

## Commodity Report: Granite and Other Stones (2026)

Granite and other stones are reportedly produced with forced labor (FL) and/or child labor (CL) in the following countries:<sup>1</sup>

### *Granite:*

- Burkina Faso (CL)
- Nigeria (CL, FL)
- Sierra Leone (CL, FL)

### *Granite (crushed):*

- Benin (CL)

### *Limestone:*

- Egypt (CL)
- Paraguay (CL)

### *Mica:*

- India (FL, CL)
- Madagascar (CL)

### *Pumice:*

- Nicaragua (CL)

### *Other Stones and Quarrying:*

- Guatemala (CL)
- India (FL, CL)
- Kenya (CL)
- Madagascar (CL)
- Nepal (FL, CL)
- Tanzania (CL)
- Togo (FL, CL)
- Uganda (CL)
- Zambia (CL)

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<sup>1</sup> This list is based solely on findings from the [U.S. Department of State's 2025 Trafficking in Persons Report](#) and the [U.S. Department of Labor's 2024 List of Goods Produced by Child Labor and Forced Labor](#).

## Top ten countries that export granite and other stones worldwide:<sup>2</sup>

### *Granite:*

1. India
2. Brazil
3. Norway
4. Spain
5. Italy
6. Portugal
7. Bhutan
8. Angola
9. South Africa
10. Cambodia

### *Mica:*

1. India
2. China
3. Madagascar
4. Germany
5. United States of America
6. France
7. Canada
8. Japan
9. United Kingdom
10. Spain

### *Limestone:*

1. United Arab Emirates
2. Japan
3. Oman
4. Malaysia
5. Spain
6. Belgium
7. India
8. Egypt
9. United States of America
10. Vietnam

### *Pumice:*

1. Australia
2. China
3. Turkey
4. India
5. South Africa
6. United States of America
7. Japan
8. Greece
9. Indonesia
10. Malaysia

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<sup>2</sup> [International Trade Center. Trade Map.](#) (ITC Calculations based on UNCOMTRADE Statistics).

**Note:** The country list is ordered by value exported.

## Where are granite and stone reportedly produced with human trafficking, including forced labor, and/or child labor?

According to the U.S. Department of State's *2025 Trafficking in Persons* report, granite is produced with child labor and forced labor in Nigeria and Sierra Leone; mica is produced with child labor and forced labor in India; and other stones and stone quarrying are listed as being produced with child labor in Guatemala and with forced labor and child labor in India, Nepal, and Togo.<sup>3</sup>

According to the U.S. Department of Labor's *2024 List of Goods Produced by Child Labor or Forced Labor*, granite is produced with child labor in Burkina Faso and Sierra Leone, and with both child labor and forced labor in Nigeria; crushed granite is produced with child labor in Benin. Limestone is listed as being produced with child labor in Egypt and Paraguay. Mica is listed as being produced with child labor in India and Madagascar. Pumice stone is listed as being produced with child labor in Nicaragua. Other stones and stone quarrying are listed as being produced with child labor in Kenya, Madagascar, Tanzania, Uganda, and Zambia, and with child labor and forced labor in India and Nepal.<sup>4</sup>

The U.S. Department of State's *2025 Trafficking in Persons* report lists Benin, Egypt, Guatemala, India, Kenya, Madagascar, Nigeria, Paraguay, Sierra Leone, Tanzania, Togo, Uganda, and Zambia as Tier 2 Countries. Burkina Faso and Nepal are listed as Tier 2 Watch List countries. Nicaragua is listed as a Tier 3 Country.<sup>5</sup>

## What does human trafficking and/or child labor in granite and stone production look like?

This section includes countries with publicly available research and reporting on forced labor and child labor, in addition to the countries listed in the above-mentioned government reports.

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<sup>3</sup> U.S. Department of State. [2025 Trafficking in Persons Report](#). 2025.

<sup>4</sup> U.S. Department of Labor. [List of Goods Produced by Child Labor or Forced Labor](#). 2024.

<sup>5</sup> [For the 2025 Trafficking in Persons Report's tier ranking methodology, see "A Guide to the Tiers."](#)

The work involved in quarrying and processing granite and stones is hazardous. Quarry workers may be recruited with wage advances or loans; these are known to rapidly accumulate debt, which can lead to debt bondage.

