

Oman

The Government of Oman has improved the Ministry of Manpower's enforcement capacity by increasing the number of labor inspectors. However, gaps remain regarding enforcement of child labor laws, and the absence of a compulsory age for education hinders efforts to address the worst forms of child labor. Children reportedly continue to work in the informal agriculture and fishing sectors, where they may be exposed to occupational health and safety risks.

Statistics on Working Children and School Attendance

Children	Percent
Working	Unavailable
Attending School	Unavailable
Combining Work and School	Unavailable



Prevalence and Sectoral Distribution of the Worst Forms of Child Labor³⁸⁵⁷

There is limited evidence regarding the worst forms of child labor in Oman.³⁸⁵⁸

Children reportedly work in the informal economy, particularly in agriculture and fishing.³⁸⁵⁹ There is a lack of information on the kinds of dangerous work children perform, and these children may be exposed to unsafe and unhealthy activities.

Camel racing is a part of the Bedouin cultural heritage, and traditionally young boys have participated as jockeys on a voluntary basis, which could involve the risk of injury during a race.³⁸⁶⁰ There were no reports in 2009 of boys under 18 working as camel jockeys.³⁸⁶¹

Because of limited data, it is difficult to ascertain whether child prostitution, pornography, or trafficking exists in Oman. In 2009, the Government reported that the sale of children, child prostitution, and child pornography was not a “perceptible problem.”³⁸⁶² However, the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child has raised concerns about the possibility that some children may be trafficked among migrant workers entering Oman.³⁸⁶³

Laws and Regulations on the Worst Forms of Child Labor

According to Oman's Labor Law and the Sultan's Royal Decree No. 35/2003, the minimum age for admission to work is 15.³⁸⁶⁴ However, for certain hazardous occupations the minimum age for work is 18.³⁸⁶⁵

The Government has identified 43 hazardous occupations, including camel jockeying, that are prohibited for children under age 18, but the full list of occupations has not been made available to the ILO.³⁸⁶⁶ As of 2007, camel jockeys have been required to register in person with the Omani Camel Racing Federation and show proof of age by submitting a birth certificate, photographs, and a passport.³⁸⁶⁷

Oman's labor law also governs hours and conditions of employment under which juveniles may work.³⁸⁶⁸ The labor law bars juveniles from working between 6 p.m. and 6 a.m., or for more than 6 hours per day.³⁸⁶⁹ The Minister of Manpower (MOM) has the authority to determine the occupations and industries in which juveniles may work and what the minimum age of employment in these occupations should be.³⁸⁷⁰

Royal Decree No. 126/2008 prohibits the trafficking of children.³⁸⁷¹ Inciting a child to carnality or prostitution is punishable by imprisonment under Article 220 of the Penal Code.³⁸⁷² Article 224 of the Penal Code also makes it a crime for a person to produce, possess, or distribute obscene pictures or other pornographic objects.³⁸⁷³

In Oman, children receive free primary education, but attending school is not compulsory under the law.³⁸⁷⁴ In 2008, UNESCO estimated that 28 percent of the primary school age children in Oman were out of school.³⁸⁷⁵ Thus, some children under age 15 may be more susceptible to engagement in the worst forms of child labor.³⁸⁷⁶

	C138, Minimum Age	✓
	C182, Worst Forms of Child Labor	✓
	CRC	✓
	CRC Optional Protocol on Armed Conflict	✓
	CRC Optional Protocol on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution, and Child Pornography	✓
	Palermo Protocol on Trafficking in Persons	✓
	Minimum Age for Work	15
	Minimum Age for Hazardous Work	18
	Compulsory Education Age	No
	Free Public Education	Yes

Institutional Mechanisms for Coordination and Enforcement

Research was inconclusive in regard to whether the Government of Oman has established a coordinating mechanism to combat the worst forms of child labor in Oman.

The Ministry of Manpower (MOM) has the responsibility for monitoring employer compliance with the labor laws, including laws on child labor.³⁸⁷⁷

Omani labor law (Royal Decree 25/2003) applies to all companies with a license from the Government to conduct business.³⁸⁷⁸ In practice, enforcement of the labor law often does not extend to the informal sectors, such as agriculture, fishing, and small family businesses, where children may work.³⁸⁷⁹ In general, compliance with child labor laws is monitored during routine labor inspections by the labor inspectorate. Monitoring can also be triggered by complaints registered directly with the MOM or through information sharing on labor cases between the MOM and Royal Oman Police (ROP).³⁸⁸⁰ The Government operates a 24-hour hotline to allow citizens to report claims of labor abuses, including trafficking. However, in 2009, there were no reports of complaints related to child labor.³⁸⁸¹

