

In 2015, Egypt made a moderate advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. The Government announced plans to enforce minimum age protections in the agricultural sector. The Ministry of Manpower signed a memorandum to oversee the National Child Labor Monitoring System. The Government also initiated a program to improve access to education through a cash transfer program. However, children in Egypt are engaged in child labor, including in agriculture and domestic work. The Government did not publicly make available data on the enforcement of child labor laws, including its worst forms. In addition, programs to combat child labor are insufficient to adequately address the extent of the problem.



## I. PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Children in Egypt are engaged in child labor, including in agriculture and domestic work.(1-4) Data from the 2010 National Child Labor Survey indicate that 63.5 percent of all child laborers work in agriculture. Boys are three times more likely than girls to engage in child labor.(3) Table 1 provides key indicators on children's work and education in Egypt.

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

Children	Age	Percent
Working (% and population)	5-14 yrs.	6.7 (993,417)
Attending School (%)	6-14 yrs.	88.1
Combining Work and School (%)	7-14 yrs.	6.3
Primary Completion Rate (%)		103.8

Source for primary completion rate: Data from 2013, published by UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2015.(5)

Source for all other data: Understanding Children's Work Project's analysis of statistics from Demographic and Health Survey, 2005.(6)

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 (1, 2)
	Caring for livestock* (1, 3, 7)
	Fishing,* activities unknown (1, 7, 8)
Industry	Quarrying† limestone (1, 9-11)
	Making bricks* (1, 12, 13)
	Working in carpentry workshops* (1, 14)
	Construction,* activities unknown (1, 15)
	Working in aluminum* factories (1, 16)
Services	Domestic work (1, 3, 4)
	Repairing automobiles* (1, 12)
	Street work, including selling goods,* collecting garbage, and sweeping* (1, 14, 17, 18)
Categorical Worst Forms of Child Labor‡	Domestic work as a result of human trafficking* (2, 19)
	Commercial sexual exploitation as a result of human trafficking* (2, 19)
	Forced begging sometimes as a result of human trafficking (2, 19, 20)

\* 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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Cases of commercial sexual exploitation of children have been reported in a number of governorates, including Alexandria, Cairo, and Luxor.(19) Additionally, in return for payments, parents give their young daughters into temporary marriages to wealthy foreign men, mostly from Persian Gulf countries.(2, 19) However, anecdotal evidence shows that this practice is on the decline with the reduction in tourism.(21)

The cost of school fees, books, and uniforms is prohibitive for lower-income families, resulting in many children dropping out of school. In addition, cultural barriers may prevent some parents from sending their daughters to school.(8) As of August 2015, more than 6,200 Syrian refugee children were out of school.(22) Syrian refugees cite overcrowded schools, harassment, and transportation issues as being among the primary reasons for their children not attending school.(23)

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

Egypt 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 64 of the Child Law (24)
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work	Yes	18	Article 1 of Ministry of Manpower's Decree 118 (25)
Prohibition of Hazardous Occupations or Activities for Children	Yes		Articles 1 and 2 of Ministry of Manpower's Decree 118 (25)
Prohibition of Forced Labor	Yes		Article 89 of the Constitution; Article 291 of the Penal Code as amended in the Child Law; Articles 2 and 3 of the Law on Combating Human Trafficking (24, 26, 27)
Prohibition of Child Trafficking	Yes		Article 89 of the Constitution; Article 291 of the Penal Code as amended in the Child Law; Articles 2 and 3 of the Law on Combating Human Trafficking (24, 26, 27)
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children	Yes		Article 116- <i>bis</i> (a) of the Child Law and Article 291 of the Penal Code as amended in the Child Law; Articles 2 and 3 of the Law on Combating Human Trafficking (24, 26)
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities	Yes		Article 34 of the Law on Narcotics; Article 65 of the Child Law; Article 2.2 of Ministry of Manpower's Decree 118 (24, 25, 28)
Minimum Age for Compulsory Military Recruitment	Yes	18	Article 1 of the Law on Military and National Service (29)
Minimum Age for Voluntary Military Service	Yes	15	Ministry of Defense Guidelines on Youth Volunteers in the Armed Forces (30)
Compulsory Education Age	Yes	15	Article 59(1) of the Child Law; Articles 80 and 238 of the Constitution (24, 27)
Free Public Education	Yes		Article 54 of the Child Law (24)

Laws on the commercial sexual exploitation are not comprehensive enough to criminally prohibit the procuring of a child in all circumstances for pornography or pornographic performances, and benefiting from a monetary transaction involving a child in pornographic performances.