In some contexts, such as in **India**, research conducted by the International Labour Organization (ILO) in 2021 found that quarry workers in Rajasthan were commonly indebted due to taking wage advance loans of INR 10,000 to 15,000 while the mines and quarries are closed during the rainy season, which carry interest and must be paid off in a short period of time. (Workers reported that the minimum wage rate was not sufficient to cover essential costs including rent, electricity, and school fees.) The risk of debt bondage increases as debts accumulate, and there are reported instances of indebted workers' children taking over their parents' debts and their work.<sup>6</sup> Reporting on child labor in India is limited, however.

Women working in stone quarries in Rajasthan, especially debt-bonded laborers, typically have no access to benefits, including health care or maternity leave. They must return to work immediately after childbirth.<sup>7</sup>

This section describes human trafficking and child labor risks in the production of granite, limestone, sandstone, mica, pumice, and stone quarrying more broadly. While there are common risk factors across these supply chains, there are geographical nuances and associated dynamics that are important to understand on their own.

## **Granite**

Both child labor and forced labor have been documented in the production of Granite.

In **Burkina Faso**, children from ages five to 17 work in granite quarries in Yagma and Pissy, outside the capital city of Ouagadougou. Children working in granite quarries crush large rocks and transport heavy loads of gravel and rock. They face a high risk of physical injury and various respiratory illnesses,

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<sup>6</sup> International Labour Organization. [Challenges and opportunities for productive employment and decent work in the natural stone mining industry supply chain in Rajasthan](#). 2021.

<sup>7</sup> International Labour Organization. [Challenges and opportunities for productive employment and decent work in the natural stone mining industry supply chain in Rajasthan](#). 2021.

including pulmonary disease, due to exposure to stone dust. There are also reports of physical abuse on granite sites.<sup>8</sup>

Traffickers recruit workers from rural regions of **Sierra Leone** to urban areas to mine granite.<sup>9</sup> Previous reporting by The Atlantic described children as young as three years old working in the granite mines of Sierra Leone, where extreme poverty may lead children to work, primarily in gravel production, instead of attending school. Whole families were known to be involved in granite mining, and children reportedly used hammers to crush stones into gravel.<sup>10</sup>

In **Nigeria**, children located in rural areas are at higher risk of exploitation in mining jobs. Higher rates of child trafficking, in general, are also reported in and around Benin City.<sup>11</sup> Children are exploited in granite quarries and artisanal mines.<sup>12</sup>

In **India**, the largest global exporter of granite in 2024,<sup>13</sup> the quarrying of granite often involves the labor of debt-bonded workers and child labor. Approximately 75 percent of granite from India comes from the states of Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, and Karnataka. Children are known to work alongside family members in stone quarries to help pay off family debts to employers or moneylenders.<sup>14</sup>

Quarry workers in southern India commonly take loans from the quarry owner, which their low wages make difficult to pay back, resulting in debt bondage for a number of workers which sometimes extends generationally. In 2021, an investigation discovered that a family was indebted to a granite quarry owner in Karnataka for three generations. The patriarch of the family had taken an initial loan of INR 50,000 from a granite mine operator; when he died, the unpaid debt was transferred to his son and his grandchildren, all of whom were forced to cut stones for 20 years to repay the debt. While trapped in debt bondage, family members reported being beaten, sexually abused, and tracked to prevent escape.

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<sup>8</sup> U.S. Department of Labor. [List of Goods Produced by Child Labor or Forced Labor](#). 2024.

<sup>9</sup> U.S. Department of State. [2025 Trafficking in Persons Report](#). 2025.

<sup>10</sup> Campbell, Greg. [“The Rock-Mining Children of Sierra Leone Have Not Found Peace.”](#) *The Atlantic*. 31 May 2012.

<sup>11</sup> U.S. Department of Labor. *Child Labor and Forced Labor Reports: Nigeria*. 2024.

<sup>12</sup> [U.S. Department of State. 2025 Trafficking in Persons Report. 2025.](#)

<sup>13</sup> International Trade Centre. [Trade Map](#). 2024.

