

MINIMAL ADVANCEMENT – EFFORTS MADE BUT CONTINUED PRACTICE THAT DELAYED ADVANCEMENT

In 2018, Iraq made a minimal advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. The Iraqi Kurdistan Parliament endorsed the Iraqi Law to Combat Human Trafficking. The Iraqi Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs increased the number of inspections, shut down several brick factories for violations of child labor laws, and continued its cash transfer program for at-risk children and families. However, despite new initiatives to address child labor, Iraq is receiving an assessment of minimal advancement because it continued a practice that delayed advancement in eliminating the worst forms of child labor. Iraqi and Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) authorities continued to inappropriately detain and prosecute without legal representation children allegedly affiliated to ISIS—some of whom were victims of forcible recruitment and use—including using abusive interrogation techniques and torture to gain children’s confessions instead of screening these children as potential human trafficking victims. In addition, in 2018, some militia groups affiliated with the Popular Mobilization Forces, including Iranian-backed groups, recruited boys younger than age 18 to fight in Syria and Yemen. While these forces operated under the umbrella of the Popular Mobilization Forces—which was legally incorporated into the Iraqi defense forces in 2016—they generally remained outside of the command and control of the Iraqi government. Children in Iraq engage in other worst forms of child labor, including forced begging and commercial sexual exploitation, each sometimes as a result of human trafficking. Labor law enforcement suffers from an insufficient number of labor inspectors and a lack of funding for inspections, authority to assess penalties, and labor inspector training. There is no child labor policy in the Iraqi Kurdistan Region, and research could not find information on the implementation of the existing policy in Iraq. The government 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 engage in the worst forms of child labor, including in forced begging and commercial sexual exploitation, each sometimes as a result of human trafficking. (1-4) 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.

Table 1. Statistics on Children’s Work and Education

Children	Age	Percent
Working (% and population)	5 to 14	5.3 (454,330)
Attending School (%)	5 to 14	75.0
Combining Work and School (%)	7 to 14	4.2
Primary Completion Rate (%)		Unavailable

Primary completion rate was unavailable from UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2019. (5)

Source for all other data: International Labor Organization’s analysis of statistics from Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 4, 2011. (6)

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

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

Sector/Industry	Activity
Agriculture	Farming, including the production of dairy products (3,7,8)
	Herding livestock (8)
	Fishing, activities unknown (3)
Industry	Construction (7,8)
	Working in carpentry workshops (8,9)
	Making bricks (3,10-12)
	Working in factories, including glass, household cleaners, paint, steel, garments and textiles, perfume, electrical materials, and plastic recycling (3,7,8,10,11,13,14)
Services	Street work, including selling goods, pushing carts, cleaning cars, and begging (3,12,14-17)
	Working at gas stations† and auto repair and other shops (3,11,18-20)
	Working in landfills, scavenging and collecting garbage† and scrap metal (11,12,14,15,21,22)
	Domestic work (8)
	Working in hotels, restaurants, and tea houses (3,8,20)
Categorical Worst Forms of Child Labor‡	Use in illicit activities, including drug and weapon trafficking, sometimes as a result of human trafficking (3,4,24)
	Domestic work as a result of human trafficking (25-28)
	Forced begging, sometimes as a result of human trafficking (3,4)
	Commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking (1,2,4,12,26,29,30)
	Recruitment of children by non-state armed groups for use in armed conflict (3,4,31)

† 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.

Despite ISIS losing control over the last remaining territory in Iraq in 2017, ISIS continued to carry out deadly attacks in Iraq throughout 2018. (68) ISIS continued to abduct and forcibly recruit and use children in combat and support roles, including as human shields, informants, bomb makers, executioners, and suicide bombers; some of these children were as young as the age of 8 and some were mentally disabled. (4,31)

