

# Russian Federation

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

In January 2000, the government collaborated with ILO-IPEC on a project to assess the situation of street children in St. Petersburg.<sup>2094</sup> During the project, a “Working Street Children Action Committee” was established in the city, and families were directed toward appropriate educational, health, psychological, and social assistance services.<sup>2095</sup> In 2001, the government began working with the World Bank on a 5-year project to improve vocational education<sup>2096</sup> and signed an agreement with UNESCO to cooperate on rehabilitating the educational system in the Chechen Republic.<sup>2097</sup>

## Incidence and Nature of Child Labor

Statistics on the number of working children under the age of 15 in Russia are unavailable. Reports indicate that children work principally in small businesses (such as in garages, kiosks, cafes, and laundries), as beggars, in commercial sexual exploitation, in the sale of drugs, and as street vendors.<sup>2098</sup> In general, child welfare in Russia has deteriorated in recent years, especially for those children who are orphans, homeless, or working on the streets.<sup>2099</sup> A study in 2000 by ILO-IPEC, in collaboration with the government, found between 10,000 and 16,000 working street children in the city of St. Petersburg.<sup>2100</sup>

Prostitution and the trafficking in girls and boys to brothels in Western Europe are reported to be increasing,<sup>2101</sup> and reports from NGOs allege that Russian organized crime is increasingly

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<sup>2094</sup> U.S. Embassy–Moscow, unclassified telegram no. 3884, November 2001 [hereinafter unclassified telegram 3884].

<sup>2095</sup> In June 2001, the Moscow office of the ILO, in collaboration with the Ministry of Labor, held a tripartite workshop entitled “The Worst Forms of Child Labor in Russia: ILO Convention 182.” As a follow-up to the workshop, the local ILO office plans to organize a nationwide conference on combating child labor in early 2002. See unclassified telegram 3884.

<sup>2096</sup> World Bank, *Education Reform Project*, “Projects and Operations,” at <http://www.worldbank.org/sprojects/Project.asp?pid'PO50474www4.worldbank.org/sprojects/Project.asp?pid'P050474> on 12/6/01, updated 11/26/01.

<sup>2097</sup> UNESCO, “Russia and UNESCO Sign Agreement on Cooperation in Education for Chechen Republic,” at <http://www.unesco.org/opi/eng/unescopress/2001/01-109e.shtml> <http://www.unesco.org/opi/eng/unescopress/2001/01-109e.shtml> on 12/6/01.

<sup>2098</sup> *ICFTU Online*, “World Union Calls for Immediate Action to Prevent Explosion of Child Labour in Russia,” at <http://www.icftu.org/english/ps/1999/eprol70-990915-dd.html>. See also *BBC News*, “World: Europe Eyewitness—Russia: A Child’s Eye View,” at [http://www.news.bbc.co.uk/hi/english/world/europe/newsid\\_489000/489283.stm](http://www.news.bbc.co.uk/hi/english/world/europe/newsid_489000/489283.stm), and *Vancouver Sun*, “No Place to Call Home for a Million Russian Kids,” at <http://www.vancouversun.com/cgi-bin/newsite.pl?adcode'w-mm&modulename>.

<sup>2099</sup> Unclassified telegram 3884.

<sup>2100</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>2101</sup> *Human Rights Report—Russian Federation*, the Protection Project, [www.protectionproject.org](http://www.protectionproject.org) January 2001.

involved in the trafficking of children<sup>2102</sup> Russian law enforcement acknowledges that the trafficking of pornographic images of children via the Internet is a growing problem.<sup>2103</sup> Children are not used as soldiers in government armed forces in Russia, but there are reports that armed groups in Chechnya use child soldiers extensively and that Islamic separatists in Daghestan have offered money to children to join their ranks<sup>2104</sup>

Primary education is free and compulsory until age 15 or 9<sup>th</sup> grade.<sup>2105</sup> It is common, however, for teachers to ask parents to help pay several dollars each month for books, supplies, and furniture.<sup>2106</sup> In 1994, the gross primary enrollment rate was 107.2 percent, and the net primary enrollment rate was 92.7 percent.<sup>2107</sup> Primary school attendance rates are unavailable for Russia. While enrollment rates indicate a level of commitment to education, they do not always reflect children's participation in school.<sup>2108</sup> Although school enrollment is high in Russia, truancy is reported to be a growing problem, especially in lower income areas.<sup>2109</sup> Access to education is also frequently denied to children of unregistered persons, asylum seekers, and migrants because of residency registration requirements.<sup>2110</sup>

### Child Labor Laws and Enforcement

The Labor Code sets the minimum age for employment at 15 years. Children age 14 can work on a temporary basis with the permission of a parent or guardian, if their jobs will not interfere with their education.<sup>2111</sup> Children under the age of 18 are prohibited from dangerous,

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<sup>2102</sup> *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2000—Russia* (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/eur/index.cfm?docid=877>.

