

In 2016, Albania made a significant advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. The Government increased the funding allocated to the labor inspectorate and established a task force to assist children living and working on the streets. In addition, the Government implemented the Identification and Protection of Children in Street Situations Action Plan, which aims to protect street children from abuse, exploitation, and neglect. The Government also implemented the Action Plan for the Social-Economic Reintegration of Women and Girl Victims by providing education and social services to girl victims of forced labor and human trafficking. However, children in Albania engage in the worst forms of child labor, including in mining and forced begging. The law does not criminally prohibit using, procuring, or offering children for illicit activities. In addition, the labor inspectorate needs to be strengthened to conduct effective inspections in all sectors in which child labor is known to occur.



I. PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Children in Albania engage in the worst forms of child labor, including in mining and forced begging. (1-6) Table 1 provides key indicators on children's work and education in Albania.

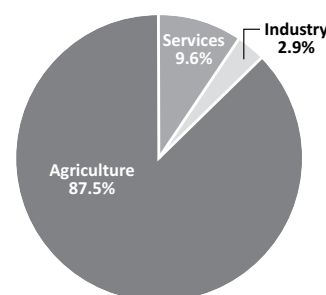
Table 1. Statistics on Children's Work and Education

Children	Age	Percent
Working (% and population)	5 to 14	4.6 (23,665)
Attending School (%)	5 to 14	92.5
Combining Work and School (%)	7 to 14	5.2
Primary Completion Rate (%)		106.4

Source for primary completion rate: Data from 2015, published by UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2016. (7)

Source for all other data: Understanding Children's Work Project's analysis of statistics from National Child Labor Survey, 2010. (8)

Figure 1. Working Children by Sector, Ages 5-14



Albania lacks recent, comprehensive data on children engaging in the worst forms of child labor, including in agriculture and construction, in the country. 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, activities unknown (2-5) Shepherding (9)
Industry	Mining, [†] including chrome (1, 2, 4, 5, 10-13) Construction, activities unknown (1-5) Working in the textile, garment, and footwear sectors (2, 4, 5, 14) Processing fish (4, 5, 15)

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

Sector/Industry	Activity
Services	Begging (2-5, 16)
	Street work, including vending, washing vehicles, busking, and shining shoes (3, 9, 17)
	Collecting recyclable materials on the street and in landfills (3, 5)
	Working in wholesale and retail trade (1, 2, 4, 5)
	Working in hotels and restaurants (1, 2, 4, 5)
	Working in call centers (4, 5)
Categorical Worst Forms of Child Labor [‡]	Use in illicit activities, including burglary, drug trafficking, drug couriership, and harvesting and processing cannabis (2, 3, 5, 10, 17-20)
	Commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking (2, 3, 5, 20)
	Forced begging, sometimes as a result of human trafficking (2, 3, 5, 6, 17, 20)

[†] 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.




Children are trafficked internally in Albania and abroad to neighboring and European Union countries for commercial sexual exploitation and forced labor, including forced begging.(5, 17, 20-22) Internal child trafficking and forced begging has increased in recent years, particularly during the tourist season.(17, 20-22) Street children, especially those from Egyptian and Roma communities, are at the greatest risk of becoming victims of human trafficking.(2, 3, 23)

Albania allows children without a birth certificate to enroll in public schools; however, some children from Roma, Egyptian, and Greek families and refugees may face obstacles in obtaining birth certificates, which may affect their access to social services and school inclusion.(5, 9, 15, 21, 24, 25) Children out of school are vulnerable to the worst forms of child labor. Some Roma and Egyptian children also experienced financial hurdles to accessing education, such as transportation and textbook costs.(5) Discrimination in schools or being physically separated in classrooms are also issues for Roma and Egyptian students.(5, 9)

II. LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR THE WORST FORMS OF CHILD LABOR

Albania 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, including its worst forms (Table 4). However, gaps exist in Albania’s legal framework to adequately protect children from child labor.

