

*In 2015, Lebanon made a moderate advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. The Ministry of Education and Higher Education participated in an initiative to provide free education up to grade nine for 200,000 Lebanese and refugee children. In addition, the Government participated in programs to assist children engaged in street work and Syrian child laborers. However, children in Lebanon are engaged in the worst forms of child labor, including in the production of tobacco and commercial sexual exploitation. Labor law enforcement is weak due to a lack of resources, and enforcement agencies do not maintain enforcement data. There are not sufficient programs and services to address the extent of child labor, specifically targeting domestic service and commercial sexual exploitation.*



## I. PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Children in Lebanon are engaged in the worst forms of child labor, including in the production of tobacco and commercial sexual exploitation. (1-7) Table 1 provides key indicators on children's work and education in Lebanon. Data on some of these indicators are not available from the sources used in this report.

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

Children	Age	Percent
Working (% and population)	5-14 yrs.	Unavailable
Attending School (%)	5-14 yrs.	Unavailable
Combining Work and School (%)	7-14 yrs.	Unavailable
Primary Completion Rate (%)		78.1

Source for primary completion rate: Data from 2013, published by UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2015.(8)  
Data were unavailable from Understanding Children's Work Project's analysis, 2015.(9)

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	Farming, including picking potatoes, cucumbers,* almonds,* plums,* olives,* citrus fruit,* beans,* and figs* (2, 6, 10-12)
	Production of tobacco† (5-7)
	Fishing,* activities unknown (13, 14)
Industry	Construction,† including carpentry and welding*† (6, 13, 14)
	Rock quarrying*† (15)
	Painting furniture*† and making handicrafts,* including soap,* souvenirs,* and fishing nets* (6, 13, 14)
Services	Street work,† including begging, street vending, portering, washing cars,* scavenging garbage,† and shining shoes (2, 6, 10, 13, 16, 17)
	Maintenance and repair of motor vehicles,† including painting*† (6, 13, 15)
	Domestic work† (6, 18, 19)
	Cleaning sewage*† (2, 14)
	Food service*† (14, 16)

# Lebanon

## MODERATE ADVANCEMENT

**Table 2. Overview of Children’s Work by Sector and Activity (cont)**

Sector/Industry	Activity
Services	Working in cemeteries,* including covering bodies in shrouds,* cleaning graves,* and assisting with rituals* (20, 21)
	Cleaning market places* (2, 13)
	Working in slaughterhouses*† and butcheries* (5, 13, 14)
	Working in small shops (13, 14, 16)
Categorical Worst Forms of Child Labor‡	Use in illicit activities, including drug trafficking, sometimes as a result of human trafficking* and arms dealing* (1, 17, 21-23)
	Forced begging, sometimes as a result of human trafficking (1, 4, 23, 24)
	Commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking (1-4, 14, 22, 25)
	Forced labor in agriculture, sometimes as a result of human trafficking* (4, 19, 23, 26)
	Use in hostility-related activities, including manning checkpoints or working as guards* (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.

Child labor has increased and its conditions have worsened since the influx of Syrian refugees into Lebanon.(14) As of December 2015, approximately 1.07 million Syrian refugees in Lebanon registered with UNHCR, about half a million of whom are children.(14, 28) Child labor is also prevalent in other refugee communities in Lebanon, including the Palestinian and Iraqi communities.(14)

Some Lebanese and Syrian children are subjected to forced begging and commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking from Syria or internally within Lebanon. In particular, Syrian girls are trafficked into Lebanon for commercial sexual exploitation under the guise of marriage.(1, 4) Children working on the streets are sometimes forced into commercial sexual exploitation and illicit work by criminal gangs or acquaintances. A 2011 study found that boys working on the street are at high risk of sexual exploitation by peers and by men.(1) Working on the streets is especially common among refugee children from Syria, including Palestinians from Syria.(17) Syrian children are also subjected to forced labor in agriculture.(4, 14, 26) Some Syrian refugee children, with their families, are kept in bonded labor in agriculture in the Bekaa Valley to pay for transit from Syria to Lebanon or to cover the cost of makeshift dwellings provided by landowners.(23, 26)




The UN reported that children were recruited into armed groups, by al-Nusra Front and Hezbollah, and sent to Syria. The UN also documented recruitment of children into Palestinian armed groups, to man checkpoints or play support roles.(27)

