



Home Office

# **Country Information and Guidance**

## **Nigeria: Trafficking of women**

**Version 1.0**

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# Preface

This document provides country of origin information (COI) and guidance to Home Office decision makers on handling particular types of protection and human rights claims. This includes whether claims are likely to justify the granting of asylum, humanitarian protection or discretionary leave and whether – in the event of a claim being refused – it is likely to be certifiable as ‘clearly unfounded’ under s94 of the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002.

Decision makers must consider claims on an individual basis, taking into account the case specific facts and all relevant evidence, including: the guidance contained with this document; the available COI; any applicable caselaw; and the Home Office casework guidance in relation to relevant policies.

## Country Information

The COI within this document has been compiled from a wide range of external information sources (usually) published in English. Consideration has been given to the relevance, reliability, accuracy, objectivity, currency, transparency and traceability of the information and wherever possible attempts have been made to corroborate the information used across independent sources, to ensure accuracy. All sources cited have been referenced in footnotes. It has been researched and presented with reference to the [Common EU \[European Union\] Guidelines for Processing Country of Origin Information \(COI\)](#), dated April 2008, and the [European Asylum Support Office’s research guidelines, Country of Origin Information report methodology](#), dated July 2012.

## Feedback

Our goal is to continuously improve the guidance and information we provide. Therefore, if you would like to comment on this document, please [e-mail us](#).

## Independent Advisory Group on Country Information

The Independent Advisory Group on Country Information (IAGCI) was set up in March 2009 by the Independent Chief Inspector of Borders and Immigration to make recommendations to him about the content of the Home Office’s COI material. The IAGCI welcomes feedback on the Home Office’s COI material. It is not the function of the IAGCI to endorse any Home Office material, procedures or policy.

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Information about the IAGCI’s work and a list of the COI documents which have been reviewed by the IAGCI can be found on the Independent Chief Inspector’s website at <http://icinspector.independent.gov.uk/country-information-reviews/>

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# Guidance

## 1. Introduction

### 1.1 Basis of claim

1.1.1 Fear of persecution or serious harm by traffickers or other non-state actors because the woman is a victim of trafficking.

### 1.2 Points to note

1.2.1 Only trained specialists in the UK's designated Competent Authorities can decide whether or not there are reasonable grounds to accept the person as a victim of trafficking for the purpose of the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings. However, both Home Office decision makers and the court are able to take factual matters into account when making their findings in a protection claim. If it has not already been done, decision makers dealing with the protection claim must make an appropriate referral to the National Referral Mechanism (NRM). The case will then be routed to a 'Competent Authority'. Information for Home Office staff who are trained specialists to help them decide whether a person referred under the National Referral Mechanism (NRM) is a victim of trafficking is available in [Victims of modern slavery – Competent Authority guidance](#).

1.2.2 Where a person makes a protection claim and their case has been considered by a Competent Authority and a decision issued, this should be taken into account when considering future risk of persecution or serious harm. However, because the Competent Authority's findings are subject to a higher standard of proof and are findings as to past treatment, it remains open to decision makers to make different findings for the purpose of the protection claim and future risk.

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## 2. Consideration of issues

### 2.1 Credibility

2.1.1 For information on assessing credibility, see the [Asylum Instruction on Assessing Credibility and Refugee Status](#).

2.1.2 Decision makers must also check if there has been a previous application for a UK visa or another form of leave. Asylum applications matched to visas should be investigated prior to the asylum interview (see the [Asylum Instruction on Visa Matches, Asylum Claims from UK Visa Applicants](#)).

2.1.3 Decision makers should also consider the need to conduct language analysis testing (see the [Asylum Instruction on Language Analysis](#)).

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### 2.2 Particular Social Group

2.2.1 Victims of trafficking from Nigeria form a particular social group (PSG) within the meaning of the 1951 UN Refugee Convention. This is because they share an immutable (or innate) characteristic – their experience as a victim

of trafficking - that cannot be changed; and have a distinct identity in their home society.

- 2.2.2 Although victims of trafficking from Nigeria form a PSG, this does not mean that establishing such membership will be sufficient to make out a case to be recognised as a refugee.
- 2.2.3 For further guidance on particular social groups, see the [Asylum Instruction on Assessing Credibility and Refugee Status](#).

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## 2.3 Assessment of risk

2.3.1 Nigeria is a source, transit and destination country for the trafficking of men, women and children for forced labour and sexual exploitation. While there is no exact data, the numbers of persons trafficked to Europe, including the UK, is likely to be in the hundreds, possibly more, each year. Men, women and children are trafficked into the UK for both domestic and sexual exploitation, with female victims of trafficking particularly likely to be forced into prostitution (see [Overview of trafficking](#) and [Prevalence](#)).

### i) Sexual exploitation

2.3.2 Female victims of trafficking (VofT) for sexual exploitation who return to Nigeria may be subject to reprisals or re-trafficking, particularly where they have an outstanding debt to traffickers. The VofT's family may also be subject to intimidation, threats and attacks, though in some cases the close relationship between the victim's family or community and traffickers may lead to a woman being re-trafficked (see [Trafficking networks and strategies](#); and [Treatment on return](#)).

2.3.3 Female VofT may be shunned by their family and experience societal discrimination and stigmatisation (see [Trafficking networks and strategies](#); and [Treatment on return](#)).

2.3.4 In the country guidance case of [PO \(Trafficked Women\) Nigeria CG \[2009\] UKAIT 00046](#), based on evidence obtained in 2008/9, the Upper Tribunal (UT) of the Asylum and Immigration Tribunal made findings on the availability of protection for women who were trafficked for sexual exploitation. [PO](#) was subsequently removed as country guidance on 22 February 2011 following a Court of Appeal judgement, [PO \(Nigeria\) v Secretary of State for the Home Department \[2011\] EWCA Civ 132 \(22 February 2011\)](#). However in making the judgment, the Court of Appeal left paragraphs 191-192 of the original [PO](#) determination in place as interim guidance. Paragraph 192 of the determination made findings on the risk to victims of trafficking in being re-trafficked on return to Nigeria:

'It must be born in mind, however, that a claimant may still have a well-founded fear of persecution if she can show that the Nigerian authorities know or ought to know of circumstances particular to her case giving rise to his fear, but are unlikely to provide the additional protection her particular circumstances reasonably require. To that end:

(a) A very careful examination of the circumstances in which the victim was first trafficked must be undertaken and careful findings made. If a victim has

been told that she is required to earn a particular sum of money ("target earnings") for the trafficker or gang, before being free of any obligation to the trafficker or gang, then, if the victim should escape before earning the target sums, there may well be a risk to the victim that on return to Nigeria she may be re-trafficked if found. The extent of the risk of the trafficking will very much depend on the circumstances in which the victim was originally trafficked.

(b) It must always be remembered that within Nigeria there are gangs of people traffickers operating who generate enormous sums of money from their activities. The evidence seems to us to be clear that where a victim escapes the clutches of her traffickers before earning the target earnings, then the traffickers are very likely to go to extreme lengths in order to locate the victim or members of the victim's family, to seek reprisals.

(c) In the absence of evidence that a trafficked victim has been trafficked by an individual, it should be borne in mind that it is likely that the trafficking will have been carried out by a collection of individuals, many of whom may not have had personal contact with the victim. Within trafficking gangs, individual members perform different roles. One might, for example, be a photographer who takes the photograph which is used within the victim's passport, whether or not the passport is a genuine one. One gang member may, for example, be a forger who is involved in the preparation of false passports or other documents for use by the victim; one might be a corrupt police official, or a border guard, whose role is to assist in facilitating the victim's passage in some way. Gang members may perform any number of different roles but it is essential to bear in mind that if a victim has been trafficked by a gang of traffickers, as opposed to a single trafficker, then the risk of re-trafficking may be greater for someone who escapes before earning the target earnings set by the trafficker, because the individual gang members will have expected to receive a share of the target sum and will, therefore, be anxious to ensure that they do receive that share or seek retribution if they do not.' (paragraph 192).

2.3.5 Whether a woman (or girl) who is a victim of trafficking for sexual exploitation will be at risk of reprisal or being re-trafficked will depend on their individual circumstances, and capability and the degree of interest that their persecutor(s) has in pursuing them. The person is more likely to be at risk of serious harm if they were trafficked by a gang and have an outstanding debt to the traffickers. The onus is on the person to demonstrate that they will be at risk of persecution or serious harm on return to Nigeria.

ii) **Forced labour / domestic servitude**

2.3.6 While women are also trafficked into the UK (and elsewhere) for forced labour/domestic servitude, there is limited information on how such victims are treated on return. It is likely that, depending on the circumstances of how they were trafficked, whether they have incurred a debt, the size and nature of trafficking organisation, and the degree of complicity of family members, that some persons may face intimidation and violent reprisal or be re-trafficked. It is, however, unclear if such persons would face any social stigma or discrimination because of having previously being trafficked for forced labour. Each case would need to be considered on its individual merits, with the onus on the person to demonstrate that they would face a

risk of serious harm or persecution on return (see [Trafficking networks and strategies](#) and [Treatment on return](#)).

- 2.3.7 For further guidance on assessing risk, see the [Asylum Instruction on Assessing Credibility and Refugee Status](#).

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## 2.4 Protection

- 2.4.1 In the country guidance of [PO](#), the UT held in paragraph 191 that:

‘Our consideration of the background materials clearly demonstrates to us that in general the government of Nigeria is both able and willing to discharge its own duty to protect its own nationals from people traffickers. In particular:

‘(a) The Danish Information Service Report: The Protection of Victims of Trafficking in Nigeria: a Fact Finding Mission to Lagos, Benin City and Abuja, 9/26 September 2007 (April 2008) points out that the government of Nigeria have recognised the problem of traffickers and, since 2003, the legal and institutional foundation for combating trafficking and, equally important, support for victims of trafficking, have been in place in Nigeria.

‘(b) The National Agency for the Prohibition of Traffic in Persons and other related matters (NAPTIP) is the principal organisation created by the Nigerian government to combat trafficking. The Trafficking in Persons (Prohibition) Law Enforcement Administration Act, 2003 established NAPTIP and was enacted as a direct result of Nigeria wishing to fulfil its international obligations under the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children.

‘(c) NAPTIP's own Legal and Prosecution Department were said in the April 2008 report, to have concluded six cases and another five were said to be pending. 58 victims of trafficking have been rehabilitated, while another 24 were waiting rehabilitation. We accept that with more funds, NAPTIP could do more to help victims, but the same could be said of any government agency with a finite budget.

‘(d) The US State Department Report suggests that whilst Nigeria is not complying with minimum standards, it is "making significant efforts" to do so and has "demonstrated a solid commitment to eradicating trafficking". It also spoke of NAPTIP making solid efforts to investigate and prosecute trafficking cases, although the numbers of convicted traffickers remained low. There are clearly several reasons for that, but not, on the evidence before us, any lack of governmental effort or desire.’

- 2.4.2 The UT further found, in regard to the risk of being re-trafficked on return to Nigeria, that: ‘It must be born in mind, however, that a claimant may still have a well-founded fear of persecution if she can show that the Nigerian authorities know or ought to know of circumstances particular to her case giving rise to this fear, but are unlikely to provide the additional protection her particular circumstances reasonably require...’ (paragraph 192).

- 2.4.3 Since [PO](#) was promulgated, Nigeria has made progress in strengthening its anti-trafficking laws and in supporting victims of trafficking. The National



Agency for the Prohibition of Traffic in Persons (NAPTIP) - the state body which has primary responsibility for tackling all forms of trafficking - has, since its inception in 2003, prosecuted over 260 individuals involved in trafficking and 'rescued' over 9,000 victims, though this may represent a relatively small proportion of the estimated number of VoTs. The agency also operates 9 shelters across Nigeria with a combined capacity for 313 persons, providing counselling, psychological services and 'empowerment', together with family tracing, repatriation and vocational training. In addition to NAPTIP, there are a number of NGOs, several of which work with NAPTIP, providing assistance, including shelter, assistance with reintegration and are involved awareness-raising of VoTs, to women generally and victims of trafficking in particular (see [Protection and assistance](#)).

