

*In 2016, the Solomon Islands made a minimal advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. The Government amended the Penal Code to improve protections for children against commercial sexual exploitation. 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.(1-6) 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 (%)		88.6

Source for primary completion rate: Data from 2015, published by UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2016.(7)  
Data were unavailable from Understanding Children's Work Project's analysis, 2016.(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)
	Harvesting sea cucumbers, including diving in deep water (4, 9)
Industry	Alluvial mining† (9)
	Construction on roads and buildings, including making bricks (9)
Services	Domestic work and work as cooks (4, 9)
	Scavenging for cans and metal in garbage dumpsites, streets, and streams (3, 9)
	Working in nightclubs, casinos, and motels (4, 9)
Categorical Worst Forms of Child Labor†	Commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking (1-6)
	Use in illicit activities, including in the cultivation and trafficking of drugs (1, 3, 9)
	Forced domestic work and forced work as cooks (4, 6, 11)

† 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 and entertainment establishments.(2, 5)

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 that make it challenging for some children,

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particularly girls, to access education.(9, 12) There is no nationally representative data available on the prevalence and nature of child labor in the Solomon Islands.

## II. LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR THE WORST FORMS OF 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, including its worst forms (Table 4). However, gaps exist in Solomon Island's legal framework to adequately protect children from child labor.

**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 (13)
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work	No		
Identification of Hazardous Occupations or Activities Prohibited for Children	No		Articles 47–49 of the Labor Act (13)
Prohibition of Forced Labor	Yes		Article 6 of the Constitution; Articles 251 and 256 of the Penal Code; Part 7 of the Immigration Act (14-16)
Prohibition of Child Trafficking	No		Part 7 of the Immigration Act; Article 145 of the Penal Code (16, 17)
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children	No		Articles 141, 143, and 144 of the Penal Code (15, 17)
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities	No		
Minimum Age for Military Recruitment			
State Compulsory	N/A†		
State Voluntary	N/A†		
Non-state Compulsory	No		
Compulsory Education Age	No		
Free Public Education	No		

† No standing military (18)

In 2016, the Government adopted an amendment to the Penal Code, which criminally prohibits domestic human trafficking, with heightened penalties if the offence is committed against a child. However, the prohibitions against child trafficking are insufficient because they require threats, the use of force, or other forms of coercion to be established for the crime of child trafficking. The amendment also criminalizes the use, procuring, and offering of a child for commercial sexual exploitation, including prostitution.(17) Further, the law prohibits the use, procuring, and offering of a child for the production of pornography, but these prohibitions are insufficient, as they do not include pornographic performances.(17)

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.(13) The hazardous work prohibitions are not in compliance with international standards. The Labor Code prohibits all children under 18 from working at night in industrial undertakings, all females under 18 from working in a mine or a ship, all boys under 15 from working in industry or on ships, and all boys under 16 from working in a mine. However, it doesn't clearly set forth a minimum age for hazardous work in compliance with international standards or delineate, after tripartite consultation, the type of work considered hazardous in the country for all children. In addition, the legal framework doesn't prohibit the types of work in which children engage in the Solomon Islands where there is evidence of dangers, including in scavenging and in agricultural activities, where children are exposed to injuries, extreme temperatures, and agrochemicals.(9)

Laws do not prohibit the use of children in illicit activities, including in the production and trafficking of drugs.(15) The Solomon Islands has not established an age to which education is compulsory, which increases 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.(12)

### 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). However, gaps in labor law and criminal law enforcement remain and some enforcement information is not available.

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

Organization/Agency	Role
Ministry of Commerce, Industry, Labor, and Immigration	Enforce child labor laws.(19) Through the Immigration Division, leads efforts to combat human trafficking, including the trafficking of children.(20, 21)
Royal Solomon Islands Police	Enforce criminal laws against the worst forms of child labor.(11) Leads investigations of internal human trafficking cases.(22)
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.(20)

#### *Labor Law Enforcement*

Research did not find information on whether labor law enforcement agencies in the Solomon Islands took actions to combat the worst forms of child labor (Table 6).

**Table 6. Labor Law Enforcement Efforts Related to Child Labor**

Overview of Labor Law Enforcement	2015	2016
Labor Inspectorate Funding	Unknown (23)	Unknown (19)
Number of Labor Inspectors	Unknown (23)	Unknown (19)
Inspectorate Authorized to Assess Penalties	Unknown (23)	Unknown (19)
Training for Labor Inspectors		
Initial Training for New Employees	Unknown (23)	Unknown (19)
Training on New Laws Related to Child Labor	Unknown (23)	Unknown (19)
Refresher Courses Provided	Unknown (23)	Unknown (19)
Number of Labor Inspections	Unknown (23)	Unknown (19)
Number Conducted at Worksite	Unknown (23)	Unknown (19)
Number Conducted by Desk Reviews	Unknown (23)	Unknown (19)
Number of Child Labor Violations Found	Unknown (23)	Unknown (19)
Number of Child Labor Violations for Which Penalties Were Imposed	Unknown (23)	Unknown (19)
Number of Penalties Imposed that Were Collected	Unknown (23)	Unknown (19)
Routine Inspections Conducted	No (23)	Unknown (19)
Routine Inspections Targeted	N/A (23)	Unknown (19)