<sup>14</sup> U.S. Department of Labor. [2019 Findings on the Worst Forms of Child Labor: India](#). 2019.

The family was freed only after social workers convinced them to file a complaint with the local police, and the granite quarry owner was eventually detained.<sup>15</sup>

### ***Limestone***

Child labor is found in limestone quarries in **Egypt**, making up an estimated 23 percent of the total workers in the sector. A field survey from December 2021 to March 2022 found 50 cases of hazardous child labor at 10 limestone quarries in the eastern deserts, specifically over 180 miles east of Minya, involving children from ages nine to 17. There were 42 documented work injuries sustained by child workers, or 84 percent of the 50 randomly surveyed children, citing a lack of adequate safety measures.<sup>16</sup> Workers in the quarries generally lacked protective gear for their hands or faces while handling stone and operating saws and drills. Children interviewed reported difficulty breathing due to exposure to silica dust, or dust particles produced by stone cutting, which is known to lead to the lung disease silicosis. Other health concerns identified in the limestone quarries include hearing loss due to machinery noise, sun stroke, skin rashes, eye inflammation, severe burns, and malnutrition.<sup>17</sup>

According to the investigation, children aged nine to 12 operated machinery and turned stone blocks, while children aged 12 to 18 cleared sawdust and operated stone crushers. The children earned a daily rate between EGP 20 and 50 for 12 to 14 hours of work, with the pay generally increasing with age. The majority of child workers contributed to their household's budget, with families sending their children to work for additional income. As a result, children commonly did not finish primary school.<sup>18</sup>

Children also work in limestone quarrying in **Paraguay**,<sup>19</sup> particularly in the town of Vallemi, to support their families. Although it is illegal for children under the age of 14 to work on dangerous sites, children under 14 were reportedly found working in the Vallemi quarries. Children work half days breaking apart large limestone rocks by hand to produce pieces that are used to produce quicklime, an ingredient for

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<sup>15</sup> Mounika, Alithea Stephanie. "[Breaking Their Chains: How a Family Escaped Bonded Labour In a Granite Quarry in Rural Karnataka.](#)" *Unbias the News*, 16 Feb 2022.

<sup>16</sup> [Arab Reporters for Investigative Journalism \(ARIJ\). Child Labor at Egypt Quarries Abuses Their Basic Rights. 2022.](#)

<sup>17</sup> [Arab Reporters for Investigative Journalism \(ARIJ\). Child Labor at Egypt Quarries Abuses Their Basic Rights. 2022.](#)

<sup>18</sup> [Arab Reporters for Investigative Journalism \(ARIJ\). Child Labor at Egypt Quarries Abuses Their Basic Rights. 2022.](#)

<sup>19</sup> U.S. Department of Labor. [List of Goods Produced by Child Labor or Forced Labor.](#) 2024.

making cement.<sup>20</sup> The limestone quarries in Vallemi are operated by the state-owned National Cement Industry (INC). However, all of the miners working in the quarries are classified as independent contractors working for a local quarrymaster subcontracted by INC. Under this arrangement, INC has no legal responsibility for the legal compliance, conditions, or welfare of the miners, who are reportedly not monitored by any entity. Many miners reported being in debt, and many families rely on help from their children.<sup>21</sup>

### **Sandstone**

In Rajasthan, **India**, child labor remains present in informal mining, including sandstone, often due to poverty, intergenerational debt bondage, and exploitative wage practices to which people of low castes are most vulnerable.<sup>22</sup> Rajasthan has reportedly issued over 33,000 mine leases for natural stone, including sandstone, granite, marble, and slate mining, which is more than any other state in India. Local environmental organizations advise that there are thousands of unlicensed, unregulated quarries operating in the state, however.<sup>23</sup>

Families from other parts of India migrate to Rajasthan's Bundi district for seasonal work on a daily piece rate system in the sandstone quarries, including children. The families reportedly live in makeshift huts near the quarries without toilets, electricity, or access to basic services. The work is physically demanding, and there are high rates of respiratory ailments including tuberculosis and silicosis due to workers' prolonged exposure to dust. Without the legal documentation required to attend Bundi schools, migrant children are denied education and will instead work in the quarries.<sup>24</sup>

The workers commonly become trapped in debt after receiving advance wages from mine owners and taking out additional loans to pay for basic needs, including medical expenses. Family debt reportedly

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<sup>20</sup> Benitez, Aldo. "[Mining Cement in Misery: The Human Cost of Paraguay's Construction Boom.](#)" *Organized Crime and Corruption Reporting Project*. 18 Oct 2024.