In 2018, NGOs reported that some PMF-affiliated militias, including Iranian-backed Harakat Hezbollah al-Nujaba (HHN) and Asaib Ahl al-Haq (AAH), recruited boys younger than the age of 18 to fight in Syria and Yemen. Some AAH and Kataib Hizballah (KH) members or brigades recruited children, most commonly out of schools. (4) Some of the forces in the HHN, AAH, and KH militias operate under the umbrella of the Popular Mobilization Forces (PMF), which was legally incorporated into the Iraqi defense forces in 2016, but they generally operate outside of the command and control of the Iraqi government. (3,4,37) There were no reports of child soldiers used within the Iraqi military. (4)

During the reporting period, multiple sources reported the Kurdistan Worker’s Party and People’s Protection Units, operating in the Iraqi Kurdistan Region and Sinjar, continued to recruit and use children. Local NGOs reported that 2018 Yezidi militias in Sinjar, including the pro-KRG Ezidixan Protection Force and Sinjar Command Force, recruited approximately 10 to 20 Yezidi boys. (4)

Throughout the country, some girls were subjected to commercial sexual exploitation through temporary marriages. (25) This practice involves a dowry paid to the girl’s family and an agreement to dissolve the marriage after a predetermined length of time. (38) Syrian girls from refugee camps in the Kurdistan region were sometimes forced into early or temporary marriages with Iraqi or other refugee men; some KRG authorities allegedly ignored, or accepted bribes to ignore such cases, including those in which girls are sold multiple times. (25) NGOs reported in 2018 that women and girls in IDP camps, whose family members have alleged ties to ISIS, continued to 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. Iranian girls were subjected to commercial sexual exploitation in the Kurdistan

MINIMAL ADVANCEMENT – EFFORTS MADE BUT CONTINUED PRACTICE THAT DELAYED ADVANCEMENT

Region and Iraqi girls were trafficked to other Arab states in the region and to Europe for commercial sexual exploitation. (4) Child laborers were also exposed to sexual violence and abuse. (12)

In previous years, ISIS sold boys, who they considered too young or too weak to engage in armed conflict, into forced domestic work. (27,28) ISIS kidnapped and trafficked Yezidi children to Turkey for exploitation. (4) Some children in IDP camps who were suspected of having ties to ISIS were blocked from obtaining civil documentation and returning home or were subjected to commercial sexual exploitation. (4,39)

Children faced numerous barriers to accessing education, including displacement, the lack of schools nearby, the use of schools as shelters by internally displaced persons (IDPs), costs of transportation and school supplies, lack of sufficient educational facilities, and IDPs' and refugees' lack of identification documents. (3,7,12,26,40,41) In addition, children with suspected ties to ISIS may not have access to identification documents required for school enrollment. (39) According to UNICEF, over half of the schools in Iraq required repairs and the education of 3 million children had been interrupted. (3) UNICEF also reported that while 92 percent of children enroll in primary schools, only half of children from economically disadvantaged families complete primary school and only a quarter complete secondary education. (42) Additionally, some 50,000 Syrian refugee children do not attend formal school; however, this number is over-inclusive as it also counts children who receive permissible non-formal education. (43) For these refugees, the majority of whom live in the Kurdistan Region, access to education was limited because of security concerns, school-related costs such as transportation and uniforms, and language issues, due to most classes in the Kurdistan Region being taught in Kurdish, which Syrian children do not understand, rather than Arabic. (44)

As of October 2018, 1.86 million people, including about 900,000 children remained internally displaced, while 4.1 million individuals, including over 2 million children, had returned home to newly accessible areas. (45) This makes children vulnerable to child labor and child trafficking and limits the government's ability to address the worst forms of child labor.

II. LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR CHILD LABOR

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

Table 3. Ratification of International Conventions on Child Labor

Convention	Ratification
 ILO C. 138, Minimum Age	✓
ILO C. 182, Worst Forms of Child Labor	✓
 UN CRC	✓
UN CRC Optional Protocol on Armed Conflict	✓
UN CRC Optional Protocol on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography	✓
 Palermo Protocol on Trafficking in Persons	✓

The government has established laws and regulations related to child labor (Table 4). However, gaps exist in Iraq's legal framework to adequately protect children from child labor, including the prohibition of child trafficking.

