

Jordan

Government Policies and Programs to Eliminate the Worst Forms of Child Labor

In July 1995, Queen Noor established the National Task Force for Children (NTFC) to monitor the condition and status of Jordanian children. Through its National Coalition for Children, the NTFC has brought together governmental, nongovernmental, and international organizations to develop initiatives which enhance the rights and well-being of the country's children.¹³²⁸ In 1998, the NTFC drafted a plan of action to assist working children. As a result, the Ministry of Labor created a Child Labor Division to receive and address child labor complaints and related issues.¹³²⁹

In 2000, Jordan became a member of ILO-IPEC, and in that same year, ILO-IPEC provided funding to the Government of Jordan to conduct a national child labor survey, covering both the formal and informal sectors of the economy, and to build a national database on child labor.¹³³⁰ Presently, the Ministry of Education is conducting a five-year education reform plan, focusing on pre-school education and education for children with special needs.¹³³¹ Queen Rania also has established the National Team for Early Childhood Development to address the issues of development and education of children from birth to age 8.¹³³² The National Team's first task assessed preschool education, which led to its call for expanded kindergarten provisions.¹³³³ Consequently, kindergarten was made compulsory in 2000.¹³³⁴

¹³²⁸ NTFC projects include the 1997 pilot study on child labor in Jordan and the drafting of the law on the rights of the child. The NTFC, in coordination with UNICEF, also has established a training and child rights advocacy program, with emphasis on child labor. *See* National Task Force for Children at <http://www.noor.gov.jo/main/ntfc.htm>.

¹³²⁹ The Ministry of Labor created a Child Labor Unit (CLU) in 1999. The CLU was responsible for conducting national research on child labor, establishing preventive and remedial measures, and training and monitoring labor inspectors on child labor. In 2000, the Ministry of Labor established a new Child Labor Division, with the added duties of receiving, investigating, and addressing child labor complaints. At present, only five employees are in the Child Labor Division, so enforcement responsibilities remain with the general labor inspectors. *See* U.S. Embassy Amman, unclassified telegram 3340, June 2000 [hereinafter unclassified telegram 3340]. *See also* U.S. Embassy Amman, unclassified telegram 4670, October 2001 [hereinafter unclassified telegram 4670].

¹³³⁰ Unclassified telegram 4670. *See also* ILO-IPEC, *All About IPEC: Programme Countries*, at http://www.ilo.org/public/english/standards/ipecc/about/countries/t_country.htm.

¹³³¹ The 1998-2002 education reform plan also covers upgrading teachers' skills, school administration, and educational information systems. The first education plan was from 1988 to 1998, and its goal was to enhance student achievement while reducing the number of dropouts. For these reasons, the Government of Jordan implemented evening, summer, and home studies programs. *See* unclassified telegram 3340, and "Education in Jordan: A Commitment to Excellence" [hereinafter "Education in Jordan"] at http://www.kingabdullah.jo/about_jordan/education_in_jordan.html.

¹³³² "Core Issues—Early Childhood Development," Queen Rania Al-Abdullah, at <http://209.41.172.238/coreissues.edc.cfm>.

¹³³³ *Ibid.*

¹³³⁴ Unclassified telegram 3340.

Incidence and Nature of Child Labor

In 1999, the ILO estimated that less than 1 percent of children between the ages of 10 and 14 were working in Jordan.¹³³⁵ Children are employed in agriculture and in small businesses.¹³³⁶ Child vendors work on the streets of Amman, selling newspapers, tissues, cigarettes, food, and gum.¹³³⁷ Children from East Amman and the adjoining refugee camps are trucked daily into West Amman to cull through dumpsters for recyclables.¹³³⁸

Education in Jordan is compulsory until age 16.¹³³⁹ While the Education Act states that basic schooling for primary and secondary students is free, families are responsible for education-related expenses, including transportation and books, and tuition is required for public schools.¹³⁴⁰ The Government of Jordan grants a 20 percent tuition fee reduction to underprivileged families and also provides food and transportation supplements to poor families and families with many chil-

¹³³⁵ The ILO estimated that 0.14 percent of children between the ages 10 and 14 were working in 1999. See *World Development Indicators 2001* (Washington, DC: World Bank, 2001) [hereinafter *World Development Indicators 2000*] [CD-ROM].

