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2020 Findings on the Worst Forms of Child Labor: Somalia

Minimal Advancement – Efforts Made but Continued Practices that Delayed Advancement

In 2020, Somalia made minimal advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. The Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs established a Labor Inspectorate and hired and trained 35 labor inspectors. The government also created an Office for the Senior Advisor on Child Labor to lead the drafting and implementation of a National Action Plan to address the worst forms of child labor. Following nationwide school closures to contain the COVID-19 pandemic, the Ministry of Education worked with UNICEF to educate 141,816 children via Internet, television, and radio platforms. However, despite new initiatives to address child labor, Somalia is receiving an assessment of minimal advancement because it continued a practice that delayed advancement in eliminating the worst forms of child labor. During the reporting period, there is evidence that federal and state security forces, as well as clan militias and al-Shabaab, continued to recruit and use children in armed conflict, in violation of national law. Children in Somalia are subjected to the worst forms of child labor, including in armed conflict. Children also perform dangerous tasks in street work. Somali laws do not criminally prohibit child trafficking for labor, commercial sexual exploitation, or the recruitment of children by non-state armed groups.

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. (1,2) 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. (3) However, in 2019 the ILO funded Somalia's first labor force survey, which included sectoral information on child labor and IDPs. The results of the survey, which was completed in 2020, will be published in 2021 pending final validation by the ILO. (3,4)

Children	Related Entity	Age	Percent
Working (%)	Somalia (North East zone)	5 to 14	9.5
	Somalia (Somaliland)	5 to 14	13.2
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, 2021. (5)
Source for all other data: International Labor Organization's analysis from Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 4 (MICS 4), 2011. (6)

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 arranging harvested seeds and light cleaning (3,7-9)
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	Herding livestock, including goats, sheep, and camels (3,7)
	Fishing, including cleaning fish (3)
Industry	Construction, including crushing stones, mining, and excavating (1,3,9,10)
	Producing garments and textiles (11)
Services	Working as maids or domestic staff in hotels and private residences (7,8)
	Domestic work (2,7,12)
	Street work, including shining shoes, washing cars, driving minibuses, vending, and transporting and selling <i>khat</i> (a legal, amphetamine-like stimulant) (1,2,7-9,11,12)
	Voluntarily recruited children used in hostilities by state armed groups (1,7,10)
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 (1,10,13)
	Forced labor in domestic work, agriculture, herding livestock, breaking rocks, selling or transporting <i>khat</i> , begging, and construction work, each sometimes as a result of human trafficking (7,10,11)
	Commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking (10)

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.

As Somalia passes its third decade of internal armed conflict, the country's IDP population stands at 2.6 million, with unofficial estimates approaching 3.6 million. (7,14) 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. (7,15,16) These developments compounded risks to vulnerable populations, including children. (10,13,15) Many were transited through Nairobi’s Eastleigh neighborhood, a known trafficking hub. Research also found traffickers exploit children from Somalia in forced begging in Saudi Arabia and Djibouti. (10) In Puntland, hundreds of children allegedly were exploited in forced labor or sex trafficking. (17)

In 2020, Somalia recorded one of the world's highest number of child abductions by non-state actors. (18,19) State and non-state armed groups recruited 1,716 children during the reporting period. (18,19) Non-state armed group al-Shabaab, which forcibly recruited children as young as age 8 into its ranks, committed a majority of these violations, recruiting 1,407 children in 2020. (19) Al-Shabaab fighters infiltrate madrassas, or Koranic schools, and mosques using deception or coercion tactics to forcibly recruit victims, including children, into sexual slavery and combat and support roles. (10) The group continued the practice of forcing communities to produce male children to serve as child soldiers. (10,18-21) Al-Shabaab imposed a financial penalty on families who refused to cooperate. (7,22) These children planted explosive devices, acted as human shields, conducted assassinations and suicide attacks, gathered intelligence, and provided domestic services. Some girls were also forced into sexual servitude. (7,10,22) In addition, Somalia’s numerous clan militias reportedly recruited children for use in armed conflict. (10,19) Children from minority clan households are uniquely vulnerable to forced recruitment by military groups, including at school. (23)