In 2009, to improve its monitoring and enforcement capacity, the MOM hired over 180 new labor inspectors.³⁸⁸² The Government partnered with ILO to train 180 labor inspectors on trafficking victim identification during inspections of private companies.³⁸⁸³

In 2009, MOM inspected 2,226 businesses.³⁸⁸⁴ No information was available to indicate whether child labor violations were found.³⁸⁸⁵

Royal Decree 126/2008 directs the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) to spearhead the Government's efforts to combat trafficking,³⁸⁸⁶ and established the National Committee to Combat Human Trafficking (NCCHT).³⁸⁸⁷ The committee includes representatives from the Ministries of Manpower, Justice, Social Development, the Public Prosecutor, and the Royal Oman Police.³⁸⁸⁸ The committee met regularly during the current reporting period.³⁸⁸⁹ The NCCHT was made responsible for establishing a comprehensive program for combating trafficking, including programs to collect and report trafficking statistics and to care for and rehabilitate victims.³⁸⁹⁰

In 2009, the Government indicted and convicted accused traffickers and imposed sentences including imprisonment with fines of \$26,000.³⁸⁹¹ The 2009 indictments and convictions did not include cases of trafficking involving underage children.³⁸⁹²

Government Policies on the Worst Forms of Child Labor

The Government has formulated a National Plan to Combat Human Trafficking³⁸⁹³ as called for under Royal Decree 126/2008. Action programs have been developed as a result of this decree as outlined below.

Social Programs to Eliminate or Prevent the Worst Forms of Child Labor

The Government has implemented a number of programs and initiatives to address human trafficking.³⁸⁹⁴ The Government has provided legal assistance, shelter, and psychological care to sex trafficking victims; distributed brochures in numerous

languages that highlighted the rights and services workers are entitled to, the assistance available to trafficking victims and information on how to report trafficking crimes. It also launched a Web site and provided information on pertinent legislation and other matters relating to trafficking.³⁸⁹⁵ These efforts contribute to preventing child trafficking. In 2009, no child trafficking complaints were reported.³⁸⁹⁶

The Government has not conducted an in-depth study on sexual exploitation and trafficking of children to determine the extent to which this is a problem in Oman.³⁸⁹⁷ At the same time, there is a lack of information on the kinds of hazardous work children perform in agriculture and fishing.

Based on the reporting above, the following actions would advance the reduction of the worst forms of child labor in Oman:

IN THE AREA OF LAWS AND REGULATIONS:

- Make publicly available the list of all hazardous occupations and jobs prohibited for children under age 18.
- Establish a compulsory age for school that is consistent with the minimum age for employment.

IN THE AREA OF COORDINATION AND ENFORCEMENT:

- Ensure that mechanisms exist to coordinate policy and guide programs on the worst forms of child labor.
- Establish mechanisms to inspect all sectors, including small-scale agriculture, and fishing sectors for child labor violations.
- Track and report on child labor violations uncovered in labor inspections.
- Ensure that enforcement efforts to prevent child labor violations in camel racing are being undertaken and report on the results.

IN THE AREA OF PROGRAMS:

- Conduct a national survey to determine the extent and nature of child labor in Oman and use the results of the survey to formulate, monitor, and evaluate anti-child labor laws, policies and programs.
- Based on the evidence, establish specific programs targeted at preventing the worst forms of child labor, particularly in small-scale agriculture and fishing.

³⁸⁵⁷ Data provided in the chart at the beginning of this country report are not available from the data sources that are used by USDOL. Reliable data on the worst forms of child labor are especially difficult to collect given the often hidden or illegal nature of the worst forms. For more information on sources used for these statistics, the definition of working children, and other indicators used in this report, please see the “Children’s Work and Education Statistics: Sources and Definitions” section.

³⁸⁵⁸ U.S. Embassy- Muscat, *reporting*, February 10, 2010.

³⁸⁵⁹ International Trade Union Confederation, “Oman,” in *Internationally-Recognised Core Labour Standards in the Sultanate of Oman*, 2008; available from http://www.ituc-csi.org/IMG/pdf/TPR_OMAN.Final.pdf. See also Hamood Al Towaiya, Personal Communications on DOL’s 2007 Findings on the Worst forms of Child Labor, March 16, 2009.

³⁸⁶⁰ ILO Committee of Experts, *CEACR 2007/78th Session: Oman (ratification: 2001)*, [online] 2007; available from <http://webfusion.ilo.org/public/db/standards/normes/appl/appl-displayAllComments.cfm?conv=C182&ctry=2790&hdroff=1&lang=EN>.

³⁸⁶¹ U.S. Embassy- Muscat, *reporting*, February 10, 2010.