### 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 Manpower	Enforce child labor laws and regulations, including receiving and investigating child labor complaints, and referring relevant violations to the Prosecutor General's Office.(1) Inspectors conduct routine labor inspections, and when they find instances of illegal child labor, refer the cases to the ministries of the Interior and Justice.(21)
Ministry of the Interior	Enforce laws and regulations prohibiting human trafficking and commercial sexual exploitation of children.(31)
Prosecutor General's Office, Ministry of Justice	Prosecute violation of laws related to child labor and human trafficking.(31)
National Council for Childhood and Motherhood (NCCM)	Provide technical support and training for Ministry of Manpower's inspectors on child labor. Identify and monitor children at risk, including those vulnerable to exploitative labor.(21) Manage two 24-hour hotlines, which can be used to report cases of child exploitation, including child victims of human trafficking. Receive the majority of complaints regarding child labor. Refer victims to shelters and medical, psychological, and legal services.(21) Provide callers who are victims of human trafficking with over-the-phone counseling and legal assistance.(1) In 2015, a counter-child trafficking unit was established to coordinate Government efforts to refer victims to social services.(32) The unit also provides work training to women and girls in order to combat "temporary marriages."(33) In 2015, the hotline received 387 reports related to human trafficking, at least nine of which involved child victims.(34)
Ministry of Local Administration and Development	Provide administrative and logistical support for the enforcement of child labor laws.(35) Administers the Child Protection Committees.(21)

#### *Labor Law Enforcement*

In 2015, law enforcement agencies in Egypt 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	2014	2015
Labor Inspectorate Funding	Unknown	Unknown (1)
Number of Labor Inspectors	Unknown	Unknown (1)
Inspectorate Authorized to Assess Penalties	Unknown	Unknown
Training for Labor Inspectors		
■ Initial Training for New Employees	Unknown	Unknown
■ Training on New Laws Related to Child Labor	Unknown	Unknown
■ Refresher Courses Provided	Unknown	Unknown
Number of Labor Inspections	Unknown	Unknown (1)
■ Number Conducted at Worksite	Unknown	Unknown
■ Number Conducted by Desk Reviews	Unknown	Unknown
Number of Child Labor Violations Found	Unknown	Unknown (1)
Number of Child Labor Violations for Which Penalties Were Imposed	Unknown	Unknown (1)
■ Number of Penalties Imposed That Were Collected	Unknown	Unknown (1)
Routine Inspections Conducted	No (31)	Unknown
■ Routine Inspections Targeted	No (31)	Unknown
Unannounced Inspections Permitted	Unknown	Unknown
Unannounced Inspections Conducted	Unknown	Unknown (1)
Complaint Mechanism Exists	Unknown	Yes (1)
Reciprocal Referral Mechanism Exists Between Labor Authorities and Social Services	Unknown	Yes (1)

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In 2015, the Ministry of Manpower prepared an annual plan for enforcing child labor laws in agriculture, but the numbers of inspections conducted and violations found were unavailable.<sup>(36)</sup> The Ministry also responded to child labor complaints, but the details are unavailable.<sup>(1)</sup>

### *Criminal Law Enforcement*

In 2015, criminal law enforcement agencies in Egypt 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	2014	2015
Training for Investigators		
■ Initial Training for New Employees	Unknown	Unknown (1)
■ Training on New Laws Related to the Worst Forms of Child Labor	Unknown	Unknown (1)
■ Refresher Courses Provided	Yes (37)	Yes (34)
Number of Investigations	Unknown	Unknown (1)
Number of Violations Found	14 (37)	Unknown (1)
Number of Prosecutions Initiated	Unknown	Unknown (1)
Number of Convictions	0 (37)	2 (34)
Reciprocal Referral Mechanism Exists Between Criminal Authorities and Social Services	Unknown	Yes (1)

