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2021 Findings on the Worst Forms of Child Labor: Somalia

Minimal Advancement – Efforts Made but Continued Practices that Delayed Advancement

In 2021, Somalia made minimal advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. The Federal Government of Somalia and Federal Member States participated in a workshop to validate findings from an International Labor Organization-conducted assessment of child labor in Somalia, which will inform future programming and policies in Somalia, including the National Action Plan to address child labor. The Ministry of Defense's Child Protection Unit also organized a number of training and awareness-raising forums to support implementation of the United Nations-supported 2012 action plans and the 2019 roadmap to end and prevent the recruitment and use of children in armed conflict. However, despite new initiatives to address child labor, Somalia is receiving an assessment of minimal advancement because it continued to implement practices that delay advancement to eliminate child labor. During the reporting period, there is evidence that federal and state security forces continued to recruit and use children in armed conflict, in violation of national law. In other cases, government security forces detained children for suspected association with armed groups, in some cases subjecting them to lengthy interrogations and coerced confessions. Children in Somalia are subjected to the worst forms of child labor, including in armed conflict. Children also perform dangerous tasks in street work. The government did not conduct worksite inspections in 2021. Somali laws do not criminally prohibit child labor trafficking, commercial sexual exploitation, or the recruitment of children by non-state armed groups. The government did not provide complete information on its criminal law enforcement efforts to address child labor for inclusion in this report.

I. Prevalence and Sectoral Distribution of Child Labor

Children in Somalia are subjected to the worst forms of child labor, including in armed conflict. (1) Children also perform dangerous tasks in street work. (2,3) Table 1 provides key indicators on children's work and education in Somalia. Data on some of these indicators are not available from the sources used in this report. (4) In 2019, the ILO funded Somalia's first labor force survey, which included sectoral information on child labor and IDPs. The government published the survey in 2021 and is working with the ILO to validate the statistics related to child labor. (4-6)

Children	Related Entity	Age	Percent
Working (%)	Somalia (North East zone)	5 to 14	9.5 (Unavailable)
	Somalia (Somaliland)	5 to 14	13.2 (Unavailable)
Attending School (%)	Somalia (North East zone)	5 to 14	38.3
	Somalia (Somaliland)	5 to 14	44.2
Combining Work and School (%)	Somalia (North East zone)	7 to 14	4.7
	Somalia (Somaliland)	7 to 14	6.6
Primary Completion Rate (%)	All (Somalia)		Unavailable

Table 1. Statistics on Children's Work and Education

Primary completion rate was unavailable from UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2022. (7)

Source for all other data: International Labor Organization's analysis from Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 4 (MICS 4), 2011. (8)

Based on a review of available information, Table 2 provides an overview of children's work by sector

and activity.

Sector/Industry	Activity
Agriculture	Farming, including planting, weeding, harvesting, and cleaning and packing crops (1,4,9-11)
	Herding livestock, including goats, sheep, and camels (1,4,9)
	Fishing, including cleaning fish (1,4)
Industry	Construction, including crushing stones, mining, and excavating (1,2,4,11)
	Producing garments and textiles (12)
Services	Working as maids or domestic staff in hotels and private residences (1,9,10)
	Domestic work (1,3,9,13)
	Street work, including shining shoes, washing cars, driving minibuses, vending, and transporting and selling <i>khat</i> (a legal, amphetamine-like stimulant) (1-4,9-13)
	Voluntarily recruited children used in hostilities by state armed groups (1,2,9,14)
Categorical Worst Forms of Child Labor‡	Recruitment of children by state and non-state armed groups for use in armed conflict and supporting roles, including as cooks, porters, and informants, or to operate checkpoints (1,3,4,14,15)
	Forced labor in domestic work, agriculture, herding livestock, breaking rocks, selling or transporting <i>khat</i> , begging, and construction work (9,12,14)
	Use in illicit activities, including trafficking drugs, sometimes as a result of human trafficking (4)
	Commercial sexual exploitation as a result of human trafficking (14)

Table 2. Overview of Children's Work by Sector and Activity

‡ Child labor understood as the worst forms of child labor *per se* under Article 3(a)–(c) of ILO C. 182.