Table 4. Laws and Regulations on Child Labor

Standard	Meets International Standards: Yes/No	Age	Legislation
Minimum Age for Work	Yes	16	Article 98 of the Code of Labor; Article 24 of the Law for the Protection of the Rights of the Child (26, 27)
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work	Yes	18	Articles 98–101 of the Code of Labor; Article 24 of the Law for the Protection of the Rights of the Child (26, 27)

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

Standard	Meets International Standards: Yes/No	Age	Legislation
Identification of Hazardous Occupations or Activities Prohibited for Children	Yes		Articles 99–101 of the Code of Labor; Decree of the Council of Ministers on Defining Hazardous and Hard Work; Decree of the Council of Ministers on the Protection of Minors at Work; Article 34 of the Law on Occupational Safety and Health at Work (26, 28-30)
Prohibition of Forced Labor	Yes		Article 8 of the Code of Labor (26)
Prohibition of Child Trafficking	Yes		Article 128/b of the Criminal Code (31)
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children	Yes		Articles 114, 114/a, 115, 117, and 128/b of the Criminal Code; Article 26 of the Law for the Protection of the Rights of the Child (27, 31)
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities	No		Article 129 of the Criminal Code; Article 25 of the Law for the Protection of the Rights of the Child (27, 31)
Minimum Age for Military Recruitment			
State Compulsory	N/A*		Article 9 of the Law on Military Service (32)
State Voluntary	Yes	19	Article 9 of the Law on Military Service (32)
Non-state Compulsory	Yes		Article 28 of the Law for the Protection of the Rights of the Child (27)
Compulsory Education Age	Yes	16	Article 22 of the Law on Pre-University Education System (33)
Free Public Education	Yes		Article 57 of the Constitution of the Republic of Albania; Article 5 of the Law on Pre-University Education System (33, 34)

* No conscription (35)

The Parliament of Albania presented a draft Code on the Criminal Justice for Children, which seeks to ensure access to education, protection, and rehabilitation for children who commit crimes.(36) The Ministry of Social Welfare and Youth proposed a new Law on the Rights and Protection of the Child that aims to protect exploited working children and mandates reporting of child exploitation cases.(5, 27, 37)

The law in Albania does not criminally prohibit using, procuring, or offering all children under age 18 for illicit activities, including in the production and trafficking of drugs. Article 129 of the Criminal Code criminally prohibits only inducing or encouraging children under age 14 to participate in criminality.(31)

III. ENFORCEMENT OF LAWS ON THE WORST FORMS OF CHILD LABOR

The Government has established institutional mechanisms for the enforcement of laws and regulations on child labor, including its worst forms (Table 5). However, gaps in labor law and criminal law enforcement remain.

Table 5. Agencies Responsible for Child Labor Law Enforcement

Organization/Agency	Role
Ministry of Social Welfare and Youth	Enforce laws related to child labor and hazardous work, and monitor the quality of social services provided through the State Inspectorate for Labor and Social Services.(4) Receive, document, and respond to child labor complaints through the Social Services Agency.(4, 6)
Ministry of Interior	Enforce all laws, including laws related to the worst forms of child labor.(4) Coordinate the work of the Regional Police Directorate through the General Directorate of State Police. Investigate child trafficking cases by an officer designated to child protection and an Illicit Trafficking Section assigned to each Regional Police Directorate.(4) Establish the Government's policy on combating human trafficking through the State Committee Against Trafficking in Persons (TIP), chaired by the Interior Minister.(37)
Office of the Prosecutor General	Investigate and prosecute child trafficking cases through the Serious Crimes Prosecution Office.(2, 38)
Child Rights Units (CRUs)	Monitor the situation of high-risk children at the regional level, coordinate protection and referral activities by Child Protection Units (CPUs) at the local level, and manage cases of children whose needs cannot be met by CPUs.(39, 40)

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Table 5. Agencies Responsible for Child Labor Law Enforcement (cont)

Organization/Agency	Role
Child Protection Units (CPUs)	Identify at-risk children, take case referrals from enforcement agencies, and conduct initial evaluations of each case at the municipal level. Manage cases of at-risk children and refer them to appropriate social services.(2, 40-42) Receive referrals from state police responsible for identifying and referring children in need to the CPUs.

Child Protection Units (CPUs) are generally staffed by only one individual, and a majority of CPU staff are not able to focus on child protection issues full-time.(4, 24) During the reporting period, CPUs handled new cases, however, due in part to decentralization reforms, Child Rights Units (CRUs) have not been functional.(5, 43)

Labor Law Enforcement

In 2016, labor law enforcement agencies in Albania took actions to combat child labor, including its worst forms (Table 6).

