

In 2014, Turkey made a moderate advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. The Directorate General for Migration Management, a new coordinating body for the implementation of migration law, including laws related to child trafficking and refugee children, began functioning during the reporting period. In addition, together with the EU, the Government funded a project that included the goal of combating child labor by helping parents of working children to find employment. The Government also trained labor inspectors and law enforcement personnel on issues related to child trafficking and hazardous child labor. However, children in Turkey are engaged in child labor in agriculture, including in mobile seasonal work, and in the worst forms of child labor, including in commercial sexual exploitation. The Government does not have laws that protect children working in agricultural enterprises employing fewer than 50 workers, in small shops employing up to three persons, or in domestic work. In addition, children in the growing Syrian refugee population in Turkey have low access to education and other social services, which leaves them 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 in agriculture, including in mobile seasonal work. (1-14) Children are also engaged in the worst forms of child labor, including in commercial sexual exploitation. (12, 15-17) Table 1 provides key indicators on children's work and education in Turkey.

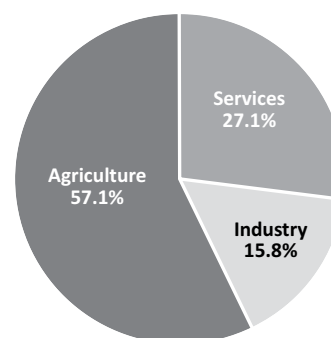
Table 1. Statistics on Children's Work and Education

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 (%)		101.4

Source for primary completion rate: Data from 2012, published by UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2015.(18)

Source for all other data: Understanding Children's Work Project's analysis of statistics from Child Labor Survey, 2006.(19)

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, and pulses (1-12, 14)
Industry	Production of furniture, bricks,* shoes,* leather goods* (2, 12, 16) Auto repair*† (12, 16)
Services	Street work, including selling facial tissue packets or flowers, carrying bundles in market areas, cleaning car windshields, collecting recyclable materials, and begging (2, 12-14, 16, 20-22)
Categorical Worst Forms of Child Labor‡	Commercial sexual exploitation sometimes as a result of human trafficking (12, 15-17) Used in armed combat by Kurdish militant groups sometimes as a result of forced recruitment* (12, 23-27)

* 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.

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Evidence suggests that the number of child laborers involved in the production of furniture has considerably declined in the past decade, although the significance of the decline is unknown.(13)

With the exception of the hazelnut harvest, which occurs during school vacation, children working in agriculture often migrate with their families for much of the year and may have limited access to health care and education.(1, 9, 10, 16)




There are reports that children are recruited by Kurdish militant groups that have been fighting in Turkey for nearly three decades.(12, 23-26) A ceasefire has been in effect since March 2013, but militant groups reportedly remain equipped to attack government forces if the ceasefire unravels.(28) Kurdish groups have committed to ensuring that children ages 16 to 18 are not used in combat zones and to releasing all children under age 16.(29, 30) However, media reports indicated that the recruitment of children under age 18 had continued.(23-27) The current number of child soldiers in Kurdish militant groups is unknown.(12)

Due to the Syrian Conflict, an estimated 1.7 million Syrian refugees have relocated to Turkey.(31, 32) Many refugee families lack adequate food, shelter, and employment.(20, 33, 34) At the beginning of the reporting period, only approximately half of the Syrian refugee population had registered with the Government and gained access to health care, education, and social services. However, due to an increased focus on registration efforts, the Government estimates that it has successfully registered more than 90 percent of the Syrian population, giving these refugees legal protections and greater access to health care and other services.(32-35) Approximately 840,000 Syrian refugees are school-aged children, less than 100,000 of whom are enrolled in school.(31, 32) This leaves the majority of child refugees out of school and at greater risk of exploitation in the worst forms of child labor. Reports indicate that a lack of schools for Syrian refugees especially in urban areas, a lack of teachers, and a lack of registration all contribute to the gap in education.(31, 36) In addition, poverty in the refugee community and a lack of meaningful employment opportunities cause parents to rely on children as contributors to the family income.(20, 32, 36) Due to their high level of vulnerability, some refugee children in urban areas may be subject to a range of abuses, including child labor, sexual exploitation, human trafficking, and begging.(13, 22, 32, 37)

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 Act (38)
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work	Yes	18	Articles 71-73 of the Labor Act; Annex 3 of the Regulation on Methods and Principles for Employment of Children and Young Workers (38, 39)
Prohibition of Hazardous Occupations or Activities for Children	Yes		Annex 3 of the Regulation on the Principles and Procedures Governing the Employment of Children and Young Workers; Annex 1 of the Regulation on Heavy and Dangerous Work; Regulation amending the Regulation on the Principles and Procedures for the Employment of Children (39-42)