The Federal Government of Somalia (FGS) maintains limited territorial control outside populated areas and some forward operating bases. Al-Shabaab, a non-state armed group, occupies rural areas in south-central Somalia. (9) In other parts of the country, essential governance functions were provided by state administrations, including the Somaliland region in the northwest. (9,14)

In 2021, as in previous years, Somalia recorded one of the world's highest numbers of child abductions by non-state actors. (16-18) State and non-state armed groups recruited at 1,116 children during the reporting period. (18-20) Al-Shabaab, which forcibly recruited children as young as age 8 into its ranks, committed a majority of these violations, recruiting 854 children in 2021. (18-20) Al-Shabaab fighters infiltrate *madrassas* and mosques, using deception or coercion tactics to forcibly recruit victims, including children, into sexual slavery and combat and support roles. (14) Al-Shabaab also continued the practice of forcing communities to turn over male children to serve as child soldiers, imposing a financial penalty on families who refused to cooperate. (9,14,16,17,21,22) In addition, Al-Shabaab used children to plant explosive devices, act as human shields, conduct assassinations and suicide attacks, gather intelligence, and provide domestic services. Some girls also were forced into sexual servitude. (2,14,23) Somalia's numerous clan militias also reportedly recruited children for use in armed conflict. (1,14,17) In Somalia, clan membership is often the primary point for social affiliation and community identity. (24) Children from minority clan households are uniquely vulnerable to forced recruitment by military groups, including at school. (25)

The reporting period saw continued allegations of grave violations against children linked to federal and state government security forces, including recruitment and use, killing and maiming, and sexual violence. (16,18,26-28) Perpetrators included federal armed forces and security services, and regional forces and police in Galmudug, Jubaland, and Puntland. (28) In 2021, the UN verified the recruitment and use of children by the Somali Police Force (SPF-75 children recruited), the Somali National Army (SNA-60 children recruited), and the National Intelligence and Security Agency (3 children recruited); Jubaland forces (21 children recruited), Galmudug forces (14 children recruited), Puntland forces (26 children recruited), Jubaland police (2 children recruited), Puntland police (1 child recruited), and Galmudug police (4 children recruited); and clan militia (63 children recruited). (18-20,29,30) Child recruitment is in violation of Somalia's General Order No. 1, which prohibits military personnel from recruiting and employing child soldiers. (14,31)

As Somalia passes its third decade of internal armed conflict, the country's IDP population stands at 2.95 million, with unofficial estimates approaching 3.2 million. (9,32) IDPs, including children, remain acutely vulnerable to sex trafficking and forced labor. The closure of international borders to contain the COVID-19 pandemic led to an uptick in irregular migration and human trafficking through unofficial border crossings. (33,34) These developments compounded the risks to vulnerable populations, including children. (14,33,34) Many were transited through Nairobi's Eastleigh neighborhood, a known trafficking hub. Research also found that traffickers exploit children from Somalia in forced begging in Saudi Arabia and Djibouti. (14) In Puntland, hundreds of children allegedly were exploited in forced labor or sex trafficking. (35)

Somalia lacks a countrywide birth registration system, further complicating efforts to identify victims of child labor. (9) Prior to the onset of the pandemic, international partners estimated that Somalia's out-of-school population was 3 million, or approximately 60 percent of the school-age population, which is among the highest rates in the world. (36,37) Access to education further deteriorated amidst recurrent climate shocks, protracted violence, and pandemic-related lockdowns. State and non-state forces occupied and damaged schools, further limiting access to educational facilities. (16) The limited number of public schools outside of Mogadishu and high fees charged by private schools also undercut enrollment rates. (9,25) Girls faced additional obstacles, including lower prioritization of girls' education and insufficient female teachers, which negatively affected girls' attendance and learning. (2,38)

Pastoralist communities, which account for approximately 25 percent of Somalia's population, faced additional impediments to education, as their nomadic existence makes static schools impractical. The primary enrollment rate for nomadic or pastoralist children was 3.1 percent. (2) Children and youth among these groups are considered at high risk of exploitation or recruitment into armed groups such as al-Shabaab. (9,25) For many IDP children, nearby schools do not exist; even where donors build temporary learning spaces, IDP children typically experienced disrupted education due to constant movement and unpredictable evictions from their camp homes. (2) Drought conditions and water scarcity likely exacerbated children's vulnerability to recruitment by armed groups and other worst forms of child labor. UNICEF estimates that as many as 420,000 children living under drought conditions were at risk of leaving school. (39)

II. Legal Framework for Child Labor

Somalia has ratified some key international conventions concerning child labor (Table 3).

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	

Table 3. Ratification of International Conventions on Child Labor

The government has established laws and regulations related to child labor (Table 4). However, gaps exist in Somalia's legal framework to adequately protect children from the worst forms of child labor, including prohibiting the recruitment and use of children under age 18 in armed conflict.

