

In 2021, Oman made moderate advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. The government adopted a new National Plan for Combating Human Trafficking, established child protection committees at the governorate level, and investigated and charged two suspects in a child sex trafficking case. The labor inspectorate also increased inspections in response to videos shared on social media documenting labor violations. Although research is limited, there is evidence that small numbers of children in Oman engage in child labor, including in fishing and farming. Government policies do not address all forms of child labor and the Ministry of Labor is not represented on the National Committee on Implementing the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child or the National Child Protection Committee.



I. PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Although research is limited, there is evidence that small numbers of children in Oman engage in child labor, including in fishing and farming. (1) Table 1 provides key indicators on children's work and education in Oman. 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 to 14	Unavailable
Attending School (%)	5 to 14	Unavailable
Combining Work and School (%)	7 to 14	Unavailable
Primary Completion Rate (%)		99.2

Source for primary completion rate: Data from 2020, published by UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2022. (2)

Source for all other data: Data were unavailable from ILO's analysis, 2022. (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	Farming, activities unknown (1)
	Fishing, activities unknown (1)

II. LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR CHILD LABOR

Oman has ratified all key international conventions concerning child labor (Table 3).

MODERATE ADVANCEMENT

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's laws and regulations are in line with relevant international standards (Table 4).

Table 4. Laws and Regulations on Child Labor

Standard	Meets International Standards	Age	Legislation
Minimum Age for Work	Yes	15	Articles 1, 8, and 75 of the Labor Law (4)
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work	Yes	18	Articles 45, 46, and 71 of the Child Law; Article 2 of Ministry of Manpower Order 217/2016 (4,5)
Identification of Hazardous Occupations or Activities Prohibited for Children	Yes		Article 5 of Ministry of Manpower Order 217/2016 (6)
Prohibition of Forced Labor	Yes		Articles 1, 2, 8, and 9 of the Law to Combat Human Trafficking; Article 3 bis of the Labor Law (4,7)
Prohibition of Child Trafficking	Yes		Articles 1, 2, 8, and 9 of the Law to Combat Human Trafficking (7)
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children	Yes		Articles 1, 2, 8, and 9 of the Law to Combat Human Trafficking; Articles 254, 255, and 267 of the Penal Code (7,8)
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities	Yes		Articles 58 and 74 of the Child Law; Article 43 of the Law on Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (5,9)
Minimum Age for Voluntary State Military Recruitment	Yes	16	Article 55 of the Child Law (5)
Prohibition of Compulsory Recruitment of Children by (State) Military	Yes*		Article 55 of the Child Law (5)
Prohibition of Military Recruitment by Non-state Armed Groups	Yes		Articles 1(f), 55, and 72 of the Child Law (5)
Compulsory Education Age	Yes	15‡	Article 36 of the Child Law (5,10)
Free Public Education	Yes		Article 13 of the Basic Law; Article 36 of the Child Law (5,11)

* Country has no conscription (12)

‡ Age calculated based on available information (12)

III. ENFORCEMENT OF LAWS ON CHILD LABOR

The government has established relevant institutional mechanisms for the enforcement of laws and regulations on child labor (Table 5).

Table 5. Agencies Responsible for Child Labor Law Enforcement

Organization/Agency	Role
Ministry of Labor (MOL)	Monitors and enforces child labor laws, conducts labor inspections, and shares information with the Royal Oman Police on labor and criminal law violations when penalties are pursued. (13)
Ministry of Social Development (MOSD)	Enforces the Child Law, including by receiving complaints and referring cases to the Royal Oman Police and the Office of the Public Prosecutor. (13)

Table 5. Agencies Responsible for Child Labor Law Enforcement (Cont.)

Organization/Agency	Role
Royal Oman Police	Monitor and enforce the Child Law, including its provisions related to child labor, and refer cases to the Office of the Public Prosecutor. (14)
Office of the Public Prosecutor	Prosecutes human trafficking and sexual exploitation cases in court with assistance from the Royal Oman Police. (14,15)
Child Protection Committee	Protects children from exploitation, receives complaints and reports of child labor, and investigates reported cases to determine whether children are engaged in prohibited activities or whether working has negative effects on their health or education. (14,16)

Labor Law Enforcement

In 2021, labor law enforcement agencies in Oman took actions to address child labor (Table 6). However, gaps exist within the operations of the Ministry of Labor (MOL) that may hinder adequate labor law enforcement.

Table 6. Labor Law Enforcement Efforts Related to Child Labor

Overview of Labor Law Enforcement	2020	2021
Labor Inspectorate Funding	Unknown (1)	Unknown (13)
Number of Labor Inspectors	303 (17)	282 (18)
Mechanism to Assess Civil Penalties	Yes (4,5,19)	Yes (4,5,19)
Initial Training for New Labor Inspectors	Yes (17)	Yes (18)
Training on New Laws Related to Child Labor	N/A	N/A
Refresher Courses Provided	Unknown (1)	Yes (18)
Number of Labor Inspections Conducted	Unknown (1)	Unknown (13)
Number Conducted at Worksite	Unknown (1)	Unknown (13)
Number of Child Labor Violations Found	0 (1)	Unknown (13)
Number of Child Labor Violations for Which Penalties Were Imposed	N/A	Unknown (13)
Number of Child Labor Penalties Imposed that Were Collected	N/A	Unknown (13)
Routine Inspections Conducted	Yes (1)	Yes (13)
Routine Inspections Targeted	Unknown (1)	Unknown (13)
Unannounced Inspections Permitted	Yes (19)	Yes (19)
Unannounced Inspections Conducted	Yes (1)	Yes (13)
Complaint Mechanism Exists	Yes (1)	Yes (13)
Reciprocal Referral Mechanism Exists Between Labor Authorities and Social Services	Yes (1)	Yes (13)

