

# Solomon Islands

*Commercial sexual exploitation of boys and girls continues to be a problem in the Solomon Islands, particularly in association with fishing and logging industries. Significant gaps remain in the laws against the worst forms of child labor and in the enforcement of those laws.*



## 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 Labor

Some children in the Solomon Islands are exploited in the worst forms of child labor.<sup>4525</sup> Both boys and girls are engaged in commercial sexual exploitation associated with the logging, tourism, and fishing industries in areas near logging camps, on fishing boats, and in Honiara, the capital city.<sup>4526</sup> Girls are trafficked within the Solomon Islands to logging camps for commercial sexual exploitation and boys and girls are brought by their parents to foreign and local fishing ships for commercial sexual exploitation with fishermen.<sup>4527</sup> Children are also involved in the sale and production of illegal homebrewed alcohol.<sup>4528</sup> Although research is limited, there are reports that children are also used in pornography.<sup>4529</sup>

## Laws and Regulations on the Worst Forms of Child Labor

The Labour Act permits children as young as age 12 to work. Children under age 15 are prohibited from working in industry or on ships and children under age 16 from working in underground mines.<sup>4530</sup> The Solomon Islands does not have a law prohibiting all children through age 17 from hazardous work nor is there a comprehensive list of hazardous occupations

in place in the country. Children between ages 16 and 18 are barred from working in mines or on ships without a medical certificate and at night without specific written permission from the Commissioner of Labor.<sup>4531</sup> The absence of a compulsory education law places children at risk of involvement in the worst forms of child labor.<sup>4532</sup> The Constitution prohibits slavery and forced labor.<sup>4533</sup>

There are no government armed forces in the Solomon Islands.<sup>4534</sup> The law allows that if needed, forces can be drawn from the Solomon Islands Police Force which has a minimum recruiting age of 18.<sup>4535</sup>

The Penal Code criminalizes production, possession, and distribution of pornography.<sup>4536</sup> Selling or hiring minors under age 15 and girls under age 18 for prostitution is punishable as a criminal offense.<sup>4537</sup>

Some general provisions in the Penal Code against prostitution, kidnapping, and abduction could be applied to prosecute sex and labor trafficking.<sup>4538</sup> Prostitution laws do not cover boys between the ages of 15 and 18; therefore they may leave boys without legal protections concerning commercial sexual exploitation.

	C138, Minimum Age	No
	C182, Worst Forms of Child Labor	No
	CRC	✓
	CRC Optional Protocol on Armed Conflict	No
	CRC Optional Protocol on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution, and Child Pornography	No
	Palermo Protocol on Trafficking in Persons	No
	Minimum Age for Work	12
	Minimum Age for Hazardous Work	15
	Compulsory Education Age	None
	Free Public Education	Yes

### Institutional Mechanisms for Coordination and Enforcement

Although the extent of government coordination of efforts to combat child labor is unclear, the Ministry of Labor hired a desk officer to work on ILO labor standards and child labor issues.<sup>4539</sup> The Commissioner of Labor, the head of the Labor Division in the Ministry of Commerce, Industry, Labor, and Immigration, is responsible for enforcing child labor laws.<sup>4540</sup> Information was not identified on the number of labor inspectors, enforcement actions, or

the number of violations found during the reporting period. Sources, including the Government, note that lack of sufficient capacity and resources has prevented meaningful enforcement of the laws.<sup>4541</sup>

While there is some awareness of the problem of commercial sexual exploitation of children, the Government is severely limited in its institutional capacity to address the issue.<sup>4542</sup> The Solomon Islands Police Force, in partnership with the Australian-led Regional Assistance Mission to the Solomon Islands Participating Police Force, appears to be the only body responsible for enforcing laws related to trafficking and commercial sexual exploitation.<sup>4543</sup> Research did not identify information regarding enforcement actions against commercial sexual exploitation of children.

### Government Policies on the Worst Forms of Child Labor

Although research found no evidence of child labor specific policies in the Solomon Islands, the Government signed its first Decent Work Program with the ILO for the period 2009-2010.. This program's priorities include promoting decent employment for youth and making progress towards eliminating child labor.<sup>4544</sup>

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

Research found no evidence of any social programs by the Government of the Solomon Islands to address the worst forms of child labor.

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

### IN THE AREA OF LAWS AND REGULATIONS:

- Amend the Labor Act [1996 Edition] to increase the minimum ages for employment and hazardous work to 14 and 18, respectively, and institute a list of hazardous occupations.
- Institute a law requiring all children to attend school through the age of 14.
- As part of the ongoing review of the Penal Code 1963:
  - Amend laws to prohibit the prostitution of boys under age of 18.
  - Ensure that laws contain comprehensive protections against the trafficking of children.

### IN THE AREA OF COORDINATION AND ENFORCEMENT:

- Make information on inspections and investigations regarding the worst forms of child labor publicly available.
- Ensure that enforcement agencies have adequate resources and the capacity to effectively enforce worst forms of child labor laws.

### IN THE AREA OF POLICIES:

- Implement strategies for the elimination of child labor under the Decent Work Program.

### IN THE AREA OF PROGRAMS:

- Initiate programs to address the worst forms of child labor, particularly the commercial sexual exploitation of children.

<sup>4525</sup> 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.