<sup>21</sup> Benitez, Aldo. "[Mining Cement in Misery: The Human Cost of Paraguay's Construction Boom.](#)" *Organized Crime and Corruption Reporting Project*. 18 Oct 2024.

<sup>22</sup> Kongari, Sion. "[World Day Against Child Labour 2025: Community-led initiatives can end this practice. Bundi in Rajasthan shows how.](#)" *Down to Earth*, 12 June 2025.

<sup>23</sup> Saluja, Romita. "[How Child Labour in India Makes the Paving Stones Beneath Our Feet.](#)" *The Guardian*, 28 Mar 2024.

<sup>24</sup> Kongari, Sion. "[World Day Against Child Labour 2025: Community-led initiatives can end this practice. Bundi in Rajasthan shows how.](#)" *Down to Earth*, 12 June 2025.

ranges from INR 50,000 to 200,000.<sup>25</sup> Under these bonded labor systems, historically rampant in Rajasthan's sandstone quarries, debt is passed on to the next generation when the worker cannot repay the advanced wages they have taken; this dynamic is exacerbated when adult workers are too ill from silicosis and tuberculosis to work.<sup>26</sup>

Reporting by the Guardian in 2024 followed an eight-year-old boy who worked alongside his mother in their village in Rajasthan chiseling cobblestones made of sandstone and other natural stones on a street near their home. He earned one Indian rupee per cobblestone. After the boy's father died of silicosis, he began working longer hours to support his family, which included four other children. The boy eventually left school to work eight hours a day, six days a week. His mother had also contracted tuberculosis after 20 years of work.<sup>27</sup> The Guardian's investigation found that many mining businesses employed children, avoiding authorities' detection by bringing large heaps of stone to the roadsides of villages for children to work close to home rather than going to the mines. Across five mining villages in Rajasthan, dozens of surveyed workers reported low pay and high rates of injury, and children under 10 years old were found chiseling stones instead of going to school. Generally, stonecutters in Bundi were hired without contracts by local agents.<sup>28</sup> The lack of employment contracts in this sector and prevalence of the piece wages payment system have historically made it difficult for workers to earn a minimum wage and overtime pay, or receive compensation for work accidents or illness.<sup>29</sup>

From 2018 to 2023, over 30,000 cases of silicosis were reported in Rajasthan, a total that is assumed to be underreported.<sup>30</sup> Silicosis is contracted due to regular exposure to airborne silica dust from mining rock, sand, and quartz. The method of dry drilling, or drilling without wetting the stone with water, produces silica dust in the air that miners breathe. In the villages of sandstone miners, many women

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<sup>25</sup> Kongari, Sion. ["World Day Against Child Labour 2025: Community-led initiatives can end this practice. Bundi in Rajasthan shows how."](#) Down to Earth, 12 June 2025.

<sup>26</sup> American Bar Association Center for Human Rights. ["Tainted Stones: Bonded Labor and Child Labor in the India-U.S. Sandstone Supply Chain."](#) August 2020.

<sup>27</sup> Saluja, Romita. ["How Child Labour in India Makes the Paving Stones Beneath Our Feet."](#) The Guardian, 28 Mar 2024.

<sup>28</sup> [Saluja, Romita. "How Child Labour in India Makes the Paving Stones Beneath Our Feet." The Guardian, 28 Mar 2024.](#)

<sup>29</sup> Global Research, Arisa. ["Between a Rock and a Hard Place."](#) June 2020.