In 2015, the Government investigated 11 cases of human trafficking. It is not known how many of these cases involved child victims. Two individuals were sentenced to life imprisonment for sexually abusing children and forcing them to beg.<sup>(34)</sup> During the reporting period, 4,645 Government officials, including judges, prosecutors, and law enforcement officers, received training on identification, protection, and rehabilitation of victims of human trafficking and commercial sexual exploitation of children.<sup>(34)</sup>

## 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. Mechanisms to Coordinate Government Efforts on Child Labor**

Coordinating Body	Role & Description
National Coordinating Committee to Combat the Worst Forms of Child Labor	Coordinate the efforts of the Ministries of Manpower, Justice, Social Solidarity, and the Interior; the Council for Human Rights, Childhood, and Motherhood; and the Council for Women to draft a National Strategy to Combat the Worst Forms of Child Labor. <sup>(1)</sup>
National Coordination Committee on Preventing and Combating Trafficking in Persons	Coordinate efforts to combat human trafficking, including women and children. Led by the Deputy Minister of Justice with committee members from the Ministries of Justice and Interior; the General Intelligence Service; the Council for Human Rights, Childhood, and Motherhood; and the Council for Women. <sup>(31, 38)</sup>
Child Protection Committees	Coordinate child protection efforts at the local level. Organized by the Ministry of Local Administration and Development and the NCCM, and chaired by the local governors in each governorate, with subcommittees at each police station. <sup>(21)</sup> Coordinate investigations, prosecutions, and counseling services to address child labor issues. These Committees remained dormant in 2015. <sup>(39)</sup>
Educational Working Group	Coordinate efforts to improve access to education for Syrian refugee children. Led by the UNHCR for Refugees, in cooperation with the Ministry of Education. <sup>(23)</sup>

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

The Government of Egypt has established policies related to child labor, including its worst forms (Table 9).

**Table 9. Policies Related to Child Labor**

Policy	Description
Second National Plan of Action Against the Worst Forms of Child Labor	Aims to provide timelines and identify roles of Government agencies responsible for assisting children engaged in child labor. <sup>(1)</sup>

**Table 9. Policies Related to Child Labor (cont)**

Policy	Description
Second National Plan of Action Against Human Trafficking (2013–2015) and Third National Plan of Action Against Human Trafficking	Aims to maintain referral mechanisms, train law enforcement officials, and combat trafficking of street children.(1, 38, 40)

## VI. SOCIAL PROGRAMS TO ADDRESS CHILD LABOR

In 2015, the Government of Egypt funded and participated in programs that include the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor, including its worst forms (Table 10).

