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2020 Findings on the Worst Forms of Child Labor: Iraq

Minimal Advancement – Efforts Made but Continued Practice that Delayed Advancement

In 2020, Iraq made minimal advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. The Ministry of Interior investigated several cases implicating Ministry of Interior police and Iraqi Security Forces members in sex trafficking crimes, including prosecution, conviction, and sentencing of six police officers and two Internal Security Forces service members for trafficking boys and girls into sexual exploitation. In addition, the Ministry of Interior upgraded the Anti-Trafficking Directorate from departmental to directorate status and increased its allocation of financial and human resources. However, despite initiatives to address child labor, Iraq is assessed as having made only minimal advancement because it continued a practice that delays advancement to eliminate child labor. Iraqi and Kurdistan Regional Government authorities continued to inappropriately detain and prosecute without legal representation children allegedly affiliated with ISIS—some of whom were victims of forcible recruitment and use—and used abusive interrogation techniques and torture to gain children's confessions. Children in Iraq are subjected to the worst forms of child labor, including in forced begging and in commercial sexual exploitation, each sometimes as a result of human trafficking. The government did not provide information on its labor or criminal law enforcement efforts for inclusion in this report. It also continues to lack programs that focus on assisting children involved in the worst forms of child labor.

I. Prevalence and Sectoral Distribution of Child Labor

Children in Iraq are subjected to the worst forms of child labor, including in forced begging and in commercial sexual exploitation, each sometimes as a result of human trafficking. (1-4) Household surveys, such as the 2018 Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) in Iraq, are not designed to capture the labor performed by IDPs living in camps and, therefore, the 2018 MICS survey does not capture children in this population involved in child labor. Table 1 provides key indicators on children's work and education in Iraq. Data on some of these indicators are not available from the sources used in this report.

Children	Related Entity	Age	Percent
Working (% and population)		5 to 14	4.8 (Unavailable)
Attending School (%)		5 to 14	78.4
Combining Work and School (%)		7 to 14	4.2
Primary Completion Rate (%)			Unavailable

Table 1. Statistics on Children's Work and Education

Primary completion rate was unavailable from UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2021. (5)

Source for all other data: International Labor Organization's analysis of statistics from Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 6 (MICS 6), 2018. (6)

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

Sector/Industry	Related Entity	Activity
Agriculture		Farming, including the production of dairy products (2,7)
		Herding livestock (7)
		Fishing, activities unknown (2)
Industry		Construction (7,8)
		Working in carpentry workshops (7,9)
		Making bricks, including transporting bricks and working in kilns (2,10)
		Working in factories, producing glass, household cleaners, paint, steel, garments and textiles, perfume, electrical materials, and plastic recycling (2,7,8,10-14)
Services		Street work, including selling goods, pushing carts, cleaning cars, and begging (11,12,14-17)
		Working at gas stations† and auto repair and other shops (2,10,12,18-20)
		Working in landfills, scavenging and collecting garbage† and scrap metal (10,14,15,21,22)
		Domestic work (7)

Working in hotels, restaurants, and tea houses (7,11,12,20)

Working at cemeteries (23)

Categorical Forms of Child Labor†	Worst	
		Use in illicit activities, including cross-border smuggling and drug and weapons trafficking, sometimes as a result of human trafficking (2,3,11,12,24,25)
		Domestic work as a result of human trafficking (26-28)
		Forced begging, sometimes as a result of human trafficking (2,4,29,30)
		Commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking (1,2,4,29-32)
		Recruitment of children by non-state armed groups for use in armed conflict (11,30,33)

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

† 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.

Throughout the country, some girls were subjected to commercial sexual exploitation through temporary marriages, including out of IDP camps. (3,32) Iranian-backed Popular Mobilization Forces (PMF)-affiliated militias Asaib Ahl al-Haq (AAH) and Harakat Hezbollah al-Nujaba (HHN) profited from and protected "marriage offices" operated by clerics that facilitate commercial sexual exploitation of children through temporary marriage; the practice reportedly increased in 2020. (3,4,30) Syrian girls from refugee camps in the Kurdistan region were sometimes forced into early or temporary marriages with Iraqi or other refugee men; some Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) authorities allegedly ignored or accepted bribes to ignore such cases, including those in which girls were sold multiple times. (3) Research found that women and girls in IDP camps, whose family members have alleged ties to ISIS, endure a complex system of sexual exploitation, sex trafficking, and abuse by armed actors residing in the camps, security and military officials, and camp personnel controlling access to humanitarian assistance and services. (29)