- 2.4.4 However, there remain gaps in the support and protection available to trafficked persons returning to Nigeria, with concerns about the adequacy of NAPTIP's funding, staff training and the quality and length of care provided to VoTs. There are also problems with corruption among state agencies generally, including those involved in the protection of VoTs, and in the judiciary, which undermines the state's ability to prosecute traffickers and provide effective protection (see [Protection and assistance](#), [Treatment on return](#) and [Nigeria: Background information including actors of protection and internal relocation](#), sections on security forces and corruption).
- 2.4.5 While there remain weaknesses in the state's ability to combat trafficking and protect VoTs (of both sexual exploitation and domestic / servitude forced labour), in general where the fear of persecution is from a non-state actor, including rogue state agents, protection is likely to be available. However this will depend on the circumstances of the person, how and for what they have been trafficked, and the nature of the threat from their persecutors. The onus is the person to demonstrate that the state is not willing and able to provide protection.
- 2.4.6 For further country information and guidance on women in Nigeria, see [Nigeria: Gender-Based Discrimination/Harm/Violence Against Women](#), and for protection generally in Nigeria, [Nigeria: Background information including actors of protection and internal relocation](#).
- 2.4.7 For guidance on considering the availability of protection generally, see the [Asylum Instruction on Assessing Credibility and Refugee Status](#).

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## 2.5 Internal relocation

- 2.5.1 Decision makers must give careful consideration to the relevance and reasonableness of internal relocation on a case-by-case basis taking full account of the individual circumstances of the particular person.
- 2.5.2 Victims of trafficking may be able to internally relocate to escape localised threats from members of their family or traffickers (or rogue state agents) depending on their particular circumstances, the nature of the threat and how far it would extend.
- 2.5.3 Single women, including those who are pregnant or have children, particularly those with no support networks or livelihood, may be particularly

vulnerable though this may be mitigated by the existence of shelters and assistance available from both government and civil society organisations (see [Support: state and NGOs](#), and [Freedom of movement](#)).

- 2.5.4 For more guidance and country information on internal relocation in Nigeria, see [Nigeria: Background information including actors of protection and internal relocation](#) and for women / girls, see [Nigeria: Gender-Based Discrimination/Harm/Violence Against Women](#).
- 2.5.5 For further guidance on considering internal relocation and the factors to be taken into account generally, see [Asylum Instruction on Assessing Credibility and Refugee Status](#).

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## 2.6 Certification

- 2.6.1 Where a claim falls to be refused, it is unlikely to be certifiable as 'clearly unfounded' under section 94 of the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002.
- 2.6.2 For further information on certification, see the [Instruction on Non-Suspensive Appeals: Certification Under Section 94 of the NIA Act 2002](#).

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## 3. Policy summary

- 3.1.1 Men, women and children are trafficked within and out of Nigeria, including to the UK, for both sexual and domestic exploitation.
- 3.1.2 Women who are victims of trafficking (VofT) for sexual exploitation may be at risk of being re-trafficked or violent reprisal by their original trafficker(s), sometimes in collusion with their family members, depending on their particular circumstances. Such persons may also be shunned by their family members, experience societal disapproval, stigma and discrimination or be attacked, again depending on their circumstances. While there is limited information on the treatment women who have been trafficked for forced labour / domestic servitude, such persons may also face difficulties on return including violent attacks and reprisal from traffickers.
- 3.1.3 A person is more likely to be at risk of serious harm if they were trafficked by a gang and have an outstanding debt to the traffickers. Each case will need to be considered on its merits, with the onus on the person to demonstrate a risk of serious harm.
- 3.1.4 In general protection is available for victims of all forms of trafficking. However, each case will need to be considered on its facts.
- 3.1.5 Internal relocation is likely to be viable but each case will need to be considered on its facts.

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# Country Information

## 4. Overview

- 4.1.1 The United States Department of State noted in its Trafficking in Persons (TIP) Report 2016, Nigeria, covering the period 1 April 2015 to 31 March 2016, published June 2016:

'Nigeria is a source, transit, and destination country for women and children subjected to forced labor and sex trafficking. Nigerian trafficking victims are recruited from rural and, to a lesser extent, urban areas: women and girls for domestic servitude and sex trafficking and boys for forced labor in street vending, domestic service, mining, stone quarrying, agriculture, textile manufacturing, and begging. Young boys in Koranic schools, commonly known as "Almajiri children," are subjected to forced begging. Nigerian women and children are taken from Nigeria to other West and Central African countries, as well as to South Africa, where they are exploited for the same purposes. Nigerian women and girls are subjected to sex trafficking throughout Europe. Nigerian women and children are also recruited and transported to destinations in North Africa, the Middle East, and Central Asia, where they are held captive in the commercial sex industry or forced labor. Women from other countries in West Africa transit Nigeria to destinations in Europe and the Middle East, where they are subjected to forced prostitution. Children from other West African countries are subjected to forced labor in Nigeria, including in granite and gold mines. Nigeria is a transit point for children from other countries in West Africa, who are then subjected to forced labor in Cameroon and Gabon. Various NGOs continued to report that children in internally displaced persons (IDP) camps in northeast Nigeria were victims of labor and sex trafficking.'<sup>1</sup>

- 4.1.2 The European Asylum Support Office (EASO) report, Nigeria: Sex trafficking of Women, October 2015, which is based on a range of sources observed:

'... information on sex trafficking from Nigeria to Europe are not abundant. While the media provides numerous accounts of Nigerian victims of sex trafficking, information is often too anecdotal to be used. Comprehensive and scientific research on the topic is far less common. In order to provide as balanced a picture as possible, the present report uses information from academic researchers, United Nations (UN) organisations, European Union (EU) agencies, non-governmental organisations and governmental agencies. Information from these sources appears at times contradictory as regards the extent to which sex trafficked women are aware of the purpose of migration to Europe and capable of emancipating themselves from sex trafficking. Contradictions may simply point to different profiles of women being trafficked, but also to many nuances in the process of becoming victims.'<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> United States Department of State (USSD), Trafficking in Persons Report 2016, Nigeria, June 2016, <http://www.state.gov/j/tip/rls/tiprpt/countries/2016/258834.htm> , date accessed 6 July 2016

<sup>2</sup> European Asylum Support Office (EASO) report, Nigeria: Sex trafficking of Women, section 1.2, October 2015, <https://coi.easo.europa.eu/administration/easo/PLib/BZ0415678ENN.pdf>

- 4.1.3 The EASO report's observation in regard to trafficking for sexual exploitation apply equally to those persons trafficked for labour exploitation, if not more so since reliable data is even more limited.

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## 5. Prevalence

### 5.1 Victims of trafficking from Nigeria

5.1.1 The number of people trafficked within Nigeria is far larger than the number of people trafficked out of the country, while internal trafficking can also be a prelude to external trafficking. There are no reliable data on the number of men or women trafficked out of Nigeria. In 2009 the UN Office for Drugs and Crimes estimated that 3,800 to 5,700 women were trafficked each year from West Africa, of which Nigeria constituted the main source country.<sup>3</sup>

5.1.2 The Global Report on Trafficking in Persons for 2014 observed that 'Nigerian trafficking flows into Western Europe have been significant for several years, and reports from different European criminal justice authorities indicate that this trafficking flow is very well organized, and also difficult to detect.'<sup>4</sup> Eurostat's report on all forms of trafficking into the EU based on data provided by member states recorded Nigeria as the top non-EU state from which victims originated, with 1,322 persons identified for the period 2010-2012. Nigeria was also the top non-EU country from which suspected traffickers originated, with 299 identified by member states.<sup>5</sup>

5.1.3 The IPPR report 2013 noted in regard to trafficking generally, though applicable to Nigeria in particular:

'There is limited evidence of the scale and character of trafficking to the UK, and quantifying the scale of trafficking here is a significant challenge. Trafficking is a hidden issue: it involves criminal behaviour, hidden work sectors and sometimes individuals who are fearful of authorities due to their irregular immigration status. Myths about trafficking and how a victim is perceived have been found to prevent the identification of victims (ATMG 2010). On the other hand, for some nationalities, being identified as a victim of trafficking may support a claim for asylum or humanitarian protection in the UK, giving an incentive to make (and in some cases) fabricate claims. Estimates of the numbers of people trafficked to the UK have unsurprisingly varied widely from a few hundred to tens of thousands (see Home Office 2009, ACPO 2010, Davies 2009). In a 2009 response to the sixth report from the Home Affairs Select Committee, the government of the time found that "no one was able to give us even a rough estimate of the scale of trafficking in the UK".<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> European Asylum Support Office (EASO) report, Nigeria: Sex Trafficking of Women 1.2 Size/scope of the phenomenon, October 2015, <https://coi.easo.europa.eu/administration/easo/PLib/BZ0415678ENN.pdf>. Date accessed: 6 July 2016.

<sup>4</sup> UNODC, Global Report on Trafficking in Persons 2014, p45, <https://www.unodc.org/unodc/data-and-analysis/glotip.html>. Date accessed: 8 July 2016.

<sup>5</sup> Eurostat, Statistical work paper, Trafficking in human beings, February 2015, ps 39 and 52, [https://ec.europa.eu/anti-trafficking/publications/trafficking-human-beings-eurostat-2015-edition\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/anti-trafficking/publications/trafficking-human-beings-eurostat-2015-edition_en). Date accessed: 8 July 2016.

<sup>6</sup> IPPR, Beyond borders, Human trafficking from Nigeria to the UK, p26, January 2013

5.1.4 The following table shows the number of detected victims of trafficking by age and gender 2010-2012 in Nigeria (the numbers and profile may be different for those being trafficked outside of the country) produced by NAPTIP published in the UNODC Country Profile: Sub-Saharan Report, undated, accessed 14 January 2016, totalling 2,739 persons:

Year	2010	2011	2012
Women	382	404	323
Men	111	129	44
Girls	352	302	275
Boys	170	141	106

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## 5.2 Victims of trafficking in the UK

5.2.1 The IPPR considered in 2013 that little is known about the characteristics of Nigerian trafficking in the UK, although it involves men, women and children. The UK's National Crime Agency reported that there were 257 Nigerians referred to the National Referral Mechanism (NRM) in 2015 as potential victims of trafficking, a 5.3% increase on the previous year. Of these, 81 were trafficked for domestic servitude, 19 for labour exploitation, 115 for sexual exploitation and 42 for 'unknown exploitation'. 214 of the 257 were adults (at the time of exploitation), a 12.6% increase on 2014.<sup>8</sup>

5.2.2 See the [NCA website](#) for further reports / data on Nigerian cases received on the NRM and outcomes.

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## 6. Profiles of victims of trafficking

6.1.1 Victims of trafficking '... are vulnerable to trafficking for reasons which are distinct from greed or any narrow understanding of poverty. Rather, trafficking results from compound situations of exclusion, deprivation and inability to access services.'<sup>9</sup> The EASO report of October 2015, citing a number of sources, stated in regard to women trafficked for sexual exploitation observed: 'The profiles of trafficked women are diverse and change over time. While it is impossible to draw a specific profile, the consulted sources identify some similarities. Note that some of these

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[http://www.ippr.org/files/images/media/files/publication/2013/01/nigeria-trafficking\\_Jan2013\\_10189.pdf?noredirect=1](http://www.ippr.org/files/images/media/files/publication/2013/01/nigeria-trafficking_Jan2013_10189.pdf?noredirect=1)

<sup>7</sup> United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), Country Profile: Sub-Saharan Africa, undated, <https://www.unodc.org/unodc/data-and-analysis/glotip.html>, dated 14 January 2016

<sup>8</sup> National Crime Agency, National Referral Mechanism Statistics – End of Year Summary 2015, February 2016, p5 and 7, <http://www.nationalcrimeagency.gov.uk/publications/national-referral-mechanism-statistics/676-national-referral-mechanism-statistics-end-of-year-summary-2015/file>. Date accessed: 27 June 2016.