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. (18,24,25,26) Perpetrators included federal armed forces and security services, as well as regional forces and police in Galmudug, Jubaland, and Puntland. (26) In 2020, the UN verified the recruitment and use of children by the Somali Police Force (SPF, 101 children recruited), the Somali National Army (SNA, 62) and the National Intelligence and Security Agency (5); Jubaland forces (36), Galmudug forces (31), Puntland forces (21), Jubaland police (3), Puntland police (2) and Galmudug police (1); and clan militia (47). (19) Child recruitment is in violation of Somalia's General Order No. 1, which prohibits military personnel from recruiting and employing child soldiers. (10,27)

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, among the highest rates in the world. (28,29) Access to education further deteriorated amidst recurrent climate shocks, protracted violence, and pandemic-related lockdowns. Somalia did not assess nationwide attendance rates in 2020; however, a UNICEF-funded rapid assessment in Puntland indicates that 7.4 percent of children did not re-enroll once schools reopened. (30) State and non-state forces occupied and damaged schools during the reporting period, further limiting access to educational facilities. (18,31,20,32) The limited number of public schools outside of Mogadishu and high fees charged by private schools also undercut enrollment rates. (7,23) Girls face additional obstacles, including lower prioritization of girls’ education and a dearth of qualified female teachers, which negatively affect girls’ attendance and learning. (1,33) Pastoralist communities, which account for approximately 25 percent of Somalia’s population, face 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. (1,7) Children and youth among these groups are considered at high risk of exploitation or recruitment into armed groups like al-Shabaab. (7,23) For many IDP children, meanwhile, schools do not exist nearby, and even where donors build temporary learning spaces, IDP children typically experience disrupted education due to constant movement and unpredictable evictions from their camp homes. (1)

The Federal Government of Somalia (FGS) has not conducted a standalone survey of child work, child labor, or the worst forms of child labor. Somalia also lacks a countrywide birth registration system, further complicating efforts to identify victims of child labor. (7)

The FGS maintains limited territorial control outside populated areas and some forward operating bases. Al-Shabaab occupied rural areas in south-central Somalia. (7) In other parts of the country, essential governance functions were provided by state administrations, including the self-declared independent region of Somaliland in the northwest. (7,10)

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 the lack of a law prohibiting the recruitment of children under age 18

Standard	Meets International Age Legislation Standards		
Minimum Age for Work	Yes	15	Article 93 of the Labor Code; Article 38(1) of the Private Sector Employees Law (34,35)
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 (34-36)
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 (34,35)

Prohibition of Forced Labor	Yes		Articles 455 and 464 of the Penal Code (37)
Prohibition of Child Trafficking	No		
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children	No		Articles 403–404 and 407–408 of the Penal Code (37)
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities	No		
Minimum Age for Voluntary State Military Recruitment	Yes	18	General Order No. 1 (27)
Prohibition of Compulsory Recruitment of Children by (State) Military	Yes		General Order No. 1 (27)
Prohibition of Military Recruitment by Non-state Armed Groups	No		Article 29 of the Provisional Constitution (36)
Compulsory Education Age	No	14‡	Articles 13 and 15 of the General Education Law (38)
Free Public Education	Yes		Article 14 of the General Education Law (38)

Table 4. Laws and Regulations on Child Labor

‡ Age calculated based on available information (38)

A National Labor Code was finalized by the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs (MOLSA). As of January 2021, the law was awaiting ratification in the upper house of Parliament. (1,4,7,39) The draft Labor Code prohibits forced or compulsory recruitment of children for use in armed conflict. (33) The Ministry of Women and Human Rights also drafted the Child Rights Bill, which will domesticate the Convention on the Rights of the Child into law during the reporting period. (4,20) The law will protect all children under age 18 from prosecution as an adult and will codify a compulsory education age. (4) It is awaiting cabinet-level approval. (1) 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. (12,38)

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. (4) 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. (34) 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 prohibits hazardous occupations and activities for children. (34) While the 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. (7,34)

