



2.7.4 Child labour

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The minimum working age in both Federal Iraq and KRI is 15 years. Under Labor Law, child labour in Iraq is illegal for children under 15 years old⁸⁸³ – with an exception in the KRI for those working in a family enterprise – and punishable with a prison sentence for up to six months and a fine of one million IQD [about 652 EUR]. Cases of child labour are to be investigated by the Ministry of Labour.⁸⁸⁴ While about 5 % of Iraqi children are estimated to be involved in work,⁸⁸⁵ according to Kurdistan24, referring to a research done by the Independent Arabia,⁸⁸⁶ some 13 % of children ‘are engaged in labour deemed hazardous or exploitative’.⁸⁸⁷ Reasons why the phenomenon persists include poverty, lack of documentation,⁸⁸⁸ unemployment, displacement and weak institutional measures against the practice.⁸⁸⁹ Children were reportedly working in services, agriculture, and industries sectors,⁸⁹⁰ or collecting recyclable materials in the streets.⁸⁹¹ After the authorities registered 600 cases of child labour in Baghdad in 2024, ten new committees to monitor the issue were formed in January 2025.⁸⁹² The authorities have reportedly developed a plan to address child labour that includes ‘offering social protection salaries or loans to affected families’.⁸⁹³ In April 2025, the government has taken measures aiming at reintegrating working children in the school life.⁸⁹⁴

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MEMO, Iraq to raid industrial areas to effort to tackle child labour, 31 January 2025, [url](#)

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NRC, Legal Guide to Children’s Rights in Iraq, November 2024, [url](#), p. 34

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Kurdistan24, Iraq’s Lost Childhoods: Begging, Labor, and Broken Dreams, 29 April 2025, [url](#) ; Shafaq News, Iraq's children face alarming crisis: rising labor, violence, and legal gaps, 24 November 2024, [url](#)

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Independent Arabia is an arabic Version of the British newspaper The Independent. See: Independent Arabia, [Linkedin], posted on: n.d., [url](#)

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Kurdistan24, Iraq's Lost Childhoods: Begging, Labor, and Broken Dreams, 29 April 2025, [url](#)

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Shafaq News, Iraq's forgotten children: Orphans of war left to scavenge for survival, 14 February 2025, [url](#)

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- [892](#)

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