Table 4. Laws and Regulations on Child Labor

Standard	Related Entity	Meets International Standards	Age	Legislation
Minimum Age for Work	Iraq	Yes	15	Article 7 of the 2015 Labor Law (46)
	Kurdistan Region	Yes	15	Article 90.1 of the 1987 Labor Law (47)

Table 4. Laws and Regulations on Child Labor (Cont.)

Standard	Related Entity	Meets International Standards	Age	Legislation
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work	Iraq	Yes	18	Article 95 of the 2015 Labor Law (46)
	Kurdistan Region	Yes	18	Articles 90.2 and 91.1 of the 1987 Labor Law (47)
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 (46,48)
	Kurdistan Region	Yes		Article 91.2 of the 1987 Labor Law; Ministry of Labor's Instruction 19 of 1987 (47,48)
Prohibition of Forced Labor	Iraq	Yes		Article 9 of the 2015 Labor Law; Articles 1 and 6 of the Law to Combat Human Trafficking (46,49)
	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 (46,49)
Prohibition of Child Trafficking	Iraq	No		Articles 1 and 6 of the Law to Combat Human Trafficking (49)
	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 (47,49)
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children	Iraq	Yes		Articles 399 and 403 of the Penal Code (50)
	Kurdistan Region	Yes		Articles 91.3(b), 91.4, and 97 of the 1987 Labor Law (47)
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 (47)
Minimum Age for Voluntary State Military Recruitment	Iraq and Kurdistan Region	Yes	18	Section 6(2) of the CPA Order 22 (51)
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 (52,53)
	Kurdistan Region	Yes	15	Articles 6 and 10 of the Kurdistan Regional Government Ministry of Education Law (54)
Free Public Education	Iraq	Yes		Article 34.2 of the Constitution; Article 9 of the Education Law (52,55)
	Kurdistan Region	Yes		Article 10 of the Kurdistan Regional Government Ministry of Education Law (54)

* No conscription (51)

‡ Age calculated based on available information

Article 117 of the Constitution of Iraq recognizes Kurdistan, which comprises the provinces of Dohuk, Erbil, Sulaimaniya, and Halabja, as a federal region. (55-58) Article 121 grants the Kurdistan region the right to exercise legislative and executive powers. (55) The Iraqi Kurdistan Parliament must endorse any laws passed by the Government of Iraq after 1991 for such laws to enter into force in the Iraqi Kurdistan Region. (56-58)

In Iraq, Article 1 of the Law to Combat Human Trafficking requires force or coercion to be present as an element of the crime of child trafficking, which is inconsistent with international standards, including Article 3 of the Palermo Protocol. (49) In July 2018, the Iraqi Kurdistan Parliament endorsed the Iraqi Law to Combat Human Trafficking, which means the operative trafficking standard there is also not in compliance with international standards. (59)

In Iraq, the provisions of the 2015 Labor Law protecting children from hazardous work do not apply to children ages 15 to 17 working in family businesses under the authority of family members. (46)

MINIMAL ADVANCEMENT – EFFORTS MADE BUT CONTINUED PRACTICE THAT DELAYED ADVANCEMENT

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. (52,53,60) 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 authority of the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs (MOLSA) that may hinder adequate enforcement of their child labor laws.

Table 5. Agencies Responsible for Child Labor Law Enforcement

Organization/Agency	Related Entity	Role
Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs (MOLSA)	Iraq	Enforces child labor laws and regulations through its Child Labor Unit. Conducts research on child labor through its Childhood Welfare Authority. Receives complaints of child labor cases. (3)
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 Kurdistan Regional Government's Ministry of Interior (KMOI) play a supporting role in the daily activities of the Ministry. (3)
Ministry of Interior	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. (3) Maintains a hotline for victims of human trafficking that is routed directly to the Ministry's Anti-Trafficking Department. (3)
Kurdistan Regional Government's Ministry of Interior (KMOI)	Kurdistan Region	Investigates cases of commercial sexual exploitation and human trafficking. (3) In 2018, KRG established a Counter Trafficking Directorate within KMOI. (59)

Labor Law Enforcement

In 2018, labor law enforcement agencies in Iraq took actions to combat child labor (Table 6). However, gaps exist within the authority and operations of MOLSA that may hinder adequate labor law enforcement, including an insufficient number of labor inspectors, and lack of funding for inspections, inspectors' lack of authority to assess penalties, and insufficient labor inspector training.