Laws prohibiting the commercial sexual exploitation of children are not sufficient, because the use, procuring, and offering of a child for prostitution, pornography, and pornographic performances are not criminally prohibited. (34) 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. (34) Many fines in the Code equal less than \$1 (585 Somali Shillings), which does not serve as an effective deterrent. (1,37,40)

The Federal Member States (FMS), which are semi-autonomous regions, maintain separate legal systems. (41) While the Provisional Constitution defines children as persons under the age of 18, the regional constitutions of South West State and Puntland set the age of majority at 15 years. (42,43) Nevertheless, the FGS asserts that the 1972 Labor Code, the Provisional Constitution, and newly enacted laws apply nationally. (1) Somaliland has criminalized human trafficking for the purposes of

commercial sexual exploitation, and a draft trafficking in persons law is pending parliamentary approval. (1,13,44,45) Although Puntland State's 2017 penal and criminal procedure codes reportedly meet international standards, research could not find a publicly available version of these laws. (44)

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 child labor laws.

Organization/Agency Role

Somali Police Force (SPF)	Investigates and enforces laws related to the worst forms of child labor. (46) The Counter-Trafficking and Organized Crime Unit has six officers. The SPF's Airport Police Task Force investigators are trained to recognize trafficked persons based on behavioral indicators and suspicious documents.(13,47) The SPF Criminal Investigation Division continued to operate a unit dedicated to investigating cases of human trafficking for prosecution in 2020. (13,47) However, the unit did not report any human trafficking cases during the reporting period. (13)
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. (1)
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. (7) Through the Child Protection Unit (CPU), screens Somali National Amry (SNA) units for child soldiers. (7,8) Raises awareness of child soldier issues, and implements standard operating procedures on protecting children associated with armed conflict. (1)
Puntland Security Forces	Investigate and enforce human trafficking laws. (46)
Puntland Ministry of Justice	Prosecutes human trafficking cases. (46)
Somaliland Police	Investigate human trafficking. (47)
Somaliland Attorney General's Office	Prosecutes human trafficking cases. (47)

Table 5. Agencies Responsible for Child Labor Law Enforcement

Labor Law Enforcement

In 2020, labor law enforcement agencies in Somalia took actions to combat child labor (Table 6). However, gaps exist within the operations of MOLSA that may hinder adequate labor law enforcement, including resource allocation.

Overview of Labor Law Enforcement	2019	2020
Labor Inspectorate Funding	N/A	\$0 (1)
Number of Labor Inspectors	N/A	35 (1)
Inspectorate Authorized to Assess Penalties	N/A	Yes (34)
Initial Training for New Labor Inspectors	N/A	Yes (1)
Training on New Laws Related to Child Labor	N/A	Yes (1)
Refresher Courses Provided	N/A	Unknown (1)
Number of Labor Inspections Conducted	N/A	2 (1)
Number of Child Labor Violations Found	N/A	0 (1)

Number of Child Labor Violations for Which Penalties Were Imposed	N/A	N/A
Number of Child Labor Penalties Imposed that Were Collected	N/A	N/A
Routine Inspections Conducted	N/A	Unknown (1)
Routine Inspections Targeted	N/A	Unknown (1)
Unannounced Inspections Permitted	N/A	Yes (34)
Unannounced Inspections Conducted	N/A	Yes (1)
Complaint Mechanism Exists	N/A	Yes (1)
Reciprocal Referral Mechanism Exists Between Labor Authorities and Social Services	N/A	No (1)

Table 6. Labor Law Enforcement Efforts Related to Child Labor

MOLSA formally established a Labor Inspectorate in 2020. The ministry hired 35 inspectors for its Benadir regional office and provided them with 2 weeks of training. (1) However, the number of labor inspectors remains insufficient for the size of the Somali workforce, which includes 4.2 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 105 inspectors. (48,49) The government did not otherwise provide information on number of inspections conducted for inclusion in this report. (1)

MOLSA conducts 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. (1) MOLSA also established an Office for the Senior Advisor on Child Labor under its Department of Legal and Labor Relations during the reporting period. The senior advisor, who oversees a staff of six, is charged with drafting and implementing a National Action Plan (NAP) to address the worst forms of child labor in Somalia. (1,50,51)