<sup>9</sup> IPPR, Beyond borders, Human trafficking from Nigeria to the UK, p35, January 2013, [http://www.ippr.org/files/images/media/files/publication/2013/01/nigeria-trafficking\\_Jan2013\\_10189.pdf?noredirect=1](http://www.ippr.org/files/images/media/files/publication/2013/01/nigeria-trafficking_Jan2013_10189.pdf?noredirect=1). Date accessed: 8 July 2016.

elements may not be unique to victims of trafficking in Nigeria.’ The report indicates profile based on ethnicity; age; family / marital status; economic status; and education: typically, victims were between the ages of 18-20 years old; lacked community / family support; were poorly educated; and were from poor backgrounds’<sup>10</sup>

- 6.1.2 An ITV news piece in October 2015 reported that 92% of Nigerians trafficked for the sex trade in Europe (noting that there are an estimated 10,000 Nigerian prostitutes in Italy) are from Edo State, and 1 in 3 women in Edo State have been reportedly approached by a trafficker.<sup>11</sup>
- 6.1.3 The EASO report of October 2015, citing a number of sources, noted that: ‘Most [female] victims come from Benin City, the capital of Edo State, as well as from the nearby villages. Recruitment from rural areas seem[s] to be more common nowadays than in the early days of trafficking.... Women may also be recruited from other states, especially Delta State, but also from other southern states of Abia, Anambra, Akwa Ibom, Cross River, Ebonyi, Ekiti, Enugu, Lagos, Oyo, Osun, Ondo, Imo or from the more central states of Kaduna and Plateau. Apart from Benin, women are also trafficked from other important cities in Nigeria, such as Lagos, Ibadan, and from the Delta State cities of Sapele and Wari.’<sup>12</sup>
- 6.1.4 Kevin Hyland, the UK’s Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner reported in his Strategic Plan 2015–2017 published in October 2015: ‘Despite the scale and volume of human trafficking originating from Nigeria, a significant proportion of it is a highly localised phenomenon. In particular, research has identified that victims who are trafficked to Europe (including the UK) disproportionately originate from the state of Edo in the south-central part of the country. The last official census in 2006 reports that the population of Edo State was 3.2 million, representing just 1.8% of Nigeria’s total population of 174 million. The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and the Nigerian National Agency for the Prohibition of Traffic in Persons report that well over ninety percent of victims rescued from human trafficking for the purpose of sexual exploitation who are discovered outside of Nigeria are from Edo State.’<sup>13</sup>
- 6.1.5 In its 2015 annual report, based on victims of (all forms of) trafficking within Nigeria, NAP TIP reported that 46.6% of VoTs were aged 0-17 years old, while 47.8% were 18 to 27 years old. The same source noted that:

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<sup>10</sup> European Asylum Support Office (EASO) report, Nigeria: Sex trafficking of Women, section 1.4, October 2015, <https://coi.easo.europa.eu/administration/easo/PLib/BZ0415678ENN.pdf>. Date accessed: 18 January 2016.

<sup>11</sup> ITV.com, In numbers: People trafficking in Nigeria, 15 October 2015, <http://www.itv.com/news/2015-10-15/in-numbers-people-trafficking-in-nigeria/>. Date accessed: 14 January 2016.

<sup>12</sup> European Asylum Support Office (EASO) report, Nigeria: Sex trafficking of Women, section 1.4, October 2015, <https://coi.easo.europa.eu/administration/easo/PLib/BZ0415678ENN.pdf>. Date accessed: 7 February 2016

<sup>13</sup> Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner Strategic Plan 2015–2017, Nigeria, October 2015, <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/independent-anti-slavery-commissioner-strategic-plan-2015-to-2017>. Date accessed: 14 January 2016.

'A total number of Seven hundred and ninety four (794) victims, out of 894 rescued were Nigerians. The highest number of victims came from Edo State (166), Kebbi State (77), and Benue and Delta (59).

'No indigenes of Bauchi, Katsina, Taraba and Yobe States as well as FCT were identified as victims of human trafficking in the reporting year. Bayelsa and Jigawa States had a victim each, Adamawa, Ekiti, Nasarawa and Zamfara States had 2 victims each and Gombe had 3 victims.'<sup>14</sup>

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## 7. Trafficking networks and strategies

7.1.1 The IPPR report of January 2013, which included interviews with 39 female and 1 male victim of trafficking from Nigeria, observed:

'Organised criminal networks are well developed and certainly play a role in many trafficking cases from Nigeria to the UK. However a very clear distinguishing feature from our research is the role of social, familial and other 'normal' associations, instead of (or in addition to) criminal networks usually associated with human trafficking. Rather than an image of a 'typical trafficker' emerging from reports, there appear to be three types of trafficker. The first of these represents the type most commonly associated with trafficking: 'professionals' operating as part of a criminal operation. Outside of this however most trafficking was undertaken through informal arrangements and by individuals closely related to the individuals and their life in Nigeria. An important group are 'personal' traffickers such as family members or guardians. At times, the boundaries between these different categories was blurred. It is also possible for a victim to be trafficked through the collaboration of multiple parties, for example family members working with professional gangs who may have been posing as concerned friends of the family.'<sup>15</sup>

7.1.2 The same report noted in section trafficking in the UK:

'Many exploiters of trafficked persons are related to individuals involved in trafficking in Nigeria. A striking proportion of exploiters in the UK appear to be ordinary citizens rather than professional criminals. In cases of domestic servitude, exploiters are overwhelmingly also Nigerian.

'In other cases, the trafficker might be an existing employer, emigrating from Nigeria, or a relative based in or relocating to the UK. There were instances where the victim was transferred from one country to the other to be exploited by the same family, showing the importance of mobile diaspora networks in the practice. In these cases, when the sender was not a parent but an employer in Nigeria or a 'friend' of an orphaned victim, the nature of the trafficking seemed to be a more opportunistic transaction between them and the receiver in the UK, or one born out of a specific economic

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<sup>14</sup> NAPTIP, 2015 Data Analysis Report, undated, p18 and 20, <http://naptip.gov.ng/index.php/downloads> (see Report folder). Date accessed: 8 July 2016.

<sup>15</sup> IPPR, Beyond borders, Human trafficking from Nigeria to the UK, p38, January 2013, [http://www.ippr.org/files/images/media/files/publication/2013/01/nigeria-trafficking\\_Jan2013\\_10189.pdf?noredirect=1](http://www.ippr.org/files/images/media/files/publication/2013/01/nigeria-trafficking_Jan2013_10189.pdf?noredirect=1). Date accessed: 8 July 2016.

circumstance or immediate need at that time, rather than a pattern of trafficking and abuse.<sup>16</sup>

7.1.3 The EASO report of October 2015 citing various sources stated:

‘Nigerian groups, organisations or networks active in human trafficking vary considerably in type, size and structure. The size and degree of organisation of networks depends on the size of the operation and the number of women being trafficked, the financial strength of the groups and how well connected they are with officials. Some traffickers operate loose networks, mainly using family members to recruit victims. A loose and flexible structure often makes the network very effective and, at the same time, more difficult for the police to disperse. Other groups are well structured and employ a variety of actors; from recruiters and travel agents to law enforcement agencies, professional forgers, financiers and exploiters. The UNODC noted already in 2005 and again in 2011 that most networks were not temporary but were well-organised and relatively solid and durable’.<sup>17</sup>

7.1.4 See [section 2.1.1 of the EASO report](#) for more information on trafficking gangs and networks.

7.1.5 A Europol release of May 2016 observed:

‘...For years, European police forces have been closely monitoring the trafficking of women from West Africa to the EU for sexual exploitation. Investigations show the existence of organised crime groups (OCGs) from West Africa highly networked which embrace exploiters, facilitators, trafficked women handed over to the forced prostitution market, money launderers, and persons involved in the forging of travel documents and Visas. After being recruited in their home countries, the victims are trafficked to Europe and sent to work in brothels or in the street with forged identity documents. The continuous shifting of exploited victims within the EU is commonly noticed. Traffickers use voodoo rituals, which are commonly practised in West Africa, as an effective mean of exerting pressure on their victims, to intimidate them, and ensure obedience; this practice enables the perpetrators to make the exploited women paying off their debts (which can be up to 60.000 Euros) incurred as a result of their trafficking to Europe. In this context, increased police checks continue to play an important role in the identification of victims of human trafficking and the associated shedding of light on previously undetected crime.’<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> IPPR, Beyond borders, Human trafficking from Nigeria to the UK, p46, January 2013, [http://www.ippr.org/files/images/media/files/publication/2013/01/nigeria-trafficking\\_Jan2013\\_10189.pdf?noredirect=1](http://www.ippr.org/files/images/media/files/publication/2013/01/nigeria-trafficking_Jan2013_10189.pdf?noredirect=1). Date accessed: 8 July 2016

<sup>17</sup> European Asylum Support Office (EASO) report, Nigeria: Sex trafficking of Women, 2.1 Structure and size of Nigerian trafficking networks, October 2015, <https://coi.easo.europa.eu/administration/easo/PLib/BZ0415678ENN.pdf>. Date accessed: 18 January 2016.

<sup>18</sup> Europol, Joint action to tackle West African human trafficking networks, 4 May 2016, <https://www.europol.europa.eu/content/joint-action-tackle-west-african-human-trafficking-networks-1>. Date accessed on 8 July 2016



## 7.2 Madams

7.2.1 The EASO report of October 2015 citing other sources stated:

‘A madam (also called maman) is the most important person in Nigerian sex trafficking and often also the sponsor financing the journey. Madams order the girls and sometimes recruit them. They often lead the trafficking organisations and monitor the trafficking process closely, from recruitment to exploitation [...]. According to Europol, the number of women operating as traffickers is increasing [...]. Madams are often found both in Nigeria and in the destination country. The madam in the destination country is responsible for the victims after their arrival, and victims usually live and work under her control.’<sup>19</sup>

7.2.2 See [section 2.1.2 of the EASO report](#) for more information on ‘madams’.

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## 7.3 Recruitment of women for sex trafficking

7.3.1 The EASO report of October 2015 citing other sources observed:

‘Women often meet the ‘travel agent’ (i.e. the trafficker/agent/madam), through family members, relatives, friends or other personal networks. Recruitment usually takes place in an environment familiar to the victim, such as their home, their neighbourhood, at school or at the workplace. The research by Cherti et al. shows that 29 out of 40 interviewed women (72 %) had been recruited by someone they or their family knew quite well. 15 % of the interviewees (6 women) had been recruited by a family member, a partner or an associate such as a former schoolfriend. 18 % (7 women) were trafficked by an employer or guardian. 22 % (9 women) were recruited by an associate of their family and 17 % (7 women) were recruited by a contact of a family friend or associate. Only 28 % (11 women) of the interviewed women had been approached and recruited by strangers.’<sup>20</sup>

7.3.2 For further information on recruitment strategies; payment and sealing of agreements; and travel to Europe, see sections 2.2 and 2.4 of the [EASO Report](#) and [NAPTIP, Tricks employed by human traffickers to lure their victims](#).