Standard	Meets International Standards	Age	Legislation
Minimum Age for Work	Yes	15	Article 93 of the Labor Code; Article 38(1) of the Private Sector Employees Law (40,41)
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work	Yes	18	Article 90 of the Labor Code; Article 38(2) of the Private Sector Employees Law; Article 29 of the Provisional Constitution (40-42)
Identification of Hazardous Occupations or Activities Prohibited for Children	No		Articles 90 and 94 of the Labor Code; Articles 10 and 38(4) of the Private Sector Employees Law (40,41)
Prohibition of Forced Labor	Yes		Articles 455 and 464 of the Penal Code (43)
Prohibition of Child Trafficking	No		
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children	No		Articles 403, 404, 407, and 408 of the Penal Code (43)
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities	No		
Minimum Age for Voluntary State Military Recruitment	Yes	18	General Order No. 1 (31)
Prohibition of Compulsory Recruitment of Children by (State) Military			General Order No. 1 (31)
Prohibition of Military Recruitment by Non-state Armed Groups	No		Article 29 of the Provisional Constitution (42)
Compulsory Education Age	No	14‡	Articles 13 and 15 of the General Education Law (44)
Free Public Education	Yes		Article 14 of the General Education Law (44)

Table 4. Laws and Regulations on Child Labor

‡ Age calculated based on available information (44)

It is unclear whether laws enacted prior to the 1991 civil war are still in effect in Somalia. However, in 2014, Parliament issued a public statement citing some pre-1991 laws, which suggests that the FGS continued to recognize relevant historic laws. (5) The Federal Member States (FMS), which are semi-autonomous regions, maintain separate legal systems. (45) Nevertheless, the FGS asserts that the 1972 Labor Code, the Provisional Constitution, and newly enacted laws apply nationally. (2) Officials in the Somaliland region, which has self-declared independence from the FGS, have criminalized human trafficking for the purposes of commercial sexual exploitation and have a draft trafficking in persons law that is pending parliamentary approval. (2,34,46,47)

In 2021, the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs (MOLSA) finished drafting a National Labor Code; the legislation awaits ratification in the upper house of Parliament. (2,5,9,48) The draft Labor Code prohibits forced or compulsory recruitment of children for use in armed conflict, however Somalia currently lacks a legal standard prohibiting the recruitment of children by non-state armed groups. (38) During the reporting period, the Ministry of Women and Human Rights Development also drafted the Child Rights Bill, which will bring Somalia's legal framework into alignment with the Convention on the Rights of the Child. (5,21) The law will protect all children under age 18 from prosecution as an adult and will codify a compulsory education age. (5) It is awaiting cabinet-level approval. (2) Currently, however, the gap between the end of compulsory education and the minimum age for work leaves children age 14 vulnerable to child labor because they are not required to attend school but may not legally work. (13,44)

Although the Provisional Constitution of 2012 does not provide a minimum age for employment, the 1972 Labor Code establishes age 15 as the minimum age for work. (40) Moreover, although the Labor Code establishes age 12 as the minimum age for light work and describes the conditions under which it may be undertaken, it neither determines the activities in which light work may be permitted nor prescribes the number of hours per week for light work. Furthermore, there is no comprehensive legislation that identifies hazardous occupations and activities for children. (40) While the 1972 Labor Code enables the publication of a hazardous works list, the government has not determined by regulation the types of hazardous work prohibited for children. (9,40)

The FGS lacks legislation prohibiting human trafficking, including of children, or the use of children in illicit activities. Laws prohibiting the commercial sexual exploitation of children also are not sufficient because the use, procuring, and offering of a child for prostitution, pornography, and pornographic performances are not criminally prohibited.(40) Furthermore, it appears that under Article 405 of the Criminal Code, children involved in prostitution are not protected from criminal charges. The Penal Code requires extensive updating, an effort that the international community has attempted to support without success. (40) Many fines in the Criminal Code equal less than \$1, which does not serve as an effective deterrent. (2,43,49)

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.