In 2020, the UN verified the combat death of a boy recruited by the PMF in 2018. (33)

Children also faced numerous other barriers to accessing education including displacement, the lack of local schools, the use of schools as shelters by IDPs, costs of transportation and school supplies, lack of sufficient educational facilities, and IDPs' and refugees' lack of identification documents required for school enrollment. (2,8,12) Sources indicate severe teacher shortages in Sinjar district as the result of teachers being displaced. (2) Insufficient access to transportation and destruction of schools during the conflict with ISIS continue to limit access to education; according to UNICEF, over half of the schools in Iraq require repairs. (2) Children of parents whose marriages were informal due to the woman being a minor, some displaced persons, and some children with suspected ties to ISIS lack identification documents required for school enrollment. (2,34,35) Additionally, as of June 2020, 1.39 million people, including about 648,000 children, remained internally displaced with poor access to education. (36,37)

Displaced children and refugee children are especially vulnerable to educational barriers, including the cost of transportation and school supplies, lack of documentation, host community children being given priority for classroom seats, and vulnerability to COVID-19 related school closures due to reduced access to mobile devices, the internet, and parental support. (2) Secondary and higher education systems refused to accept approximately 600 students who had studied at schools that used the Latin rather than Arabic alphabet; many of these students dropped out as a result. (2) Children with special needs had limited access to education due to lack of specialized teachers and school infrastructure. (2) UNICEF also reported that, while almost 92 percent of children enroll in primary schools, only half of children from economically disadvantaged families complete primary school and less than a quarter complete secondary education. (38)

II. Legal Framework for Child Labor

Iraq has ratified all 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 Iraq's and the KRG's legal framework to adequately protect children from the worst forms of child labor, including the prohibition of child trafficking.

Standard	Related Entity	Meets International Standards	Age	Legislation
Minimum Age for Work	Iraq	Yes	15	Article 7 of the 2015 Labor Law (39)
	Kurdistan Region	Yes	15	Article 90.1 of the 1987 Labor Law (40)

Minimum Age for Hazardous Work	Iraq	Yes	18	Article 95 of the 2015 Labor Law (39)
	Kurdistan Region	Yes	18	Articles 90.2 and 91.1 of the 1987 Labor Law (40)
Identification of Hazardous Occupations or Activities Prohibited for Children	Iraq	Yes		Articles 95 and 98 of the 2015 Labor Law; Ministry of Labor's Instruction 19 of 1987 (39,41)
	Kurdistan Region	Yes		Article 91.2 of the 1987 Labor Law; Ministry of Labor's Instruction 19 of 1987 (40,41)
Prohibition of Forced Labor	Iraq	Yes		Articles 9 and 11.2 of the 2015 Labor Law (39)
	Kurdistan Region	Yes		Articles 91.3(a), 91.4, and 97 of the 1987 Labor Law; Articles 1 and 6 of the Law to Combat Human Trafficking (40,42)
Prohibition of Child Trafficking	Iraq	No		Articles 1 and 6 of the Law to Combat Human Trafficking (42)
	Kurdistan Region	No		Articles 91.3(a), 91.4, and 97 of the 1987 Labor Law; Articles 1 and 6 of the Law to Combat Human Trafficking (40,42)
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children	Iraq	No		Articles 399 and 403 of the Penal Code (43)
	Kurdistan Region	Yes		Articles 91.3(b), 91.4, and 97 of the 1987 Labor Law (40)
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities	Iraq	No		
	Kurdistan Region	Yes		Articles 91.3(c), 91.4, and 97 of the 1987 Labor Law (40)
Minimum Age for Voluntary State Military Recruitment	Iraq and Kurdistan Region	Yes	18	Section 6(2) of the CPA Order 22 (44)
Prohibition of Compulsory Recruitment of Children by (State) Military	Iraq and Kurdistan Region	N/A*		
Prohibition of Military Recruitment by Non-state Armed Groups	Iraq and Kurdistan Region	No		
Compulsory Education Age	Iraq	No	12‡	Articles 8.1.1 and 11.1 of the Education Law; Article 1.3 of the Law on Compulsory Education (45,46)
	Kurdistan Region	Yes	15	Articles 6 and 10 of the Kurdistan Regional Government Ministry of Education Law (47)
Free Public Education	Iraq	Yes		Article 34.2 of the Constitution; Article 9 of the Education Law (45,48)
	Kurdistan Region	Yes		Article 10 of the Kurdistan Regional Government Ministry of Education Law (47)