The law guarantees free compulsory education for children, but only for Lebanese citizens.(29) Therefore, non-citizen children, including stateless and refugee children, have limited access to education. Palestinian refugees cannot access public schools, but some attend schools operated by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA).(30-32) Although Syrian refugees can access public education, the public school system in Lebanon lacks the capacity to accommodate the large number of school-age Syrian refugee children.(30) As of summer 2015, only about half of school-age Syrian refugee children between ages 6 and 14 attended schools in Lebanon.(33) Lack of awareness about educational opportunities, school fees, the cost of transportation and supplies, use of schools by armed groups or as shelters, and fear of passing checkpoints or of violence are among the barriers to education.(27, 31, 34, 35) Likewise, Iraqi refugee children may not be enrolled in school due to school-related costs, reliance on child labor income, and discrimination.(36) In Lebanon, many classes are taught in French or English, but Syrian and Iraqi children do not speak those languages.(34, 36) Children who work in agriculture, regardless of nationality, often do not attend school during harvesting and planting seasons.(32, 37)

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

Lebanon has ratified most 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	14	Article 22 of the Labor Code (38)
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work	Yes	18	Article 1 of Decree No. 8987 (39)
Prohibition of Hazardous Occupations or Activities for Children	Yes		Annex 1 of Decree No. 8987 (39)
Prohibition of Forced Labor	Yes		Articles 586.1 and 586.5 of the Law on the Punishment of Human Trafficking (40)
Prohibition of Child Trafficking	Yes		Articles 586.1 and 586.5 of the Law on the Punishment of Human Trafficking (40)
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children	Yes		Articles 523–527 and 507–510 of the Penal Code; Articles 586.1 and 586.5 of the Law on the Punishment of Human Trafficking (40, 41)
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities	Yes		Articles 586.1 and 586.5 of the Law on the Punishment of Human Trafficking; ; Article 618 of the Penal Code (40, 41)
Minimum Age for Compulsory Military Recruitment	N/A*		
Minimum Age for Voluntary Military Service	Yes	18	Article 30 of the National Defense Law (42)
Compulsory Education Age	Yes	15‡	Article 49 of the Education Law (43)
Free Public Education	Yes		Article 49 of the Education Law (43)

\* No conscription (44)

‡ Age calculated based on available information (14)

Laws related to forced labor are not sufficient as debt bondage is not criminally prohibited.

Government officials clarified that although Article 610 of the Penal Code criminalizes begging, Article 26 of the Delinquent Juveniles Law, which takes precedence over the Penal Code, stipulates that in cases of begging, the child is considered in danger and entitled to receive protective measures.(41, 45, 46) Yet, children working as beggars have been arrested in a limited number of cases.(47)

Based on Article 49 of the Education Law, education is compulsory in the basic level, which is until grade nine.(43) Children generally start at age six and complete grade nine around age 15.(14)

### 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).

# Lebanon

## MODERATE ADVANCEMENT

**Table 5. Agencies Responsible for Child Labor Law Enforcement**

Organization/Agency	Role
Ministry of Labor	Enforce child labor laws through desk review and workplace inspections. Maintain a hotline to receive labor-related complaints, including cases of child labor.(14, 46) The Ministry's Child Labor Unit launched its revamped Web site in 2015, which provides information on child labor and contains a mechanism to receive complaints of child labor.(14)
Internal Security Forces	Enforce laws regarding the worst forms of child labor through the Anti-Human Trafficking and Morals Protection Bureau.(14)
Ministry of Justice	Prosecute violations of the Penal Code in coordination with the Internal Security Forces. Maintain general data and statistics on criminal violations involving the worst forms of child labor.(48) Refer at-risk children to shelters and protection services.(14) The Ministry has signed agreements with civil society organizations, to provide social workers to the Ministry to oversee court proceedings involving juveniles and deliver services to them, including children engaged in begging.(14)
Ministry of Social Affairs	Refer children identified by the Internal Security Forces and the Ministry of Justice to protective institutions, such as health centers. Refer children to shelters through its Higher Council for Childhood.(14)
Directorate of General Security Hotline	Receive complaints, including on human trafficking.(14)

