

In 2020, the Solomon Islands made minimal advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. During the reporting period, the government created a revised version of its National Action Plan against Human Trafficking and People Smuggling and partnered with private companies to create and implement human trafficking awareness-raising campaigns targeting 12 communities in the Choiseul Province. However, children in the Solomon Islands are subjected to the worst forms of child labor, including in commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking. Children also perform dangerous tasks in the harvesting of palm oil fruits. The minimum age for work does not meet international standards, and the Solomon Islands has not established a minimum age for hazardous work or delineated the types of work considered hazardous for children. The government also did not publish labor and criminal law enforcement data for the reporting year. In addition, education is not compulsory, which increases children's vulnerability to child labor exploitation.



I. PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Children in the Solomon Islands are subjected to the worst forms of child labor, including in commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking. (1-4) Children also perform dangerous tasks in the harvesting of palm oil fruits. (2) 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 (%)		85.7

Source for primary completion rate: Data from 2019, published by UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2021. (5)

Data were unavailable from International Labor Organization's analysis, 2021. (6)

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	Working on plantations, including harvesting palm oil fruits (1,2)
	Harvesting seafood, including diving in deep water (1-3)
Industry	Alluvial mining† (1-3)
	Furniture construction (1,2)
	Construction on roads and buildings, including making bricks (1,2)
Services	Domestic work, including working as cooks (1-3)
	Scavenging for cans and metal in garbage dumpsites, streets, and streams (1-3)
	Working in nightclubs, casinos, and motels (1-3)
Categorical Worst Forms of Child Labor‡	Commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking (1-4,7-9)
	Use in illicit activities, including in the cultivation and trafficking of drugs (1-3)
	Forced domestic work and forced work as cooks (1-3)
	Forced pickpocketing, sometimes as a result of human trafficking (2,3,9)

† 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.

Solomon Islands




MINIMAL ADVANCEMENT

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. (1-4,10) Children are exposed to toxic pesticides on palm oil plantations while tending to, harvesting, and collecting palm oil fruits. In addition, children—mainly boys—are exposed to extreme water depths and temperatures while diving for sea cucumbers. (1,2) The government provides a nominal amount of funding towards its Fee Free Basic Education Policy for free education. (11) Additional school fees, teacher absenteeism, and transportation limitations make it challenging for some children to access education. (1,2) There are no nationally representative data available on the prevalence and nature of child labor in the Solomon Islands.

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	Age	Legislation
Minimum Age for Work	No	12	Article 46 of the Labor Act (12)
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work	No		Articles 47-49 of the Labor Act (12)
Identification of Hazardous Occupations or Activities Prohibited for Children	No		Articles 47–49 of the Labor Act (12)
Prohibition of Forced Labor	Yes		Article 6 of the Constitution; Articles 251 and 256 of the Penal Code; Part 7 of the Immigration Act (13-15)
Prohibition of Child Trafficking	No		Part 7 of the Immigration Act; Article 145 of the Penal Code (14,15)
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children	No		Articles 141 and 143–144 of the Penal Code (15)
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities	No		
Minimum Age for Voluntary State Military Recruitment	N/A†		
Prohibition of Compulsory Recruitment of Children by (State) Military	N/A†		
Prohibition of Military Recruitment by Non-state Armed Groups	No		
Compulsory Education Age	No		
Free Public Education	No		

† No standing military (16)

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. (12) While the Labor Code prohibits all children under age 18 from working at night and regulates work in mines and on ships, it does not clearly establish a minimum age for hazardous work or delineate the type of work considered hazardous for all children. In addition, the legal framework does not prohibit dangerous work in scavenging or in agricultural activities for which there is evidence of children being exposed to injuries, extreme temperatures, or chemicals. (4,12,17,18) The Penal Code includes heightened penalties if an offense is committed against a child, but 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. Furthermore, the laws on child commercial sexual exploitation are insufficient, as they do not include prohibiting pornographic performances. (9,15) The law also does not criminally prohibit the use of children in illicit activities. (2) In addition, education is not compulsory, which increases children's vulnerability to child labor exploitation. (19) Although there are no laws that provide free basic education, there is a policy that provides for some free basic education. This policy does not cover all costs, and still allows schools to request some fees. (20,21)

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 enforcement agencies 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	Enforces child labor laws. (1,2) Through the Immigration Division, leads efforts to combat human trafficking, including the trafficking of children. (9,22) In 2020, initiated a process to reform its human trafficking awareness programs by integrating them with the community policing program, which was ongoing during the reporting period. In partnership with private companies, created and implemented human trafficking awareness-raising campaigns targeting 12 communities in the Choiseul Province, focusing on victim identification, prevention, and support for community stakeholders and civil society. (3)
Royal Solomon Islands Police	Enforce criminal laws against the worst forms of child labor. (1) Lead investigations of internal human trafficking cases and currently chair the Anti-Human Trafficking Advisory Committee (AHTAC). (9,23)
Business Monitoring Joint Agency Committee	Monitors and investigates cases of transnational human trafficking, specifically in the logging industry. Comprises representatives from the Immigration Division, the Royal Solomon Islands Police, Customs, and the Forestry Division. (22,24)

While the Government of the Solomon Islands has agencies to enforce child labor laws, research found that the agencies' commitment, coordination, and priorities vary widely depending on their mandates, structural capacity, and budget allocations. (1,2)

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).