Table 4. Laws and Regulations on Child Labor

* No conscription (44)

‡ Age calculated based on available information (45,46)

Article 117 of the Constitution of Iraq recognizes Kurdistan, which comprises the provinces of Dohuk, Erbil, Sulaimaniya, and Halabja, as a federal region. (48-51) Article 121 grants the Kurdistan Region the right to exercise legislative, executive, and judicial powers. (48) The Iraqi Kurdistan Parliament must endorse any laws that the Government of Iraq has passed after 1991 for such laws to enter into force in the Iraqi Kurdistan Region. (49-51)

In Iraq, Article 1 of the Law to Combat Human Trafficking requires force, fraud or coercion to be present as an element to constitute the crime of child trafficking, which is inconsistent with international standards, including Article 3 of the Palermo Protocol. (42) The Iraqi Kurdistan Parliament endorsed the Iraqi Law to Combat Human Trafficking, which means the operative human trafficking standard in the Kurdistan Region is also not in compliance with international standards. (52)

Iraq's laws do not sufficiently prohibit the use of children in prostitution or the use, procuring, and offering of children for the production of pornography or pornographic performances. (43) Moreover, under the Iraqi Education Law and under the Law on Compulsory Education, children are required to attend primary school for only 6 years, which is typically up to age 12. (45,46) This standard makes children ages 12 to 15 particularly vulnerable to child labor, because they are not required to be in school, yet they are not legally permitted to work.

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	Related Entity	Role
Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs (MOLSA)	Iraq	Enforces child labor laws and regulations through its Child Labor Unit. (12) Conducts research on child labor through its Childhood Welfare Authority. Receives complaints of child labor cases. (12)
Kurdistan Regional Government's Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs (KMOLSA)	Kurdistan Region	Enforces child labor laws and regulations in the Iraqi Kurdistan Region. Police units of the KRG's Ministry of Interior (KMOLSA) play a supporting role in the daily activities of KMOLSA. (12)
Ministry of Interior (MOI)	Iraq	Enforces criminal laws on the worst forms of child labor. Collaborates with MOLSA, the Iraqi Industries Federation, and the Confederation of Trade Unions to conduct inspection campaigns. (12) Maintains a hotline for victims of human trafficking, with calls routed directly to the Ministry's Anti-Trafficking Directorate. (12) In 2020, the MOI upgraded the Anti-Trafficking Directorate from departmental status, increasing its allocation of financial and human resources. (4)
Kurdistan Regional Government's Ministry of Interior (KMOLSA)	Kurdistan Region	Investigates cases of commercial sexual exploitation and human trafficking. (12) Includes a Counter Trafficking Directorate within KMOL. (52)

Table 5. Agencies Responsible for Child Labor Law Enforcement

Labor Law Enforcement

In 2020, labor law enforcement agencies in Iraq took actions to combat child labor (Table 6). However, gaps exist within the authority and operations of the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs (MOLSA) and the Kurdistan Regional Government's Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs (KMOLSA) that may hinder adequate labor law enforcement, including an insufficient number of labor inspectors.

Overview of Labor Law Enforcement	Related Entity	2019	2020
Labor Inspectorate Funding		Unknown (11)	Unknown
Number of Labor Inspectors		Unknown (11)	Unknown
Inspectorate Authorized to Assess Penalties		No (39)	No (39)
Initial Training for New Labor Inspectors		No (11)	No (2)
Training on New Laws Related to Child Labor		N/A	N/A
Refresher Courses Provided		No (11)	No (2)
Number of Labor Inspections Conducted		9,129 (2)	Unknown
Number Conducted at Worksite		Unknown (11)	Unknown
Number of Child Labor Violations Found		Unknown (11)	Unknown
Number of Child Labor Violations for Which Penalties Were Imposed		Unknown (11)	Unknown
Number of Child Labor Penalties Imposed that Were Collected		Unknown (11)	Unknown
Routine Inspections Conducted		Yes (11)	Yes (2)
Routine Inspections Targeted		Yes (11)	Yes (2)
Unannounced Inspections Permitted		Yes (39)	Yes (39)
Unannounced Inspections Conducted		Unknown (11)	Unknown
Complaint Mechanism Exists		Yes (11)	Yes (2)
Reciprocal Referral Mechanism Exists Between Labor Authorities and Social Services		Yes (11)	Yes (2)

