

*In 2014, Armenia made a minimal advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. Armenia has received an assessment of minimal advancement because the Government lacks a labor inspectorate to monitor, inspect, and enforce child labor laws. This gap in enforcement delays the advancements made in eliminating child labor during the reporting period. In addition, the Government lacks a mechanism to coordinate its efforts to address all forms of child labor, including its worst forms, and no programs exist to aid children engaged in work activities on the street or in agriculture. Children in Armenia continue to engage in child labor in the services sector. Despite these gaps, the Government did make efforts to prevent and eliminate child labor, including enacting legislation to improve the identification of and provision of services to victims of human trafficking.*



## I. PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Although research is limited, evidence suggests that children are engaged in child labor in the services sector.(1-5) Table 1 provides key indicators on children's work and education in Armenia.

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

Children	Age	Percent
Working (% and population)	5-14 yrs.	8.1 (30,494)
Attending School (%)	5-14 yrs.	89.8
Combining Work and School (%)	7-14 yrs.	9.9
Primary Completion Rate (%)		100.1

Source for primary completion rate: Data from 2008, published by UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2015.(6)

Source for all other data: Understanding Children's Work Project's analysis of statistics from Demographic and Health Survey, 2010.(7)

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 planting and harvesting potatoes* (1, 3-5, 8, 9)
	Herding livestock* (4, 5, 10)
Industry	Construction,* activities unknown (1, 8, 11)
Services	Washing cars* (1, 3, 4)
	Street work, including gathering scrap metals* and begging (1, 2, 4, 5, 9, 11, 12)
Categorical Worst Forms of Child Labor‡	Commercial sexual exploitation sometimes as a result of human trafficking* (4, 8, 13-15)
	Forced begging sometimes as a result of human trafficking* (4, 8, 14)

\* 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.

Although Article 39 of the Constitution of Armenia and Article 6 of the Law of Republic of Armenia on Education guarantee free universal education, children from low-income families and from families belonging to ethnic minorities continue to have reduced access to education.(16, 17) In addition, children with disabilities also face difficulty accessing mainstream education due to the inaccessibility of the physical infrastructure of schools, a lack of individual education planning and methodologies,

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a lack of community-based support services for the child and the family, and a general social stigma against individuals with disabilities. (16-18) As a result of these barriers, a source reports that over 70 percent of children with disabilities in the care of the state and almost 20 percent of children with disabilities in the care of their families do not attend school.(19)

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

Armenia 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	Articles 15 and 17 of the Labor Code; Article 32 of the Constitution of the Republic of Armenia (20, 21)
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work	Yes	18	Article 257 of the Labor Code (20)
Prohibition of Hazardous Occupations or Activities for Children	Yes		List of Work Categories Considered Excessive or Harmful for Persons Under the Age of 18, Women Who are Pregnant, and Women Caring for Infants Under the Age of One Year (22)
Prohibition of Forced Labor	Yes		Article 32 of the Constitution of the Republic of Armenia; Article 3 of the Labor Code; Article 132 of the Republic of Armenia Criminal Code (20, 21, 23, 24)
Prohibition of Child Trafficking	Yes		Articles 132, 132.2, and 168 of the Republic of Armenia Criminal Code (23, 25)
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children	Yes		Articles 132, 166, and 261-263 of the Republic of Armenia Criminal Code (23-25)
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities	Yes		Articles 165 and 166.1 of the Republic of Armenia Criminal Code (23-25)
Minimum Age for Compulsory Military Recruitment	Yes	18	Article 5 of the Law on Mandatory Military Service (25, 26)
Minimum Age for Voluntary Military Service	No		
Compulsory Education Age	Yes	16	Article 18 of the Law of the Republic of Armenia on Education (25, 27)
Free Public Education	Yes		Article 39 of the Constitution of the Republic of Armenia; Article 6 of the Law of the Republic of Armenia on Education (21)

The minimum age for work is 16. If children ages 14 to 15 obtain the written consent of a parent or a guardian, they may work restricted hours as specified by the labor code; however, Armenia does not specify the type of light work in which they may engage. (20, 28)

In December 2014, the Government passed the Law on Identification and Assistance of Victims of Trafficking and Exploitation, which will replace the National Referral Mechanism when it comes into force in June 2015. This law aims to improve the

identification of and provision of services to victims of human trafficking, including child trafficking, by removing the necessity for victims to cooperate with law enforcement in order to receive assistance.(15, 29)

Also in December 2014, the Government passed an amendment to the Law of the Republic of Armenia on General Education that guarantees inclusive education, improves education standards, and defines respective support services for children with special education needs and children with disabilities.(10, 18, 30)