<sup>30</sup> U.S. Department of Labor. ["Child Labor and Forced Labor Reports – Nigeria."](#) 2023.

have been forced to take up mining jobs after their husbands succumb to silicosis, as they have no other means of survival.<sup>31</sup>

### **Mica**

In **Madagascar**, child labor is prevalent in the extraction and production of mica. The U.S. Embassy in Madagascar estimated that up to 10,000 children work in unsafe, informal mica mines,<sup>32</sup> which is half of the 20,000 mica miners in the country.<sup>33</sup> Most mines are located in the southern region of the country.<sup>34</sup> Boys commonly dig underground to extract the mica ore, risking suffocation due to poor ventilation. Girls haul and process the mica ore on the surface.<sup>35</sup>

An ongoing drought has reportedly led agricultural households to turn to mica mining to make a living.<sup>36</sup> The price of food has also increased due to the drought, worsening poverty in mica-producing communities. To afford basic necessities, “many families feel they must send their children to work in the mica mines to earn money.”<sup>37</sup>

Across 34 active mica mining sites in Ranopiso, Behara, Tranomaro, and Maromby, many families reportedly cannot afford school fees and supplies. Among 2,000 households with children, 36 percent of children were found to perform work activities, such as sorting and transporting mica and digging holes, to supplement family income. Risks of physical injury or illness while working in and around the mines include landslides, burial, falling into holes, respiratory infections from inhaling mica particles, suffocation, and eye damage or blindness due to exposure to mica particles.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> Mir, Hussain. [“India’s Widow Village.” \*Think Global Health\*](#). 16 August 2023.

<sup>32</sup> U.S. Embassy in Madagascar. [“U.S. Government and International NGO Partner to Combat Child Labor in Mica Mining Sector in Anosy Region.”](#) 4 May 2023.

<sup>33</sup> [Responsible Mica Initiative, BASIC. “The mica value chain in Madagascar.”](#) June 2024.

<sup>34</sup> Rybarczyk, Katarzyna. [“Ending Child Labor in Mica Mines in India and Madagascar.”](#) *The Child Labor Coalition*. 12 July 2021.

<sup>35</sup> U.S. Embassy in Madagascar. [“U.S. Government and International NGO Partner to Combat Child Labor in Mica Mining Sector in Anosy Region.”](#) 4 May 2023.

<sup>36</sup> Responsible Mica Initiative, BASIC. [“The mica value chain in Madagascar.”](#) June 2024.

<sup>37</sup> U.S. Embassy in Madagascar. [“U.S. Government and International NGO Partner to Combat Child Labor in Mica Mining Sector in Anosy Region.”](#) 4 May 2023.

<sup>38</sup> [Rakotosamimanana, Mirana F. “To combat child labor in Madagascar’s mica mining sector, Pact focuses on families.” \*Pact\*, 12 June 2024.](#)

Mica is also produced with child labor in **India**, specifically in Jharkhand and Bihar. An estimated 22,000 children are employed in the mica industry where they make an average of 70 cents per day.<sup>39</sup>

### ***Stone Quarrying and Other Stones***

Instances of both child labor and forced labor have been documented in stone quarrying in **Nepal**. According to the U.S. Department of Labor's 2024 *List of Goods*, children as young as five work in stone quarries with their parents and are often debt-bonded laborers. Children and their families often live at the worksite, where they are under the surveillance of guards and are not free to leave. Stone quarry workers, including children, experience physical violence, the threat of violence, and denial of food for not adequately performing their work.<sup>40</sup>

In **Uganda**, child labor is prevalent in the stone quarrying sector. According to the 2024 *List of Goods*, children as young as seven work in stone quarries in the Central region of Uganda and in the northeastern Karamoja region. Most commonly, children are assigned the task of breaking up stone, which is known to result in loss of limbs, spinal cord injuries, and loss of sight.<sup>41</sup>

Interviews with child workers documented in a 2021 Human Rights Watch report described wounds caused by flying stone and accidents with "machete-like" tools, exhaustion from carrying heavy loads, and eye injuries from flying debris. Most children make an average of USD 2 per day working a minimum of 10 hours daily. There are reports of pay deductions by employers if they were not satisfied with the level of work performed. One 12-year-old girl working in a stone quarry claimed to make the equivalent of USD 1.39 per week and to be threatened with less pay if the size of the stones she crushed was not satisfactory.<sup>42</sup>

### **Granite and Stone Supply Chain and Production:**

Granite and stone supply chains can be complex. While some raw granite blocks make their way directly from quarries to end users, this is often not the case. After quarrying, the material most often passes through cutting industry entities or a wholesaler where it is turned into slabs. Slabs of granite are then

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<sup>39</sup> Rybarczyk, Katarzyna. "[Ending Child Labor in Mica Mines in India and Madagascar.](#)" *The Child Labor Coalition*. 12 July 2021.