Organization/Agency	Role
Somali Police Force (SPF)	Investigates and enforces laws related to the worst forms of child labor. (1,9) The Counter-Trafficking and Organized Crime Unit has six officers. SPF's Airport Police Task Force investigators are trained to recognize trafficked persons based on behavioral indicators and suspicious documents. (34) The SPF Criminal Investigation Division also continued to operate units dedicated to investigating cases of human trafficking for prosecution. (1,34,50,51)
Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs (MOLSA)	Investigates and enforces laws related to the worst forms of child labor. MOLSA's regional office in Banaadir employs 35 labor inspectors. (2) MOLSA also maintains an Office for the Senior Advisor on Child Labor under its Department of Legal and Labor Relations. The senior advisor, who oversees a staff of six, is charged with drafting and implementing a National Action Plan to address the worst forms of child labor in Somalia. (2,52,53)
Ministry of Defense	Operates separately from civilian law enforcement bodies and leads efforts to combat the use of child recruitment and abduction by al-Shabaab. (9) Through the Child Protection Unit, screens Somali National Army (SNA) units for child soldiers. (9,10) Raises awareness of child soldier issues, and implements standard operating procedures on protecting children associated with armed conflict. (2)
Puntland Agencies	Enforcement Includes the Puntland Ministry of Justice, which prosecutes human trafficking cases within Puntland. (54) Also includes security forces that investigate and enforce human trafficking laws within Puntland. (54)
Somaliland Agencies	Enforcement Includes the Somaliland Police, who investigate human trafficking within the Somaliland region. (50) Also includes the Somaliland Attorney General's Office that prosecutes human trafficking cases within the Somaliland region. (50)

Table 5. Agencies Responsible for Child Labor Law Enforcement

Labor Law Enforcement

In 2021, labor law enforcement agencies in Somalia took actions to address child labor (Table 6). However, the absence of worksite inspections conducted at the national level in Somalia may have impeded the enforcement of child labor laws.

Overview of Labor Law Enforcement	2020	2021
Labor Inspectorate Funding	\$0 (2)	\$0 (1)

Number of Labor Inspectors	35 (2)	35 (1)
Mechanism to Assess Civil Penalties	Yes (40)	Yes (40)
Initial Training for New Labor Inspectors	Yes (2)	No (55)
Training on New Laws Related to Child Labor	Yes (2)	N/A (55)
Refresher Courses Provided	Unknown (2)	No (55)
Number of Labor Inspections Conducted	2 (2)	0 (55)
Number of Child Labor Violations Found	0 (2)	N/A (55)
Number of Child Labor Violations for Which Penalties Were Imposed	N/A	N/A (55)
Number of Child Labor Penalties Imposed that Were Collected	N/A	N/A (55)
Routine Inspections Conducted	Unknown (2)	No (55)
Routine Inspections Targeted	Unknown (2)	No (55)
Unannounced Inspections Permitted	Yes (40)	Yes (40)
Unannounced Inspections Conducted	Yes (2)	No (55)
Complaint Mechanism Exists	Yes (2)	Yes (1)
Reciprocal Referral Mechanism Exists Between Labor Authorities and Social Services	No (2)	No (1)

Table 6. Labor Law Enforcement Efforts Related to Child Labor

MOLSA formally established a labor inspectorate in 2020, hiring and training 35 inspectors for its Banaadir regional office. (2) However, the number of labor inspectors remains insufficient for the size of the Somali workforce, which includes nearly 3 million workers. According to the ILO's technical advice of a ratio approaching 1 inspector for every 40,000 workers in less developed economies, Somalia would employ about 75 inspectors. (56,57) MOLSA's mandate allows for inspections based on requests sent by other authorities such as the police, and inspectors are authorized to issue fines indirectly upon approval of a senior advisor in the ministry. However, the labor inspectorate does not have any dedicated funding and research indicates that there were no labor inspections conducted in 2021.(2)

Criminal Law Enforcement

In 2021, criminal law enforcement agencies in Somalia took actions to address child labor (Table 7). However, gaps exist within the operations of enforcement agencies that may hinder adequate criminal law enforcement, including insufficient financial resources.

Overview of Criminal Law Enforcement	2020	2021
Initial Training for New Criminal Investigators	No (2)	Yes (51)
Training on New Laws Related to the Worst Forms of Child Labor	No (2)	Unknown (1)
Refresher Courses Provided	No (2)	Yes (51)
Number of Investigations	7 (51)	Unknown (51)

Number of Violations Found	1,735 (2,58)	1,161 (1,18)
Number of Prosecutions Initiated	Unknown (2)	Unknown (51)
Number of Convictions	Unknown (2)	Unknown (51)
Imposed Penalties for Violations Related to the Worst Forms of Child Labor	Unknown (2)	No (1)
Reciprocal Referral Mechanism Exists Between Criminal Authorities and Social Services	Yes (2,58)	Yes (2,58)

