

In 2017, the Solomon Islands made a minimal advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. The government adopted the Child and Family Welfare Act, which mandates the establishment of social services, and a referral mechanism with law enforcement authorities, for children in need of care and protection who are at risk of or subject to hazardous or exploitative labor. However, children in the Solomon Islands engage in the worst forms of child labor, including in commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking. The minimum age for employment does not meet international standards, and the government has not comprehensively identified the hazardous occupations prohibited for children. In addition, education is not compulsory, which increases children's vulnerability to child labor.



I. PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Children in the Solomon Islands engage in the worst forms of child labor, including in commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking. (1; 2; 3; 4; 5; 6) Table 1 provides key indicators on children's work and education in the Solomon Islands. Data on some of these key 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 to 14	Unavailable
Attending School (%)	5 to 14	Unavailable
Combining Work and School (%)	7 to 14	Unavailable
Primary Completion Rate (%)		85.1

Source for primary completion rate: Data from 2012, published by UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2018. (7)
Data were unavailable from Understanding Children's Work Project's analysis, 2018. (8)

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	Harvesting palm oil fruits on plantations (9; 10; 6)
	Harvesting sea cucumbers, including diving in deep water (4; 9; 6)
Industry	Alluvial mining† (9; 6)
	Furniture construction (6)
	Construction on roads and buildings, including making bricks (9; 6)
Services	Domestic work and work as cooks (4; 9; 6)
	Scavenging for cans and metal in garbage dumpsites, streets, and streams (3; 9; 6)
	Working in nightclubs, casinos, and motels (4; 9; 6)
Categorical Worst Forms of Child Labor‡	Commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking (1; 2; 3; 4; 5; 6; 11; 12)
	Use in illicit activities, including in the cultivation and trafficking of drugs (1; 3; 9; 6)
	Forced domestic work and forced work as cooks (4; 13; 6; 12)

† 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.

In the Solomon Islands, the commercial sexual exploitation of both boys and girls is prevalent near logging camps, near or aboard fishing vessels, and at hotels, casinos, and entertainment establishments. (2; 5; 6; 11; 14) There are no nationally representative data available on the prevalence and nature of child labor in the Solomon Islands.

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Although the government's Fee Free Basic Education Policy provides free education for children in grades one through nine, additional school fees, uniform and book costs, and transportation limitations make it challenging for some children, particularly girls, to access education. (9; 6; 15)

II. LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR CHILD LABOR

The Solomon Islands has ratified some 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 (Table 4). However, gaps exist in the Solomon Islands' legal framework to adequately protect children from the worst forms of child labor, including the minimum age for work and the minimum age for hazardous work.

Table 4. Laws and Regulations on Child Labor

Standard	Meets International Standards: Yes/No	Age	Legislation
Minimum Age for Work	No	12	Article 46 of the Labor Act (16)
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work	No		
Identification of Hazardous Occupations or Activities Prohibited for Children	No		Articles 47–49 of the Labor Act (16)
Prohibition of Forced Labor	Yes		Article 6 of the Constitution (17); Articles 251 and 256 of the Penal Code; Part 7 of the Immigration Act (18; 19)
Prohibition of Child Trafficking	No		Part 7 of the Immigration Act; Article 145 of the Penal Code (19; 20)
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children	No		Articles 141 and 143–144 of the Penal Code (18; 20)
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities	No		
Prohibition of Military Recruitment			
State Compulsory	N/A†		
State Voluntary	N/A†		
Non-state	No		
Compulsory Education Age	No		
Free Public Education	No		

† No standing military (21)

The minimum age for work is not in compliance with international standards because the Labor Act permits children as young as age 12 to work. (16) The hazardous work prohibitions are not in compliance with international standards. The Labor Code prohibits all children under age 18 from working at night in industrial undertakings, all girls under age 18 from working in a mine or on a ship, all boys under age 15 from working in an industry or on a ship, and all boys under age 16 from working in a mine. However, the Labor Code does not clearly set forth a minimum age for hazardous work in compliance with international

standards or delineate the type of work considered hazardous for all children. In addition, the legal framework does not prohibit dangerous work in scavenging and agricultural activities, in which there is evidence of children being exposed to injuries, extreme temperatures, and agrochemicals. (9)

The Penal Code, which criminally prohibits domestic human trafficking, with heightened penalties if the offense is committed against a child, has insufficient prohibitions against child trafficking because threats, the use of force, or other forms of coercion are required to be established for the crime of child trafficking. Further, the law prohibits using, procuring, and offering a child for the production of pornography, but these prohibitions are insufficient, as they do not include pornographic performances. (20)

Laws do not prohibit the use of children in illicit activities, including in the production and trafficking of drugs. (18) In addition, the recruitment of children by non-state armed groups is not prohibited.