### 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
State Health Inspectorate (SHI)*	Enforce labor laws and impose sanctions for violations.(31)
Main Department on Especially Serious Crimes within the Investigative Committee*	Investigate cases of child trafficking and the commercial sexual exploitation of children referred to the Investigative Committee by the Police.(29, 32)
Department on Defending the Rights of Minors and Combating Domestic Violence within the Police	Identify and conduct preliminary investigation of crimes in which children are victims or perpetrators. (13, 32) Enforce laws against the worst forms of child labor under the General Department of Criminal Intelligence.(25, 29, 32) Refer identified crimes to the Investigative Committee for further investigation. (32)
Anti-Trafficking Unit within the Police	Identify and conduct preliminary investigation of crimes related to child trafficking and the commercial sexual exploitation of children through a staff of seven field officers. Operate within the Department of Combating High-Tech related (Cyber) Crimes, Human Trafficking, Illegal Migration, and Terrorism of the General Department on Combating Organized Crime.(33) Refer identified crimes to the Investigative Committee for further investigation.(32)

\* Agency responsible for child labor enforcement was created during the reporting period.

Law enforcement agencies in Armenia took actions to combat child labor, including its worst forms.

#### *Labor Law Enforcement*

During the reporting period, there were 60 labor inspectors located in the State Health Inspectorate (SHI).(34) In July 2013, the Government had adopted Decree #857-N that created the new SHI under the Ministry of Health to take over the combined inspection functions of the former State Labor Inspectorate under the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs (MoLSA) and the former State Hygiene and Anti-Epidemic Inspectorate under the Ministry of Health.(33) As part of the 2013 restructuring, the number of labor inspectors was reduced from 146 to 60, which the SHI reports was insufficient to fully enforce labor laws. The 20 inspectors based at the SHI headquarters are civil servants, while the remaining 40 are contractors, who do not receive the same training as the civil servants.(34) In addition, in 2014 the SHI lacked sufficient funding, work space, computers, and transportation to effectively enforce labor laws. SHI officials reported that inspectors are often required to walk to inspection sites in order to perform inspections due to lack of transportation.(34) As a result, inspectors were not able to conduct a sufficient number of inspections in 2014. Inspectors were also unable to conduct unannounced inspections.(34)

In 2014, the SHI conducted 48 inspections and discovered 2 violations of laws related to child labor. After an administrative review, these employers were issued administrative penalties and given mandatory requirements to eliminate their child labor law violations. (35) While inspectors do not have the right to issue penalties for violations discovered during the course of investigations, the head of the SHI does have the power to review cases of violations and issue administrative penalties.(35) However, a source indicated that penalties for violations of labor laws were insufficient to deter violations.(36)

In addition, in January 2015, the Government enacted legislation that amended the Labor Code to remove the SHI's mandate to conduct labor inspection.(34) The SHI is restricted to conducting inspections based on complaints only related to occupational safety and health violations.(37) As a result, the SHI reports that there is now no monitoring or enforcement of child labor laws in Armenia.(34)

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### *Criminal Law Enforcement*

In June 2014, the Investigation Department within the Police was merged with the Investigative Department of the Ministry of Defense to create a new autonomous body called the Investigative Committee.(29) As a result of the reorganization, functions formerly carried out by the Unit to Investigate Human Trafficking, Illegal Drug Trafficking, and Organized Crime within the Police are now part of the mandate of the Main Department on Especially Serious Crimes within the Investigative Committee.(29) Under the new system, police officers respond to allegations of a crime and conduct a pre-investigation during a period of 10 days to determine whether a crime has been committed. After this period, the case is either transferred to the Investigative Committee for full investigation or dropped due to lack of evidence of a crime.(32) The Main Department on Especially Serious Crimes within the Investigative Committee has 40 investigators.(29)

In 2014, approximately 300 police officers were engaged in the investigation of cases involving the worst forms of child labor.(35) Both police officers and MoLSA employees received training on human trafficking, including training on interviewing victims of child trafficking, in 2014.(15) The Police developed modules on Juvenile Justice in the Republic of Armenia and trained 24 officers on dealing with criminal cases involving minors.(35) However, a source reported that law enforcement officials do not receive sufficient specialized training on interviewing child victims of crime.(4)

In 2014, law enforcement investigated a total of five criminal cases involving minors, including one new case involving a child trafficked for forced begging.(15, 35) Two individuals were charged with child trafficking and their cases were sent to the courts.(35) However, a source reported that because not all the children who are referred to social service providers by the Police are officially registered as victims, official statistics for begging, forced begging, and commercial sexual exploitation may underreport the scope of the problem.(4)