Table 6. Labor Law Enforcement Efforts Related to Child Labor

Overview of Labor Law Enforcement	2017	2018
Labor Inspectorate Funding	Unknown (7)	Unknown (3)
Number of Labor Inspectors	98 (7)	Unknown (3)
Inspectorate Authorized to Assess Penalties	No (46)	No (46)
Initial Training for New Labor Inspectors	No (7)	No (3)
Training on New Laws Related to Child Labor	N/A	N/A
Refresher Courses Provided	No (7)	No (3)
Number of Labor Inspections Conducted	9,129 (7)	Unknown (3)
Number Conducted at Worksite	Unknown (7)	Unknown (3)
Number of Child Labor Violations Found	0 (7)	Unknown (3)
Number of Child Labor Violations for Which Penalties Were Imposed	N/A	Unknown (3)
Number of Child Labor Penalties Imposed that Were Collected	N/A	Unknown (3)
Routine Inspections Conducted	Yes (7)	Yes (3)
Routine Inspections Targeted	Yes (7)	Yes (3)
Unannounced Inspections Permitted	Yes (7)	Yes (3)
Unannounced Inspections Conducted	Unknown (7)	Unknown (3)
Complaint Mechanism Exists	Yes (7)	Yes (3)
Reciprocal Referral Mechanism Exists Between Labor Authorities and Social Services	Yes (7)	Yes (3)

Iraq

MINIMAL ADVANCEMENT – EFFORTS MADE BUT CONTINUED PRACTICE THAT DELAYED ADVANCEMENT

In 2018, although the exact numbers are unknown, MOLSA inspectors increased the number of inspections and shut down several brick factories in which children had been engaged in child labor. (3) Although the number of labor inspectors in Iraq during the reporting period is unknown, in 2018 the number of labor inspectors was likely insufficient for the size of Iraq’s workforce, which includes over 8.9 million workers. (61) 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. (62,63)

In 2018, the KRG Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs (KMOLSA) did not provide child labor training to inspectors. However, the KMOLSA and the KRG Ministry of the Interior responded to referrals of child labor. (3) KMOLSA employed 21 labor inspectors who carried out 8,872 inspections. (64) This is a high number of inspections conducted by each inspector, and it is unknown whether this high number affected the quality of such inspections. Nevertheless, inspectors receive a small budget for transportation to worksites. The monthly budget for each of the 3 provincial directorates is about 1 million dinars (approximately \$840). (64) When inspectors identify child labor violations, they can issue warnings and instructions, or refer cases to court. In 2018, KMOLSA inspectors referred 82 cases to the court. (64)

Criminal Law Enforcement

In 2018, 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.

Table 7. Criminal Law Enforcement Efforts Related to Child Labor

Overview of Criminal Law Enforcement	2017	2018
Initial Training for New Criminal Investigators	No (7)	Unknown (3)
Training on New Laws Related to the Worst Forms of Child Labor	No (7)	N/A
Refresher Courses Provided	No (7)	Unknown (3)
Number of Investigations	Unknown (7)	Unknown (3)
Number of Violations Found	0 (7)	Unknown (3)
Number of Prosecutions Initiated	0 (7)	Unknown (3)
Number of Convictions	0 (7)	Unknown (3)
Imposed Penalties for Violations Related to The Worst Forms of Child Labor	Unknown	Unknown
Reciprocal Referral Mechanism Exists Between Criminal Authorities and Social Services	Yes (7)	Yes (3)

In 2018, Iraqi and KRG authorities continued to inappropriately detain and prosecute without legal representation children allegedly affiliated to ISIS—some of whom were victims of forcible recruitment and use—and used abusive interrogation techniques and torture to gain children’s confessions; the government did not screen these children as potential human trafficking victims. (4,32-36)