### *Labor Law Enforcement*

In 2015, law enforcement agencies in Lebanon 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
Number of Labor Inspectors	Unknown (19)	Unknown (14)
Inspectorate Authorized to Assess Penalties	No (49)	No (49)
Training for Labor Inspectors		
■ Initial Training for New Employees	No (19)	Unknown
■ Training on New Laws Related to Child Labor	N/A	N/A
■ Refresher Courses Provided	No (19)	Yes (14)
Number of Labor Inspections	0 (19)	Unknown
■ Number Conducted at Worksite	N/A (19)	Unknown
■ Number Conducted by Desk Reviews	N/A (19)	Unknown
Number of Child Labor Violations Found	0 (19)	Unknown
Number of Child Labor Violations for Which Penalties Were Imposed	N/A (19)	Unknown
■ Number of Penalties Imposed That Were Collected	N/A (19)	Unknown
Routine Inspections Conducted	No (19)	Unknown
■ Routine Inspections Targeted	No (19)	Unknown
Unannounced Inspections Permitted	Yes (50)	Yes (50)
Unannounced Inspections Conducted	No (19)	Unknown
Complaint Mechanism Exists	Yes (19)	Yes (14)
Reciprocal Referral Mechanism Exists Between Labor Authorities and Social Services	Unknown	Unknown

In 2015, the Ministry of Labor employed a cadre of 90 staff members involved in labor inspections, including labor inspectors, administrators, and technicians. The Ministry does not provide inspectors with the necessary equipment or transportation to enforce child labor laws.(14) In theory, labor inspectors can conduct routine inspections, including unannounced inspections; however, due to a lack of resources, almost all inspections are complaint-based.(14) The Ministry does not track the number of child labor inspections and whether such inspections were unannounced.(51)

### *Criminal Law Enforcement*

In 2015, criminal law enforcement agencies in Lebanon 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
■ Training on New Laws Related to the Worst Forms of Child Labor	N/A	N/A
■ Refresher Courses Provided	Yes (52)	Yes (14)
Number of Investigations	0 (46)	3 (14)
Number of Violations Found	Unknown	Unknown
Number of Prosecutions Initiated	Unknown (53)	Unknown
Number of Convictions	2 (53)	1 (23)
Reciprocal Referral Mechanism Exists Between Criminal Authorities and Social Services	Yes (19)	Yes (14)

In 2015, the Anti-Human Trafficking and Morals Protection Bureau of the Internal Security Forces employed 25 officers responsible for criminal enforcement of child labor laws. The Internal Security Forces provided specialized training for its staff on human trafficking, investigation of cases involving children, and protection of child victims.(14) Training was provided to 7 Ministry of Labor officers on the referral mechanism and trafficking hotline; and 103 officers of the Internal Security Forces, 227 officers of the Directorate of General Security, the Ministry of Labor's hotline operators and labor inspectors, and social workers from the Ministry of Social Affairs all received training on how to identify human trafficking victims.(23, 54) The Army also trained soldiers on combatting human trafficking.(23)

A court convicted one man of subjecting a child to commercial sexual exploitation as a result of human trafficking, sentencing him to 10 years in prison, a fine, and loss of civil rights.(23)

The Ministry of Justice continued to contract an NGO, the Caritas Lebanon Migrant Center, to provide protection and assistance to victims of human trafficking. In 2015, the Directorate of General Security signed an MOU with the same NGO to strengthen cooperation and a reciprocal referral system between the Directorate and Caritas.(54)

The Government signed an MOU with Caritas to provide services to child victims of human trafficking.(46) However, some victims were still subject to arrest, detention, and deportation for crimes committed as a direct result of being trafficked.(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. Mechanisms to Coordinate Government Efforts on Child Labor**

Coordinating Body	Role & Description
National Steering Committee on Child Labor	Raise awareness; coordinate efforts among Government agencies; establish standard practices; and develop, enforce, recommend changes, and ensure that government agencies comply with the law. Led by the Minister of Labor's Child Labor Unit, includes representatives from the National Social Security Fund; the Ministries of Social Affairs, Public Health, Justice, and Agriculture; and the National Employment Office.(14) Includes two subcommittees on child labor in agriculture and street work, which met regularly in 2015.(14)
National Steering Committee on Trafficking	Coordinate efforts against human trafficking, including child trafficking. Based at the Ministry of Labor and meet on a monthly basis.(46) In 2015, the Committee replaced the Inter-Ministerial Task Force on Human Trafficking.(46)
UN	Coordinate efforts to address the needs of children affected by the Syrian refugee crisis in Lebanon and maintain interagency standards for child protection. The UN representatives identify crucial concerns, including factors that make children vulnerable to child labor, and make recommendations to the Government on the use of resources, including referral services.(30, 55)