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## 7.4 The debt system

7.4.1 The EASO report of October 2015 citing various sources noted:

“One characteristic of African sex networks is the debt system. These debts are typically quite high, taking between one to four years to repay, and [women] are released once the debt is repaid. However, they remain

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<sup>19</sup> European Asylum Support Office (EASO) report, Nigeria: Sex trafficking of Women, 2.1.2 Madams, October 2015, <https://coi.easo.europa.eu/administration/easo/PLib/BZ0415678ENN.pdf>. Date accessed: 18 January 2016.

<sup>20</sup> European Asylum Support Office (EASO) report, Nigeria: Sex trafficking of Women, 2.2 Means of recruitment for sex trafficking, October 2015, <https://coi.easo.europa.eu/administration/easo/PLib/BZ0415678ENN.pdf>. Date accessed: 18 January 2016.

vulnerable because they are left without money, skills, legal status, or a support network. Another characteristic of these sex trafficking networks is the use of voodoo as a means of exerting pressure over their victims” [...].

‘Most victims expect to get into debt with traffickers, but they are informed of the size of the debt only once they arrive in Europe [...]. Some know the actual size of the debt from the beginning but do not necessarily understand how much money it represents or what they must do to repay it [...]. Many women think that the debt amount announced in Nigeria is in Nigerian naira. Only in the destination country do they realise that the debt is in euro. They may not know or understand the exchange rate of the euro either [...]. Often the victims do not have advance knowledge about how long it takes to repay the debt, and they have been given the impression that the sum can be easily earned in a few months [...].

‘The debt sometimes increases with punishment for ‘bad’ behaviour, such as abortions and pregnancies, with a fine of EUR 10,000 or more [...].

‘Travelling by air is more expensive than by sea due to the travel document procurement costs and airline ticket prices. The price for a plane ticket and a forged passport, plus visa, ranges between USD 6,500 and 12,000. The debt further increases when entering Europe due to high interest rates and more expenditure. In June 2015, the price for the passage from Nigeria to Europe varied between EUR 40,000 and 60,000, depending on the mode of transport.

‘... The repayment of a EUR 35,000–50,000 debt would take two to five years although [one source...] mention[s] two to three years of sex work to repay the debt. Women may try to repay the debt through savings, or other type of work such as selling, cleaning, or agricultural work. However, women rapidly become aware that sex work is the quickest way to earn money. In the meantime, the family in Nigeria also expects to receive regular remittances from the daughter abroad.

‘Usually the victims are not allowed to send money home until the entire debt is repaid. Some try to hide part of their earnings in different places to send some money back home secretly. If they get caught, a fine may be added to their initial debt. [One source’s]... interlocutors managed to remit some money to their families to meet their most urgent demands, despite the cost of living as undocumented prostitutes and their debts.

‘It is the madam who finally determines when the victim has settled her debt. Some madams report their victims to the police just before they finish repaying their debt. In this way, they can remove these victims from the market, and prevent them from competing with new victims earning money for the madam.

#### 7.4.2 The same report stated:

‘Even after the repayment of the debt, victims may feel obliged to continue sex work, as earnings from any other type of work may not be sufficient to provide for both themselves and their family in Nigeria. Victims therefore often continue working for the madam after repaying their debt, and some of them eventually try to become madams or traffickers themselves, as

indicated previously. Indeed, as [1 source noted]..., a self-producing organisational structure is a typical feature of Nigerian human trafficking.

‘Some women may stop paying their debt as they consider it unreasonably large and the working conditions unbearable, or both. Women who do not pay money back in the amount and timeframe set by the madam are confronted with threats, coercion and physical violence. IOM notes that in such cases, ‘juju doctors’ may threaten the women with physical harm, madness, impotency or death (their death or relatives deaths), thereby terrifying the women in order to bring them back into the network. Threats are also directed towards their families and minor children back home [...].’<sup>21</sup>

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## 7.5 Juju / Voodoo ceremonies

### 7.5.1 A UNHCR paper of October 2013 opined:

‘It’s generally perceived that voodoo is used to force African women into prostitution. However, this is simply a sensationalist way of presenting a complex abuse of women who believe in supernatural forces... One characteristic of African sex networks is the debt system... Another characteristic of these sex trafficking networks is the use of voodoo as a means of exerting pressure over their victims.’<sup>22</sup>

### 7.5.2 The same source observed that:

‘Voodoo plays an important role in enslaving African women and girls (at least West African women and girls), without making a distinction between all the supernatural forces involved in sex trafficking . First of all it is important to differentiate between voodoo and ritual oaths. As Victoria Nwogu, Programme Specialist with UNIFEM/Nigeria, explains: “Voodoo is a religion (which includes ritual oaths in its practices), while a ritual oath is a seal placed on an agreement through rituals binding both parties to the terms of the agreement on pain of supernatural retaliation.”

‘Voodoo is a religion based on the existence of an invisible world interconnected to the visible world. It originated in West Africa, where voodoo beliefs are still widespread, mainly in Nigeria, Benin, Togo and Ghana. Rituals oaths are a practice derived from this religion. These oaths seal the pact between women who want to move to Europe and traffickers. Traffickers commit to pay all costs of the journey, while the women promise to repay the money, be respectful to the traffickers and engage not to denounce the traffickers to the police.’<sup>23</sup>

### 7.5.3 The EASO report of October 2015 noted that:

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<sup>21</sup> European Asylum Support Office (EASO) report, Nigeria: Sex trafficking of Women, 2.2 Means of recruitment for sex trafficking, October 2015, <https://coi.easo.europa.eu/administration/easo/PLib/BZ0415678ENN.pdf>. Date accessed: 18 January 2016.

<sup>22</sup> UNHCR, Voodoo, Witchcraft and Human Trafficking in Europe, p6-7, October 2013, [http://www.ecoi.net/file\\_upload/1930\\_1382531731\\_526664234.pdf](http://www.ecoi.net/file_upload/1930_1382531731_526664234.pdf). Date accessed: 18 January 2016

<sup>23</sup> UNHCR, Voodoo, Witchcraft and Human Trafficking in Europe, p6-7, October 2013, [http://www.ecoi.net/file\\_upload/1930\\_1382531731\\_526664234.pdf](http://www.ecoi.net/file_upload/1930_1382531731_526664234.pdf). Date accessed: 18 January 2016

‘Voodoo—referred to locally as juju—is a traditional religion in West Africa where it has been practised for centuries. Spirits or gods are believed to govern the earth and every aspect of human existence. They may protect people or punish them. Juju is deeply ingrained in society in Edo State, and many Nigerians, regardless of social class or education level, believe in it.

‘... Ritual oaths (called juju by Nigerian women) became used in Nigerian human trafficking as a tool of coercion to control the victims. A juju oath works as a form of psychological control as the fear of consequences of breaking the oath, i.e. punishment by the gods, is extremely strong (208). The purpose of the oath is to prevent victims from revealing the identity of the traffickers or the details of the juju ritual and to ensure they pay their debt as agreed. without creating problems. For their part, traffickers pledge to take the victim to the destination. Many traffickers require their victims to swear the oath. It is believed that breaking the oath can anger the deities, which may lead to severe illness, madness or death of the oath breaker or their relatives...’<sup>24</sup>

- 7.5.4 An October 2015 briefing paper prepared by the International Movement against all forms of Racism and Discrimination noted that:

‘An important characteristic of the Nigerian trafficking system is the use by the traffickers of threats of voodoo curses to control Nigerian victims and force them into situations of prostitution. In fact, once arrangements for victims’ trips abroad are completed, traffickers seal the deal by taking the victims to shrines of voodoo priests for oath taking. During the ritual, in which body parts such as fingernails, blood and/or pubic hairs are recollected, the woman is made to swear an oath to repay her debt, never to report her situation to the police or reveal the identities of her traffickers. Fear of breaking the pact is so strong that it creates a powerful hold over the victims and impedes them to seek help. According to the Nigerian National Agency for Prohibition of Traffic in Persons about 90 per cent of girls that are been trafficked to Europe are taken to shrines to take "oaths of secrecy".’<sup>25</sup>

- 7.5.5 For more information on the use of ‘juju’, voodoo and ritual oaths, see pages 6 to 11 of [UNHCR research paper, Voodoo, Witchcraft and Human Trafficking in Europe](#); and section 2.5 of the [EASO report of October 2015](#).

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## 8. Protection and assistance

### 8.1 Law and policy position

- 8.1.1 The EASO report of October 2015 citing various sources observed:

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<sup>24</sup> European Asylum Support Office (EASO) report, Nigeria: Sex trafficking of Women, 2.2 Means of recruitment for sex trafficking, October 2015, <https://coi.easo.europa.eu/administration/easo/PLib/BZ0415678ENN.pdf>. Date accessed: 5 February 2016.

<sup>25</sup> The International Movement against all forms of Racism and Discrimination, Briefing paper for the Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons, especially in women and children, [http://imadr.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/IMADR-Briefing-Paper\\_Human-Trafficking-in-Nigeria\\_5.11.2015.pdf](http://imadr.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/IMADR-Briefing-Paper_Human-Trafficking-in-Nigeria_5.11.2015.pdf). Date accessed: 5 February 2016.

'The Nigerian government has developed several sets of measures to address the issue of trafficking in women including:

- 'the ratification, in 2000 and 2001 respectively, of the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized crime and its supplementing protocol on trafficking in persons;
- 'the introduction, in 2003, of the Trafficking in Persons (Prohibition) Law Enforcement and Administration Act which was amended in 2005 and 2015 to increase penalties for trafficking offenders; this Act is a Federal Legislation and applies to all the 36 States, including the Federal Capital Territory Abuja;
- 'the creation in August 2003 of a specialised anti-trafficking agency, the National Agency for Prohibition of Traffic in Persons and other related matters (NAPTIP) whose mandate encompasses investigation, prosecution, monitoring, counselling, rehabilitation, awareness raising, research, and training;
- 'the adoption of a national action plan on trafficking in persons.

'In 2009, NAPTIP, along with its partners, developed a National Plan of Action (2009-2012)...'<sup>26</sup>

8.1.2 For the full text of the Trafficking in Persons (Prohibition), Enforcement and Administration Act 2015, see: <http://placng.org/new/laws/T23.pdf>.

8.1.3 NAPTIP has also developed an action plan for 2012 – 2017, which covers 5 broad areas:

- Strengthening law enforcement and prosecutorial response to issues of TIP;
- reinforcing public enlightenment, using various media;
- trafficking; expanding platforms for victim protection and assistance and addressing factors which increase vulnerability;
- strengthening partnerships at national, regional and international levels; and
- improving organizational development to enhance effective and efficient work culture in order to fulfil its national mandate.<sup>27</sup>

8.1.4 The USSD trafficking in persons report 2016 commented that:

'The Government of Nigeria does not fully meet the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking; however, it is making significant efforts to do so.

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<sup>26</sup> European Asylum Support Office (EASO) report, Nigeria: Sex Trafficking of Women, 1.6. Role of the state in fighting/preventing THB, October 2015, <https://coi.easo.europa.eu/administration/easo/PLib/BZ0415678ENN.pdf>. Date accessed: 18 January 2016.

<sup>27</sup> UNOHCHR, Godwin Moroka, Assistant Director, Research and Programme Development National Agency for the Prohibition of Traffic in Persons (NAPTIP), Nigeria, Second Consultative Meeting on Strengthening Partnerships with National Rapporteurs on Trafficking in Persons and Equivalent Mechanisms (21-22 May 2014), <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/Trafficking/Pages/2ndConsultativeMeeting2014.aspx>. Date accessed: 6 July 2016.