Table 4. Laws and Regulations Related to Child Labor (cont)

Standard	Yes/No	Age	Related Legislation
Prohibition of Forced Labor	Yes		Articles 80 and 117 of the Penal Code (43)
Prohibition of Child Trafficking	Yes		Article 80 of the Penal Code (43)
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children	Yes		Articles 77, 103, 226, and 227 of the Penal Code (43)
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities	Yes		Articles 37–38 of the Penal Code (43)
Minimum Age for Compulsory Military Recruitment	Yes	21	Article 2 of the Law on Military Service (44, 45)
Minimum Age for Voluntary Military Service	NA*		
Compulsory Education Age	Yes	17	Article 3 of the Primary Education Law; Education Reform Law (14, 46-48)
Free Public Education	Yes		Article 2 of the Primary Education Law; Article 42 of the Constitution of the Republic of Turkey (13, 46, 49)

* No voluntary military service (14)

Under the National Defense Service Law 3634, children ages 15 to 18 can be deployed in civil defense forces in the event of a national emergency.(44, 50)

As stated in Article 4 of the Labor Act, the provisions of the Labor Act do not apply to children working in agricultural enterprises employing 50 or fewer workers, in small shops employing up to three persons, or in domestic service.(38) These gaps in the law leave children vulnerable to exploitative conditions without legal protection.(16)

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.(14) 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.(14)
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.(14)
Turkish National Police (TNP)	Enforce laws defining criminal activity.(13)
Ministry of Justice	Prosecute legal cases regarding child labor or exploitation of children.(13)
Ministry of Family and Social Policy (MFSP)	Receive all referred child laborers in need of assistance. Coordinate services targeted to children living and/or working on the streets through the Directorate General of Child Services within MFSP.(13)

Law enforcement agencies in Turkey took actions to combat child labor, including its worst forms.

Labor Law Enforcement

In 2014, the number of labor inspectors authorized to conduct inspections decreased from 1,099 to 970. However, the Ministry of Labor and Social Security (MOLSS) plans to increase the number of labor inspectors, which currently remains inadequate to fully enforce Turkey's labor laws.(14) 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.(14)

In 2013, the most recent year for which data are available, 23,504 inspections were conducted involving 2,209,565 workers, including 397 children. Child labor penalties were levied on 56 violations in 49 workplaces, and approximately \$27,000 in fines were collected.(51) The fine for violating the ban on employing child labor is approximately \$665, which the MOLSS acknowledges

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is insufficient to deter violations.(14) Inspectors both proactively plan inspections and conduct inspections in response to complaints. Inspections include unannounced inspections.(14) Complaints about child labor can be made to a phone hotline operated by the Directorate General of Child Services within the Ministry of Family and Social Policy (MFSP).(14) Complaints can also be submitted online through the Prime Minister’s Office Communications Center website.(52) Research did not find how many calls were made to the hotline or how many complaints were submitted via the website.

Criminal Law Enforcement

The Turkish National Police (TNP) are responsible for the enforcement of criminal laws related to the worst forms of child labor.(14) During the reporting period, the Ministry of Interior and NGOs provided training to law enforcement, judicial, and Ministry of Interior officials on human trafficking and the law; the referral system for human trafficking victims; and identification of human trafficking victims.(37) Enforcement agencies refer child victims to MFSP services.(14) During 2014, the Government identified two victims of child trafficking.(22) Research did not find disaggregated data on the number of investigations, prosecutions, or convictions related to child trafficking.(53)

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 6).

Table 6. Mechanisms to Coordinate Government Efforts on Child Labor

Coordinating Body	Role & Description
National Steering Committee (NSC) on child labor issues	Coordinate and monitor programs and projects to be implemented nationwide to prevent child labor, primarily its worst forms.(14) Chaired by the MOLSS Undersecretary and includes senior government officials, workers, employers, and NGOs. Coordinate the Time-bound National Policy and Program Framework for the Prevention of Child Labor.(13, 14)
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.(14, 54)
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.(13, 51)
The Child Services Directorate General	Coordinate services for children living and working on the streets; located within the MFSP.(13)
Directorate General for Migration Management (DGMM)*	Coordinate the implementation of migration law, including laws related to irregular migration, refugees, and human trafficking.(34, 55)

* Mechanism to coordinate efforts to address child labor was created during the reporting period.

With the creation of the DGMM in 2014, responsibility for refugees and combating human trafficking shifted from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the TNP to the DGMM. The DGMM’s new infrastructure and lack of capacity has created challenges both in combating human trafficking and in registering and assisting refugees in 2014.(34)

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 7).