<sup>4526</sup> UNICEF Pacific, *Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children and Child Sexual Abuse in the Pacific: A Regional Report*, Suva, 2008; available from [http://www.unicef.org/pacificislands/Small\\_CESEC.pdf](http://www.unicef.org/pacificislands/Small_CESEC.pdf). See also Solomon Islands Department of Home Affairs official, Interview with USDOL official, June 20, 2006. See also Tania Herbert, *Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children in the Solomon Islands: A Report Focusing on the Presence of the Logging Industry in a Remote Region*, Christian Care Center of the Church of Melanesia, Honiara, July 2007; available from <http://www.melanesiangeo.org/resources/Solomons%20Child%20Exploitation.pdf>. See also Solomon Islands Port Authority official, Interview with USDOL consultant, June 28, 2006. See also Rory Callinan, “Generation Exploited,” *Time* 167, no. 13 (March 27, 2006); available from [http://](http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,1174745,00.html)

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<sup>4527</sup> U.S. Department of State, “Solomon Islands (Special Cases),” in *Trafficking in Persons Report- 2008*, Washington, DC, June 4, 2008; available from <http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/105660.pdf>. See also Herbert, *Logging Industry: Solomon Islands*. See also Callinan, “Generation Exploited.”

<sup>4528</sup> Solomon Islands Central Magistrate’s Court official, Interview with USDOL consultant, June 23, 2006. See also Solomon Islands Police official, Interview with USDOL consultant, September 3, 2006.

<sup>4529</sup> Callinan, “Generation Exploited.” See also UNICEF Pacific, *Commercial sexual exploitation in the Pacific*. See also Solomon Islands National Council of Women official, Interview with USDOL consultant, June 23, 2006.

<sup>4530</sup> Government of Solomon Islands, *Labour Act (Chapter 73)*, (1996 Edition), articles 46-48; available from <http://www.pacii.org>.

<sup>4531</sup> *Ibid.*, article 49.

<sup>4532</sup> *Ibid.*, article 46.

<sup>4533</sup> Government of Solomon Islands, *Constitution of Solomon Islands*, (July 7, 1978), article 6; available from

[http://www.paclii.org/sb/legis/consol\\_act/c1978167/](http://www.paclii.org/sb/legis/consol_act/c1978167/).

See also International Trade Union Confederation, *Internationally Recognised Core Labour Standards in the Solomon Islands: Report for the WTO General Council Review of the Trade Policies of the Solomon Islands*, Geneva, May 6 and 8, 2009; available from [http://www.ituc-csi.org/IMG/pdf/WTO\\_report\\_Solomon\\_final0509.pdf](http://www.ituc-csi.org/IMG/pdf/WTO_report_Solomon_final0509.pdf).

<sup>4534</sup> Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers, “Solomon Islands,” in *Child Soldiers Global Report 2008*, London, 2008; available from <http://www.childsoldiersglobalreport.org/content/solomon-islands>.

<sup>4535</sup> Salote Austin, Osborn Cains, Anafia Norton, Penelope Taylor, Marie Wernham, and Freida, *Protect Me with Love and Care: A Baseline Report for the Solomon Islands*, UNICEF Pacific, Suva, November, 20009; available from [http://www.unicef.org/pacificislands/UNICEF\\_Solomon\\_Report1.pdf](http://www.unicef.org/pacificislands/UNICEF_Solomon_Report1.pdf).

<sup>4536</sup> Government of Solomon Islands, *Penal Code (Chapter 26)*, (Revised 1996), article 173; available from [http://www.paclii.org/sb/legis/consol\\_act/pc66/](http://www.paclii.org/sb/legis/consol_act/pc66/).

<sup>4537</sup> *Ibid.*, articles 149-150.

<sup>4538</sup> *Ibid.*, articles 144, 248, 250. See also U.S. Department of State, “Trafficking in Persons Report- 2008: Solomon Islands.”

<sup>4539</sup> ILO, *Country Baseline under the ILO Declaration Annual Review (2000-2009): Solomon Islands: The effective abolition of child labour*, Status Report, Geneva, 2009; available from [http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed\\_norm/---declaration/documents/publication/wcms\\_091263.pdf](http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_norm/---declaration/documents/publication/wcms_091263.pdf).

<sup>4540</sup> U.S. Department of State, “Solomon Islands,” in *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices- 2009*, Washington, DC, March 11, 2010; available from <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2009/eap/136009.htm>.

<sup>4541</sup> International Trade Union Confederation, *Review of Trade Policies of the Solomon Islands*. See also Solomon Islands Ministry of Labor official, Interview with USDOL consultant, June 12, 2006. See also ILO, *Country Baseline: Solomon Islands, Status Report*. See also U.S. Department of State, “Country Reports- 2009: Solomon Islands.”

<sup>4542</sup> Callinan, “Generation Exploited.”

<sup>4543</sup> *Ibid.* See also Herbert, *Logging Industry: Solomon Islands*.

<sup>4544</sup> ILO, *Fact Sheet: Solomon Islands*, Status Report, Bangkok, 2010; available from [http://bravo.ilo.org/asia/whatwedo/publications/lang--en/docName--WCMS\\_120549/index.htm](http://bravo.ilo.org/asia/whatwedo/publications/lang--en/docName--WCMS_120549/index.htm).