During the reporting period, the government sustained strong anti-trafficking law enforcement efforts by investigating, prosecuting, and convicting numerous traffickers; by collaborating with 11 countries on international investigations; and by providing extensive specialized anti-trafficking training to officials from various government ministries and agencies. The National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons and Other Related Matters (NAPTIP) received a larger operating budget, identified and provided services to a large number of victims, and continued extensive awareness campaigns throughout the country. During the reporting period, the Borno State government provided financial and in-kind resources to some members of [Civilian Joint Taskforce] CJTF; CJTF recruited and used child soldiers. Additionally, despite a 2015 amendment that removed judges' ability to sentence traffickers to fines in lieu of prison time, Nigerian courts penalized two traffickers with fines alone and gave another three the option to pay a fine in lieu of serving time in prison.<sup>28</sup>

8.1.5 The US State Department in its TIP report assessed Nigeria to be a Tier 2 country<sup>29</sup>, which it defined as 'Countries whose governments do not fully comply with the [US Trafficking Victims Protection Act's] [TVPA's minimum standards](#), but are making significant efforts to bring themselves into compliance with those standards.'<sup>30</sup>

8.1.6 The USSD Trafficking in Persons report, 2015, noted that:

'The government maintained strong anti-trafficking law enforcement efforts. In March 2015, the government passed amendments to the 2003 Trafficking in Persons Law Enforcement and Administration Act, which increase the penalties for trafficking offenders. The law prohibits all forms of trafficking. It prescribes a minimum penalty of five years' imprisonment and a minimum fine of one million naira ([US]\$5,470) for labor trafficking offenses. The law prescribes a minimum penalty of five years' imprisonment for sex trafficking offenses and a minimum fine of one million naira (\$5,470); the minimum penalty increases to seven years' imprisonment if the case involves a child. These penalties are sufficiently stringent and commensurate with other serious crimes, such as rape.'<sup>31</sup>

8.1.7 A 2015 research paper published before the amended trafficking act of which addressed some of the gaps in the 2003 act was released in March 2015 in the Journal of Law, Policy and Globalization stated that:

'While the Government has made some progress in addressing the problem, it can still do more to prevent trafficking and protect victims. .... For instance, the Government has to implement formal procedures for the return and reintegration of Nigerian victims to ensure that victims are afforded adequate care upon their return to Nigeria; take proactive measures to investigate and

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<sup>28</sup> United States Department of State (USSD), Trafficking in Persons Report 2016, Nigeria, June 2016, <http://www.state.gov/j/tip/rls/tiprpt/countries/2016/258834.htm>, date accessed 6 July 2016

<sup>29</sup> USSD, Trafficking in Persons Report 2016, Nigeria, June 2016, <http://www.state.gov/j/tip/rls/tiprpt/countries/2016/258834.htm>. Date accessed: 6 July 2016.

<sup>30</sup> USSD, Trafficking in Persons Report 2016, Tier Placements, June 2016 <http://www.state.gov/j/tip/rls/tiprpt/2016/258696.htm>. Date accessed: 6 July 2016.

<sup>31</sup> United States Department of State (USSD), Trafficking in Persons Report 2015, Nigeria, July 2015, <http://www.state.gov/j/tip/rls/tiprpt/2015/index.htm>. Date accessed: 17 December 2015.

prosecute government officials suspected of trafficking related corruption and complicity in trafficking offenses; and fully integrate anti-trafficking responsibilities into the work of the Nigerian Police Force and the Ministry of Labor.<sup>32</sup>

#### 8.1.8 The same source stated that:

'...The Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons Act recognizes the problem of trafficking in Nigeria, but it falls short of the standards set in the United Nations Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially women and Children, 2000 which Nigeria zealously ratified but has not domesticated and falls short of the various international human rights obligations and standards for the treatment of trafficked persons...'<sup>33</sup>

## 8.2 Enforcement agencies, activities and UK assistance

8.2.1 The National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons (NAPTIP) is Nigeria's multidisciplinary agency created to tackle human trafficking.<sup>34</sup> The agency is headquartered in Abuja, has 8 zonal commands, covering all of Nigeria's 36 states, and employs over 1,000 staff.<sup>35</sup> On its website, NAPTIP states that it coordinates law enforcement, protection and preventive initiatives of the various levels of Government and Non Governmental Organisations working on all forms of trafficking. NAPTIP also states that its organisational mandate enables it to suppress human trafficking, prosecute the perpetrators and offer a range of protection services to victims including temporary sheltering, counselling, rehabilitation, reintegration and access to justice.<sup>36</sup>

8.2.2 NAPTIP's Public Enlightenment Department on undated webpage, accessed 14 January 2016, stated:

'The Public Enlightenment Department of NAPTIP is one of the core departments of the Agency.... has organized and executed several awareness/sensitization programmes, in virtually all the states of the country in collaboration with its 6 zonal offices... Several methods are usually employed by the department in its operations... The methods are as follows: Conferences, seminars, workshop Strategic alliance and cooperation Production and distribution of sensitization materials such as Face caps, T/shirts, stickers and posters Courtesy calls or visits Awareness campaign rally Organized excursion Pre-Sensitisation tours to human-trafficking endemic areas Research projects Newspaper sensitization and awareness

<sup>32</sup> Kigbu, S.K., Challenges in Investigating and Prosecuting Trafficking in Persons' Cases in Nigeria, Journal of Law, Policy and Globalization, Vol. 38, 2015, <http://www.iiste.org/Journals/index.php/JLPG/article/viewFile/23683/24257>. Date accessed: 5 February 2016.

<sup>33</sup> Kigbu, S.K., Challenges in Investigating and Prosecuting Trafficking in Persons' Cases in Nigeria, Journal of Law, Policy and Globalization, Vol. 38, 2015, <http://www.iiste.org/Journals/index.php/JLPG/article/viewFile/23683/24257>. Date accessed: 5 February 2016.

<sup>34</sup> NAPTIP, About us, undated webpage, <http://www.naptip.gov.ng/index.php/aboutus/about-naptip>. Date accessed: 6 July 2016.

<sup>35</sup> UK Foreign Office / Home Office, Ralon interview with NAPTIP official, 25 May 2016, hard copy on request,. Date accessed: 11 July 2016

<sup>36</sup> NAPTIP, About us, undated webpage, <http://www.naptip.gov.ng/index.php/aboutus/about-naptip>. Date accessed: 6 July 2016.

publication Electronic media messages Outdoor publicity vans Jingles Local media Newsletter publication Traditional methods of communication e.g Town Crier Drama Feedback mechanism'.<sup>37</sup>

8.2.3 NAPTIP provided the following tabled information dated March 2015 in relation to 'rescue agencies', indicating that government agencies are making efforts to recognise and combat trafficking:

Rescue Agency	number	Percentage %
NAPTIP	48	26.2
Nigeria Immigration Service	86	47.0
Nigeria Police	6	3.3
Department of State Service	1	0.5
Nigeria Security and Civil defence Corps	2	1.1
Non Governmental Organisations	15	8.2
Samaritans	10	5.5
Federal/State Ministry of Women Affairs	4	2.2
Foreign police	11	6.0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>183</b>	<b>100</b>

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8.2.4 Kevin Hyland, the UK's Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner reported in his Strategic Plan 2015–2017:

'I have completed two visits to Edo State, in May and October 2015, meeting with community groups, traditional and religious leaders, law enforcement officials, civil society organisations and survivors. My office, in collaboration with a range of stakeholders and local experts, is now developing a holistic strategic plan that aims to tackle this issue. Key areas of focus include: enhanced community engagement and the development of a programme to build public awareness of the dangers of human trafficking, especially in rural areas; economic projects, focusing on agribusiness, to generate employment for young people who are currently leaving their villages due to lack of opportunity and often falling prey to traffickers; and building law enforcement and judicial capacity.'<sup>39</sup>

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### 8.3 Protection and effectiveness of enforcement agencies

8.3.1 The EASO report of October 2015 citing various sources observed:

<sup>37</sup> NAPTIP, Public Enlightenment Department, undated webpage,

<http://www.naptip.gov.ng/publicenlight.html>. Date accessed: 14 January 2016.

<sup>38</sup> The National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons NAPTIP, First Quarter 2015 Report, 8.0 Rescue Agencies, <http://www.naptip.gov.ng/docs/First%20quarter%20report.pdf>. Date accessed: 31 December 2015.

<sup>39</sup> Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner Strategic Plan 2015–2017, Nigeria, October 2015, <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/independent-anti-slavery-commissioner-strategic-plan-2015-to-2017>. Date accessed: 14 January 2016.



'One of NAPTIP's challenges is inadequate funding (337). In 2014, NAPTIP received approximately 2.4 billion naira (USD 13 million) from the Nigerian government. During that year, NAPTIP spent ca. 20 % of its operational budget, or 96.5 million naira (USD 528,000), on victim protection and assistance. State governments also contributed an additional five million naira (USD 27,300) to support state anti-trafficking efforts (338). According to Nwogu, the Nigerian government does not fund NGO efforts to address human trafficking. NAPTIP funds allocated to anti-trafficking efforts have not been adequate, especially considering the victims' need for assistance services (339).'<sup>40</sup>

8.3.2 However the USSD TIP report 2016 commented on the government's efforts to combat trafficking, including referring to a five-fold increase in spending on victim protection compared to 2015: 'In 2015, the government allocated approximately 2.5 billion naira ([US]\$13 million) to NAPTIP, which spent roughly 581 million naira (\$3 million) on victim protection and assistance during the reporting period.'

8.3.3 The EASO report, citing various sources, noted

'The work of NAPTIP has been questioned because of allegations of corruption and the use of financial resources. It is, however, difficult to assess the degree of corruption within NAPTIP and specifically the impact on the protection of victims. Fact-finding missions by the Danish Immigration Service in 2008 and 2010 found no confirmation of these allegations. According to the interviewed NAPTIP partners, the Agency is effective within the limits of its resources. Staff must also undertake trainings constantly because traffickers' methods change very quickly. NAPTIP tries to ensure it is able to respond to these changes (340).

'Researchers consider as potentially problematic that NAPTIP is in charge of both the rehabilitation of victims and the prosecution of traffickers. The victims do not necessarily have the courage to seek assistance because they are afraid of having to testify against traffickers. It is considered possible that in its operations, NAPTIP prioritises the prosecution of traffickers over the prevention of human trafficking and the rehabilitation of victims.'<sup>41</sup>

8.3.4 The EASO report of October 2015 citing various sources stated:

'Interlocutors of the 2007 Danish fact-finding mission to Nigeria stated that, even if the debt had not been fully repaid, the victim would be able to obtain protection from reprisals by traffickers in Nigeria. The Nigerian police was said to have the capacity to protect victims from traffickers. However, it was also stated that there was no guarantee of protection as the Nigerian police suffered from corruption, and any trafficker could bribe the police and avoid possible prosecution. It was further stated that up to 90 % of the families in

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<sup>40</sup> European Asylum Support Office (EASO) report, Nigeria: Sex Trafficking of Women, 4.3, October 2015, <https://coi.easo.europa.eu/administration/easo/PLib/BZ0415678ENN.pdf>. Date accessed: 18 January 2016.

<sup>41</sup> European Asylum Support Office (EASO) report, Nigeria: Sex Trafficking of Women, 4.3, October 2015, <https://coi.easo.europa.eu/administration/easo/PLib/BZ0415678ENN.pdf>. Date accessed: 18 January 2016.

which one of the family members had been trafficked did not call on the police or go to court but would do their utmost to pay the debt, including by selling their land and other property [...]].

'Representatives of NGOs interviewed by the 2007 Danish fact-finding mission were generally sceptical about NAPTIP's capability to protect victims against traffickers, due to lack of resources and technical know-how. It was not considered possible that all victims who need assistance would receive it as there were too many victims compared to the available resources. However, NAPTIP officials blamed NGO criticism of NAPTIP on the fact that they have to compete for funds [...]].

'Difficulty for returned victims to obtain state protection is mentioned in various other studies. Several respondents in the 2013 study by Cherti et al. reported incidents of indifference or even active complicity with traffickers on the part of the authorities when the respondents tried to seek help from the police [...]].