Table 6. Labor Law Enforcement Efforts Related to Child Labor

Overview of Labor Law Enforcement	2015	2016
Labor Inspectorate Funding	\$117,164.47 (5)	\$142,953.97 (5)
Number of Labor Inspectors	115 (4, 44)	113 (43)
Inspectorate Authorized to Assess Penalties	Yes (4)	Yes (5)
Training for Labor Inspectors		
Initial Training for New Employees	No (4)	Yes (5)
Training on New Laws Related to Child Labor	N/A	Yes (5)
Refresher Courses Provided	No (4, 44)	No (5)
Number of Labor Inspections	45 (44)	171 (5)
Number Conducted at Worksite	Unknown (4)	69 (5)
Number Conducted by Desk Reviews	Unknown (4)	102 (5)
Number of Child Labor Violations Found	16 (4)	21 (5)
Number of Child Labor Violations for Which Penalties Were Imposed	0 (4)	10 (5)
Number of Penalties Imposed that Were Collected	N/A	N/A
Routine Inspections Conducted	No (4)	Yes (5)
Routine Inspections Targeted	N/A (4)	Yes (5)
Unannounced Inspections Permitted	Yes (4)	Yes (5)
Unannounced Inspections Conducted	Unknown (4)	Yes (5)
Complaint Mechanism Exists	Yes (4)	Yes (5)
Reciprocal Referral Mechanism Exists Between Labor Authorities and Social Services	Yes (4)	Yes (5)

The Government has an annual plan to conduct inspections to identify potential dangers to employees. During the summer tourist seasons, the inspections focus on child labor in tourist areas.(5) Due in part to human resource shortages, inspections were not conducted in some fields in which child labor is known to occur in Albania, specifically the agricultural, wholesale and retail trade, hotel restaurants, mining, and informal sectors. In 2016, the 69 inspections conducted at worksites were routine requests required before hiring a minor.(45) While labor inspectors were trained on trafficking in persons (TIP), including child trafficking and proactive identification of TIP victims, inspectors were not trained on hazardous work conditions for children.(5) The total number of labor inspectors decreased from 115 in 2015 to 113 in 2016 due to reduced vacancies.(5, 45) Funding increased to a 10-year high in 2016, although the Labor Inspectorate reported that the budget was insufficient for effective labor law enforcement.(5)

If a child is trafficked for labor exploitation, the agency identifying the child refers the child to the police and state social services and then to an anti-trafficking shelter.(5) If a child is exploited for labor, the identifying agency or individual refers the child to the CPU to create a child care plan.(5) The CPU then refers the child to social services offered by the Government or NGOs.(5)

Criminal Law Enforcement

In 2016, criminal law enforcement agencies in Albania took actions to combat the worst forms of child labor (Table 7).

Table 7. Criminal Law Enforcement Efforts Related to the Worst Forms of Child Labor

Overview of Criminal Law Enforcement	2015	2016
Training for Investigators		
Initial Training for New Employees	Unknown	Yes (5)
Training on New Laws Related to the Worst Forms of Child Labor	N/A	N/A
Refresher Courses Provided	Yes (4)	Yes (37)
Number of Investigations	32 (4)	19 (5)
Number of Violations Found	16 (43)	21 (43)
Number of Prosecutions Initiated	8 (4)	17 (5)
Number of Convictions	5 (4)	8 (5)
Reciprocal Referral Mechanism Exists Between Criminal Authorities and Social Services	Yes (4)	Yes (5)

In 2016, police, prosecutors, judges, social workers, and civil society group members attended workshops and training focused on TIP identification, services for trafficking victims, and managing children's cases, including children engaged in the worst forms of child labor.(5, 20, 45) While the number of investigations and prosecutions of child TIP cases increased in 2016, NGOs noted that, due to police turnover, frequent training for police officers is needed to improve identification of child trafficking victims.(20, 37)

Standard operating procedures exist to identify and refer victims of trafficking, although border police rarely used them during the reporting period.(20, 45) In addition, gaps existed in the screening of minors, including migrants travelling to and from neighboring countries.(20, 45) Criminal law enforcement's national capacity to handle migrant flows is limited due to lack of resources.(46)

IV. COORDINATION OF GOVERNMENT EFFORTS ON THE WORST FORMS OF CHILD LABOR

The Government has established mechanisms to coordinate its efforts to address child labor, including its worst forms (Table 8).