Table 7. Criminal Law Enforcement Efforts Related to Child Labor

In 2021, the FGS Attorney General's Office undertook investigations and prosecuted 9 cases of forced labor, involving 30 defendants under the Somali Penal Code; however, research could not confirm the ages of the individuals subjected to forced labor to determine whether these cases were related to the worst forms of child labor. (51) In addition, in July 2021, the IOM reported that approximately 20 girls ages 14 to 16 were referred to Somali immigration authorities as potential trafficking victims. (51) The authorities found the girls' families and returned them to their relatives. However, Somalia lacks a standardized system to effectively respond to these types of cases. (51) The government, working with UNICEF and other NGOs, has established a limited mechanism for case management, family tracing and reunification, and the provision of social services in response to trafficking in persons and other related worst forms of child labor. (34,58)

In December 2021, the Somali Police Force's Criminal Investigation Department, with USDOS funding, established two new anti-trafficking units, one in Garowe, Puntland and one in Baidoa, South West State. (51) Between November 27 and December 2, 2021, investigators assigned to these units completed UNODC-delivered training on the investigation of trafficking in persons and smuggling of migrants cases. (51) Despite these developments, the SPF and other criminal law enforcement authorities remained understaffed and undertrained, and lacked sufficient financial resources to conduct investigations and enforce laws on the worst forms of child labor. (9) Resources to assist victims of human trafficking also were limited to government-operated Migrant Response Centers in Bosaso, Hargeisa, and Mogadishu. (9,34) Government authorities, including in the Somaliland region, continued to rely on the international community to provide support to survivors of trafficking and forced labor. (51) In addition, there were reports that in 2021, the Somali National Police recruited and used at least 75 children in police activities. (19,20,29,30)

A general command order barring the recruitment and use of children by the SNA remained in effect during the reporting period. Nevertheless, government security forces recruited and used children in 2021, highlighting gaps in enforcement and uneven command and control of some units. (59) The Child Protection Unit does not refer cases relating to child soldiers to the civilian justice system; however, it would theoretically prosecute violations in the military justice system. (9) In 2021, FGS security forces (police and SNA) detained at least 136 children, at times in the company of adults, for their suspected association with non-state armed groups. (19,20,29,30) Research finds that detained children have sometimes been interrogated without legal representation and coerced into signing or recording confessions. (17,22,42)

Somalia's FMS command separate police and military forces. These forces are not under the FGS chain of command. (60,61) The federal and regional governments did not provide information on their criminal law enforcement efforts for inclusion in this report. However, research indicates that Galmudug, Jubaland, and Puntland forces recruited children during the reporting period. There is evidence that a brigade of the Jubaland Security Forces, commanded by Abdirashid Janan, forcibly recruited children during the early months of 2021. (17,33,62) There is no evidence that the FGS or member states prosecuted offenders during the reporting period. (17,33) Moreover, the Juvenile Justice Law of Puntland defines a child as anyone age 14 and under; consequently, the government detained and issued prison sentences, including life imprisonment, to children over age 14 for their association with armed groups. (22,63)

IV. Coordination of Government Efforts on Child Labor

The FGS 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.

Coordinating Body	Role & Description
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Child Protection Unit (CPU), Ministry of Defense	<p>Raises awareness of child soldier issues and works with international partners and donors to implement standard operating procedures on protecting children associated with armed conflict. (2,34) Works in concert with the SPF, which is responsible for investigating and enforcing laws against the worst forms of child labor. (2) In 2021, the Federal Government of Somalia (FGS) continued to rely on CPU to screen SNA forces for underage recruits and more broadly raise awareness of child soldiers in Somalia, screening 3,296 SNA personnel during the reporting period. (51,64,65) CPU also conducted training and awareness campaigns to prevent the recruitment and use of child soldiers, which included an event commemorating the International Day Against the Use of Child Soldiers. (65) Finally, CPU continued to make progress on its African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) transition strategy, including through capacity building and training. (1,64)</p>
Children Associated with Armed Conflict Working Group (CAACWG)	<p>Implements the 2012 Action Plan to Eliminate Recruitment and Use of Child Soldiers and the Action Plan to End the Killing and Maiming of Children in Contravention of International Law. (9) Co-chaired by CPU and UNICEF, includes other Ministry of Defense officials, representatives of the Ministry of Women and other relevant ministries, and UN officials. (60,66) In 2020, the government expanded the scope of CAACWG by including officials from the Federal Member States (FMS). (9,34) In 2021, the CAACWG met on four occasions to support the continued implementation of the 2019 Roadmap to Prevent the Recruitment and Use of Children in Armed Conflict. (65)</p>
Human Trafficking Task Forces	<p>FGS, Puntland, and the Somaliland region maintain different coordinating bodies to combat human trafficking. The Office of the Special Envoy for Children and Migrants' Rights, which includes a Task Force on Human Trafficking and Smuggling, leads FGS' anti-trafficking efforts. (23) It was inactive during the reporting period. (51) Separately, Puntland's Counter-Trafficking Board leads the state's anti-trafficking efforts. Somaliland's Counter-Human Trafficking Agency also coordinates the development of legislation and the collection of data in the semi-autonomous region. (23) Resources to assist victims of human trafficking were limited to government-operated Migrant Response Centers in Bosaso, Hargeisa, and Mogadishu during the reporting period. As of January 2021, the FGS Special Envoy for Children and Migrants' rights was working from Kenya and possibly had a reduced role in overseeing efforts on migration, human trafficking, and reintegration across the state and regional governments. (34)</p>
Somali National Tripartite Consultative Committee (SNTCC)	<p>Manages implementation of the Labor Code and the National Employment Policy. An ILO-recognized body, it meets quarterly to review progress and has taken on child labor as an area of special concern. (9) The committee has included child labor as a priority focus, which has enabled the ministry to coordinate efforts within the government and between the government and the private sector. (9) The committee was active until 2021, meeting quarterly; however, activities were suspended due to the delayed presidential elections. (1,67)</p>