'According to an Italian inspector of police and a consultant who visited Edo State several times to cooperate with Nigerian authorities, working with NAPTIP and the Nigerian police is 'frustrating'. They report that some police officers were not willing to facilitate collaboration (exchange of information for instance). Victims were also told by the police that it would be better if they just paid their debt [...]].'<sup>42</sup>

#### 8.3.5 The USSD TIP report 2016 noted:

'The government maintained strong anti-trafficking law enforcement efforts. In 2015, the government passed amendments to the 2003 Trafficking in Persons Law Enforcement and Administration Act, which increased the penalties for trafficking offenders. The law prohibits all forms of trafficking and prescribes a minimum penalty of five years' imprisonment and a minimum fine of one million naira (\$5,470) for sex and labor trafficking offenses; the minimum penalty for sex trafficking increases to seven years' imprisonment if the case involves a child. These penalties are sufficiently stringent and commensurate with other serious crimes, such as rape.'<sup>43</sup>

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## 8.4 Investigations and convictions

### 8.4.1 A report published by the Institute for Public Policy Research (IPPR) published in January 2013 noted that:

'The problem of trafficker impunity in Nigeria is still acute. Consequently, many offenders are able to operate with little risk of prosecution (Okojie 2009). Nigeria's weak rule of law, coupled with at times the indifference and even, according to our stakeholder respondents, the active involvement of police and other officials, has led to low penalties and prosecution rates for

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<sup>42</sup> European Asylum Support Office (EASO), Nigeria Sex Trafficking of Women, section 4.8, October 2015, <https://coi.easo.europa.eu/administration/easo/PLib/BZ0415678ENN.pdf>. Date accessed: 20 January 2016.

<sup>43</sup> United States Department of State (USSD), Trafficking in Persons Report 2016, Nigeria, published June 2016, <http://www.state.gov/j/tip/rls/tiprpt/countries/2016/258834.htm>. Date accessed: 6 July 2016.

trafficking. Low prosecution rates for violent crimes such as sexual assault as well as low tariffs for those convicted are also an issue. This is in part because, outside NAPTIP itself, knowledge and concern about trafficking among officials and police is perceived to be generally low.... Several respondents reported incidents of indifference or even active complicity when victims or their families notified police about their situation, only to be told it was a 'private' matter. In at least one case, the families were subsequently murdered. In another, the victim appeared to have been handed over directly from custody by police to a stranger, who then trafficked her into sexual exploitation.

'While in theory the penalties for trafficking were appropriate, even where prosecutions could be brought, this was undermined by the option for some offenders to pay a fine in place of serving a prison term. Of the 23 offenders convicted in the 2011/2012 period, eight were offered fines in lieu of a prison sentence, ranging from US\$63 to US\$316 (US Department of State 2012). These reflect neither the severity of trafficking as a crime nor its high profitability. At the same time, alongside the impunity of many traffickers, victims often have little recourse to official protection themselves.'<sup>44</sup>

8.4.2 A 2015 research paper published in the Journal of Law, Policy and Globalization stated that: 'Regrettably, investigation and prosecution of trafficking in persons' cases in Nigeria have faced a plethora of challenges, thereby making realization of the objectives of the consciously institutionalized mechanisms for combating trafficking in person in Nigeria, far from being wholly realized.' The same source also noted 'While, there have been a number of convictions, quite a number of cases have been successfully investigated and are presently in court, law enforcement agents/agencies still encounter repeated difficulties in actually identifying victims of human trafficking, providing them with needed services and assistance, prosecuting traffickers and enabling environment for combating human trafficking.'<sup>45</sup>

8.4.3 NAPTIP's annual report for 2015 stated that:

'...a total of Five Hundred and Seventy (570) cases were reported to the Agency. This brings the total number of cases of human trafficking reported to the Agency from inception to Three thousand, Eight Hundred and Ninety Nine (3,899) cases.

' Out of the 570 cases reported, Two Hundred and Three (203) cases, representing 35.6% of the number were successfully investigated.

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<sup>44</sup> IPPR, Beyond Borders: Human Trafficking from Nigeria to the UK, January 2013, [http://www.ippr.org/files/images/media/files/publication/2013/01/nigeria-trafficking\\_Jan2013\\_10189.pdf?noredirect=1](http://www.ippr.org/files/images/media/files/publication/2013/01/nigeria-trafficking_Jan2013_10189.pdf?noredirect=1). Date accessed: 5 February 2016.

<sup>45</sup> Kigbu, S.K., Challenges in Investigating and Prosecuting Trafficking in Persons' Cases in Nigeria, Journal of Law, Policy and Globalization, Vol. 38, 2015, <http://www.iiste.org/Journals/index.php/JLPG/article/viewFile/23683/24257>. Date accessed: 5 February 2016.

The highest number of cases reported came from External trafficking for sexual exploitation, with 145 (25.4%), Child Labour, with 127 (22.3%), and Child Abuse, with 82 (14.4%) of the cases.<sup>46</sup>

8.4.4 The same report included the following table:

Cases	Reported		Investigated	
	No.	%	No.	%
External trafficking for sexual exploitation	145	25.4	85	58.6
Internal trafficking for sexual exploitation	15	2.6	6	40.0
External trafficking for labour exploitation	30	5.3	9	30.0
Internal trafficking for labour exploitation (Force labour)	16	2.8	1	6.3
Nigerians deported as illegal migrants	1	0.2	0	0.0
Child labour	127	22.3	42	33.1
Child abuse	82	14.4	27	32.9
Kidnapping from guardianship	32	5.6	6	18.8
Forced marriage	5	0.9	2	40.0
Rape/sexual abuse	26	4.6	8	30.8
Others (baby sale, illegal adoption, almajiri, missing child and abandoned)	91	16.0	17	18.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>570</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>203</b>	<b>35.6</b>

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8.4.5 In an interview with Ralon in May 2016, a representative of NAPTIP stated that the organisation had identified 175 VoTs of sexual exploitation and 169 of domestic slavery in 2014, and 226 VoTs of sexual exploitation and 208 of domestic servitude in 2015. The representative also stated that VoTs are brought to NAPTIP's attention by:

- Complaints by victims, friends family or concern Nigerians
- Intelligence from international partners, NGOs
- Open source information (social, print and electronic media)
- Intelligence gathering by NAPTIP operations<sup>48</sup>

8.4.6 The NAPTIP annual report for 2015 also noted 432 suspected traffickers were apprehended<sup>49</sup>, compared to 276 in 2014.<sup>50</sup> The 2015 report further noted that of those apprehended:

<sup>46</sup> NAPTIP, 2015 Data Analysis Report, undated, p2

<http://naptip.gov.ng/index.php/downloads/finish/3/25>. Date accessed: 8 July 2016.

<sup>47</sup> NAPTIP, 2015 Data Analysis Report, undated, p2 <http://naptip.gov.ng/index.php/downloads> (see Report folder). Date accessed: 8 July 2016.

<sup>48</sup> UK Foreign Office / Home Office, Ralon interview with NAPTIP official, 25 May 2016, hard copy on request. Date accessed: 11 July 2016.

‘Two hundred and nineteen (219) were males and Two hundred and thirteen (213) were females.

‘Child labour had the highest number of suspected traffickers with 109 suspects; 40 males and 69 females. External trafficking for sexual exploitation and Child Abuse had 89 (52 males and 37 females) and 58 suspects (24 males and 34 females) respectively.’<sup>51</sup>

8.4.7 The NAPTIP annual report for 2015 documented the number of convictions of traffickers:

‘The Agency won a total number of Eighteen (18) cases, which saw Twenty three (23) people; 15 males and 8 females, convicted of different offences. This brings the total number of convictions to Two hundred and thirty six (236) and the total number of convicted persons to Two hundred and Eighty (280) since inception.

‘External trafficking for sexual exploitation got the highest number of convicted traffickers, representing 43.5% of the total number. Internal trafficking for labour exploitation and Abduction from guardianship had a tie, with 3 convicted traffickers each, representing 13% of the total number.

‘Fraudulent entry of persons, a new offence from the newly enacted Act of the Agency got one conviction, representing 4.4% of the total convicts.’<sup>52</sup>

8.4.8 The same source observed ‘In 2015, the Agency had a total of Twenty Three (23) convicts compared to 2014 that recorded a total of Thirty Nine (39) convicts. External and Internal trafficking for labour exploitation recorded an increase of 322.3% and 300% respectively in the number of convicted traffickers in 2015 compared to 2014.’<sup>53</sup>

8.4.9 The United States Department of State, Trafficking in Persons Report 2015, Nigeria noted:

‘NAPTIP conducted 509 trafficking investigations, completed 56 prosecutions, and secured 30 convictions during the reporting period [1 April 2014 to 31 March 2015], compared with 314 investigations, 43 prosecutions, and 42 convictions in the previous reporting period. The decrease in convictions is likely a result of a three-month strike by the judiciary. An additional 150 prosecutions remained pending at the end of the reporting period. All prosecutions occurred under the 2003 anti-trafficking law, and prison sentences upon conviction ranged from three months’ to 30 years’ imprisonment. Of the 22 convictions, 17 resulted in imprisonment without the option of paying a fine’.<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>49</sup> NAPTIP, 2015 Data Analysis Report, undated, p6. <http://naptip.gov.ng/index.php/downloads> (see Report folder). Date accessed: 8 July 2016.

<sup>50</sup> NAPTIP, 2014 Data Analysis Report, undated, <http://naptip.gov.ng/index.php/downloads> (see Report folder). Date accessed: 8 July 2016.

<sup>51</sup> NAPTIP, 2015 Data Analysis Report, undated, p6 <http://naptip.gov.ng/index.php/downloads> (see Report folder). Date accessed: 8 July 2016.

<sup>52</sup> NAPTIP, 2015 Data Analysis Report, undated, p11 <http://naptip.gov.ng/index.php/downloads> (see Report folder). Date accessed: 8 July 2016.

<sup>53</sup> NAPTIP, 2015 Data Analysis Report, undated, p12 <http://naptip.gov.ng/index.php/downloads> (see Report folder). Date accessed: 8 July 2016.

<sup>54</sup> United States Department of State, Trafficking in Persons Report 2015, Nigeria,

8.4.10 NAPTIP announced that on 2 December 2015, two traffickers were sentenced to a year each for their part in trafficking 24 girls aged between 8 and 13 years for domestic work.<sup>55</sup>

8.4.11 The USSD TIP report 2016 noted:

'NAPTIP conducted 507 trafficking investigations, completed at least 32 prosecutions, and secured 24 convictions during the reporting period, compared with 509 investigations, 56 prosecutions, and 30 convictions in the previous reporting period. The decrease in convictions is likely a result of the seconding of many judges to electoral tribunals during the reporting period. An additional 148 prosecutions remained pending at the end of the reporting period. All prosecutions occurred under the anti-trafficking law, and prison sentences upon conviction ranged from three months' to 14 years' imprisonment. Of the 24 convictions, 16 resulted in imprisonment without the option of paying a fine. However, despite a 2015 amendment that removed judges' ability to sentence traffickers to fines in lieu of prison time, Nigerian courts penalized five traffickers with only fines. The government also collaborated with law enforcement agencies from Belgium, Burkina Faso, Finland, France, Germany, Mali, Norway, Sweden, Taiwan, the United Kingdom, and the United States on 43 investigations involving Nigerian nationals during the reporting period. The government commenced prosecution of a Ministry of Foreign Affairs official who allegedly used his or her position to facilitate a trafficking crime abroad; the prosecution remained ongoing at the close of the reporting period. The government did not report any other investigations, prosecutions, or convictions of government officials complicit in trafficking offenses; however, corruption at all levels of the government remained a pervasive problem.'<sup>56</sup>

8.4.12 The same source reported:

'The government conducted extensive training throughout the reporting period. NAPTIP, in collaboration with international partners, provided specialized training to approximately 228 government employees, including judges, prosecutors, and officials from NAPTIP, the Nigerian police force, and the Nigerian Immigration Service. These programs offered specialized training on victim identification, investigation and prosecution of trafficking cases, counseling, intelligence collection, and monitoring and evaluation. NAPTIP officials assisted 18 countries with their anti-trafficking efforts through training courses, joint intelligence sharing, and mutual legal assistance.'<sup>57</sup>

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<http://www.state.gov/j/tip/rls/tiprpt/index.htm>. Date accessed: 31 December 2015.