**Table 10. Social Programs to Address Child Labor**

Program	Description
Enhancing Access of Children to Education and Fighting Child Labor (2014–2018)	\$65 million, EU-funded, 4-year project implemented by the WFP provides food security for up to 100,000 children at risk of engaging in child labor, and financial assistance to 400,000 family members to compensate for wages that child labor would have otherwise generated, enabling children to attend school. Supports 50,000 households in income-generating activities to help keep their children in school.(41) In 2015, the project served 58,000 children in 8 governorates.(42) The Ministry of Manpower, in cooperation with the Ministry of Social Solidarity and WFP, signed an MOU, according to which the Ministry of Manpower will oversee the National Child Labor Monitoring System at the ministerial and governorate level and improve access to education, particularly for young girls.(1) The system will track the beneficiaries of the project and also support the implementation of the national child protection mechanism as envisioned by the Child Law.(43)
Combating Worst Forms of Child Labor by Reinforcing Policy Response and Promoting Sustainable Livelihoods and Educational Opportunities in Egypt (2011–2015)	\$2.07 million, WFP-funded, 4-year project implemented by the ILO-IPEC that provided direct educational services and promoted sustainable livelihoods to targeted households. Supported the review and revision of legislation on child labor. Promoted the capacity of national institutions to combat child labor and conducted research to collect reliable data on child labor through baseline surveys.(44, 45)
Shelters for Street Children†	NCCM program that, in cooperation with NGOs, operates shelters and provides support services to street children. A center for male street children is operated by a Belgian NGO and the NCCM.(38)
Child Rights Program (2013–2017)	UNICEF program, in cooperation with the Government, that aims to improve the quality and coverage of child protection services and programs to prevent violence against children.(46)
Awareness-Raising Campaigns†	NCCM program that generates awareness of human trafficking and victim services among students and educators, the public, NGOs, and government officials.(37)
Care Centers and Shelters for Victims of Trafficking†	Three facilities providing assistance and services to Egyptian and foreign victims of human trafficking.(37)
National School Feeding Program†	Improves food security by reaching 5.3 million school children with a budget of \$60 million per year.(47)
Solidarity and Dignity Initiative of the Cash Transfer Program (2015–2017)*†	Provides a monthly income supplement to poor families, conditional on keeping their children at school, or unconditional for the elderly and family members with disabilities. The Initiative aims to reach 1.5 million households by 2017.(48)
Action to Protect and Assist Vulnerable and Exploited Migrant Workers (2013–2016)	\$1.8 million, EU- and Italian Ministry of Interior-funded, 2-year regional project implemented by the IOM in five countries to build the capacity of governments and civil society organizations to apply international standards to migrant workers, provide assistance to migrant workers, raise awareness among the workers of their rights, and reduce bias and discrimination in the general public against migrant workers.(49, 50) The project pursues the objective of elimination of the worst forms of child labor in Egypt. It provides victim identification training to civil society organizations and supports drafting policies to protect vulnerable groups in Egypt.(49) It also raises awareness among migrant workers about regulations in the informal sector.(49)
Positive Life Alternatives for Egyptian Youth at-Risk of Irregular Migration Program (2015–2017)*	\$3.2 million, USAID-funded, 2-year project implemented by the IOM supports activities that include the goal of eliminating the worst forms of child labor, specifically through raising awareness among children and youth on the dangers of irregular migration, trafficking in persons, and building technical capacity of service providers to at-risk children.(43, 51)

\* Program was launched during the reporting period.

† Program is funded by the Government of Egypt.

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The president announced the allocation of \$14 million to address the growing number of street-based children who are vulnerable to forced labor and human trafficking.<sup>(19)</sup> Research found no additional details about the scope or timeline for this program. Although Egypt has programs that target child labor, the scope of these programs is insufficient to fully address the extent of the problem.

### 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 Egypt (Table 11).

**Table 11. Suggested Government Actions to Eliminate Child Labor, Including its Worst Forms**

Area	Suggested Action	Year(s) Suggested
Legal Framework	Ensure that the law clearly criminally prohibits the procuring of children for pornography and pornographic performances under all circumstances, as well as benefiting from a monetary transaction involving a child in pornographic performances.	2015
Enforcement	Make information publicly available on the labor inspectorate funding; the number of child labor inspectors, their training, and whether they can assess penalties; the number of inspections, including number of worksite inspections and desk reviews; the number of violations found, penalties imposed, and penalties imposed that were collected; whether routine and targeted inspections were conducted, and whether unannounced inspections were permitted and conducted.	2011 – 2015
	Make information publicly available on the training of criminal investigators, the numbers of investigations, violations found, and prosecutions.	2011 – 2015
Coordination	Ensure coordination of the Government's efforts to investigate, prosecute, and provide services to children engaged in child labor, for example, through the reactivation of the Child Protection Committees.	2014 – 2015
Social Programs	Ensure universal access to free public education, including for girls and Syrian refugee children, by addressing the cost of school fees, supplies, overcrowding, and other barriers to education.	2010 – 2015
	Expand existing programs to address the scope of the child labor problem.	2010 – 2015

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