Criminal Law Enforcement

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

Overview of Criminal Law Enforcement	Related Entity	2019	2020
Initial Training for New Criminal Investigators	All (Somalia)	3 (7,15)	No (1)
Training on New Laws Related to the Worst Forms of Child Labor	All (Somalia)	0 (7)	No (1)
Refresher Courses Provided	All (Somalia)	0 (7)	No (1)
Number of Investigations	All (Somalia)	0 (7)	Unknown (1)
Number of Violations Found	All (Somalia)	1,331 (7)	1,735 (1,52)
Number of Prosecutions Initiated	All (Somalia)	0 (7)	Unknown (1)
Number of Convictions	All (Somalia)	0 (7)	Unknown (1)

Imposed Penalties for Violations Related to the Worst Forms of Child Labor	All (Somalia)	No (7)	Unknown (1)
Reciprocal Referral Mechanism Exists Between Criminal Authorities and Social Services	All (Somalia)	No (7)	Yes (1,52)

Table 7. Criminal Law Enforcement Efforts Related to Child Labor

In 2020, the FGS Attorney General’s Office prosecuted a case of forced labor under the Penal Code. The case involved a 12-year-old boy being held as a personal servant. (1) The boy was returned to his parents, and the accused was released from custody. There were no details on whether any violation was found. (1) During the reporting period, the SPF Airport Police Task Force intercepted four female teenagers traveling to Kenya, where they had been promised employment. Authorities also arrested a male accompanying the girls on suspicion of trafficking, and repatriated the girls to their families. (13) In a separate instance, authorities intercepted a 10-year-old girl traveling to the United Arab Emirates who was a potential sex trafficking victim. Authorities rescued the child and arrested the parents. (1,13) The SPF remained understaffed and undertrained, and lacked the capacity to investigate or enforce laws on the worst forms of child labor. (7) Generally, criminal enforcement authorities lack the capacity and resources to fully implement laws that are technically in force. Resources to assist victims of human trafficking were limited to government-operated Migrant Response Centers in Bosaso, Hargeisa, and Mogadishu. (7,13) In addition, there were reports that in 2020, the Somali National Police recruited and used at least 99 children in police activities. (19)

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 2020, highlighting gaps in enforcement and uneven command and control of some units. (53) The Child Protection Unit (CPU) does not refer cases relating to child soldiers to the civilian justice system, but it would theoretically prosecute violations in the military justice system. (7) In 2020, state security forces detained at least 212 children, at times in the company of adults, for their suspected association with non-state armed groups. (19,21,25,53) These children were sometimes interrogated without legal representation and coerced into signing or recording confessions. While 128 children were released, 83 remained in detention by the end of the reporting period. (19,21,36)

Somalia’s FMS command separate police and military forces. These forces are not under the FGS chain of command. (42,54) 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. (15,19,55) 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. (21,56)

Nevertheless, federal and state governments, including Southwest and Galmudug, made efforts to implement the 2012 action plans and 2019 roadmap on ending recruitment and use of children in armed conflict. Somalia’s Ministry of Defense, for instance, collaborated with other security forces, including the Darwish and SPF, on child protection-related issues. (15,19) At the same time, the UN has noted an uptick in violations by the SPF and several FMS forces in 2020. There is no evidence that the FGS or member states prosecuted offenders during the reporting period. (15,19)

While research was unable to determine the number of criminal law enforcement investigations conducted during the reporting period, research suggests that 1,735 former child soldiers were demobilized and reintegrated during the reporting period. (1,13,52) However, the government has not established a referral mechanism for other victims of the worst forms of child labor, including forced labor and commercial sexual exploitation. (1,13,52)