<sup>40</sup> U.S. Department of Labor. [List of Goods Produced by Child Labor or Forced Labor](#). 2024.

<sup>41</sup> U.S. Department of Labor. [List of Goods Produced by Child Labor or Forced Labor](#). 2024.

<sup>42</sup> Human Rights Watch. "[I Must Work to Eat](#)" *Covid-19, Poverty, and Child Labor in Ghana, Nepal, and Uganda*. 26 May 2021.

further processed into finished products through polishing and carving, then exported to a wholesaler or company to be sold.<sup>43</sup> Imports of granite and stone are divided into dimension stones, which have been shaped and processed, and crushed stone, which skips the cutting and refining processes. Rough stone is used in building and construction, while finished stone is used in products such as tile, blackboards, and flagstone (paving stones used for walkways).<sup>44</sup> The waste stone from granite and stone processing is often crushed to make grit and gravel, which may be used as fill in the construction and gardening sectors.<sup>45</sup>

How consumers are linked to human trafficking and/or child labor in granite and stone production:

Top ten countries that import granite and other stones:<sup>46</sup>

*Granite:*

1. China
2. United Kingdom
3. Italy
4. Bangladesh
5. Netherlands
6. Maldives
7. Taiwan
8. United States of America
9. Spain
10. France

*Limestone:*

1. India
2. Netherlands
3. Taiwan
4. South Korea
5. Germany
6. Japan
7. Bangladesh
8. United States of America
9. Sweden
10. Kuwait

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<sup>43</sup> India Committee of the Netherlands; Stop Child Labor. [The Dark Sites of Granite](#). 23 August 2017.

<sup>44</sup> United States Geological Survey. [2023 Mineral Commodity Summaries: Dimension Stone](#). 2023.

<sup>45</sup> India Committee of the Netherlands; Stop Child Labor. [The Dark Sites of Granite](#). 23 August 2017.

<sup>46</sup> [International Trade Center. Trade Map](#). (ITC Calculations based on UNCOMTRADE Statistics).

**Note:** The country list is ordered by value imported.

*Mica:*

1. China
2. Japan
3. United States of America
4. Germany
5. Italy
6. South Korea
7. Thailand
8. France
9. Mexico
10. Netherlands

*Pumice:*

1. United States of America
2. United Arab Emirates
3. Saudi Arabia
4. China
5. United Kingdom
6. Canada
7. Qatar
8. Bangladesh
9. South Korea
10. Israel

Dimension stone, a term used for natural rock materials like granite, sandstone, and limestone, is used in a variety of home goods, such as tiles, countertops, fireplaces, and flagstones for garden pathways as well as in construction goods, such as gravel and curb stones. Granite and other stones are also used to make gravestones, urns, and tombstones in the funeral industry.<sup>47</sup> Dimension stone is also used for road paving.<sup>48</sup> According to ITC TradeMap data, the United States was the fifth largest importer of Indian granite, sandstone, and other building stone blocks in 2025, with a total value of USD 21,786,000 exported.<sup>49</sup>

In the United States, approximately 50 percent of dimension stone sold or used is limestone, followed by granite (19 percent) and sandstone (14 percent). In 2024, 2.2 million tons of dimension stone was used or exported by U.S. producers, valued at approximately USD 370 million.<sup>50</sup>

The global granite market is projected to have an annual growth rate of 4.9 percent through 2027, expanding the granite, marble, and stone market to 26.2 billion metric tons.<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> India Committee of the Netherlands; Stop Child Labor. [The Dark Sites of Granite](#). 23 August 2017.

<sup>48</sup> Epiroc. [Dimension Stone Industry](#). Epiroc. 2025.

<sup>49</sup> [International Trade Center. Trade Map](#). (ITC Calculations based on UNCOMTRADE Statistics).

<sup>50</sup> United States Geological Survey. [2025 Mineral Commodity Summaries](#). 2025.