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

Overview of Labor Law Enforcement	2015	2016
Unannounced Inspections Permitted	Yes (13)	Yes (13)
Unannounced Inspections Conducted	Unknown (23)	Unknown (19)
Complaint Mechanism Exists	Unknown	Unknown (19)
Reciprocal Referral Mechanism Exists Between Labor Authorities and Social Services	Unknown	Unknown (19)

Inadequate resources continue to hamper the labor inspectorate's capacity to enforce child labor laws.(11, 23)

### *Criminal Law Enforcement*

In 2016, criminal law enforcement agencies in the Solomon Islands 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	2015	2016
Training for Investigators		
Initial Training for New Employees	Unknown (23)	Unknown (19)
Training on New Laws Related to the Worst Forms of Child Labor	Unknown (23)	Unknown (19)
Refresher Courses Provided	Yes (20)	Yes (24)
Number of Investigations	Unknown (23)	1 (22)
Number of Violations Found	Unknown (23)	1 (22)
Number of Prosecutions Initiated	Unknown (23)	0 (22)
Number of Convictions	Unknown (23)	0 (22)
Reciprocal Referral Mechanism Exists Between Criminal Authorities and Social Services	Yes (20)	Yes (20)

In 2016, the IOM and the Solomon Islands Immigration Division conducted a series of province-level anti-human trafficking trainings for law enforcement officials, focusing on victim identification and protection.(24)

## IV. COORDINATION OF GOVERNMENT EFFORTS ON THE WORST FORMS OF CHILD LABOR

Although the Government has established a coordination mechanism 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 child labor, including all its worst forms (Table 8).

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

Coordinating Body	Role & Description
Anti-Human Trafficking Advisory Committee	Coordinate efforts across the Government to address human trafficking.(20) Includes the Immigration Division, which acts as secretariat, and representatives from law enforcement agencies and NGOs.(22)

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

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

**Table 9. Key Policies Related to Child Labor<sup>‡</sup>**

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.(20, 26) Approximately \$3,850 has been allocated for victim support under the plan.(22)
Fee Free Basic Education Policy	Subsidizes school fees for grades one through nine to increase access to education.(9, 12)

<sup>‡</sup> The Government had other policies that may have addressed child labor issues or had an impact on child labor.(27)

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 in the Fee Free Basic Education Policy.

## VI. SOCIAL PROGRAMS TO ADDRESS CHILD LABOR

In 2016, the Government participated in programs that include the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor, including its worst forms (Table 10).

**Table 10. Key Social Programs to Address Child Labor<sup>‡</sup>**

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. Seeks to strengthen community-level child protection and referral mechanisms in three provinces to protect children from engagement in commercial sexual exploitation.(28-30)

<sup>‡</sup> The Government of the Solomon Islands had other programs that may have addressed child labor issues or had an impact on child labor.(31)

## 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 the Solomon Islands (Table 11).

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

Area	Suggested Action	Year(s) Suggested
Legal Framework	Ratify UN CRC Optional Protocol on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography and the Palermo Protocol on Trafficking in Persons.	2014 – 2016
	Raise the minimum age for employment to at least 14 to comply with international standards.	2009 – 2016
	Ensure that laws clearly establish 18 years old as the minimum age for hazardous work.	2016
	After tripartite consultations, determine the types of hazardous work prohibited for children, including the types of work in which children are engaged where there is evidence of hazards, such as in scavenging and in agriculture.	2009 – 2016
	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
	Ensure that the law criminally prohibits the use, procuring, and offering of a child for pornographic performances.	2016
	Ensure that the law criminally prohibits the use, procuring, and offering of a child for illicit activities, including in the production and trafficking of drugs.	2011 – 2016
	Ensure that the law criminally prohibits the recruitment of children under 18 by non-state armed groups.	2016
	Establish by law an age up to which education is compulsory.	2009 – 2016
Enforcement	Publish information on the enforcement of labor laws and criminal laws on child labor, including its worst forms.	2009 – 2016
	Allocate adequate funds for the enforcement of laws on child labor, including its worst forms.	2009 – 2012 2014 – 2016
Coordination	Establish coordinating mechanisms to combat child labor, including its worst forms.	2010 – 2016
Government Policies	Adopt a policy that addresses all relevant worst forms of child labor.	2016
	Integrate child labor elimination and prevention strategies into the Fee Free Education Policy.	2014 – 2016
Social Programs	Conduct research on child labor in the Solomon Islands to inform policy and program design.	2013 – 2016
	Eliminate barriers to basic education by improving access to school transportation and eliminating school-related fees.	2014 – 2016

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