Table 6. Labor Law Enforcement Efforts Related to Child Labor

Overview of Labor Law Enforcement	2019	2020
Labor Inspectorate Funding	Unknown (1)	Unknown (2)
Number of Labor Inspectors	Unknown (1)	Unknown (2)
Inspectorate Authorized to Assess Penalties	No (12)	No (12)
Initial Training for New Labor Inspectors	Unknown (1)	Unknown (2)
Training on New Laws Related to Child Labor	Unknown (1)	N/A (2)
Refresher Courses Provided	Unknown (1)	Unknown (2)
Number of Labor Inspections Conducted	Unknown (1)	Unknown (2)
Number Conducted at Worksite	Unknown (1)	Unknown (2)

Solomon Islands

MINIMAL ADVANCEMENT

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

Overview of Labor Law Enforcement	2019	2020
Number of Child Labor Violations Found	Unknown (1)	Unknown (2)
Number of Child Labor Violations for Which Penalties Were Imposed	Unknown (1)	Unknown (2)
Number of Child Labor Penalties Imposed that Were Collected	Unknown (1)	Unknown (2)
Routine Inspections Conducted	Unknown (1)	Unknown (2)
Routine Inspections Targeted	Unknown (1)	Unknown (2)
Unannounced Inspections Permitted	Yes (12)	Yes (12)
Unannounced Inspections Conducted	Unknown (1)	Yes (2)
Complaint Mechanism Exists	Unknown (1)	Yes (2)
Reciprocal Referral Mechanism Exists Between Labor Authorities and Social Services	Unknown (1)	Unknown (2)

The Government of the Solomon Islands did not respond to requests for information related to its labor law enforcement efforts for inclusion in this report. Insufficient resources continued to hamper the labor inspectorate's capacity to enforce child labor laws, including a lack of budget transparency and enforcement efforts. (2,19) While the number of labor inspectors is unknown, according to the ILO's technical advice of a ratio approaching 1 inspector for every 40,000 workers in less developed economies, the Solomon Islands would need to employ roughly 5 labor inspectors as its workforce consists of over 202,500 workers.

Criminal Law Enforcement

Research did not find information on whether criminal law enforcement agencies in the Solomon Islands took actions to combat child labor (Table 7).

Table 7. Criminal Law Enforcement Efforts Related to Child Labor

Overview of Criminal Law Enforcement	2019	2020
Initial Training for New Criminal Investigators	Unknown (1)	Unknown (2)
Training on New Laws Related to the Worst Forms of Child Labor	Unknown (1)	N/A (2)
Refresher Courses Provided	Unknown (1)	Unknown (2)
Number of Investigations	Unknown (1)	Unknown (2)
Number of Violations Found	Unknown (1)	Unknown (2)
Number of Prosecutions Initiated	Unknown (1)	Unknown (2)
Number of Convictions	Unknown (1)	Unknown (2)
Imposed Penalties for Violations Related to the Worst Forms of Child Labor	Unknown (1)	Unknown (2)
Reciprocal Referral Mechanism Exists Between Criminal Authorities and Social Services	Unknown (1)	Unknown (2)

The Government of the Solomon Islands did not respond to requests for information related to its criminal law enforcement efforts for inclusion in this report. (2)

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 & Description
Anti-Human Trafficking Advisory Committee (AHTAC)	Coordinates efforts across the government to address human trafficking. (22,25) Comprised of the Ministries of Commerce, Industries, Labor, and Immigration (MCILI); Finance; Health and Medical Services; Police, National Security, and Correctional Services; Women, Youths, and Cultural Affairs; the Office of the Public Solicitors and representatives from law enforcement agencies, NGOs, and UN agencies. MCILI acts as secretariat. (25) During the reporting period, the committee met on a quarterly basis to discuss human trafficking issues in general, including reports of potential cases, and to coordinate on trafficking-related policies. (3,9)

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

Coordinating Body	Role & Description
National Advisory and Action Committee on Children (NAACC)	Coordinates government and NGOs to address child trafficking and commercial sexual exploitation of children. (26) Consists of several ministries, including the Ministry of Women, Youth, Children and Family Affairs; MCIL; and the Ministry of Home Affairs. Several NGOs participate, including Save the Children, UNICEF, and WHO. (18) Research was unable to determine whether the NAACC was active during the reporting period.

The Government of the Solomon Islands did not respond to requests for information on its coordination efforts to eliminate child labor. (2)

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 covering all worst forms of child labor.