¹³³⁶ In 1998, the National Task Force for Children (NTFC) presented the major findings of its pilot study on child labor in Jordan. The NTFC reported that the majority of working children in Jordan were employed on the farm, in crafts, and in trade and noted that 42 percent of employed children worked over 49 hours per week. The NTFC estimated that 75 percent of these children worked only during the summer but indicated that they were exposed to occupational hazards and physical abuse. See U.S. Embassy–Amman unclassified telegram no. 1460, February 1998 [hereinafter unclassified telegram 1460]. See also “Queen Chairs Round Table on Child Labour in Jordan,” *Jordan Times*, February 14, 1998, at <http://www.jordanembassyus.org/021498005.htm>, and UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, *Consideration of Reports Submitted by States Parties Under Article 44 of the Convention, Periodic Reports of States Parties Due in 1998, Addendum, Jordan CRC/C/70/Add. 4*, September 13, 1999 [hereinafter *Periodic Reports Submitted by States Parties*].

¹³³⁷ Children also have been reported working on the streets of Zarqa and Irbid. In many of these cases, the children provide the only means of income for the family. See U.S. Embassy–Amman unclassified telegram no. 4578, June 1999 [hereinafter unclassified telegram 4578]. See also *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2000—Jordan* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of State, 2001) [hereinafter *Country Reports 2000*], Section 6d, at <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2000/nea/836.htm>, and UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, *Consideration of Reports Submitted by States Parties Under Article 44 of the Convention, Concluding Observations of the Committee on the Rights of the Child, Jordan, CRC/C/15/Add. 125*, June 2, 2000.

¹³³⁸ Unclassified telegram 4578.

¹³³⁹ In 1988, education was made compulsory for citizens ages 6 to 16. Beginning in the 2000-2001 school year, kindergarten education also was made mandatory in both government and private schools. However, the Government of Jordan has refused to allow Iraqi children to attend school unless they are legal residents or are recognized as refugees by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. See unclassified telegram 3340. See also *Country Reports 2000* at Section 5.

¹³⁴⁰ Unclassified telegram 3340. See also “Education in Jordan”; *Periodic Reports Submitted by States Parties*; and “IWRAP Country Reports: Jordan,” IWRAP Publications, at <http://www.igc.org/iwraw/publications/countries/jordan.html>.

dren in order to make education more affordable.¹³⁴¹ In 1997, the gross primary enrollment rate was 70.6 percent, and in 1995, the net primary enrollment rate was 67.5 percent.¹³⁴²

Child Labor Laws and Enforcement

In 1996, the Labor Code was amended to raise the minimum legal working age from 13 to 16.¹³⁴³ According to the Labor Code, children under 17 are prohibited from working in dangerous and hazardous jobs.¹³⁴⁴ Children under the age of 18 are not allowed to work more than six hours per day, and they may not work during evenings, weekends, or holidays.¹³⁴⁵ Before hiring a minor, a prospective employer must obtain a guardian's written approval, the minor's birth certificate, and a health certificate.¹³⁴⁶ An employer found in violation of the above requirements must pay a fine ranging from 100 to 500 dinars (USD 142 to 710), with a doubling of the fine for repeat offenses.¹³⁴⁷ The Criminal Code bans the procurement of females under the age of 20 for the purpose of prostitution.¹³⁴⁸ A 1926 law specifically prohibits the trafficking of children.¹³⁴⁹ Jordan ratified ILO Convention 138 on March 23, 1998 and ILO Convention 182 on April 20, 2000.¹³⁵⁰

¹³⁴¹ *Country Reports 2000* at Section 5 and unclassified telegram 3340.

¹³⁴² *World Development Indicators 2001*.

¹³⁴³ Labour Code [hereinafter Labour Code], Law No. 8 of 1996, Chapter VIII, Section 73, at <http://www.natlex.ilo.org/txt/E96JOR01.htm>.

¹³⁴⁴ *Ibid.* at Section 74.

¹³⁴⁵ *Ibid.* at Section 75.

¹³⁴⁶ *Ibid.* at Section 76.

¹³⁴⁷ At present, the Government of Jordan has 85 general labor inspectors who are also tasked with investigating child labor investigations. *See* Labour Code at Chapter VIII, Section 77. *See also* unclassified telegram 4670. Currency conversion at <http://www.carosta.de/frames/convert.htm> on 1/25/02.

¹³⁴⁸ *The Protection Project, Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Women and Children: A Human Rights Report—Jordan*, The Protection Project, at <http://www.protectionproject.org>.

¹³⁴⁹ *Country Reports 2000* at Section 6d.

¹³⁵⁰ ILOLEX database: Jordan at <http://ilolex.olo.ch:1567>.

NOTE: Hard copies of all Web citations are on file.