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

CPU, Ministry of Defense	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. (1,13) Works in concert with the SPF, which is responsible for investigating and enforcing laws against forced child labor and trafficking, commercial sexual exploitation, and use of children in illicit activities. (1) In 2020, the FGS continued to rely on the CPU to screen SNA forces for underage recruits and raise awareness of child soldiers in Somalia more broadly. To this end, CPU screened 4,899 SNA personnel in Galmudug, South West State, Jubaland, and Mogadishu during the reporting period. (1,13) While it did not identify underage soldiers within its ranks, CPU did recover 11 child soldiers from al-Shabaab, some of whom were referred to social services. (1,13) CPU also conducted training and awareness campaigns to prevent the recruitment and use of child soldiers during the reporting period. To this end, the unit continued to disseminate information on preventing the recruitment and use of child soldiers to hundreds of militia, clan, and community leaders across Somalia. (1,13)CPU bolstered its relationships with FGS and with Federal Member States (FMS) through the expansion of a National Children Associated with Armed Conflict Working Group, which met throughout the reporting period. CPU also coordinated with the Ministry of Women and Human Rights, which facilitates referrals of demobilized child soldiers from CPU to various NGOs. (1,7,13)
Children Associated with Armed Conflict Working Group (CAACWG)	Implements the Child Soldier Action Plan and the Action Plan to End the Killing and Maiming of Children in Contravention of International Law. (7) 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. (42,57) In 2020, the government expanded the scope of CAACWG by including officials from FMS; discussions covered the implementation of action plans on eliminating the use of children in armed conflict. (7,13)
Human Trafficking Task Forces	The FGS, Puntland, and Somaliland 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. (22) The task force, which is led by the Ministry of Interior and Federal Affairs, took steps to improve coordination across the FGS. (58) Separately, Puntland’s Counter-Trafficking Board leads the state’s anti-trafficking efforts. Somaliland’s Counter-Human Trafficking Agency coordinates the development of legislation and collection of data in the semi-autonomous region. (22) 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 overseeing efforts on migration, human trafficking, and reintegration across the state and regional governments. (13)
Somali National Tripartite Labor Committee	Manages the implementation of the Labor Code and the National Employment Policy. An ILO-recognized body, meets quarterly to review progress and has taken on child labor as an area of special concern. (7) Establishment of the MOLSA-led Somali National Tripartite Labor Committee, and the inclusion of child labor as a special focus, has enabled the ministry to coordinate efforts within the government and between the government and the private sector. (7) Although the government officially established the Somali National Tripartite Labor Committee in 2019, there is no evidence that it was active in 2020. (1)

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

MOLSA coordinates informally with the Ministry of Women and Human Rights and the Ministry of Defense on child labor-related issues. Other law enforcement agencies include the SPF, the National Intelligence and Security Agency, and the Immigration and Naturalization Directorate. (1) 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, coordination declined due to the pandemic and political crises, including a cabinet reshuffle, the ouster of the country’s prime minister, and preparations for national elections. (13)

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, but the task force was inactive this year. In November and December 2020, Galmudug, Hirshabelle, and

South West State participated in a commission led by the Inter-governmental Authority on Development to coordinate migration resources. (13) Puntland and Somaliland independently instituted their own laws and resource mechanisms without coordinating with the FGS. (13)

V. Government Policies on Child Labor

The government has established policies related to child labor (Table 9). However, policy gaps exist that hinder efforts to address child labor, including the lack of a policy covering all worst forms of child labor.

Policy	Description
National Employment Policy	Provides the Somali National Tripartite Labor Committee 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. (7,39) In 2020 MOLSA, in consultation with ILO, published a macroeconomic analysis of the labor market in Somalia and used the data to inform a draft Child Labor National Action Plan. (7,8,59,60)
Child Soldier Action Plan	Establishes a strategy for identifying and removing children from SNA ranks through education and monitoring of military camps. (1,61) In 2012, the FGS committed to two UN Action Plans to end grave violations against children, including recruitment and use, killing, and maiming. In October 2019, the government committed to a UN Roadmap to expedite the implementation of the two action plans. (62,63) The adoption of the roadmap will address grave violations, including recruitment and use. (18) In 2020, 1,735 children previously associated with armed groups received UNICEF reintegration support under the roadmap. (31,24,52)
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. (64-66) 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. (7) The policy focuses, in part, on mitigating the vulnerability of IDPs and other populations to gender-based violence and human trafficking. The policy remained in effect during the reporting period, with benchmarks measuring progress over a 20-year time span. (13)
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. (67,68) In 2020, the Ministry of Labor drafted a work plan to develop a Child Labor Action Plan. (1)
United Nations Strategic Framework (2017–2020)	Established a broad strategic framework in support of humanitarian, development, political, and security reform in Somalia. Included measures to prevent child recruitment, rehabilitate former child soldiers, and mitigate human rights violations, including the arbitrary arrest of children. (69) The framework targeted improved access to child soldier reintegration services and implementation of the 2020 Action Plans on Children Associated with Armed Conflict and Conflict Related Sexual Violence. (69) The government also undertook CPU capacity building through training and enhanced screening measures. (31,22) The framework also sought to establish a nationwide social protection system, which was operationalized in 2020. (64,65)