Table 6. Labor Law Enforcement Efforts Related to Child Labor

During the reporting period, MOLSA reported that it conducted site visits to industrial zones to monitor for child labor. In addition, several brick factories were shut down as a result of such enforcement actions; it is unknown, however, if the child labor issues identified in these factories were remediated or if children found to be working there received appropriate services. (2) Sources indicate that KMOLSA and the Kurdistan Regional Government's Ministry of Interior (KMOLSA) were responsive regarding complaints of child labor in the Kurdistan region, but would only conduct child labor inspections in response to a complaint. (2)

In 2020, MOLSA employed 98 inspectors. The number of KMOLSA inspectors is unknown. (2) Although the total number of labor inspectors in Iraq during the reporting period is unknown, research indicates that in 2020 the number of labor inspectors was likely insufficient for the size of the Iraqi and KRG workforces, which combined includes over 8.9 million workers. (2,53) According to the ILO's technical advice of a ratio approaching 1 inspector for every 15,000 workers in industrializing economies, Iraq would employ about 593 labor inspectors. (54,55) In addition, both MOLSA and KMOLSA indicated that the number of inspectors is insufficient. (2)

In 2020, KMOLSA did not provide training on child labor to inspectors. (2) When inspectors identify child labor violations, they can issue warnings and instructions, or refer cases to court. (56) KMOLSA indicated that funding is insufficient to carry out its duties. (2)

The government did not provide information on its labor law enforcement efforts for inclusion in this report.

Criminal Law Enforcement

In 2020, criminal law enforcement agencies in Iraq took actions to combat child labor (Table 7). However, gaps exist within the operations of the criminal enforcement agencies that may hinder adequate criminal law enforcement, including training for criminal investigators and prosecution planning.

Overview of Criminal Law Enforcement	Related Entity	2019	2020
Initial Training for New Criminal Investigators		Unknown (11)	Unknown
Training on New Laws Related to the Worst Forms of Child Labor		N/A	N/A
Refresher Courses Provided		Unknown (11)	Unknown
Number of Investigations		Unknown (11)	Unknown
Number of Violations Found		Unknown (11)	Unknown
Number of Prosecutions Initiated		Unknown (11)	Unknown
Number of Convictions		Unknown (11)	Unknown
Imposed Penalties for Violations Related to The Worst Forms of Child Labor		Unknown (11)	Unknown
Reciprocal Referral Mechanism Exists Between Criminal Authorities and Social Services		Yes (11)	Yes (2)

Table 7. Criminal Law Enforcement Efforts Related to Child Labor

In 2020, Iraqi and KRG authorities continued to inappropriately detain and prosecute without legal representation children allegedly affiliated with ISIS—some of whom were victims of forcible recruitment and use—and used abusive interrogation techniques and torture to gain children's confessions. (3,29,33,57,58) During the reporting period, a special committee of judges in Nineveh undertook the task of adjudicating cases of individuals charged with joining ISIS as children. Sources indicate that 202 individuals were convicted, charges against 31 were dropped, and 44 were pardoned and released. (59) Observers hoped that the committee's adherence to international standards would be an example to other bodies; however, authorities dissolved the committee in June. Other bodies continue to adjudicate cases of children who joined ISIS. (59)

During the reporting period, the Ministry of Interior (MOI) took steps to investigate and hold criminally accountable military and security personnel for involvement in the sexual exploitation of children. MOI investigated several cases implicating MOI police and Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) members in sex trafficking crimes, including prosecution, conviction, and sentencing of six police officers to 10 years imprisonment and two ISF servicemembers to 8 years imprisonment for trafficking boys and girls into sexual exploitation. (4,60) However, reporting indicates that security and camp management personnel in IDP camps were complicit in the sexual exploitation and trafficking of girls. (4)

The government did not investigate or hold anyone criminally accountable for allegations of unlawful recruitment and use of child soldiers. (3) Some victims of human trafficking, including children who were forcibly recruited and used, continued to be punished for unlawful acts their traffickers compelled them to commit. (3,51) In addition, an NGO reported that police occasionally detained children engaged in street begging and kept them in custody before releasing them; police did not screen these children as possible victims of human trafficking or refer them to appropriate protection services. (3,11) However, during the reporting period, the Central Committee to Combat Trafficking in Persons conducted 18 training sessions for police officers and judges focusing on appropriately investigating and prosecuting human trafficking cases so that victims of trafficking are considered victims even if they had broken Iraqi law. (4)