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

MOLSA coordinates informally with the Ministry of Women and Human Rights Development and the Ministry of Defense on child labor-related issues. Other law enforcement agencies with whom MOLSA coordinates include the SPF, the National Intelligence and Security Agency, and the Immigration and Naturalization Directorate. (2) Although these agencies loosely coordinate their activities, there is no formal coordination mechanism to address other forms of child labor, including forced labor in domestic work, agriculture, and herding livestock. During the reporting period, the effects of the pandemic continued to hinder coordination due to restrictions on in-person meetings. (51)

The FGS Ministry of Internal Security, along with other cabinet-level entities, previously chaired a High-Level Task Force on Migration, which included a working group on human trafficking; however, the task force was inactive this year. Puntland independently instituted their own laws and resource mechanisms without coordinating with the FGS. (34)

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 the lack of scope of existing policies to address all worst forms of child labor.

Policy	Description
National Employment Policy	Provides the SNTCC with a roadmap for improving labor conditions, including stipulations related to child labor. The policy was designed with ILO support under a Joint UN Project on Youth Employment in Somalia and was adopted in February 2019. (9,48) During the reporting period, FGS and FMS validated an ILO Child Labor Assessment in Somalia, which will form the basis of a forthcoming National Action Plan to Address the Worst Forms of Child Labor. The plan calls for the deployment of a national child labor prevalence survey and numerous stakeholder meetings, including with line ministries from Somalia's FMS. (68)
UN Child Soldier Action Plans	Establish a strategy for identifying and removing children from the SNA ranks through education and monitoring of military camps. (2,69) In 2012, FGS committed to two UN Action Plans to end grave violations against children—the Action Plan to Eliminate Recruitment and Use of Child Soldiers and the Action Plan to End the Killing and Maiming of Children in Contravention of International Law. In October 2019, the government committed to a UN Roadmap to expedite the implementation of the two action plans. (70,71) The adoption of the 2019 Roadmap to Prevent the Recruitment and Use of Children in Armed Conflict will address grave violations, including recruitment and use. (16) Federal governments, including Southwest and Galmudug, made efforts to implement both the 2012 Action Plan and the 2019 Roadmap on ending the recruitment and use of children in armed conflict. Somalia's Ministry of Defense, for example, collaborated with other security forces, including the Somali Federal Darwish Police and the SPF, on child protection-related issues. (17,33)
Somalia Social Protection Policy	Develops and strengthens components of a national social protection system, including safety net programs. Provisions include a guaranteed income floor for vulnerable households and families with children under age 5. (72,73) The tiered policy is designed to protect the poorest strata of society from sinking into destitution, prevent the moderately poor from sliding into extreme poverty, and promote the livelihoods of at-risk populations. (9) The policy focuses, in part, on mitigating the vulnerability of IDPs and other populations to gender-based violence and human trafficking. (1,34) A Shock Responsive Safety Net for Human Capital Project was created to implement the Somalia Social Protection Policy. (74) The project is currently active and provides cash transfers to targeted poor and vulnerable households. As of January 2022, of the 200,000 targeted households, 188,000 have benefited from the project. (74,75)
National Development Plan (2020–2024)	Broad-based security and poverty reduction policy, with provisions for ending all forms of violence against children, including child labor, and developing and implementing a national child labor policy. Under the National Development Plan's Education Sector Strategic Plan, the Ministry of Education launched a primary school curriculum and established a national secondary school graduation examination. (76,77) Research could not determine whether activities were undertaken to implement the National Development Plan during the reporting period. (1)