The Solomon Islands has not established an age up to which education is compulsory, increasing the risk of children's involvement in child labor. Although there are no laws that provide free basic education, there is a policy that sufficiently provides for free basic education. (22)

III. ENFORCEMENT OF LAWS ON CHILD LABOR

The government has established institutional mechanisms for the enforcement of laws and regulations on child labor (Table 5). However, gaps exist within the operations of the Ministry of Commerce, Industry, Labor and Immigration that may hinder adequate enforcement of their child labor laws.

Table 5. Agencies Responsible for Child Labor Law Enforcement

Organization/Agency	Role
Ministry of Commerce, Industry, Labor and Immigration	Enforce child labor laws. (23) Through the Immigration Division, leads efforts to combat human trafficking, including the trafficking of children. (24; 25)
Royal Solomon Islands Police	Enforce criminal laws against the worst forms of child labor. (13) Leads investigations of internal human trafficking cases. (26)
Joint Monitoring and Investigation Team	Monitor and investigate cases of transnational human trafficking, specifically in the logging industry. Comprises representatives from the Immigration Division, the Royal Solomon Islands Police, Customs, and Forestry Division. (24)

Labor Law Enforcement

Research did not find information on whether labor law enforcement agencies in the Solomon Islands took actions to combat child labor (Table 6). Gaps exist within the operations of the Ministry of Commerce, Industry, Labor and Immigration that may hinder adequate labor law enforcement, including resource allocation.

Table 6. Labor Law Enforcement Efforts Related to Child Labor

Overview of Labor Law Enforcement	2016	2017
Labor Inspectorate Funding	Unknown (23)	Unknown (6)
Number of Labor Inspectors	Unknown (23)	Unknown (6)
Inspectorate Authorized to Assess Penalties	Unknown (23)	Unknown (6)
Training for Labor Inspectors		
Initial Training for New Employees	Unknown (23)	Unknown (6)
Training on New Laws Related to Child Labor	Unknown (23)	Unknown (6)
Refresher Courses Provided	Unknown (23)	Unknown (6)
Number of Labor Inspections Conducted	Unknown (23)	
Number Conducted at Worksites	Unknown (23)	Unknown (6)
Number of Child Labor Violations Found	Unknown (23)	Unknown (6)
Number of Child Labor Violations for Which Penalties were Imposed	Unknown (23)	Unknown (6)
Number of Child Labor Penalties Imposed that were Collected	Unknown (23)	Unknown (6)
Routine Inspections Conducted	Unknown (23)	Unknown (6)

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Table 6. Labor Law Enforcement Efforts Related to Child Labor (cont)

Overview of Labor Law Enforcement	2016	2017
Routine Inspections Targeted	Unknown (23)	Unknown (6)
Unannounced Inspections Permitted	Yes (27)	Unknown (6)
Unannounced Inspections Conducted	Unknown (23)	Unknown (6)
Complaint Mechanism Exists	Unknown (23)	Unknown (6)
Reciprocal Referral Mechanism Exists Between Labor Authorities and Social Services	Unknown (23)	Unknown (6)

Inadequate resources continue to hamper the Labor Inspectorate's capacity to enforce child labor laws. (13; 28; 6)

Criminal Law Enforcement

In 2017, criminal law enforcement agencies in the Solomon Islands took actions to combat child labor (Table 7). However, gaps exist within the operations of the criminal enforcement agencies that may hinder adequate criminal law enforcement, including limited collection of law enforcement data.

Table 7. Criminal Law Enforcement Efforts Related to Child Labor

Overview of Criminal Law Enforcement	2016	2017
Training for Investigators		
Initial Training for New Employees	Unknown (23)	Unknown (6)
Training on New Laws Related to the Worst Forms of Child Labor	Unknown (23)	Unknown (6)
Refresher Courses Provided	Yes (29)	Unknown (6)
Number of Investigations	1 (26)	Unknown (6)
Number of Violations Found	1 (26)	2 (11)
Number of Prosecutions Initiated	0 (26)	2 (30)
Number of Convictions	0 (26)	Unknown (6)
Reciprocal Referral Mechanism Exists Between Criminal Authorities and Social Services	Yes (24)	Yes (24)

In 2017, the government adopted the Child and Family Welfare Act, which mandates the establishment of social services, and a referral mechanism with law enforcement authorities, for children in need of care and protection who are at risk of or subject to hazardous or exploitative labor. (31)

IV. COORDINATION OF GOVERNMENT EFFORTS ON CHILD LABOR

The government has established mechanisms to coordinate its efforts to address child labor (Table 8). However, gaps exist that hinder the effective coordination of efforts to address child labor, including efforts to address all forms of child labor.