Table 7. Policies Related to Child Labor

Policy	Description
Time-bound National Policy and Program Framework for the Prevention of Child Labor (2005–2015)	Aims to eliminate the worst forms of child labor by 2015. MOLSS, through the NSC, is the coordinating institution.(13) Prioritizes reducing poverty, improving the quality and accessibility of education, and increasing social awareness and sensitivity to child labor.(13) Priority target groups include 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. Articulates objectives, indicators, outputs, target groups, activities, and responsibilities for the elimination of the worst forms of child labor.(13)

Table 7. Policies Related to Child Labor (cont)

Policy	Description
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.(37, 56)
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.(57) Includes provisions for the prevention of the worst forms of child labor.(14)
Strategic Plan for the Ministry of National Education (2010–2014)*	Sets medium- and long-term objectives for education policy, including increasing participation rates from preschool to secondary education, promoting vocational education, and terminating gender and regional education disparities.(58)
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.(59) Includes a section addressing child labor issues.(14, 60)

* Child labor elimination and prevention strategies do not appear to have been integrated into this policy.

† Policy was approved during the reporting period.

The Government reports that it reviews the impact of policies on child labor when renewing or updating a policy. However, it did not make its assessments publicly available.(51)

VI. SOCIAL PROGRAMS TO ADDRESS CHILD LABOR

In 2014, the Government of Turkey funded and participated in programs that include the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor, including its worst forms (Table 8).

Table 8. Social Programs to Address Child Labor

Program	Description
Activation of Local Sources on Preventing Child Labor (2012–2014)‡	MOLSS-implemented, 3-year program to support the Time-bound Framework by enhancing local capacity and building an effective monitoring system.(61) Provides direct services such as child labor monitoring, vocational skills training, rehabilitation of children, and awareness-raising through the formation of Child Labor Monitoring Units in five pilot provinces. As of 2014, identified 2,204 at-risk children to receive services and conducted 795 direct interventions with parents of working children.(14)
Elimination of Worst Forms of Child Labor in Seasonal Commercial Agriculture in Hazelnuts	Project funded by the Association of Chocolate, Biscuit, and Confectionery Industries of Europe (CAOBISCO) and the Government of the Netherlands that focuses on child labor in hazelnut harvesting in the Black Sea province of Ordu. Aims to build the capacity of local institutions to coordinate and implement activities for the elimination of child labor in hazelnut production.(14) In 2014, 313 seasonal worker families were provided with individual or group counseling, and 408 children were provided with services, including 310 who were withdrawn or prevented from work.(14) In addition, CAOBISCO extended the project through June 1, 2015.(62)
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.(63)
Conditional Education and Health Care Assistance Program‡	Government program that aims to reduce poverty through cash transfers.(64) Requires children between ages 6 and 15 of participating families to regularly attend primary school.(52) Provides milk to all primary school children and distributes books free of charge.(61)
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.(14, 37)
'157' Hotline for Victims of Trafficking‡	Government and International Organization for Migration funded and operated 24-hour toll-free hotline in multiple languages for human trafficking victims. Advertised through government awareness-raising campaigns in airports and other points of entry into Turkey.(37)
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. (14, 51, 65) Includes the goal of combating child labor by supporting the entry of parents of working children into the labor market.(51, 65)
Teacher Training Program	Joint Ministry of National Education (MoNE) and UNICEF project to provide training on teaching methods to Syrian teachers living in refugee camps. Includes training sessions for both Syrian and MoNE trainers who then move on to hold broader training sessions in selected refugee camps.(66)

† Program was launched during the reporting period.

‡ Program is funded by the Government of Turkey.

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The Government of Turkey reports that it reviews the impact of a program on child labor when renewing or updating that program. However, it does not make its assessments publicly available.(51)

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 9).

Table 9. 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, small businesses, and domestic work.	2009 – 2014
Enforcement	Increase the number of labor inspectors responsible for enforcing laws related to child labor in order to provide adequate coverage of the workforce.	2014
	Increase the penalties for violation of child labor laws to an amount sufficient to deter violations.	2014
	Make publicly available the number of calls related to child labor made via the MFSP hotline and complaints related to child labor made through the Prime Minister's Office Communications Center website.	2014
	Make disaggregated data on the number of investigations, prosecutions, and convictions related to child trafficking publicly available.	2014
Government Policies	Make assessments about the impact of policies on child labor publicly available.	2013 – 2014
Social Programs	Institute programs to increase access to education and health care for children working in mobile seasonal agriculture.	2014
	Ensure that all Syrian refugees are able to register and that refugees are aware of how to register and why registration is important.	2014
	Expand schools and increase the number of schools and teachers for Syrian refugee children both in refugee camps and in urban areas.	2014
	Make assessments about the impact of existing programs on child labor publicly available.	2010 – 2014

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