict	No
	CRC Optional Protocol on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography	No
	Palermo Protocol on Trafficking in Persons	No
	Minimum Age for Work	12
	Minimum Age for Hazardous Work	15
	Compulsory Education Age	No
	Free Public Education	Yes

In March 2012, the Government enacted the Immigration Act 2012. The Act prohibits and punishes all forms of trafficking in persons, and provides specific legal protections against the trafficking of children.(22, 23)

There are no government armed forces in the Solomon Islands.(18) The law allows for forces to be drawn from the Solomon Islands Police Force, if necessary. The Police Force has a minimum recruiting age of 18.(24)

Institutional Mechanisms for Coordination and Enforcement

The National Advisory Committee on Children advises the Cabinet on issues affecting children, coordinates the implementation of the CRC and develops advocacy materials to promote the rights of children.(25) However, research found no evidence that the Government has established a coordinating mechanism to combat child labor.

The Commissioner of Labor—the head of the Labor Division in the Ministry of Commerce, Industry, Labor and Immigration (MOCILI)— is responsible for enforcing child labor laws.(15, 18) The most recent data indicate that in 2010 the Labor Division was allocated \$3,252 for all of its operations, including conducting inspections. During the reporting period, MOCILI only employed three labor inspectors to enforce all labor laws, including those related to

child labor.(18) Additionally, the Ministry of Labor (MOL) employs a desk officer to work on ILO labor standards and child labor issues.(26) During the reporting period no inspections were carried out involving child labor in sectors where children are known to work(18). Research did not uncover the number of enforcement actions or the number of violations found that related to child labor during the reporting period.(15, 18, 20, 27) Sources, including the Government, note that inadequate capacity and resources have prevented meaningful enforcement of the laws.(15, 18, 20, 27)

The Royal Solomon Islands Police, in partnership with the Australian-led Regional Assistance Mission to the Solomon Islands Participating Police Force, appears to be the only body responsible for enforcing laws related to trafficking and commercial sexual exploitation.(9, 18) During the reporting period, the Government of Solomon Islands did not investigate or prosecute any trafficking cases, including sex trafficking.(3) Moreover, research did not uncover the number of investigations of commercial sexual exploitation of children in 2011.

Government Policies on the Worst Forms of Child Labor

In 2010, the Government established a National Children's Policy, with a National Plan of Action for 2010-2015.(25) The Policy acknowledges existing gaps in legislation, enforcement and programs for the protection of children. It commits the Government to substantially improving services and the legal framework over the next 4 years.(25) Objectives of the policy include the ratification of the Optional Protocols to the United Nations CRC, raising the minimum age for employment to 18, achieving universal primary education and creating a mechanism for the coordination and enforcement of child protection laws and policies.(25) During the reporting period, the Government met some key indicators for development outlined in the National Plan of Action, such as increasing access to education and targeting girls with these efforts. However, the Government did not ratify the CRC Optional Protocols or raise the minimum age for work. In addition, the Plan fails to include the Labor Division of the MOCILI in its intended coordination mechanism.(25)

Education in the Solomon Islands is not compulsory.(15) In 2011, the Government continued to implement the Free Fee Basic Education (FFBE) Policy, which covers the operational costs for children to attend school, but allows for school management to request additional contributions from families such as cash, labor and school fundraising.(4, 28) The FFBE Policy is intended to increase educational access by subsidizing school fees for grades 1 through 9.(28) In 2011, the Policy

Solomon Islands

enabled the Government to provide primary schools in rural areas \$320 per child, and in urban areas \$520 per child. Further, rural secondary schools, years 7 to 9, received \$800 per student, and urban high schools received \$1,000 per student.(28) The ILO Committee of Experts has noted that although this policy has effectively covered operational costs for primary and secondary schools, school levies, uniform costs, book fees and transportation needs still prevent some children from attending school.(28)

Reports have criticized the high cost of these additional school fees for creating a barrier to transitioning into secondary schools. Further, attendance and dropout rates indicate that girls in the Solomon Islands are less likely to finish school.(15) To address these issues, the Government continued to support the Community High School Initiative.(4) The Initiative specifically aims to improve girls' access to high school. In an effort to increase access to education, additional secondary schools will be built in and around local villages and communities as a way to reduce transportation costs for families.(28)

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

The Government of Solomon Islands is collaborating with the ILO to implement its Decent Work Program for 2009-2012. The Program's priorities include promoting decent employment for youth and making progress toward eliminating child labor.(29) Research has not uncovered if any child labor specific activities were implemented in 2011.