<sup>55</sup> NAPTIP, Federal High Court, Kano Sentence 3 Traffickers, undated website posting, <http://www.naptip.gov.ng/>. Date accessed: 7 January 2016.

<sup>56</sup> United States Department of State (USSD), Trafficking in Persons Report 2016, Nigeria, published June 2016, <http://www.state.gov/j/tip/rls/tiprpt/countries/2016/258834.htm>. Date accessed: 6 July 2016.

<sup>57</sup> United States Department of State (USSD), Trafficking in Persons Report 2016, Nigeria, published June 2016, <http://www.state.gov/j/tip/rls/tiprpt/countries/2016/258834.htm>. Date accessed: 6 July 2016.

## 9. Treatment on return

### 9.1 Process of return

#### 9.1.1 The EASO, citing various sources, noted

‘Only very few trafficked women voluntarily return to Nigeria if they have not repaid their debt or if they cannot return with a great sum of money, for various reasons. Their families might need the income from their work abroad. Women may fear the anger and rejection of their families for having failed to earn money in Europe. If they have not repaid the entire debt, they may fear the consequences of violating the contract with the traffickers and the harmful effects of the juju. In addition, women do not trust the Nigerian authorities to provide them with protection against traffickers or to assist them in providing means for their subsistence....In January 2012, the Nigerian Immigration Service and Frontex signed a working agreement on the exchange of information and collaboration on border management. The agreement extends to other Nigerian authorities and agencies involved in border and migration management, including the Nigeria Police Force and NAPTIP. There are strict procedures for people who are returned via Frontex return operations and there are independent observers to monitor the process (302).’<sup>58</sup>

#### 9.1.2 The USSD Trafficking in Persons report, 2015, noted that: ‘Despite the growing number of Nigerian trafficking victims identified abroad, the government has yet to implement formal procedures for the return and reintegration of Nigerian victims; consequently, many victims are not afforded adequate care upon their return to Nigeria.’<sup>59</sup> However in an interview with a Ralon officer, a NAPTIP representative stated, on being asked about returns process, that VoTs would be met at the airport on arrival where the agency has the ‘necessary information’. The same representative also stated that returnees are ‘processed in line with provisions of the national policy document. Contact is usually established with their families after reception and identification. Immediate support is also provided.’<sup>60</sup>

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### 9.2 On and after arrival

#### 9.2.1 The IPPR paper of January 2013 noted:

‘For some people, returning to Nigeria will be an option. Our research to date has found that return is often high risk. Former victims of trafficking faced significant vulnerability and as a result had intensive support needs.

‘In terms of physical protection, victims appear to be in serious risk from violence or re-trafficking. The close relationship between traffickers and the

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<sup>58</sup> European Asylum Support Office (EASO) report, Nigeria: Sex trafficking of Women, section Means of recruitment for sex trafficking, section 4.1 October 2015, <https://coi.easo.europa.eu/administration/easo/PLib/BZ0415678ENN.pdf>. Date accessed: 6 July 2016.

<sup>59</sup> United States Department of State, 2015 Trafficking in Persons report, Nigeria, July 2015, <http://www.state.gov/j/tip/rls/tiprpt/2015/index.htm>. Date accessed: 17 December 2015.

<sup>60</sup> UK Foreign Office / Home Office, Ralon interview representative Women Trafficking and Child Labour Eradication Foundation, 19 May 2016, hard copy on request. Accessed 11 July 2016.

communities that trafficked people or their families originate from appears to cause specific difficulties. This is particularly the case if the victim or their family are still perceived to be in debt bondage to the trafficker. A few had returned to Nigeria. Among our respondents was a woman who after escaping domestic servitude and returning to Nigeria was found by the trafficking network there and her house burnt down. Another 'agreed' to go back with a trafficker after she and her family had received threats on returning home. Many interviewees were aware that after leaving their trafficking situation, their family had received threats. In some cases, the trafficker had killed family members of the victim.

'For others, while they may not face threats of violence and retribution, if the fundamental issues of vulnerability which contributed to their original exploitation are unresolved, then their prospects remain poor. In many cases their prospects may be worse. As well as returning with possible health problems and broken social networks, the social stigmatisation of former trafficking victims is high.

'Widely held negative attitudes towards returned victims of trafficking within Nigeria including accusations of greed and culpability were also clear, both in interviews with stakeholders as well as polling with the public. In large part because of this vulnerability, re-trafficking between Nigeria specifically and Europe has been identified as a significant issue (GAATW 2010).'<sup>61</sup>

#### 9.2.2 IPPR noted in their April 2013 report that:

'While assistance provided through AVR was important, having a supportive family and community to return to was also crucial. Those returnees who were removed and were then able to successfully reintegrate had the support of their families or communities. Even those who went back through AVR had a much more successful experience if they received social support in conjunction with practical support.

'Migrants also made clear the importance of social support when they discussed the barriers to their reintegration. For some, the stigma they faced upon returning or being deported presented major social hurdles – particularly for those who had been victims of trafficking....'

'A number of the stakeholders we interviewed identified stigma like this as one of the main difficulties which plagues returnees. However, it is important to stress the nuances around stigma. In our tally of responses from returnees, stigma was cited as a concern by some, but more stakeholders than returnees were apt to draw attention to it. This could be because of regional variations. Some areas, such as Benin City in Edo, are more accustomed to people migrating, and even expect it, while others are less accepting. While some felt stigmatised because they felt accused of working in prostitution, others felt stigmatised for their lack of success.'<sup>62</sup>

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<sup>61</sup> Institute for Public Policy Research, Homecoming: Return and Reintegration of Irregular Migrants from Nigeria, p72-73, April 2013, [http://www.ippr.org/files/images/media/files/publication/2013/04/Homecoming\\_irregular\\_migrants\\_Nigeria\\_Apr2013\\_10661.pdf?noredirect=1](http://www.ippr.org/files/images/media/files/publication/2013/04/Homecoming_irregular_migrants_Nigeria_Apr2013_10661.pdf?noredirect=1) accessed: 21 July 2016.

<sup>62</sup> Institute for Public Policy Research, Homecoming: Return and Reintegration of Irregular Migrants from Nigeria, p43-44, April 2013,



9.2.3 The Institute for Public Policy Research (IPPR) noted in an April 2013 report referencing Cherti et al's report of January 2013, noted that 'Victims of trafficking who had been returned to Nigeria through an AVR scheme arrived at the airport with no one to meet them, and had no means of contacting the organisation that they had been given details of. Some ended up in detention in Nigeria, or were met at the airport by their trafficker.'<sup>63</sup>

9.2.4 The EASO report of October 2015 citing various sources stated:

'Women arriving in Nigeria who cannot be confirmed as trafficked victims are taken from the airport to a police station for interview. In principle, this procedure should not be lengthy as it involves few administrative tasks. However, several cases have been reported in which women have been held for periods of three to five days 'as if they were criminals, without ever being informed what crime they were charged with, if any...

'IOM and NAPTIP are supposed to provide protection and assistance to returning women but they are often not notified in advance of the return ....] Forced returnees from Great Britain said there was no organisation at the airport to offer them appropriate support. Some returnees were met at Nigerian airports by traffickers rather than support providers, while others were detained. Some could not communicate with the organisations, for which they had obtained contact details, in order to seek support.'

'The returnees interviewed by [a source...] said they did not receive any assistance upon arrival in Lagos and some of the women included in her study had slept in the residential areas near the airport until they were able to return to Benin City.'<sup>64</sup>

9.2.5 The EASO Report of October 2015 citing various sources stated:

'Victims of human trafficking often express the feeling that returning to Nigeria is too dangerous for fear of retaliation by traffickers or madams. They are afraid because of the juju oath they have sworn and the remaining debt with the trafficker [...].

'Their fears are not always shared by NGOs working with victims of sex trafficking. The NGOs working with victims of sex trafficking interviewed by the Danish Immigration Service (2007 fact-finding mission) provided conflicting and unclear information on this issue. Some NGOs emphasised the fear of retaliation by traffickers of victims, while others remarked that there were no records of violent reprisals or killings of victims in the media. Traffickers were not known to have persecuted or killed victims in Nigeria. Victims who had testified against their traffickers were not considered to be

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[http://www.ippr.org/files/images/media/files/publication/2013/04/Homecoming\\_irregular\\_migrants\\_Nigeria\\_Apr2013\\_10661.pdf?noredirect=1](http://www.ippr.org/files/images/media/files/publication/2013/04/Homecoming_irregular_migrants_Nigeria_Apr2013_10661.pdf?noredirect=1). Date accessed: 7 February 2016.

<sup>63</sup> Institute for Public Policy Research, Homecoming: Return and Reintegration of Irregular Migrants from Nigeria, April 2013, p.22

[http://www.ippr.org/images/media/files/publication/2013/04/Homecoming\\_irregular\\_migrants\\_Nigeria\\_Apr2013\\_10661.pdf](http://www.ippr.org/images/media/files/publication/2013/04/Homecoming_irregular_migrants_Nigeria_Apr2013_10661.pdf). Date accessed: 5 February 2016.

<sup>64</sup> European Asylum Support Office (EASO) report, Nigeria: Sex trafficking of Women, section Means of recruitment for sex trafficking, section 4.1 October 2015, <https://coi.easo.europa.eu/administration/easo/PLib/BZ0415678ENN.pdf>. Date accessed: 18 January 2016.

at risk. It was explained that local traffickers would have no interest to act against a victim who testifies against them or a madam abroad, as this would greatly expose them to risks of imprisonment by the police. The risk of reprisals was assessed to be greater in Europe than in Nigeria. It was reported that traffickers would rather send the victim back to Europe than killing or severely injuring them...

'On the other hand, other interlocutors interviewed by the aforementioned Danish mission in 2007, did mention examples of reprisals, violence, kidnapping and burning of homes of victims, especially when they had not repaid their debts. There were also reports of witnesses experiencing reprisals and intimidation by traffickers. However, there seemed to be no systematic reprisal against returning victims, although in individual cases this might have occurred. It was further stated that victims would testify against a trafficker or a madam only if they were not related, and if the victim had been cheated by them. Unpaid debts were considered more risky for women's safety than testifying against traffickers [...]. This was confirmed by many of the women interviewed by Skilbrei and Tveit in 2007 as well, as they feared punishment or revenge from traffickers if they returned to Nigeria before paying back their debt [...].

'According to the 2013 study by Cherti et al., the return to Nigeria is often highly risky for the victims, and they are exposed to the risk of violence or re-trafficking. The close relationship between the victims and their exploiters appears to create difficulties for the victims, particularly if there is still debt remaining. Interviewees testify that returnees as well as their relatives have been threatened, their houses have been burnt and in some cases the victims' family members had been killed [...]

'... women interviewed by Plambech (2011-2012) noted that traffickers do not pursue the deported women violently to collect their unpaid debt, as they have so many women going to Europe to control [...].

'NAPTIP staff, interviewed by Women's Link Worldwide in 2011, stated that women who do not file charges against traffickers are not considered to be at risk. In their view, women who have escaped from their traffickers and reported them to the authorities generally run more risks than those who have been detected by the police in a European country and deported to Nigeria. The former have broken the contract but still have a debt to be repaid. NAPTIP staff notes that deported women who still have a debt to be paid run the risk of being re-trafficked to Europe. This risk is not taken into account in risk assessments, according to NAPTIP staff [...].