Law enforcement agencies refer all at-risk children discovered during investigations to the Children Support Center of the Armenian Relief Fund, which provides medical, psychological, and social assistance to at-risk children.(25) The Government also has a National Referral Mechanism that defines procedures and responsible government agencies for identification, referral, assistance, and protection of trafficking victims, including children.(14, 25) Victim assistance includes the provision of in-kind, legal, medical, and psychological support, as well as the victims' integration into various social, educational, and employment projects.(14)

Research found that although the Police work with social service providers when conducting the pre-investigation, the Investigative Committee does not work with social service providers to ensure the well-being of the children during the investigation period.(4) Implementing the provisions of the Criminal Procedural Code on victim and witness protection continued to be difficult due to lack of an appropriate victim witness protection mechanism and of sufficient funding for these efforts.(8, 38)

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

Although the Government has established coordinating mechanisms to combat human trafficking and ensure the protection of child rights, research found no evidence of mechanisms to coordinate its efforts to address child labor, including all its worst forms (Table 6).

**Table 6. Mechanisms to Coordinate Government Efforts on Child Labor**

Coordinating Body	Role & Description
Ministerial Council to Combat Human Trafficking	Implement, coordinate, and monitor government efforts on human trafficking.(14, 25) Chaired by the Deputy Prime Minister and composed of various officials from 17 government entities.(14)
Inter-Agency Working Group against Trafficking in Persons	Advise, organize, and implement decisions made by the Ministerial Council to Combat Human Trafficking.(14) Chaired by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and composed of officials from all government entities. Includes nongovernmental stakeholders such as NGOs, international organizations, and social partners in regularly scheduled meetings.(14, 25)

**Table 6. Mechanisms to Coordinate Government Efforts on Child Labor (cont)**

Coordinating Body	Role & Description
National Commission on the Protection of Child Rights	Coordinate activities of state bodies responsible for child protection, assist in developing state policy and programs aimed at the protection of children's rights, and assist in developing solutions to new child welfare problems as they arise. Facilitate cooperation between state and local government and NGOs.(25) Maintain a working group to prevent child begging, which includes representatives from the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs, the Ministry of Health, and the Ministry of Education. (25) In 2014, developed a draft proposal for approval by the Prime Minister that would introduce new functions for the Commission and expand its composition. The Commission has also developed a draft joint decision by the Police, MOLSA, and the Ministry of Health to create a working group for the purpose of introducing modern rehabilitative services for child beggars and street children.(35)

During the reporting period, the Ministerial Council to Combat Human Trafficking and the Inter-Agency Working Group against Trafficking in Persons met regularly to share information and make implementation and policy decisions.(15, 29, 33) The two groups focused on taking steps to address the National Plan of Action Against Trafficking in Persons for years 2013–2015, particularly those related to child trafficking.(14, 29)

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

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

**Table 7. Policies Related to Child Labor**

Policy	Description
Strategic Program for the Protection of Children's Rights for 2013–2016*	Outlines the Government's goals and activities in the sphere of child rights protection; formerly included a child labor component focusing on data collection on working children, awareness raising of the rights of working children, and implementation of oversight mechanisms for children's work.(39) The National Child Labor Survey and recommendations for the prevention of child labor exploitation originally envisaged in the 2013–2016 Strategic Program remains in the list of activities for 2016. However, during a 2014 revision, the Government removed the child labor component from the document.(18, 29)
National Plan of Action Against Trafficking in Persons for the Years 2013–2015	Aims to improve victim identification, including for child laborers; conduct surveys among working children; improve prevention efforts; and work with the media on the format and approach of reporting on human trafficking cases.(40) Strategies and activities fall under five sections: legislation on action against trafficking in persons and enforcement of laws; prevention of trafficking in persons; protection of and support to victims of trafficking in persons; cooperation; and surveys, monitoring, and evaluation.(40)
Concept on Combatting Violence Against Children†	Defines government priorities for combatting violence against children and outlines a list of related activities. Addresses labor exploitation of children, especially in agriculture, and commercial sexual exploitation of children, especially child trafficking.(29)
UNDAF Plan for Armenia (2010–2015)*	Focuses on poverty reduction through expanding economic and social opportunities for vulnerable groups, including by developing vocational training and technical assistance programs targeted at the most vulnerable youth.(39, 41)

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

† Policy was launched during the reporting period.

## VI. SOCIAL PROGRAMS TO ADDRESS CHILD LABOR

In 2014, the Government of Armenia funded and participated in programs that include the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor, including its worst forms (Table 8).