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

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

# Lebanon

## MODERATE ADVANCEMENT

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

Policy	Description
National Action Plan on the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labor (2013–2016)	Establishes strategies for addressing the worst forms of child labor. Includes a National Awareness Strategy to be carried out by the Ministry of Labor's Child Labor Unit and the ILO.(48, 56)
National Social Development Strategy	Establishes a plan for a comprehensive social, health, and educational program.(57) Includes the protection of working children and the implementation of the Higher Council for Childhood's strategy to address the needs of street children.(58)
Work Plan to prevent and respond to the association of children with armed violence in Lebanon	Provides the framework for the prevention of children involved in armed conflict. In 2015, the Government intensified its efforts to implement this Work Plan.(27)
National Action Plan for Human Rights	Aims to combat demand for all forms of exploitation, including trafficking in persons, especially children.(46)
Ministry of Education and Higher Education's Education Sector Development Plan (2010–2015)*	Aimed to improve quality learning during pre-school, general, and higher education levels; integral part of the National Social Development Strategy.(59)

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

In 2015, the Ministry of Social Affairs' Higher Council for Childhood, in cooperation with World Vision, finalized a sectoral action plan on child trafficking, pending ministerial approval.(14)

The Ministry of Justice began to provide training to social workers and NGOs on the standard operating procedures for child protection, including protection against human trafficking, which defines the role of each government agency in implementing relevant laws.(14, 19)

## VI. SOCIAL PROGRAMS TO ADDRESS CHILD LABOR

In 2015, the Government of Lebanon 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
Tackling Child Labor among Syrian Refugees and their Host Communities in Jordan and Lebanon (2015–2016)*	EU-funded, 1.5-year project, implemented by the ILO to conduct research on the hazards of child labor in certain sectors; promote awareness of child labor, including raising awareness among children of their rights; build the technical capacity of governments, employers, and workers' organizations to improve referrals and respond to cases of child labor; and provide training on preventing child labor, removing children, and providing services.(60)
Higher Council for Childhood's Program to Eliminate Child Labor and Street Children	Funded by the Arab Council for Children and Development, the program includes training for the media on how to cover child labor cases, a study on street children in collaboration with St. Joseph's University, training programs for social workers, and awareness campaigns for the general public.(48) In 2015, the Council added information on children's rights to school curricula.(46)
Program to Support Children Working on the Street (2014–2016)	Joint UNHCR and International Rescue Committee program to identify children engaged in child labor on the street, mitigate risks by providing psycho-social support and emergency services, and track incidents of violence. In 2015, the program trained 100 law enforcement officers on child protection and the vulnerabilities of street-based children, as well as staff of different NGOs on how to identify children engaged in child labor and refer them to governmental agencies.(14) Between 2014 and the end of 2015, the program assisted 488 children.(14)
Child Protection Committee	Joint program by UNICEF and the Ministry of Social Affairs. Addresses the worst forms of child labor through interventions, including psychological counseling; raising awareness among employers to reduce the risks for children engaged in child labor; and working with employers to decrease working hours for children and to improve working conditions.(19) Currently, also implements programs for children in armed conflict.(14)
Country Level Engagement and Assistance to Reduce Child Labor (CLEAR)*	USDOL-funded capacity-building project implemented by the ILO in at least 10 countries to build the local and national capacity of the Government to address child labor. Aims to improve legislation by addressing child labor issues, including by bringing local or national laws into compliance with international standards, improving monitoring and enforcement of laws and policies related to child labor, and improving the implementation of the National Action Plan on the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labor.(61)