According to the KRG, between 2014 and 2020, KRG authorities funded the rescue from ISIS of more than 3,545 kidnapped Yazidis, members of a minority religious group, including 1,600 children. Civil society organizations reported that returned victims of sexual exploitation remained vulnerable to exploitation upon their return to the Kurdistan Region. (4)

The government did not provide information on its criminal law enforcement efforts for inclusion in this report.

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 coordination among agencies to effectively process cases of children suspected of having ties with ISIS or children who are victims of human trafficking.

Coordinating Body	Related Entity	Role & Description
Inter-Ministerial Committee on Child Labor	Iraq	Coordinates overall government efforts to combat child labor, researches policies regarding child labor, and designs and manages projects. Members include representatives from MOLSA and four other ministries. (11) In 2020, the committee coordinated with the UN to address grave violations through its Monitoring and Reporting Task Force, including four meetings concerning monitoring tools, screening children, ethical considerations, and addressing sexual violence. (2,61)

Central Committee to Combat Trafficking in Persons (CCCT)	Iraq	Oversees the implementation of the Law to Combat Human Trafficking and serves as the national coordinating body on trafficking in persons. Led by MOI, and includes representatives from five ministries, KMOI, and two other state entities. (11,13,18) In 2020, the CCCT continued to coordinate the government's efforts to combat human trafficking including running a nationwide public awareness campaign. (4) In addition, the CCCT increased its number of KRG representatives from one to three and instituted monthly meetings between MOI and KMOI. (4)
Inter-Ministerial Committee on Trafficking in Persons	Kurdistan Region	Makes recommendations on implementing the KRG's Anti-Trafficking in Persons Law. Headed by the Director General of the <i>Divan</i> at the Ministry of Interior, it also includes 17 members from several ministries and services. (30) The Inter-Ministerial Committee on Trafficking in Persons did not meet regularly during the reporting period. (60)
KRG Council of Ministers	Kurdistan Region	KMOI and KMOLSA coordinate on child labor in the Iraqi Kurdistan Region through the KRG Council of Ministers. (11) Research was unable to determine whether the KRG Council of Ministers was active during the reporting period.
KRG High Committee on Human Trafficking	Kurdistan Region	Led by KMOI and includes representatives of KMOLSA and includes 17 government ministries. (3,11) Specific activities are unknown. (62) Research was unable to determine whether the KRG High Committee on Human Trafficking was active during the reporting period.

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

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 of all worst forms of child labor.

Policy	Related Entity	Description
Child Protection Policy (2017–2022)	Iraq	Outlines a comprehensive approach to addressing child protection, including addressing child labor, through prevention, protection, and rehabilitation programs such as a poverty alleviation initiative, and educational and mental health services. Includes a component to provide rehabilitation and reintegration activities for children previously engaged in armed conflict and children who experienced trauma during the period of ISIS occupation. (12,63) The policy does not specifically cover other worst forms of child labor present in Iraq, including forced begging and commercial sexual exploitation. (63) Research was unable to determine whether activities were undertaken to implement this policy during the reporting period.
National Plan on Combating Human Trafficking in Iraq	Iraq	Aims to combat human trafficking by outlining steps to be taken by authorities represented on the CCCT. Focuses on prevention, protection, prosecution, and regional and international cooperation and includes considerations for child victims. (64) Active in 2020. (4)

Table 9. Key Policies Related to Child Labor

Research was unable to identify any child labor policies in the Kurdistan Region. (12)

VI. Social Programs to Address Child Labor

In 2020, 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 adequacy of programs to address the full scope of the problem.

