

In 2014, Djibouti made a minimal advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. The Government drafted a National Action Plan on Human Trafficking and a Strategic Education Plan. With support from multilateral organizations, the Government continued to provide social services to children at risk of child labor, including migrants. However, children in Djibouti are engaged in child labor, including in street work and in the worst forms of child labor, including in commercial sexual exploitation. Significant gaps remain in the legal framework on child labor. Neither law enforcement efforts nor programs to assist working children are adequate.



I. PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Children in Djibouti are engaged in child labor, including in street work. Children are also engaged in the worst forms of child labor, including in commercial sexual exploitation.⁽¹⁾ Table 1 provides key indicators on children's work and education in Djibouti.

Table 1. Statistics on Children's Work and Education

Children	Age	Percent
Working (% and population)	5-14 yrs.	12.3 (23,693)
Attending School (%)	5-14 yrs.	67.4
Combining Work and School (%)	7-14 yrs.	10.2
Primary Completion Rate (%)		52.0

Source for primary completion rate: Data from 2013, published by UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2015.⁽²⁾

Source for all other data: Understanding Children's Work Project's analysis of statistics from Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 3, 2006.⁽³⁾

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	Herding livestock (1, 4)
	Farming,* activities unknown (4)
Services	Domestic work (1, 4)
	Street work, including shining shoes, washing and guarding cars, cleaning storefronts, sorting merchandise, collecting garbage, begging, and selling items, including khat (1, 4, 5)
	Working in restaurants and small shops (1, 4)
	Commercial sexual exploitation sometimes as a result of human trafficking* (1, 5, 6)
Categorical Worst Forms of Child Labor†	Forced domestic work (1, 4, 5)
	Used in illicit activities, including theft* (4, 5)

* Evidence of this activity is limited and/or the extent of the problem is unknown.




† Child labor understood as the worst forms of child labor *per se* under Article 3(a) – (c) of ILO C. 182.

In addition to Djiboutian girls, Ethiopian, Somali and Eritrean migrant girls fall victim to forced domestic work and possibly to commercial sexual exploitation in Djibouti City; the Ethiopia-Djibouti trucking corridor; and Obock, the preferred departure point for Yemen.⁽⁵⁾ Girls from poor Djiboutian families may be sexually exploited as a means of income.⁽¹⁾ Limited evidence suggests younger children are sometimes exploited in commercial sexual exploitation by older children.⁽⁵⁾

II. LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR THE WORST FORMS OF CHILD LABOR

Djibouti 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	16	Article 5 of the Labor Code (7)
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work	No		
Prohibition of Hazardous Occupations or Activities for Children	No		Article 110 of the Labor Code (7)
Prohibition of Forced Labor	Yes		Articles 396 and 404 of the Penal Code (8)
Prohibition of Child Trafficking	Yes		Articles 2 and 6 of the Law on the Fight Against Human Trafficking (9)
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children	Yes		Articles 394, 462, and 463 of the Penal Code (8)
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities	Yes		Article 461 of the Penal Code (8)
Minimum Age for Compulsory Military Recruitment	N/A*		
Minimum Age for Voluntary Military Service	Yes	18	National Army Amendment Decree (10)
Compulsory Education Age	Yes	16	Article 4 of the Law on the Orientation of the Education System (11)
Free Public Education	Yes		Article 16 of the Law on the Orientation of the Education System (11)

* No conscription (12)

Djiboutian law does not establish a minimum age for hazardous work.(13) The Labor Code prohibits the employment of children between 16 and 18 years old in domestic work, hotels, and bars.(7) However, this legislation is not specific enough to facilitate enforcement.

While the Penal Code contains certain prohibitions on the commercial sexual exploitation of children, the law does not prohibit possession of or benefitting from child pornography.(8)

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 Labor (MOL) Labor Inspectorate	Enforce child labor laws and regulations.(14)
Djibouti National Police and Vice Squad	Enforce criminal laws and investigate criminal offenses related to child labor, including forced child labor, child trafficking, commercial sexual exploitation, and the use of children in illicit activities.(14)
Ministry of Justice's State Prosecutor	Prosecute child labor cases after they have been referred by the MOL.(6, 14)

Research found no evidence that law enforcement agencies in Djibouti took actions to combat child labor, including its worst forms.

Labor Law Enforcement

In 2014, the Ministry of Labor (MOL) Labor Inspectorate had 23 staff members, including support personnel. There were a total of four labor inspectors, an inadequate number to cover the entire country.(14) None of the inspectors have received training specific to child labor investigations. According to the MOL, the Labor Inspectorate did not have sufficient human, capital, or material resources to conduct regular preventative inspections.(14) The Government does not have a mechanism for filing and responding to complaints about child labor. No child labor inspections occurred during the reporting period.(14)

Criminal Law Enforcement

During the reporting period, the Vice Squad included four officers, but they lacked sufficient training and resources to effectively enforce laws related to child labor, child trafficking, and commercial sexual exploitation.(14) In addition, no data were available on criminal investigations, prosecutions, or convictions for child labor-related offenses, or on implementation of penalties.(1, 14) Research did not find a system for referring exploited children to social services.(14)

The Government detained children in prostitution and street children, including potential human trafficking victims, following sweeps to clear the streets in advance of holidays or national events. After detention, immigration officials transported children identified as Ethiopian or Somali to Ali Sabieh, near the Ethiopian border, leaving them abandoned and vulnerable to re-trafficking.(5)

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 Council for Children (CNE)	Oversee the implementation of the National Strategic Plan for Children in Djibouti (PASNED). Members include six ministers, two representatives of the Youth Parliament, two representatives of the private sector, and two representatives of women's associations.(15)
Senior Human Trafficking Taskforce	Coordinate efforts to combat human trafficking. Met regularly and included the Attorney General, the Inspector General of the Judiciary, and the Ministry of Justice's Foreign Affairs Advisor.(5)

Although the National Council for Children (CNE) exists, research found no evidence that it functions as a coordinating mechanism to address child labor, including its worst forms.