During the reporting period, the Ministry of Interior held several training workshops on countering human trafficking in which officials of the Ministry of Justice and MOLSA participated. (59) However, the KRG did not provide training for criminal investigators. (3)

In 2018, the Government of Iraq convicted 53 individuals of human trafficking, although it is unknown how many of these cases involved children. (59)

KRG officials stated that courts can refer cases of the worst forms of child labor to the KRG Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs. (13) The KRG Ministry of Interior investigated 85 cases of human trafficking, at least 2 of which involved children who were forced to beg. (3,59) KRG also convicted 7 individuals of human trafficking but it is not known whether any of the cases involved children. (59) Despite these efforts, the government did not investigate or hold anyone criminally accountable for continued allegations of unlawful recruitment and use of child soldiers. Furthermore, the government also failed to investigate and hold criminally accountable military and security personnel for credible allegations of the sexual exploitation of girls in IDP camps. (4) An NGO reported

MINIMAL ADVANCEMENT – EFFORTS MADE BUT CONTINUED PRACTICE THAT DELAYED ADVANCEMENT

in 2018 that police occasionally detained children engaged in street begging and kept them in custody before releasing them; police did not screen these children for trafficking nor refer them to appropriate protection services. (4)

Between 2014 and 2018, KRG officials rescued approximately 1,600 children who had been kidnapped, sold multiple times, and subjected to commercial sexual exploitation. (3) Some KRG authorities allegedly ignored, or may have accepted bribes to ignore, such cases, including those in which girls are sold multiple times. (4)

Some child victims of human trafficking and forced labor were held legally responsible for acts committed while being trafficked, particularly immigration violations. (25,58,65) Lack of sufficient coordination among judicial authorities and security forces across governorates led to re-arrests of some children previously cleared of charges related to ISIS. (66,67)

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.

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

Coordinating Body	Related Entity	Role & Description
Inter-ministerial Committee on Child Labor	Iraq	Coordinates overall government efforts to combat child labor, research policies regarding child labor, and design and manage projects. Members included representatives from MOLSA and four other ministries. (18) In 2018, the Committee worked with UNICEF and other UN agencies on the development of an action plan to address the recruitment and use of children in armed conflict, although the action plan was not finalized at the end of the reporting period. (3)
Central Committee to Combat Trafficking in Persons	Iraq	Oversees the implementation of the Law to Combat Human Trafficking and serves as the national coordinating body on trafficking in persons. Led by the Ministry of Interior, and includes representatives from five ministries, the KRG Ministry of Interior, and two other state entities. (13,18) However, due to lack of sufficient coordination between judicial authorities and security forces in 2018, some children, who were suspected of affiliation with ISIS, cleared of allegations, and released from custody, were sometimes re-arrested for the same allegations. (32,66) In 2018, the Committee continued to oversee the implementation of the Law to Combat Human Trafficking. (3)
KRG High Committee on Human Trafficking	Kurdistan Region	Established in 2016, members include representatives of the KRG Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs and KRG Ministry of the Interior. In 2018, the High Committee supported the endorsement of the Iraqi Law to Combat Human Trafficking by the Iraqi Kurdistan Parliament. (3)
KRG Council of Ministers	Kurdistan Region	KRG Ministry of Interior and KRG Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs coordinate on child labor in the Iraqi Kurdistan Region through the KRG Council of Ministers. In 2018, the two KRG ministries coordinated on child labor issues. (3)

The KRG High Commission on Child Welfare has been inactive for several years and no longer plays a role in coordination efforts; instead, the KRG Council of Ministers provides the auspices under which KRG agencies coordinate on child labor issues. (3)

V. GOVERNMENT POLICIES ON CHILD LABOR

The government has established policies that are consistent with relevant international standards on child labor (Table 9). However, policy gaps exist that hinder efforts to address child labor, including coverage of all worst forms of child labor.