<sup>51</sup> Wood, Laura. "[Global Granite, Marble and Stone Markets Report 2022-2027 - With Rising Competition from New Materials, Companies Acquiring Quarries to Remain Relevant](#)." *GlobeNewswire*. 16 February 2023.

## Examples of what governments, corporations, and others are doing:

There are a number of international initiatives currently working to improve labor conditions in granite and stone supply chains. For example, the NGO Fair Stone is a social standard and certification program for natural stone importers. Fair Stone partners must implement labor and environmental standards, including banning child and bonded labor, in their supply chains.<sup>52</sup> Fair Stone also offers a traceability program for its members to track individual shipments using QR codes.<sup>53</sup> The latest edition of the International Standard for the Natural Stone Industry was published by Fair Stone in August 2024, which sets occupational health and safety, management system, and environmental standards in addition to ILO conventions.<sup>54</sup>

TruStone Initiative, a Dutch and Flemish government program, is the result of a joint agreement to tackle irresponsible and illegal labor practices in the natural stone supply chain. Launched in October 2019, the program maps out the potential risks of sourcing stone in areas where abusive labor practices have been reported, develops guidelines and obligations businesses must follow when sourcing natural stone, and provides recommendations for businesses to improve upon their sustainability in supply chain management.<sup>55</sup> Carving Change, a project to improve working conditions in natural stone supply chains in India and Brazil, was launched in January 2026 and is set to run until the end of 2028. Targeting sandstone, granite, slate, and quartzite supply chains, the project aims to reduce informal employment relationships which often lead to unsafe working conditions, child labor, excessive working hours, suppression of union rights, and inadequate wages. Other activities include providing personal protective equipment, medical screenings, and support for workers' social security access.<sup>56</sup>

In September 2020, The Occupational Safety, Health and Working Conditions Code was passed in India, prohibiting children under 18 from operating heavy machinery, providing safeguards for children handling toxic chemicals in their employment, among other labor protections for child workers. It is

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<sup>52</sup> [Fair Stone. Approach.](#)

<sup>53</sup> India Committee of the Netherlands; Stop Child Labor. [The Dark Sites of Granite.](#) 23 August 2017; [Fair Stone. Tracing Fair Stone.](#)

<sup>54</sup> [Fair Stone. "Downloads."](#)

<sup>55</sup> [TruStone: International Responsible Business Conduct; SER. International RBC TruStone Initiative.](#)

<sup>56</sup> TruStone. ["The TruStone Initiative starts the collective impact project Carving Change – Improving working conditions in natural stone supply chains in India and Brazil."](#) 27 January 2026.

unclear how successfully this legislation has been implemented.<sup>57</sup> In 2024, India's new criminal code, the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, went into effect, which includes regulations on hazardous work for children in between the ages of 14 and 18. However, this regulation only covers institutions with more than 10 employees. Because many of India's businesses qualify as micro, small, or medium enterprises, many workers remain unprotected.<sup>58</sup>

Design for Freedom, an initiative of the Grace Farms Foundation, convenes an industry working group that aims to eliminate forced labor in the building materials supply chain and promote a more equitable future. The organization brings together industry leaders to create what it calls a radical paradigm shift by removing forced and child labor from the building materials supply chain. It strives to mobilize the global architectural, engineering, and construction professions to adopt fair labor material sourcing and material transparency measurements. The initiative also emphasizes the importance of material circularity to reduce material flow where forced labor is prevalent while increasing environmental sustainability.<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> U.S. Department of Labor. [2020 Findings on the Worst Forms of Child Labor: India](#). 2020.

<sup>58</sup> U.S. Department of Labor. [2024 Findings on the Worst Forms of Child Labor: India](#). 2024.

<sup>59</sup> [Grace Farms Foundation: Design for Freedom](#).

## How can I learn more?

[Read](#) about bonded labor and child labor in sandstone production and supply chains.

[Watch](#) documentation of the dangerous labor conditions children mining mica in Madagascar experience.

[Watch](#) a video describing the impact the COVID-19 pandemic had on families in Uganda, Ghana, and Nepal, forcing children to work in quarries and other dangerous labor sectors.

[Read](#) about child laborers in stone quarries in Egypt.