<sup>2103</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>2104</sup> Coalition to End the Use of Child Soldiers, *Global Report 2001: Russian Federation* at [http://www.child-soldiers.org/report2001/countries/russian\\_federation.html](http://www.child-soldiers.org/report2001/countries/russian_federation.html) on 12/4/01 <http://www.child-soldiers.org/report2001/countries/russian-federation.html>.

<sup>2105</sup> There is no minimum age for admission to schools in the Russian Federation. The age of admission is set by the statutes of the educational establishment. See *Periodic Reports of States Parties Due in 1997: Addendum, Russia*, CRC/C/65/Add. 5, UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, United Nations, Geneva, November 20, 1998, 20, 27.

<sup>2106</sup> Unclassified telegram 3884.

<sup>2107</sup> *World Development Indicators 2001* (Washington, D.C.: World Bank, 2001) [CD-ROM].

<sup>2108</sup> For a more detailed discussion on the relationship between education statistics and work, see *Introduction* to this report.

<sup>2109</sup> Unclassified telegram 3884.

<sup>2110</sup> *Country Reports 2000* at Section 5.

<sup>2111</sup> Boris Marchuck, Embassy of the Russian Federation, letter to USDOL official, September 27, 2000 [hereinafter Marchuck letter].

night, and overtime work; work that would prevent them from an education; work that is harmful to their health and moral development;<sup>2112</sup> work in cabarets, night-clubs, gambling establishments, and places where the production, transportation, and sale of liquors, tobacco products, drugs, and toxic substances can occur. Children ages 16 to 18 may not work more than 36 hours per week or during school hours.<sup>2113</sup> Children ages 14 to 16, may work only during school breaks and may not work more than 24 hours a week.<sup>2114</sup> Children of working age can be employed only after a medical examination and are required to pass annual medical examinations until the age of 18.<sup>2115</sup>

There is no comprehensive law that prohibits trafficking in persons.<sup>2116</sup> Forced labor is prohibited under the Constitution,<sup>2117</sup> and the Criminal Code contains provisions that prohibit the violation of Russian borders by an organized group using either violence or the threat of violence.<sup>2118</sup> The Criminal Code also prohibits the coercion of a minor to engage in prostitution.<sup>2119</sup> There is no law specifically prohibiting child pornography in Russia; however, this offense can be prosecuted under the general pornography provision in the Criminal Code.<sup>2120</sup>

The Ministry of Labor can impose administrative penalties or file criminal charges against employers who violate children's labor rights. The Criminal Code provides a penalty of up to 2 years of imprisonment for labor safety violations, including those involving children. There are also local commissions on youth labor rights that assist with the monitoring process. The Procurator's Office has general supervision over compliance with labor legislation, including responsibility for protecting children from economic exploitation and making checks to ensure that labor laws are enforced.<sup>2121</sup> Although the government has stated that child labor enforcement

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<sup>2112</sup> Ibid.

<sup>2113</sup> Ibid. *See also* unclassified telegram 3884.

<sup>2114</sup> Marchuck letter.

<sup>2115</sup> Ibid.

<sup>2116</sup> *Country Reports 2000* at Section 6f.

<sup>2117</sup> Constitution of the Russian Federation, Section 1, Chapter 2, Article 37 [document on file].

<sup>2118</sup> *Country Reports 2000* at Section 6f.

<sup>2119</sup> Unclassified telegram 3884.

<sup>2120</sup> "Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Women and Children: A Human Rights Report—Russian Federation," The Protection Project Database, January 2001, at <http://www.protectionproject.org> [document on file].

<sup>2121</sup> Marchuck letter.

checks are regular,<sup>2122</sup> one report indicated that investigations are entirely complaint driven.<sup>2123</sup> The government investigates and prosecutes cases involving the trafficking of children and has collaborated with the United States and other countries to develop its expertise on trafficking.<sup>2124</sup>

Russia ratified ILO Convention 138 on May 3, 1979, but has not ratified ILO Convention 182.<sup>2125</sup>

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<sup>2122</sup> Ibid.

<sup>2123</sup> *Country Reports 2000* at Section 6d.

<sup>2124</sup> U.S. Department of State, *Trafficking in Persons Report*, July 2001, Russian Federation.

<sup>2125</sup> ILO, ILOLEX database, "Ratifications of ILO Conventions," at <http://www.ilolex.ilo.chhttp://www.ilolex.ilo.ch:1567/English/>.

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