Table 9. Key Policies Related to Child Labor

Policy	Related Entity	Description
Child Protection Policy (2017–2022)	Iraq	Provides a holistic approach to addressing children’s needs, including ameliorating the child labor situation in the country 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. (3) Research was unable to determine whether activities were undertaken to implement this policy during the reporting period.

Based on available information, there were no child labor policies in the Kurdistan Region. (3)

VI. SOCIAL PROGRAMS TO ADDRESS CHILD LABOR

In 2018, 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 services to address the full scope of the problem.

Table 10. Key Social Programs to Address Child Labor

Program	Related Entity	Description
Informal Education†	Iraq	Government-supported informal education systems, including evening school programs and the fast education mode that encourages children ages 12 to 18 who have dropped out of school to continue their education. (3) Research was unable to determine what steps were taken in 2018 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 2018, MOLSA continued to provide cash assistance to low-income families to send their children to school. (3)
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. (3) Research was unable to determine what steps were taken in 2018 to implement this program.

† Program is funded by the Government of Iraq.

Neither the Government of Iraq nor the KRG reported efforts to provide protection services to demobilized child soldiers of ISIS or the PMF, thus failing to prevent re-victimization or re-recruitment of these children into armed groups. (4) Likewise, research found no evidence of specific active programs to support children engaged in commercial sexual exploitation.

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).

Table 11. Suggested Government Actions to Eliminate Child Labor

Area	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 its application, in accordance with international standards.	2015 – 2018
	Ensure that hazardous work protections apply to all children, including children working in family businesses under the authority of family members.	2016 – 2018
	Ensure that the law in Iraq criminally prohibits the use of children in illicit activities, including in the production and trafficking of drugs.	2015 – 2018
	Ensure that the law criminally prohibits the recruitment of children under age 18 by non-state armed groups.	2013 – 2018
	Increase the age of compulsory schooling in Iraq to at least age 15, the minimum age for work.	2009 – 2018

MINIMAL ADVANCEMENT – EFFORTS MADE BUT CONTINUED PRACTICE THAT DELAYED ADVANCEMENT

Table 11. Suggested Government Actions to Eliminate Child Labor (Cont.)

Area	Suggested Action	Year(s) Suggested
Enforcement	Ensure that children under age 18 cannot join armed groups affiliated with the Popular Mobilization Forces to engage in combat.	2016 – 2018
	Publish law enforcement information, such as the funding of the labor inspectorate, number of inspectors, inspections, and violations.	2011 – 2018
	Authorize the labor inspectorate to assess penalties.	2017 – 2018
	Ensure that labor inspectors and criminal investigators receive training courses on child labor.	2016 – 2018
	Increase the number of labor inspectors to meet the ILO technical advice and ensure adequate funding to adequately enforce legal protections against child labor, including its worst forms.	2011 – 2018
	Determine whether the inspection ratio for each labor inspector is appropriate to ensure the quality and scope of inspections.	2018
	Publish information on criminal law enforcement on the worst forms of child labor in Iraq and the Iraqi Kurdistan Region.	2013 – 2018
Enforcement	Ensure that child victims of human trafficking are not prosecuted; that children are not arrested, detained, or denied services solely on the basis of their family members' perceived ties to ISIS; and that children suspected of ISIS affiliation are not subjected to torture.	2015 – 2018
Coordination	Through enhanced coordination among government agencies, ensure that children previously cleared of charges related to armed conflict are not at risk of re-arrest and re-prosecution.	2017 – 2018
Government Policies	Implement the Child Protection Policy in Iraq, and adopt a child labor policy in the Iraqi Kurdistan Region.	2018
Social Programs	Ensure that children are discouraged from enlisting in armed groups and receiving military training.	2015 – 2018
	Ensure that universal access to education is consistent with international standards, including for refugee and internally displaced children.	2013 – 2018
	Implement programs to address child labor in relevant sectors in Iraq, such as commercial sexual exploitation, informal education programs and shelters for human trafficking victims, and demobilize and reintegrate children engaged in armed groups.	2009 – 2018

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