Moreover, research found no evidence that the Government carried out programs to combat the commercial sexual exploitation of children in 2011. However, the Government continued to support the American Bar Association's Rule of Law (ROLI) Program, funded by the U.S. Department of State's Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons, to address the issue of human trafficking through workshops and training programs using multi-stakeholder solutions. It is unclear whether the ROLI Program has impacted the trafficking of children.(4)

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

Area	Suggested Actions	Year(s) Action Recommended
Laws and Regulations	Increase the minimum age for employment and hazardous work to 14 and 18, respectively, and institute a comprehensive list of hazardous occupations and activities from which children are prohibited.	2009, 2010, 2011
	Strengthen penalties for violating child labor laws.	2009, 2010, 2011
	Adopt laws to forbid the use, procuring or offering of a child for illicit activities, such as the production and trafficking of drugs and the production of pornography.	2011
	Amend laws to prohibit the prostitution of boys under age 18.	2009, 2010, 2011
Coordination and Enforcement	Establish a coordinating mechanism to combat the worst forms of child labor.	2010, 2011
	Make information on inspections and investigations regarding the worst forms of child labor publicly available.	2009, 2010, 2011
	Consider including MOCILI in the coordination mechanism for enforcement outlined in the National Plan.	2010, 2011
	Allocate sufficient funds to ensure that enforcement agencies have adequate resources and capacity to effectively enforce laws that prevent the worst forms of child labor.	2009, 2010, 2011
Policies	Meet the goals outlined in the National Children's Policy with a National Plan of Action for 2010-2015, including ratifying the CRC Optional Protocols.	2010, 2011
	Establish compulsory education to age 14 to meet international standards.	2009, 2011
Social Programs	Initiate programs to address the worst forms of child labor, particularly the commercial sexual exploitation of children.	2011