Table 9. Key Policies Related to Child Labor

† Policy was approved during the reporting period.
‡ The government has other policies that may have addressed child labor issues or had an impact on child labor. (70)

In 2020, MOLSA issued a national workplan under the auspices of its Office for the Senior Advisor on Child Labor. (1) To this end, MOLSA completed a draft child labor work plan, which calls for the deployment of a national child labor prevalence survey and numerous stakeholder meetings, including with line ministries from Somalia's FMS. The NAP will culminate with the development of a Child Labor National Action Plan. (50,51) 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, or domestic work.

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 in their capacity to address the problem in all sectors.

Program	Description
Defectors Reintegration Program	FGS program in coordination with UNICEF that rehabilitates and reintegrates former combatants, emphasizing the specific needs of former child soldiers, including demobilized female combatants and their dependents. (52,71) Centers located in Baidoa, Beledweyne, Kismayo, and Mogadishu provide accommodation, medical care, psychological counseling, education, and vocational training to former combatants. (52,72) With the Ministry of Defense, facilitated the release and handover of 1,735 children formerly associated with armed forces and armed groups during the reporting period. (52)
Joint Program on Youth Employment in Somalia	Joint program by the Food and Agriculture Organization, ILO, UNDP, UN-Habitat, and 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. (73) In 2019, coordinated with the Ministry of Labor and the Ministry of Planning to conduct a labor force survey, resulting in the development of a National Employment Policy. (59,60,74) Research was unable to determine whether activities were undertaken to implement the program during the reporting period.
Donor-Funded Programs	Programs that aim to improve the resiliency of vulnerable families. The \$267 million UNICEF Country Program (2018–2020), implemented with FGS support, aimed to ensure safe, equitable, and quality education for children through a child protection framework. (75) In response to widespread, pandemic-induced school closures in 2020, the Ministry of Education worked with UNICEF to develop Somalia's "COVID-19 Education Response" and safe school re-opening strategies. These plans enabled 141,816 children to continue their education through internet, television, and radio platforms. (52) UNICEF partnerships with the Ministry of Defense and the Defectors Reintegration Program also facilitated the release of 1,735 children formerly associated with armed groups during the reporting period. These children received reintegration support, including family reunification and access to safe shelters, medical care, and formal and informal education. (52,76) UNICEF also provided more than 64,840 children with comprehensive education services, including safe learning spaces, and supported 11,366 children through school feeding programs. (52,76) Moreover, the \$600 million WFP Country Strategic Plan (2019–2021) provided both conditional and unconditional food or cash-based food assistance to vulnerable children. (77) To address high female absenteeism, UNICEF also distributed menstruation kits and provided hygiene health training to 1,900 adolescent girls. In addition, UNICEF trained 776 teachers in pedagogic and psychosocial skills, and provided financial incentives to increase retention. (52) UNICEF's awareness-raising campaigns, which focused on prevention of child recruitment, child marriage, female genital mutilation, and gender-based violence, reached 92,240 people during the reporting period. Finally, UNICEF registered 11,778 unaccompanied and separated children, and provided them with family tracing and reunification services. (52) UNICEF also piloted the rollout of a case management and data management system in Puntland and Somaliland. (52)
Peace Building Fund	\$2 million UN-funded project that supports the prevention of child recruitment and the reintegration of former child soldiers. (63) The project, announced in October 2019 in Baidoa, the capital of South West State, will supplement SNA child soldier prevention and screening methods. Children identified will be released, rehabilitated, and reintegrated into society. (20,22,63) Research was unable to determine whether activities were undertaken to implement the program during the reporting period.
ACT to Protect Children Affected by Armed Conflict†	FGS awareness-raising initiative launched under the auspices of a global UN advocacy campaign highlighting children in armed conflict. (78) Throughout the year, the CPU continued to disseminate radio and print media content regarding the prevention of child recruitment and conscription in armed conflict. (1,13)