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

Coordinating Body	Role & Description
State Agency for the Protection of Children's Rights	Oversee implementation of the Government's child rights protection policies, including monitoring the National Action Plan for the Identification and Protection of Children in Street Situations.(4, 5) Manage cases of at-risk children and refer them to appropriate social services.(2, 40-42) Sanction those that fail to protect children from violence and exploitation by a fine or other means of redress.(40, 47)
Office of the National Coordinator for the Fight Against Trafficking in Human Beings (ONAC)	Coordinate all anti-trafficking efforts in Albania.(38) Oversee 12 regional anti-human trafficking committees that carry out local action plans in cooperation with civil society partners. Lead data collection and report writing for the National Database for TIP Victims/Potential Victims.(5)
National Referral Mechanism	Coordinate the identification, protection, referral, and rehabilitation of trafficking victims between Government and civil society organizations.(21) Chaired by the Ministry of the Interior's ONAC.(21, 43)

In 2016, governmental institutions, the police, and NGOs created a task force to assist children living and working on the streets in Albania.(5) During the reporting period, the Office of the National Coordinator for the Fight Against Trafficking in Human Beings conducted two national awareness-raising campaigns and met three times with the Office of the General Prosecutor and the State Police Task Force to identify investigative and prosecutorial shortcomings in TIP cases. These meetings tapered off due to a lack of participation.(20) In addition, coordination between the State Inspectorate for Labor and Social Services and the Albanian State Police has traditionally been sporadic.(5)

During the reporting period, the State Agency for the Protection of Children's Rights (the State Agency) organized a national mobilization plan aimed at raising awareness on violence against children.(50) The State Agency also established a child helpline in every public residential institution for children.(20) In addition, the State Agency set up mobile teams to monitor assigned regions for the identification and protection of children and at the local level to offer assistance to parents.(43)

V. GOVERNMENT POLICIES ON THE WORST FORMS OF CHILD LABOR

The Government has established policies related to child labor, including its worst forms (Table 9).

Table 9. Key Policies Related to Child Labor

Policy	Description
Strategy for Combating Trafficking in Persons Action Plan (2014–2017)	Outlines a plan to improve law enforcement and prosecutions, build the capacity of programs that provide services to trafficking victims, improve interagency coordination, and train professionals working with street children.(22, 44, 48, 49) Reviewed and updated by ONAC and IOM in 2016 to ensure its continued relevance.(20)
The Action Plan for the Social-Economic Reintegration of Women and Girl Victims (2016–2020)†	Increases resources available to victims and attempts to reintegrate girl trafficking victims by providing education and social services to combat future forced labor and trafficking.(50) Part of the Strategy for Combating Trafficking in Persons Action Plan.(5)
Instruction No. 10 on Cooperation and Intervention Procedures for Assisting Vulnerable Children for Institutions and Structures in Charge of Child Protection	Describes child protection responsibilities of the state police, Ministry of Education, regional Directorates of Social Services, regional Departments of Education, schools, municipal governments, CRUs, and CPUs.(40) Requires all agencies to refer known and suspected cases of child abuse and exploitation to CPUs. Outlines principles for case management and evaluation.(40)
Action Plan for the Identification and Protection of Children in Street Situations (2015–2017)	Defines the roles and responsibilities of various ministries and stakeholders in identifying and providing assistance to street children, including children working on the street.(4, 44)
White Paper on the Future of the Integrated Child Protection System in Albania	Clarifies roles and responsibilities of government agencies involved in child protection, makes government policy recommendations on child protection accountability, addresses mechanisms, and creates a child-friendly justice system.(4, 51)
National Action Plan for Roma and Egyptian Community Reintegration (2016–2020)	Aims to provide Roma and Egyptian children full access to education, reduce discrimination, enhance social inclusion, and promote intercultural dialog between different actors in the community.(22, 52)

† Policy was approved during the reporting period.

Under the Social Assistance and Services Law, the Government increased payments to families who are eligible for assistance and expanded the reach of the program.(5) In 2016, the People’s Ombudsman drafted a report on migrant unaccompanied minors and distributed flyers aimed to prevent sexual abuse and exploitation of children affected by the refugee crisis.(48) In addition, Guideline No. 14 was passed, which gives CPUs and multidisciplinary technical groups the power to immediately intervene to take a child out of a high-risk situation and place the child into a care institution.(5, 53)

VI. SOCIAL PROGRAMS TO ADDRESS CHILD LABOR

In 2016, the Government funded and participated in programs that include the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor, including its worst forms (Table 10).