REFERENCES

- UNESCO Institute for Statistics. *Gross intake ratio to the last grade of primary. Total*; accessed March 29, 2012; <http://www.uis.unesco.org/Pages/default.aspx?SPSLanguage=EN>. Data provided is the gross intake ratio to the last grade of primary school. This measure is a proxy measure for primary completion. For more information, please see the “Children’s Work and Education Statistics: Sources and Definitions” section of this report.
- UCW. *Analysis of Child Economic Activity and School Attendance Statistics from National Household or Child Labor Surveys*. February 2, 2012. Reliable statistical data on the worst forms of child labor are especially difficult to collect given the often hidden or illegal nature of the worst forms. As a result, statistics on children’s work in general are reported in this chart, which may or may not include the worst forms of child labor. For more information on sources used, 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 of this report.
- U.S. Department of State. “Soloman Islands,” in *Trafficking in Persons Report- 2011*. Washington, DC; June 27, 2011; <http://www.state.gov/g/tip/rls/tiprpt/2011/164233.htm>.
- U.S. Embassy- Port Moresby. *reporting, February 16, 2012*.
- UNICEF Pacific. *Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children and Child Sexual Abuse in the Pacific: A Regional Report*. Suva; 2008. http://www.unicef.org/pacificislands/Small_CESEC.pdf.
- Solomon Islands Department of Home Affairs official. Interview with USDOL official. June 20, 2006.
- Herbert, T. *Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children in the Solomon Islands: A Report Focusing on the Presence of the Logging Industry in a Remote Region*. Honiara, Christian Care Centre, Church of Melanesia, Solomon Islands July 2007. <http://www.melanesiangeo.org/resources/Solomons%20Child%20Exploration.pdf>.
- Solomon Islands Port Authority official. Interview with USDOL consultant. June 28, 2006.
- Callinan, R. “Generation Exploited.” *Time Magazine World* [online] March 27, 2006 [cited June 11, 2012]; <http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,1174745,00.html>.
- Marau, D. “Sr Doreen’s Story: The Untold Stories of Human Trafficking.” *Solomon Star*, Honiara, August 9, 2011; National. <http://www.solomonstarnews.com/news/national/11705-sr-doreens-story-the-untold-stories-of-human-trafficking>
- Solomon Islands Central Magistrate’s Court official. Interview with USDOL consultant. June 23, 2006.
- Solomon Islands Police official. Interview with USDOL consultant. September 3, 2006.
- ILO Committee of Experts. *Individual Direct Request concerning Forced Labour Convention, 1930 (No. 29) Solomon Islands (ratification: 1985) Submitted: 2011* Geneva. <http://www.ilo.org/ilolex/cgi-lex/pdconv.pl?host=status01&textbase=iloeng&document=25734&chapter=9&query=%28solomon%29+%40ref%2Bchild&highlight=on&querytype=bool&context=0>.
- Solomon Islands National Council of Women official. Interview with USDOL consultant. June 23, 2006.
- U.S. Department of State. “Solomon Islands,” in *Country Reports on Human Practices- 2011*. Washington, DC; May 24, 2012; http://www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/hrrpt/humanrightsreport/index.htm?dynamic_load_id=186307.
- International Labour Office. *Children in hazardous work: What we know, What we need to do*. Geneva, International Labour Organization; 2011. While country-specific information on the dangers children face in domestic work is not available, research studies and other reports have documented the dangerous nature of tasks in domestic work and their accompanying occupational exposures, injuries and potential health consequences to children working in the sector.
- Government of Solomon Islands. *Labour Act (Chapter 73)*, enacted 1996. <http://www.paclii.org>
- U.S. Embassy- Port Moresby. *reporting, March 16, 2011*.
- Government of Solomon Islands. *Constitution of Solomon Islands*, enacted July 7, 1978. http://www.paclii.org/sb/legis/consol_act/c1978167/
- International Trade Union Confederation. *Internationally Recognised Core Labour Standards in the Solomon Islands: Report for the WTO General Council Review of the Trade Policies of the Solomon Islands*. Geneva; May 6 and 8, 2009. http://www.ituc-csi.org/IMG/pdf/WTO_report_Solomon_final0509.pdf
- Government of Solomon Islands. *Penal Code (Chapter 26)*, enacted 1996. http://www.paclii.org/sb/legis/consol_act/pc66/
- Government of Solomon Islands. *Immigration Act 2012*, No.3 of 2012, enacted March 9, 2012.
- U.S. Embassy- Port Moresby official. E-mail communication to USDOL official. May 23, 2012.
- Austin, S, Osborn Cains, Anafia Norton, Penelope Taylor, Marie Wernham, Freida. *Protect Me with Love and Care: A Baseline Report for the Solomon Islands*. Suva, UNICEF Pacific; November 2009. http://www.unicef.org/pacificislands/UNICEF_Solomon_Report1.pdf
- Government of Solomon Islands. *National Children’s Policy with National Plan of Action* Ministry of Women, Youth & Children Affairs, April 15, 2010.
- ILO. *Solomon Islands: The Effective Abolition of Child Labour*. Status Report: Country Baseline under the ILO Declaration Annual Review (2000-2009). Geneva; 2011. http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/-ed_norm/-declaration/documents/publication/wcms_091263.pdf
- Solomon Islands Ministry of Labor official. Interview with USDOL consultant. June 12, 2006.
- Child Rights International Network. *Solomon Islands: Child Rights References in the Universal Periodic Review*, Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights [online] July 22, 2011 [cited June 11, 2012]; <http://www.crin.org/resources/infodetail.asp?id=25544>.
- ILO. *Fact Sheet: Solomon Islands*. Status Report. Bangkok; 2010. http://bravo.ilo.org/asia/whatwedo/publications/lang-en/docName-WCMS_120549/index.htm