The MOL conducts yearly inspections of all private institutions and re-inspections of workplaces found to be in violation of labor laws. Labor inspections are also conducted following a complaint. (13,20) If a violation is found, the institution is given a set period of time to address the problem. If an institution fails to address the violation, a fine may be levied. (13,20) The MOL can refer cases of child labor to the Ministry of Social Development (MOSD) if the child is under the minimum age for work. The MOL and MOSD can also coordinate with the Royal Oman Police to shelter child victims and refer suspected violators for criminal investigation. (13)

In June 2021, the MOL announced it was increasing inspections in response to videos shared on social media documenting labor violations, which the MOL determined were not current. (13) In 2021, the number of labor inspections conducted exceeded 80,000. (21)

The government did not provide information on the number of child labor violations found for inclusion in this report.

Criminal Law Enforcement

In 2021, the government's criminal law enforcement agencies appeared to function adequately in addressing child labor (Table 7).

MODERATE ADVANCEMENT

Table 7. Criminal Law Enforcement Efforts Related to Child Labor

Overview of Criminal Law Enforcement	2020	2021
Initial Training for New Criminal Investigators	Yes (1)	Yes (13)
Training on New Laws Related to the Worst Forms of Child Labor	N/A	N/A
Refresher Courses Provided	Unknown (1)	Unknown (13)
Number of Investigations	0 (1)	2 (21,22)
Number of Violations Found	N/A (1)	2 (22,23)
Number of Prosecutions Initiated	N/A (1)	2 (22,23)
Number of Convictions	0 (1)	2 (21,22)
Imposed Penalties for Violations Related to the Worst Forms of Child Labor	N/A	Yes (22,23)
Reciprocal Referral Mechanism Exists Between Criminal Authorities and Social Services	Yes (1)	Yes (13)

In April 2021, the Royal Oman Police received a report of a missing foreign national girl, then a subsequent report that the girl had returned to her home with bruises. Upon investigation, the Royal Oman Police identified the girl as a victim of sex trafficking and referred her to the Dar al-Wifaq trafficking shelter. (23) As a result, the government charged two foreign nationals under the Law to Combat Human Trafficking with exploiting a child in prostitution; the suspects remained in pretrial detention at the end of the reporting period. (23) In addition, the government convicted one trafficker of forcing two foreign national boys into begging. The boys were also referred to the Dar al-Wifaq shelter. (22)

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 the omission of the MOL from the National Child Protection Committee.

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

Coordinating Body	Role & Description
National Child Protection Committee	Consists of representatives from the MOSD, the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Education, and the Royal Oman Police. Oversees regional committees, which are responsible for coordinating intervention with children who are survivors of abuse, neglect, or other related issues, and works with UNICEF on several projects related to child intervention. (1) However, the MOL is not represented on the Committee. (1) In 2021, child protection committees were established at the governorate level. (13)
National Committee on Implementing the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child	Led by the MOSD Under Secretary and consists of representatives from government and private organizations concerned with children's rights. Submits proposals to achieve the CRC's principles and follows up on the UN body's comments and recommendations. (17) However, the MOL is not represented on the Committee. (17) Active in 2021. (18)
National Committee for Combating Human Trafficking	Oversees the National Action Plan for Combating Human Trafficking. Includes the Royal Oman Police and 12 other state agencies. (1) Met regularly during 2021 to recommend additions and modifications to the National Action Plan to Combat Human Trafficking. (13)

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 lack of coverage of all forms of child labor.

Table 9. Key Policies Related to Child Labor

Policy	Description
National Action Plan for Combating Human Trafficking (2021–2023)†	Aims to educate stakeholders on their rights and responsibilities, train authorities on addressing human trafficking, coordinate government services for survivors, and develop new policies and best practices. (24) Adopted in 2021. (13)

† Policy was approved during the reporting period.

Although the Government of Oman has adopted the National Plan for Combating Human Trafficking, it does not have a comprehensive policy to address all forms of child labor, including in farming and fishing.

VI. SOCIAL PROGRAMS TO ADDRESS CHILD LABOR

In 2021, the government funded and participated in programs that include the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor, which cover the main sectors in which child labor has been identified in the country (Table 10).

Table 10. Key Social Programs to Address Child Labor

Program	Description
Social Security Cash Transfer Program†	Provides assistance to children in low-income families, including educational services. (16) Active in 2021. (13)

† Program is funded by the Government of Oman.

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 Oman (Table 11).

Table 11. Suggested Government Actions to Eliminate Child Labor

Area	Suggested Action	Year(s) Suggested
Enforcement	Collect and publish data on the number of child labor violations found.	2013 – 2021
Coordination	Ensure that the Ministry of Labor participates in the National Child Protection Committee and the National Committee on Implementing the UN CRC.	2016 – 2021
Government Policies	Develop a national policy to address all forms of child labor that occur within Oman, including in farming and fishing.	2013 – 2021
Social Programs	Collect and publish data on the extent and nature of child labor to inform policies and programs.	2017 – 2021

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