**Table 8. Social Programs to Address Child Labor**

Program	Description
Global Research on Child Labor Measurement and Policy Development (MAP)	USDOL-funded research project implemented by the ILO in 10 countries, including Armenia, to increase the knowledge base around child labor by collecting new data, analyzing existing data, and building capacity to conduct research in this area.(42)
When September Comes Program*	Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs (MoLSA) program, implemented by charitable organizations, that assists families with children excluded from secondary education and families of "deceased freedom fighters" with three or more children of school age. Provides school supplies, clothing, and food.(25)

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**Table 8. Social Programs to Address Child Labor (cont)**

Program	Description
Social Response to Labor Migration in Armenia Project*	EU-funded, 3-year project implemented by UNICEF, the Ministry of Territorial Administration, and MoLSA, designed to mitigate the social vulnerability of labor migrants' families, including children.(43) In 2014, the project resulted in an MOU with representatives from 10 communities in order to provide social support to migrant workers and their families, including by establishing preschools and child development centers.(44)
Police Hotline‡	Police-supported hotline for human trafficking and migration-related calls.(8)
Armenia Social Protection Administration II Project (SPAP)†‡	World Bank project to improve social services delivery through the functional integration of agencies responsible for social services. Continues the first SPAP efforts to co-locate service providers for social protection benefits by building 37 new Integrated Social Protection Centers.(45) Will target unemployed youth through the Youth without Education and Skills program.(45)
UNICEF Country Program for 2010–2015	Outlines a plan for the development of an enhanced child care system, a continuum of child protection services to identify and respond to the exploitation and abuse of children, and a comprehensive policy framework for protecting vulnerable children in cooperation with UNICEF.(46)
Day Care Centers‡	Government-supported day care centers that provide alternatives to working children and daytime centers that provide services for children with special needs.(33) In 2014, the Government co-funded four daytime centers to support up to 250 children, and fully owned and operated an additional three to support up to 100 children each.(33, 47-49)
Shelter for Victims of Human Trafficking‡	Government shelter co-funded and run by the United Methodist Committee on Relief—Armenia that provides victims of human trafficking with medical, psychological, social, and legal services; access to education for children; and vocational training for adult victims.(15) Assisted five victims of child trafficking during the reporting period. In 2014, the Government increased funding to the shelter to approximately \$36,300 from approximately \$16,100 provided in 2013.(15)
School Feeding Program*	Approximately \$260,000 program, co-funded by the World Food Program, which provided in-school meals to 67,000 students in 800 schools.(35)

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

† Program was launched during the reporting period.

‡ Program is funded by the Government of Armenia.

Although the Government of Armenia has implemented programs to address child labor, research found no evidence that it has carried out programs to assist children engaged in child labor in street work or in agriculture.

## 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 Armenia (Table 9).

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

Area	Suggested Action	Year(s) Suggested
Legal Framework	Ensure that Armenian law specifies the types of light work and the working conditions acceptable for children age 14.	2014
Enforcement	Address deficiencies in the SHI's labor inspection resources, including by increasing the number of labor inspectors and empowering inspectors to perform unannounced inspections; increasing the funding and resources available to the SHI; ensuring that all inspectors receive an adequate amount of training; and ensuring that penalties for child labor violations are sufficient to serve as a deterrent.	2014
	Ensure that the SHI is capable of monitoring, inspecting, and enforcing child labor laws through quality inspections, including targeted, complaint-based, and unannounced inspections; that inspectors have the ability to assess penalties; and that data on the number and type of inspections, violations, and penalties are made publicly available.	2014
	Protect children by providing law enforcement officials with specialized training on interviewing child victims of crime.	2014
	Implement and adequately fund a victim-witness protection mechanism for criminal proceedings.	2011 – 2014



**Table 9. Suggested Government Actions to Eliminate Child Labor, Including its Worst Forms (cont)**

Area	Suggested Action	Year(s) Suggested
Coordination	Establish coordinating mechanisms to combat child labor, including its worst forms.	2009 – 2014
Government Policies	Integrate child labor elimination and prevention strategies into national policies, including the Strategic Program for the Protection of Children's Rights and the UNDAF Plan for Armenia (2010–2015).	2011 – 2014
Social Programs	Ensure that all children, including children from low-income families and those belonging to ethnic minorities, have equal access to education.	2010 – 2014
	Ensure that mainstream education is accessible to children with special education needs and children with disabilities by improving the accessibility of the physical infrastructure, bringing the child disability assessment criteria up to international standards, improving needs assessments, expanding community-based support services, and ensuring that social stigmas against individuals with disabilities do not prevent children from accessing schools.	2014
	Assess the impact that existing programs may have on child labor.	2011 – 2014
	Implement programs to address child labor in street work and in agriculture.	2009 – 2014

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