Table 9. Key Policies Related to Child Labor

Policy	Description
National Action Plan Against Human Trafficking and People Smuggling (2020–2025) [†]	Establishes a coordinated effort to eliminate human trafficking and people smuggling on the Solomon Islands. Led by AHTAC. (3,25) In 2020, the new Action Plan was revised to contain provisions aimed at preparing the government to accede to and ratify the UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and its supplementary protocols. (3,9) Though the committee endorsed the Action Plan in March 2020, the government did not report implementing the Action Plan. (21)
Fee Free Basic Education Policy	Subsidizes school fees for grades one through nine to increase access to education. (17,18,20,28) Research was unable to determine whether activities were undertaken to implement the Fee Free Basic Education Policy during the reporting period.
National Education Action Plan	Establishes a timeline within the National Development Strategy 2016–2035 to provide free primary and secondary education to boys and girls by 2020. (29) Research was unable to determine whether activities were undertaken to implement the National Education Action Plan during the reporting period.
United Nations Pacific Strategy (2018–2022)	A multi-national strategic framework, comprising 14 South Pacific nations, created to address, develop, and implement strategic economic development priorities in the South Pacific, including eliminating child labor and the worst forms of child labor. (30) Research was unable to determine whether activities were undertaken to implement the United Nations Pacific Strategy during the reporting period.

[†] Policy was approved during the reporting year.

[‡] The government had other policies that may have addressed child labor issues or had an impact on child labor. (30)

The Government of the Solomon Islands did not respond to requests for information regarding its policies to eliminate child labor. (1) Child labor prevention and elimination strategies do not appear to be integrated into the Fee Free Basic Education Policy. (28) Research did not find evidence that the National Action Plan on Human Trafficking and People Smuggling contains policies to eliminate the worst forms of child labor.

VI. SOCIAL PROGRAMS TO ADDRESS CHILD LABOR

Research found no evidence that the government funded or participated in social programs that include the goal of preventing or eliminating child labor.

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 10).

Table 10. Suggested Government Actions to Eliminate Child Labor

Area	Suggested Action	Year(s) Suggested
Legal Framework	Ratify the UN CRC Optional Protocol on Armed Conflict.	2014 – 2020
	Ratify the UN CRC Optional Protocol on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography.	2014 – 2020
	Ratify the Palermo Protocol on Trafficking in Persons.	2014 – 2020

Solomon Islands

MINIMAL ADVANCEMENT

Table 10. Suggested Government Actions to Eliminate Child Labor (Cont.)

Area	Suggested Action	Year(s) Suggested
Legal Framework	Raise the minimum age for employment to comply with international standards.	2009 – 2020
	Establish age 18 as the minimum age for hazardous work.	2009 – 2020
	Determine the types of hazardous work prohibited for children, including the types of work for which there is evidence of hazards, such as in scavenging and agriculture.	2009 – 2020
	Establish by law an age up to which education is compulsory that extends to the minimum age for employment.	2009 – 2020
	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 – 2020
	Ensure that the law criminally prohibits using, procuring, and offering a child for pornographic performances.	2016 – 2020
	Ensure that the law criminally prohibits using, procuring, and offering a child for illicit activities, including in the production and trafficking of drugs.	2011 – 2020
	Ensure that the law criminally prohibits the recruitment of children under age 18 by non-state armed groups.	2016 – 2020
Enforcement	Establish by law free basic public education.	2018 – 2020
	Publish information on child labor law enforcement efforts undertaken, including labor inspectorate funding, the number and type of labor inspections conducted, violations found, information about the training system for labor inspectors, and penalties imposed and collected.	2009 – 2020
	Strengthen the labor inspectorate by ensuring the ability to assess penalties.	2019 – 2020
	Publish information on the number of criminal law enforcement efforts undertaken, including the number of child labor investigations initiated, the number of child labor penalties imposed, and the number of criminal law enforcement convictions secured.	2009 – 2020
	Allocate sufficient resources to enforce child labor laws, including increasing budget transparency.	2014 – 2020
	Ensure agencies address issues with commitment, coordination, priorities, structural capacity, and budget allocations to enable them to enforce child labor laws.	2020
Coordination	Ensure the number of labor inspectors in the Solomon Islands meets the ILO's technical guidance.	2020
	Publish information on coordination mechanisms and efforts undertaken to address child labor.	2020
Government Policies	Adopt a policy via the National Action Plan on Human Trafficking and People Smuggling that addresses all worst forms of child labor, including using children in commercial sexual exploitation.	2016 – 2020
	Integrate child labor elimination and prevention strategies into the Fee Free Basic Education Policy.	2014 – 2020
	Publish activities undertaken to implement the National Action Plan on Human Trafficking and People Smuggling.	2018 – 2020
	Publish activities undertaken to implement the Fee Free Basic Education Policy.	2018 – 2020
	Publish activities undertaken to implement the National Education Action Plan.	2018 – 2020
	Publish activities undertaken to implement the United Nations Pacific Strategy.	2019 – 2020
Social Programs	Implement and fully fund programs to address and eliminate child labor—especially in the agriculture sector—and the worst forms of child labor.	2018 – 2020
	Collect and publish data on the extent and nature of child labor to inform policies and programs.	2013 – 2020
	Eliminate barriers to basic education, including by improving access to school transportation and eliminating school-related fees.	2014 – 2020

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