Program	Related Entity	Description
Informal Education†	Iraq	Government-supported informal education systems, including evening school programs and accelerated education that encourages children ages 12 to 18 who have dropped out of school to continue their education. (12) Research was unable to determine what steps were undertaken in 2020 to implement this program.
Conditional Subsidies Program†	Iraq	Provides assistance to low-income families for children to stay in school and out of the workforce. In 2020, MOLSA continued to provide cash assistance to low-income families to send their children to school. (2)
Shelters for Human Trafficking Victims†	Iraq	MOLSA-operated shelter in Baghdad for human trafficking victims, including children involved in the worst forms of child labor; other facilities are in Basrah, Kirkuk, and Ninewa provinces. (12) Officials have indicated that poor coordination and policies that dissuade victims from seeking help accounted for a low number of victims receiving services through shelters. (30) In 2020, 18 trafficking victims were referred to shelters, however, officials stated that referral gaps prevented shelters from helping more victims. (4)

Table 10. Key Social Programs to Address Child Labor

† Program is funded by the Government of Iraq.

In 2020, 258 children at-risk of joining or formerly associated with armed groups participated in community-based reintegration programs in Najaf, Karbala, Kirkuk, and Ninewa. (65) However, neither the Government of Iraq nor the KRG efforts to provide protection services to demobilized child soldiers of ISIS or the PMF are sufficient. Failing to reintegrate former child soldiers leaves them vulnerable to re-victimization or re-recruitment into armed groups. (3) Likewise, research was unable to find evidence of specific active programs to support children subjected to commercial sexual exploitation or other worst forms of child labor, including child soldiering. Existing programs do not sufficiently address the lack of access to education in Iraq and the Kurdistan Region.

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 Iraq (Table 11).

Area	Related Entity	Suggested Action	Year(s) Suggested	
Legal Framework		Ensure that the laws comprehensively prohibit child trafficking in all parts of Iraq, including the Kurdistan Region, and do not require force or coercion for their application, in accordance with international standards.	2015 2020	-
		Ensure that the law criminally prohibits the use of a child in prostitution and the use, procuring, and offering of a child for the production of pornography and pornographic performances.	2019 2020	-
		Ensure that the law in Iraq criminally prohibits the use of children in illicit activities, including in the production and trafficking of drugs.	2015 2020	-
		Ensure that the law criminally prohibits the recruitment of children under age 18 by non-state armed groups.	2013 2020	-
		Increase the age of compulsory schooling in Iraq to at least age 15, the minimum age for work.	2009 2020	-
Enforcement		Ensure that children under age 18 are not recruited or used by armed groups affiliated with the Popular Mobilization Forces and that those that recruit and use children criminally accountable.	2016 2020	-
		Publish labor law enforcement information, such as the funding of the labor inspectorate, number of inspectors, inspections, and violations.	2011 2020	-
		Authorize the labor inspectorate to assess penalties.	2017 2020	-
		Ensure that routine labor inspections are carried out in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq.	2019 2020	-
		Ensure that labor inspectors and criminal investigators receive training, including refresher courses, on child labor and that they have sufficient resources to carry out their duties.	2016 2020	-
		Increase the number of labor inspectors to meet the ILO's technical advice and ensure adequate funding to enforce legal protections against child labor, including its worst forms.	2011 2020	-
		Publish information on criminal law enforcement on the worst forms of child labor in Iraq and the Iraqi Kurdistan Region.	2013 2020	-
		Ensure that children are not arrested, detained, tortured, or denied services on the basis of their or their family members' perceived ties to ISIS.	2015 2020	-
		Ensure that allegations of sexual exploitation and trafficking of girls in IDP camps by government officials are investigated and those responsible are held criminally liable.	2019 2020	-
Coordination		Ensure that all coordinating bodies meet and are able to carry out their intended mandates.	2017 2020	-
Government Policies		Implement the Child Protection Policy in Iraq, and adopt a child labor policy in the Iraqi Kurdistan Region for other worst forms of child labor present in Iraq, including forced begging and commercial sexual exploitation.	2018 2020	-
Social Programs		Implement programs to ensure that children are discouraged from enlisting in armed groups and receiving military training.	2015 2020	-
		Ensure that universal access to education is consistent with international standards, including for refugee and internally displaced children, and that programs address barriers to education, including the lack of teachers, the destruction and lack of local schools, costs of transportation and school supplies, lack of infrastructure, especially during school closures. Ensure that the lack of identification documents does not hinder access to education, including for IDPs and refugees, children with suspected ties to ISIS, and children of "informal" marriages.	2013 2020	-
		Implement programs to address child labor in relevant sectors in Iraq, such as the provision of services to children in commercial sexual exploitation, to demobilize and reintegrate children engaged in armed groups, and to provide informal education programs and shelters for human trafficking victims.	2009 2020	-

Table 11. Suggested Government Actions to Eliminate Child Labor

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