³⁸⁶² UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, *Consideration of Reports Submitted By States Parties - Oman*, Geneva, January 20, 2009; available from http://ww2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/crc/docs/CRC_C_OPSC_OMN_1_NEW.pdf.

³⁸⁶³ UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, *Consideration of Reports Submitted by States Parties Under Article 44 of the Convention: Concluding Observations: Oman*, CRC/C/OMN/CO/2, Geneva, September 29, 2006, sections 65 and 66(a); available from http://www.ohchr.org/english/bodies/crc/docs/co/CRC_C_OMN_CO_2.pdf.

³⁸⁶⁴ Government of Oman, *Royal Decree No. 35/2003: Oman Labour Law*, (May 3, 2003).

³⁸⁶⁵ ILO Committee of Experts, *CEACR 2007/78th Session - Oman*.

³⁸⁶⁶ *Ibid.*]

³⁸⁶⁷ UN Human Rights Council, *Implementation of General Assembly Resolution 60/251 of 15 March 2006 Entitled Human Rights Council.* “Report of the Special Rapporteur on Trafficking in Persons, especially women and children, Sigma Huda, A/HRC/4/23/Add.2, Geneva, April 25, 2007; available from <http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/docid/466d6231e.html>.

³⁸⁶⁸ Government of Oman, *Oman Labour Law*.

³⁸⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁸⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

³⁸⁷¹ Government of Oman, *Royal Decree No. 126/2008: Law Combating Trafficking in Persons*, (November 23, 2008); available from <http://www.google.com/search?hl=en&q=Royal+Decree+No.126%2F2008+-+oman&BtnG=Search&aq=f>.

³⁸⁷² Government of Oman, *Penal Code*, (1974); available from <http://www.interpol.int/public/Children/SexualAbuse/NationalLaws/csaOman.asp>.

³⁸⁷³ Hamood Al Towaiya, Letter to Marcia Eugenio, March 16, 2009.

³⁸⁷⁴ UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, *Oman (Second Periodic Report)*, Geneva, September 29, 2006; available from http://olddoc.ishr.ch/hrm/tmb/treaty/crc/reports/crc_43/crc_43_oman.pdf.

³⁸⁷⁵ UNESCO Institute for Statistics, *Global Rankings - Arab States - Rate of Primary Age Children Out Of School*, 2008; available from http://stats.uis.unesco.org/TableView/document.aspx?ReportId=125&IF_.

³⁸⁷⁶ Fererico Allais & Frank Hagemann, *Child labor and education: Evidence from SIMPOC Surveys - IPEC* June 2008; available from <http://www.ilo.org/ipec>.

³⁸⁷⁷ U.S. Embassy- Muscat, *reporting*, February 10, 2010.

³⁸⁷⁸ Hamood Al Towaiya, DOL’s 2007 Findings on the Worst Forms of Child Labor, March 16, 2009.

³⁸⁷⁹ International Trade Union Confederation, “Core Labor Standards in Sultanate of Oman.”

³⁸⁸⁰ U.S. Embassy- Muscat, *reporting*, February 10, 2010.

³⁸⁸¹ *Ibid.*

³⁸⁸² U.S. Embassy- Muscat official, E-mail communication to USDOL official, November 14, 2010.

³⁸⁸³ U.S. Department of State, “Oman (Tier 2),” in *Trafficking in Persons Report- 2010*, Washington, DC, June 2010; available from <http://www.state.gov/g/tip/rls/tiprpt/2010/index.htm>.

³⁸⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁸⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁸⁸⁶ U.S. Embassy- Muscat, *reporting*, March 3, 2008.

³⁸⁸⁷ Government of Oman, *Law Combating Trafficking in Persons*.

³⁸⁸⁸ U.S. Embassy- Muscat, *reporting*, March 3, 2008.

³⁸⁸⁹ U.S. Department of State, “Trafficking in Persons Report- 2010: Oman.”

³⁸⁹⁰ U.S. Embassy- Muscat, *reporting*, March 3, 2008.

³⁸⁹¹ U.S. Department of State, “Trafficking in Persons Report- 2010: Oman.”

³⁸⁹² U.S. Embassy- Muscat official, E-mail communication to USDOL official, November 18, 2010.

³⁸⁹³ Government of Oman, *Law Combating Trafficking in Persons*.

³⁸⁹⁴ U.S. Department of State, “Trafficking in Persons Report- 2010: Oman.”

³⁸⁹⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁸⁹⁶ U.S. Embassy- Muscat, *reporting*, February 10, 2010.

³⁸⁹⁷ UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, *Concluding Observations: Oman (Second Periodic Report)*.