V. GOVERNMENT POLICIES ON THE WORST FORMS OF CHILD LABOR

The Government of Djibouti has established policies related to child labor, including its worst forms (Table 7).

Table 7. Policies Related to Child Labor

Policy	Description
National Strategic Plan for Children in Djibouti (PASNED) (2011-2015)	Aims to create a protective environment for all children to ensure the protection of their human rights and equitable access to basic services. Interventions to combat the worst forms of child labor include a study on the worst forms of child labor, awareness campaigns, and social services for victims of human trafficking, sexual exploitation, and other worst forms of child labor.(13, 16)
National Strategy (2013-2017)*	Supports street children and other marginalized populations through an emphasis on protecting the rights of children and developing social programs to address the risks of children.(1, 17)
Education Sector Strategic Plan (2014-2017)*†	Incorporates strategies to address the needs of children who have not previously attended school and children living in the most impoverished areas.(17)
UNDAF (PNUAD) (2013-2017)*	Protects children against all forms of violence and exploitation and plans for boys and girls in both rural and urban areas to have equitable and quality access to basic education.(18)

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

† Policy was approved during the reporting period.

In March, the Government drafted a National Action Plan on Human Trafficking, which provides for the creation of a working group to coordinate efforts on child protection, including child trafficking.(5, 17) The plan has been approved by the President and is waiting formal adoption.(19)

VI. SOCIAL PROGRAMS TO ADDRESS CHILD LABOR

In 2014, the Government of Djibouti participated in programs that may have an impact on child labor (Table 8).

Table 8. Social Programs to Address Child Labor

Program	Description and Objectives
UNICEF Country Program (2013-2017)*	UNICEF program in collaboration with the Government to promote access to quality education for children, especially from rural and poor urban areas, increase birth registration, and provide support for orphans and vulnerable children.(17, 20)
Humanitarian Action for Children†	UNICEF-funded program in partnership with the Government to forge stronger links between humanitarian response programs and existing long-term development programming. Includes identification of the needs and priorities of the most vulnerable populations in rural areas and suburban parts of Djibouti City.(21) UNICEF will continue to support the basic education of refugee children in camps by constructing additional classrooms, providing furniture and teaching materials to 4,000 children, and providing pedagogical training to 60 teachers. Additionally, 245 street children will benefit from a social services package.(21)
IOM Program*	IOM program in partnership with the Government to address the risks of irregular migration, including a service center along the route most often traveled by undocumented migrants from Somalia and Ethiopia on their way to Yemen.(1, 14)
School Meal Program*	World Food Programme-funded project in partnership with the Government in which 15,000 children in rural parts of Djibouti receive daily meals at school as well as take-home rations for girls to encourage them to attend regularly.(22)
Urban Poverty Reduction Program*	African Development Bank program to promote socioeconomic development in Djibouti's towns and cities, where the majority of working children live.(17, 23)

* The impact of this program on child labor does not appear to have been studied.

† Program was launched during the reporting period.

Research found no evidence of programs to specifically address children engaged in domestic work, commercial sexual exploitation, or street work.

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 Djibouti (Table 9).

Table 9. Suggested Government Actions to Eliminate Child Labor, Including its Worst Forms

Area	Suggested Action	Year(s) Suggested
Legal Framework	Establish a minimum age for hazardous work, and ensure that hazardous occupations or activities prohibited for children are specific enough to facilitate enforcement.	2009 – 2014
	Ensure children are protected from all types of commercial sexual exploitation, including by prohibiting the possession and benefit from child pornography.	2012 – 2014
Enforcement	Provide additional resources to the Labor Inspectorate and criminal law enforcement agencies so that more inspectors and officers can be hired and receive adequate training, including on identifying victims of child labor, commercial sexual exploitation, and human trafficking.	2011 – 2014
	Conduct inspections to enforce child labor laws.	2011 – 2014
	Publicly report on inspections, prosecutions, convictions, and implemented penalties related to the worst forms of child labor.	2010 – 2014
	Establish a referral mechanism between law enforcement and social welfare services so that exploited children, especially children in commercial sexual exploitation and street children, receive the appropriate care and reintegration services.	2014
Coordination	Establish coordinating mechanisms to combat child labor, including its worst forms.	2009 – 2014
Government Policies	Integrate child labor elimination and prevention strategies into existing policies.	2014
Social Programs	Conduct research to determine the activities carried out by children working in agriculture to inform policies and programs.	2013 – 2014
	Assess the impact that existing programs may have on child labor.	2010 – 2014
	Implement programs to specifically address children involved in domestic work, commercial sexual exploitation, and street work.	2009 – 2014

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