Table 10. Key Social Programs to Address Child Labor†

Program	Description
UN Programs	Support to Social Inclusion (2012–2016) worked with several government ministries to develop informed policies and strengthen institutions on social inclusion.(45, 54) Albania-UN Program of Cooperation (2012–2016) and the Government of Albania-UN Program of Cooperation for Sustainable Development (2017–2021)* includes goals of increased access to education for vulnerable children and protections for child TIP victims.(55, 56)
TIP Hotline and Shelters	The TIP Helpline, Report, and Save Mobile App, created by ONAC and supported by USAID, UNODC, World Vision, and the Vodafone Albania Foundation, provides services to victims of crime, improves prevention of TIP, and serves as a public awareness tool.(21) The National Shelter Coalition† comprises one state-run and three NGO-run shelters. The National Reception Center for Victims of Trafficking, under the supervision of the Directorate General of State Social Service, provides shelter and access to social services for TIP victims.(57) The <i>Tjeter Vizion</i> NGO shelter provides services for minors. In 2016, ONAC promoted the helpline through awareness-raising activities.(45) In 2016, \$36,500 was allocated to the state-run shelter; 63 TIP victims/potential victims received services, and 95 children TIP victims/potential victims were accommodated in the shelters.(5, 20)
National Emergency Transition Center†	Government-run center that aims to provide vulnerable families with housing, health care, psychosocial and educational services, legal assistance, and employment placement aid. In 2016, housed 37 families and 80 unaccompanied children.(5)

Table 10. Key Social Programs to Address Child Labor* (cont)

Program	Description
Child Allowance Program (<i>Ndihma Ekonomike</i>)†	\$46 million government-funded cash transfer program that provides an allowance for families benefiting from economic aid through the Law on Social Assistance and Services. Expanded throughout the country by the 2016 amendments to the law.(58)
Identification and Protection of Children in Street Situations Action Plan (2015–2017)	UNICEF-funded program that protects children from abuse, exploitation, and neglect through an inter-agency plan for the protection of children living and working on the street.(59) Drafted by the Ministries of Social Welfare and Youth, Interior, and Education and Sports. Implemented by municipalities and monitored by the State Agency for the Protection of Children's Rights.(5, 59) In 2016, 24 special mobile teams were formed in 7 municipalities, reaching more than 800 children.(5)

* Policy was launched during the reporting period.

† Program is funded by the Government of Albania.

‡ The Government had other social programs that may have included the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor, including its worst forms.(5, 20, 48)

While some state or NGO-run services were available for children who were forced to beg, research found no evidence that programs were carried out to assist children working in mining.(20, 43)

VII. SUGGESTED GOVERNMENT ACTIONS TO ELIMINATE THE WORST FORMS OF CHILD LABOR

Based on the reporting above, suggested actions are identified that would advance the elimination of child labor, including its worst forms, in Albania (Table 11).

Table 11. Suggested Government Actions to Eliminate Child Labor, Including its Worst Forms

Area	Suggested Action	Year(s) Suggested
Legal Framework	Ensure that using, procuring, and offering of all children under age 18 for illicit activities, including in the production and trafficking of drugs, is criminally prohibited.	2015 – 2016
Enforcement	Provide CRUs and CPUs with sufficient staffing and funding to carry out their work effectively and implement decentralization reforms.	2013 – 2016
	Strengthen the labor inspectorate by providing sufficient training and funding, initiate routine inspections and inspections targeted based on analysis of data related to child labor, risk-prone sectors, and patterns of serious incidents.	2010 – 2016
	Ensure that police investigators receive frequent training on children engaged in the worst forms of child labor and that enough investigations are carried out.	2013 – 2016
	Ensure that the border police officers properly screen minor children, including migrants, and properly implement the Standard Operating Procedures.	2016
Coordination	Coordinate the task force between ONAC, the Office of the General Prosecutor, and the state police to ensure that all parties participate in meetings.	2016
	Increase the coordination between the State Inspectorate for Labor and Social Services and the state police.	2016
Social Programs	Conduct additional research to further identify children's activities in agriculture and construction to inform policies and programs.	2013 – 2016
	Increase resources, access to civil registration, and social services available to children, including Roma and Egyptian children engaged in or at risk of engaging in child labor.	2011 – 2016
	Ensure that barriers to education, such as the prohibitive cost of school supplies, are removed.	2013 – 2016
	Institute programs to assist children being used in mining and forced begging.	2014 – 2016

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- includes all new entrants to last grade (regardless of age). Therefore, the ratio can exceed 100 percent, due to over-aged and under-aged children who enter primary school late/early and/or repeat grades. For more information, please see “Children’s Work and Education Statistics: Sources and Definitions” in the Reference Materials section of this report.
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