Table 9. Key Policies Related to Child Labor

‡ The government has other policies that may have addressed child labor issues or had an impact on child labor. (81)

Although the government has some policies that address child soldiers, research found no evidence of any policies to address child labor in agriculture, industry, street work, commercial sexual exploitation, or domestic work.

VI. Social Programs to Address Child Labor

In 2021, the government funded and participated in programs that include the goal of eliminating child labor (Table 10). However, gaps exist in these social programs, including the inadequacy of programs to address the full scope of the problem in all sectors.

Program	Description
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ACT to Protect Children Affected by Armed Conflict†	<p>Federal Government of Somalia awareness-raising initiative launched under the auspices of a global UN advocacy campaign highlighting children in armed conflict. (82) Throughout the year, Child Protection Units continued to disseminate radio and print media content regarding the prevention of child recruitment and conscription in armed conflict. (2,19,34) To commemorate the Day of the African Child, the United National Assistance Mission in Somalia and AMISOM, in coordination with the Ministry of Defense and the FMS Ministries of Women and Human Rights Development in Baidoa and Kismayo, organized numerous events. These included the dissemination of awareness-raising materials from the campaign "ACT to Protect Children Affected by Armed Conflict." (19) Civil society, women and youth groups and Somali security forces participated. (19)</p>
Donor-Funded Programs	<p>UNICEF partnerships with the FGS Ministry of Defense to address issues related to the recruitment and use of child soldiers in Somalia. (58) Includes the Defectors Reintegration Program that rehabilitates and reintegrates former combatants, emphasizing the specific needs of former child soldiers, including demobilized female combatants and their dependents. (58) Centers located in Baidoa, Beledweyne, Kismayo, and Mogadishu provide accommodations, medical care, psychological counseling, education, and vocational training to former combatants. (58,83) During the reporting period, the program facilitated the release of 1,041 children formerly associated with armed groups, providing them with reintegration support, including family reunification and access to safe shelters, medical care, and formal and informal education. (39) UNICEF programs also include educational services that provided emergency education packages to 40,723 children, school supplies reaching 20,000 children, and access to safe drinking water reaching 20,723 children. (39) UNICEF-supported awareness-raising campaigns, which focus on the prevention of child recruitment, child marriage, female genital mutilation, and gender-based violence, reached more than 170,000 people during the reporting period. (39) Donor-funded programs also include the WFP Country Strategic Plan, which provides both conditional and unconditional food or cash-based food assistance to vulnerable children. (84) In 2021, WFP provided hot meals and nutritional assistance to 110,000 boys and girls through its homegrown school feeding programs. (85)</p>
Peace Building Fund	<p>\$2 million UN-funded project that supports the prevention of child recruitment and the reintegration of former child soldiers. (71) The project, announced in October 2019 in Baidoa, the capital of South West State, supplements SNA child soldier prevention and screening methods and calls for the identified children to be released, rehabilitated, and reintegrated into society. (21,23,71) Research was unable to determine whether activities were undertaken to implement the program during the reporting period.</p>
Joint Program on Youth Employment in Somalia	<p>Joint program by the Food and Agriculture Organization, ILO, UNDP, UN-Habitat, and the UN Industrial Development Organization that seeks to improve sustainable employment opportunities for youth and develop their skills to respond to needs in the labor market. (86) Research was unable to determine whether activities were undertaken to implement the program during the reporting period.</p>
Global Accelerator Lab Project* 8.7	<p>DOL-supported global project, implemented by ILO, which will support broader and more effective action under Alliance 8.7, a global partnership to assist UN member states to end child labor, forced labor, human trafficking, and modern slavery by 2030. The project will facilitate dialogue among regional institutions on forced labor and child labor, and encourage regional and country ownership of initiatives to reduce child and forced labor. (87) In addition, the project will support countries, such as Somalia, in achieving their commitments to eradicate child labor, forced labor, human trafficking, and modern slavery, in line with the UN Sustainable Development Goals' Target 8.7, by helping countries replicate promising practices and identify and implement new solutions. (87) For additional information, please see our website.</p>

Table 10. Key Social Programs to Address Child Labor

* Program was launched during the reporting period. (87)

† Program is partially funded by the FGS. (23)

‡ The government had other social programs that may have included the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor. (88)

The ILO supported the MOLSA in conducting a child labor assessment to determine the key drivers of child labor in Somalia. Findings will be used to support the development of a more comprehensive National Action Plan Against Child Labor. (1,68)

Although the FGS implemented programs to address child soldiers and child trafficking, research found that existing programs were insufficient to address the scope of the problem, including in street work and forced labor in agriculture.