Table 10. Key Social Programs to Address Child Labor

† Program is partially funded by the Federal Government of Somalia. (22)

‡ The government had other social programs that may have included the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor. (79)

Although the FGS implemented programs to address child soldiers and child trafficking, existing programs were insufficient to address the scope of the problem, including 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 10).

Area	Suggested Action	Year(s) Suggested	
Legal Framework	Accede to the UN CRC Optional Protocol on Armed Conflict.	2013 2020	–
	Accede to the UN CRC Optional Protocol on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution, and Child Pornography.	2013 2020	–
	Accede to the Palermo Protocol on Trafficking in Persons.	2013 2020	–
	Clarify whether the pre-1991 Labor Code is still in effect under the Federal Government of Somalia.	2009 2020	–
	Criminally prohibit child trafficking for the purpose of labor and sexual exploitation.	2009 2020	–
	Criminally prohibit using, procuring, and offering a child for prostitution, pornography, and pornographic performances.	2015 2020	–
	Ensure that penalties for the commercial sexual exploitation of children are sufficiently stringent to deter violations.	2013 2020	–
	Ensure that the law protects children involved in commercial sexual exploitation from criminal charges.	2011 2020	–
	Criminally prohibit the use of children in illicit activities.	2009 2020	–
	Criminally prohibit the recruitment of children under age 18 by non-state armed groups.	2016 2020	–
	Raise the compulsory education age to be commensurate with the minimum age for work.	2009 2020	–
	Ensure that Puntland's laws define a child as anyone under age 18, in accordance with international standards.	2016 2020	–
	Ensure that a legal framework on child labor is in place that includes a minimum age for hazardous work; determines the activities in which light work may be permitted and prescribes the number of hours per week for light work; and, in consultation with employers' and workers' organizations, determines the types of hazardous work prohibited for children.	2009 2020	–
Enforcement	Report labor law enforcement information on the number of violations found, prosecutions initiated, and convictions achieved in all regions of Somalia.	2016 2020	–
	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 2020	–

	Cease the recruitment and use of child soldiers by the SPF, the National Intelligence and Security Agency, and the SNA, 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 2020	-
	Ensure that children associated with armed groups are not detained with adults and refer these children to social services providers. Cease the practice of sentencing children to long prison terms for associating with armed groups.	2015 2020	-
	Establish a referral mechanism between the labor inspectorate and social welfare services for children subjected to child labor.	2014 2020	-
	Ensure that the labor inspectorate is funded, and increase the number of labor inspectors to meet the ILO’s technical advice.	2020	-
	Establish a referral mechanism between the SPF and social welfare services for children engaged in forced labor and commercial sexual exploitation.	2014 2020	-
Coordination	Establish coordinating mechanisms to combat all forms of child labor.	2009 2020	-
Government Policies	Adopt policies to address child labor in agriculture, industry, street work, and domestic work.	2018 2020	-
Social Programs	Enhance efforts to eliminate barriers and make education accessible and safe for all children by removing all armed groups from educational facilities, constructing schools outside Mogadishu, removing enrollment fees, and ensuring nomadic and rural children have access.	2013 2020	-
	Develop programs to address child labor, such as in street work and forced labor in agriculture. Expand existing programs to address the scope of children in armed conflict.	2009 2020	-
	Ensure all social programs are implemented as intended.	2019 2020	-
	Adopt a countrywide birth registration system to facilitate identification of child labor violations.	2019 2020	-

Table 11. Suggested Government Actions to Eliminate Child Labor

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