Table 8. Key Mechanisms to Coordinate Government Efforts on Child Labor

Coordinating Body	Role and Description
Anti-Human Trafficking Advisory Committee	Coordinate efforts across the government to address human trafficking. (24) Includes the Immigration Division, which acts as secretariat, and representatives from law enforcement agencies and NGOs. (26; 11) Research was unable to determine whether this body was active during the reporting period.

Although the government has established a coordination body on trafficking in persons, as well as the National Advisory Committee on Children, which advises the Cabinet on children's issues, research found no evidence of mechanisms to coordinate its efforts to address all forms of child labor.

V. GOVERNMENT POLICIES ON CHILD LABOR

The government has established policies related to child labor (Table 9). However, policy gaps exist that hinder efforts to address child labor, including coverage of all worst forms of child labor.

Table 9. Key Policies Related to Child Labor‡

Policy	Description
National Action Plan on Human Trafficking and People Smuggling (2015–2020)	Establishes a framework for national anti-human trafficking efforts. Raises awareness about commercial sexual exploitation of children and services available for vulnerable children. (24; 32) Approximately \$3,850 has been allocated for victim support under the plan. (26)
Fee Free Basic Education Policy	Subsidizes school fees for grades one through nine to increase access to education. (9; 22; 33)

‡ The government had other policies that may have addressed child labor issues or had an impact on child labor. (34)

Although the Government of the Solomon Islands has adopted the National Action Plan on Human Trafficking and People Smuggling, research found no evidence of a policy on other worst forms of child labor. Child labor prevention and elimination strategies do not appear to be integrated into the Fee Free Basic Education Policy.

VI. SOCIAL PROGRAMS TO ADDRESS CHILD LABOR

In 2017, the government participated in programs that include the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor (Table 10).

Table 10. Key Social Programs to Address Child Labor‡

Program	Description
Protecting Children from Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse Through Empowerment and Cooperation	EU-funded program, implemented by Save the Children in collaboration with the National Advisory Committee on Children that ended in November 2017. Sought to strengthen community-level child protection and referral mechanisms in three provinces to protect children from engagement in commercial sexual exploitation. (35; 36; 37; 38)

‡ The government had other social programs that may have included the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor. (39)

VII. SUGGESTED GOVERNMENT ACTIONS TO ELIMINATE CHILD LABOR

Based on the reporting above, suggested actions are identified that would advance the elimination of child labor in the Solomon Islands (Table 11).

Table 11. Suggested Government Actions to Eliminate Child Labor

Area	Suggested Action	Year(s) Suggested
Legal Framework	Ratify the UN CRC Optional Protocol on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography and the Palermo Protocol on Trafficking in Persons.	2014 – 2017
	Raise the minimum age for employment to at least age 14 to comply with international standards.	2009 – 2017
	Ensure that laws clearly establish age 18 as the minimum age for hazardous work.	2009 – 2017
	After tripartite consultations, determine the types of hazardous work prohibited for children, including the types of work in which children are engaged when there is evidence of hazards, such as in scavenging and agriculture.	2009 – 2017
	Ensure that the law criminally prohibits child trafficking, regardless of whether threats, the use of force, or other forms of coercion can be established.	2016 – 2017
	Ensure that the law criminally prohibits using, procuring, and offering a child for pornographic performances.	2016 – 2017
	Ensure that the law criminally prohibits using, procuring, and offering a child for illicit activities, including in the production and trafficking of drugs.	2011 – 2017
	Ensure that the law criminally prohibits the recruitment of children under age 18 by non-state armed groups.	2016 – 2017
	Establish by law an age up to which education is compulsory.	2009 – 2017
Enforcement	Publish information on the enforcement of labor laws and criminal laws on child labor, including its worst forms.	2009 – 2017
	Allocate adequate funds for the enforcement of laws on child labor, including its worst forms.	2014 – 2017
Coordination	Establish coordinating mechanisms to combat all forms of child labor.	2010 – 2017
Government Policies	Adopt a policy that addresses all relevant worst forms of child labor.	2016 – 2017
	Integrate child labor elimination and prevention strategies into the Fee Free Education Policy.	2014 – 2017
Social Programs	Conduct research on child labor in the Solomon Islands to inform policy and program design.	2013 – 2017
	Eliminate barriers to basic education by improving access to school transportation and eliminating school-related fees.	2014 – 2017

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