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 Somalia (Table 11).

Area	Related Entity	Suggested Action	Year(s) Suggested
Legal Framework		Ratify the UN CRC Optional Protocol on Armed Conflict.	2013 – 2021
		Ratify ILO Convention 138.	2021
		Ratify the UN CRC Optional Protocol on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution, and Child Pornography.	2013 – 2021
		Ratify the Palermo Protocol on Trafficking in Persons.	2013 – 2021
		Clarify whether the pre-1991 Labor Code and Penal Code are still in effect under the Federal Government of Somalia.	2009 – 2021
		Ensure that the law's light work provisions specify the activities in which light work may be undertaken and limit the number of hours for light work.	2009 – 2021
		Determine by national law or regulation the types of hazardous work prohibited for children, after consultation with employers' and workers' organizations,	2009 – 2021
		Raise the compulsory education age to be commensurate with the minimum age for work.	2009 – 2021
		Criminally prohibit using, procuring, and offering a child for prostitution, pornography, and pornographic performances.	2015 – 2021
		Ensure that penalties for the commercial sexual exploitation of children are sufficiently stringent to deter violations.	2013 – 2021
		Ensure that the law protects children involved in commercial sexual exploitation from criminal charges.	2011 – 2021
		Criminally prohibit child trafficking for the purposes of labor and sexual exploitation.	2009 – 2021
		Criminally prohibit the use of children in illicit activities.	2009 – 2021
	Criminally prohibit the recruitment of children under age 18 by non-state armed groups.	2016 – 2021	

Enforcement	Ensure that the laborinspectorate has dedicated funding.	2021
	Ensure that labor inspections are conducted, including in targeted sectors in which child labor most frequently occurs.	2021
	Institutionalize training for labor inspectors, including by training new labor inspectors at the beginning of their employment and providing refresher courses.	2021
	Increase the number of labor inspectors to meet the ILO's technical advice.	2020 – 2021
	Establish a referral mechanism between the labor inspectorate and social welfare services for children subjected to child labor.	2014 – 2021
	Publish information on criminal law enforcement efforts.	2021
	Ensure that criminal law enforcement officials receive sufficient training and resources to investigate, prosecute, and convict violators of the worst forms of child labor.	2012 – 2021
	Cease the recruitment and use of child soldiers by the Somali Police Force, the National Intelligence and Security Agency, and the Somali National Army, as well as Galmudug, Jubaland, and Puntland forces and all allied militia. Investigate, prosecute, and punish, as appropriate, all commanders who recruit and use children.	2015 – 2021
	Ensure that children associated with armed groups are referred to social services providers while ceasing the practices of detaining them with adults, subjecting them to lengthy interrogations without legal representation, eliciting coerced confessions, and imposing long prison terms. Transfer children currently in detention to social services providers.	2015 – 2021
Coordination	Establish coordinating mechanisms to combat all forms of child labor.	2009 – 2021
	Ensure that all coordinating bodies are active and able to carry out their intended mandates.	2021
	Puntland independently instituted their own laws and resource mechanisms without coordinating with FGS.	Strengthen coordination between the Federal Government of Somalia and the Federal Member States, including Puntland.
Government Policies	Adopt policies to address child labor in agriculture, industry, street work, and domestic work.	2018 – 2021

**Social
Programs**

Ensure that activities are undertaken to implement the Somalia Social Protection Policy and the National Development Plan and 2021 publish the results from activities implemented during the reporting period

Adopt a countrywide birth registration system to facilitate identification of child labor 2019 – 2021 violations.

Enhance efforts to eliminate barriers and make education accessible and safe for all children by removing all armed groups from educational facilities, constructing schools 2013 – 2021 outside Mogadishu, removing enrollment fees, and ensuring that girls, IDP children, and nomadic and rural children have access.

Develop programs to address all forms of child labor, including in street work and forced labor in agriculture. Expand the scope of 2009 – 2021 existing programs to address the use of children in armed conflict.

Table 11. Suggested Government Actions to Eliminate Child Labor

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