**Table 10. Social Programs to Address Child Labor (cont)**

Program	Description
Global Action Program on Child Labor Issues	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 and forced labor through data collection and research.(62) In 2015, more than 4,000 households were visited and more than 2,700 were interviewed. The interview and data entry process remain ongoing.(62)
Reaching All Children through Education	Part of the No Lost Generation initiative, a joint effort of the Ministry of Education and Higher Education, UNHCR, UNICEF, and the World Bank to improve access to education.(19) \$94 million campaign, funded by UNHCR, UNICEF, the World Bank, and other donors, aims to register 200,000 children between the ages of 3 and 14 to access education in the academic year 2015–2016, including families who withdrew their children from school to engage in child labor. The Initiative provides free education for Lebanese and refugee children up to grade nine. In the 2014–2015 academic year, 106,000 children were enrolled.(63) The Ministry of Education and Higher Education also oversees a pilot Accelerated Learning Program, designed for children who have been out of school for more than 2 years.(63)
Education Program for Syrian Refugee Children	The Ministry of Education and Higher Education and UNHCR support the War Child Holland initiative, which provides education to qualified refugee children in 13 public schools in Beirut and Mount Lebanon. Supports second-shift courses and informal educational activities designed to give students the necessary skills to enroll in public schools.(64)
National Poverty Alleviation Program†	Funded by the Government, the Italian Foreign Ministry, the World Bank, and the Canadian Embassy, this Ministry of Social Affairs' program pays school tuition and book costs for 74,000 families living in extreme poverty.(14)
Action to Protect and Assist Vulnerable and Exploited Migrant Workers (2013–2016)	\$1.8 million EU- and Italian Ministry of the 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.(65, 66) In 2015, the project held a workshop for government officials, including those from the Ministries of Labor and Justice, to improve the referral mechanism to identify and provide assistance for victims of human trafficking.(67) Judges and prosecutors took part in a roundtable discussion on victim protection.(65) The Ministry of Justice and the IOM launched a public service announcement to raise awareness about human trafficking and inform the public on how to report suspected cases to Lebanese authorities.(65)

\* Program was launched during the reporting period.

† Program is funded by the Government of Lebanon.

The Ministry of Justice, in cooperation with the Caritas Lebanon Migrant Center, launched a public awareness campaign on human trafficking that was broadcast on several television stations.(54) In 2015, the Ministry of Labor's Child Labor Unit provided training for employers and workers in Bekaa Valley on child labor in agriculture. It also held an awareness-raising campaign in Akkar on child labor in agriculture. The Child Labor Unit revised an agreement between the Farmers' Union and the Ministry of the Interior to raise the age from 10 to 13 years for Syrian children who accompany their parents in seasonal agricultural work.(14)

The scarcity of shelters for child-trafficking victims results in some children being placed in juvenile detention centers.(32) The lack of shelters and resources to effectively handle child labor and trafficking cases puts children at a heightened risk of further exploitation.(23)

Although Lebanon has programs that target child labor, the scope of these programs is insufficient to fully address the extent of the problem, including child labor for domestic work and commercial sexual exploitation.

## 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 Lebanon (Table 11).

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

Area	Suggested Action	Year(s) Suggested
Legal Framework	Accede to the CRC Optional Protocol on Armed Conflict, which the Government signed in 2002.	2013 – 2015
	Ensure that debt bondage is criminally prohibited.	2015

# Lebanon

## MODERATE ADVANCEMENT

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

Area	Suggested Action	Year(s) Suggested
Enforcement	Track and make publicly available information on the number of labor inspectors and their training system; the number of labor inspections, including those conducted at worksites and through desk reviews; the number of violations found, and the penalties imposed and collected; whether routine, targeted, and unannounced inspections were conducted; and whether a reciprocal referral system exists between labor authorities and social services.	2009 – 2015
	Authorize the labor inspectorate to assess penalties.	2015
	Ensure adequate funding for equipment and transportation for the Ministry of Labor inspectors.	2011 – 2015
	Make publicly available information on the training system for criminal investigators, and the number of violations and prosecutions related to the worst forms of child labor.	2009 – 2015
	Ensure that child victims of human trafficking and children engaged in begging are treated under the law as victims, rather than as criminals.	2011 – 2015
Government Policies	Integrate child labor elimination and prevention strategies into the Education Sector Development Plan.	2013 – 2015
Social Programs	Ensure that noncitizen children, including refugee and stateless children, have access to education.	2010 – 2015
	Increase the number of shelters for juvenile victims of human trafficking and other worst forms of child labor.	2013 – 2015
	Institute programs to address child labor in domestic service and commercial sexual exploitation.	2013 – 2015

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