'Plambech raises yet another safety concern for returned women who are assisted by reintegration funds to start a business. Due to low funding, they only can settle in areas where rents are low, that is, at the outskirts of Benin City where there are no paved roads, scarce light from a few generators, and no security guards. As these women usually have basic or no education, they are not allowed to open shops within the Government Reserved Areas which are protected by security guards. In these 'repatriation areas', where it

is (falsely) assumed that deportees have brought a lot of money back, the women are more exposed to crime, armed robbery, and rape [...].'<sup>65</sup>

#### 9.2.6 The same report also stated:

'Many of the victims repatriated to Nigeria try to return to Europe as soon as possible. They may do so on their own initiative, or be pressured or forced to do this by the trafficker or the madam, to whom they may not have yet fully repaid their debt, or by their family, disappointed that they were not able to fulfil their expectations of becoming wealthy. Many of the women repatriated to Nigeria that Peano interviewed in her study re-negotiated their passage to Europe under the same conditions and did so repeatedly... Cherti et al. note that the close relationship between the victims' families or communities and traffickers may lead to the risk of being re-trafficked even when the victim herself is unwilling to leave...

'Some victims may at first try to resettle in Nigeria, but if they find life there to be unsatisfactory, they may try to migrate to Europe again. In connection with this migration, victims may again be exploited and accumulate more debt. On the other hand, according to some women in Skilbrei & Tveit's study, the second migration to Europe may be easier as the customs of the destination country have already become familiar and the women are not as vulnerable as they were during their first migration... Cherti et al. note that the close relationship between the victims' families or communities and traffickers may lead to the risk of being re-trafficked even when the victim herself is unwilling to leave'.<sup>66</sup>

In interviews with a Ralon official in May 2016, representatives of NAPTIP and WOTCLEF acknowledged that victims of trafficking were aware of examples of re-trafficking and other abuses but did not provide details or an indication of scale / frequency or circumstances. WOTCLEF stated that other abuses included sexual, emotional and physical abuses, denial of rights to education and freedom of movement. Similarly a representative of HDI noted that re-trafficking and reprisal occurred but was not able to provide details and suggested that NAPTIP would have more information. The same source observed in responses to whether a VoT who had an outstanding debt to traffickers would be re-trafficked, they responded that they thought that re-trafficking 'can' take place.

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### 9.3 Family / societal attitudes and treatment

#### 9.3.1 The EASO report noted

'... the decision resulting in a woman leaving to work in Europe may be, in certain cases, a family decision. According to a study carried out in the UK

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<sup>65</sup> European Asylum Support Office (EASO) report, Nigeria: Sex trafficking of Women, 4.6 Safety of returning victims of THB, October 2015, <https://coi.easo.europa.eu/administration/easo/PLib/BZ0415678ENN.pdf>. Date accessed: 18 January 2016.

<sup>66</sup> European Asylum Support Office (EASO) report, Nigeria: Sex trafficking of Women, 4.9 possible return and re-trafficking to Europe, October 2015, <https://coi.easo.europa.eu/administration/easo/PLib/BZ0415678ENN.pdf>. Date accessed: 18 January 2016.

and Nigeria on the subject of trafficking (2012), few women are in a position to play a role in the decision to accept a (misrepresented) offer to travel to Europe. Parents may encourage their daughters to do this and sacrifice one or more family members, as this is seen as an investment for the whole family. Many families pride themselves on having their daughter, sister or other relation in Europe earning money, pointing to things acquired with the money sent by these women. Sending daughters abroad has become a sort of status symbol for some families.<sup>67</sup>

9.3.2 The EASO report of October 2015 citing various sources also noted:

‘In addition to arrests, repatriated women fear the social consequences of return. There are both negative attitudes and high expectations towards victims of trafficking who have returned or been forced to return from Europe.

‘Women who have worked as prostitutes in Europe, as many migrants going to Europe, are met with high expectations from their families because they are assumed to be wealthy and regarded as socioeconomically advantaged even when the way money has been earned is known. According to Plambech, interviewed in Science Nordic, deported women are regarded as ‘socioeconomically advantaged individuals by their families – even when it’s apparent that they have sold sex in Europe’. Plambech notes that in Nigeria, women are expected to take care of several relatives, and consequently, the relatives expect the victims to help them out of poverty. Returning women often find themselves taking care of a large number of family members, apart from their own children. Many cases have been recorded in which families continuously demand money from the victims.

9.3.3 The EASO report further explained

‘Successful’ returnees

‘Women who return from Europe wealthy do not hide the fact that the money stems from prostitution. Becoming rich through illicit activities such as prostitution has become socially acceptable in Edo State. When the women arrive in Nigeria for holidays or return home, Nigerians pretend not to know how the victims have earned their money in Europe. Negative stories about prostitution in Europe are generally not told in Benin City because they are associated with shame. Women are expected to return home with money and people are not interested in the origin of the earnings.

‘According to Osezua, ‘successful’ trafficked women enjoy high socio-economic status in their native families, especially when family members were the direct recipients of the money earned by the women. The research shows that most mothers of ‘successfully’ trafficked victims enjoy greater influence within their family than was the case in traditional Benin family structure before widespread trafficking took place. In addition, victims who are considered ‘successful’ victims of trafficking are highly esteemed by their

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<sup>67</sup> European Asylum Support Office (EASO) report, Nigeria: Sex trafficking of Women, 2.4 Role of women’s relatives in sex trafficking October 2015, <https://coi.easo.europa.eu/administration/easo/PLib/BZ0415678ENN.pdf>. Date accessed: 18 January 2016.

older brothers, as long as they send 'hard currency' from overseas. Osezua concludes that many uneducated women still perceive trafficking and sex work as empowering and enriching activities that are otherwise out of reach for Benin women.

#### 9.3.4 The EASO report noted:

##### 'Unsuccessful' returnees

'Trafficked women who return or are repatriated to Nigeria without money are received in a significantly different manner than those who return wealthy. Communities may have a negative attitude towards the victims. The social stigmatisation is also high if the victim returns with health problems instead of wealth.

'Bowers reports that victims are considered immoral by the general public and they are believed to have had a choice in selecting their work. They are also accused of being greedy. According to Skilbrei and Tveit, Nigerians suspect that Nigerian women working in Europe make their living from prostitution, and having been in prostitution is typically considered shameful, in particular if they did not bring money back - even when having been trafficked.

'In some cases, mothers show disappointment with their deported daughters and hardly discuss with them their experiences in Europe. Lack of empathy for the victims has also been noted, even among educated Nigerians. Parents may also force their children back into their situation of exploitation after they return to Nigeria. According to Cherti et al., this may result from the parents' disbelief in their children, the need for money or fear of repercussions from the traffickers due to unpaid debt. Some families in Nigeria have been threatened or attacked by traffickers, with the clear warning that the trafficked woman would be the next one to be attacked.

##### 'Social networks

'A concern for returned victims is the lack of social support networks; the longer the victim has lived in Europe, the likelier this is. Many feel that it is impossible to succeed in Nigeria without a family and believe that 'in Nigeria, you are nothing without your family'. The assistance provided by NGOs cannot substitute social networks, nor can the organisations look after the returned victims on a permanent basis. For some women, the only option to earn a living, after the assistance period by the NGOs has expired, may be prostitution.

##### 'Psychological and physical violence

'As in many cases of forced returns, the victims may not necessarily be able to admit their 'failure' when forced to return penniless and indebted, as the failure often causes a severe psychological crisis and suffering. They may also suffer from traumas resulting from their experiences in Europe. The uncertain socioeconomic situation, lack of opportunities for earning a living and social stigmatisation may cause fear and worries in the victims.

'Many victims of human trafficking have experienced violence when returning to Nigeria. Women returning to Lagos and Benin City have fallen victim to armed robbery, rape and/or physical violence. According to the women, it is

'safer to sell sex on the streets of European cities than to have a food stall in Benin City'. Many inhabitants of Edo State experience violence but repatriated women are more vulnerable to it as they are assumed to have money, either earned by themselves or received as repatriation compensation. In addition, their children, especially when light-skinned (e.g. of a European father), may be vulnerable to kidnapping in Benin City.'<sup>68</sup>

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## 10. Support: state and NGOs

### 10.1 Overview

10.1.1 The Institute for Public Policy Research noted in a report published in January 2013:

'Former victims of trafficking face significant vulnerability in Nigeria. The close relationship between traffickers and the communities that trafficked people originate from, or their families, causes particular difficulties. Even where the risk of re-trafficking can be avoided, the prospects of former trafficking victims remain poor: as well as returning with possible health problems and broken social networks, the social stigmatisation of former trafficking victims is high. The capacity of support organisations in Nigeria is low, with support frequently constrained by lack of funding and poor coordination. While some services are highly professional and proficient, this is not the case across the board. Victims' support too often lacks therapeutic value and is unsafe. 'Safe' houses are known targets of traffickers. Some services presume the ultimate outcome to be family reunification, but this is often inappropriate. Vulnerability to traffickers often started as a result of individuals fleeing a violent or abusive family situation. In other cases, family members were complicit in the trafficking or relatives were at risk of reprisals'.<sup>69</sup>

10.1.2 The Institute for Public Policy Research (IPPR) noted in an April 2013 report that:

'There are currently many gaps in the support available to people returning to Nigeria. Some returnees are better supported than others. The policy response to return migration only caters for the extreme ends of the returnee experience. Services are developed partially for migrants perceived as the most vulnerable (female victims of trafficking, for example), and the most valuable (such as the highly skilled diaspora). This is not to say that the support in place for trafficked people is sufficient to meet acute and substantial needs. Yet the current response does overlook the vast majority of returnees, including some who have high support needs and many who could make significant contributions to their communities given the right

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<sup>68</sup> European Asylum Support Office (EASO) report, Nigeria: Sex trafficking of Women, 4.2.1 - 4.2.2 'Successful' returnees, October 2015, <https://coi.easo.europa.eu/administration/easo/PLib/BZ0415678ENN.pdf>. Date accessed: 18 January 2016.

<sup>69</sup> Institute for Public Policy Research, Beyond Borders, Human Trafficking from Nigeria to the UK, January 2013, Executive Summary p.9, [http://www.ippr.org/files/images/media/files/publication/2013/01/nigeria-trafficking\\_Jan2013\\_10189.pdf?noredirect=1](http://www.ippr.org/files/images/media/files/publication/2013/01/nigeria-trafficking_Jan2013_10189.pdf?noredirect=1). Date accessed: 5 February 2016.

support. Services tailored to the needs of these other groups are thin on the ground.’<sup>70</sup>

#### 10.1.3 The same source noted

‘NAPTIP does play an important role in coordinating Nigeria’s response to trafficking more generally, including: training police officers to apprehend traffickers; collaborating with other countries to gather intelligence and secure prosecutions; coordinating and supporting NGOs to take on targeted work with at-risk groups; and advising government when there is a need to take action in other areas such as domestic violence or access to education. Requiring NAPTIP to coordinate programmes of support is an extra responsibility on top of an already heavy workload.

‘As NAPTIP is the only national body that coordinates support for returning migrants, most support for returning migrants is geared towards people, particularly women, who have been trafficked. While it is important that migrants with high support needs are prioritised, this approach can also create problems. Our research shows that there are gaps in provision for irregular migrants whose support needs are distinct from those of migrants who were trafficked. For example, one respondent who freely decided to migrate irregularly reported that, upon her return, she had been referred to a specialist trafficking support provider. The support she received was not appropriate for her situation. Other returned migrants who had not been trafficked, particularly men, had significant support needs that left them in a vulnerable situation, but because they were unable to access any assistance they found reintegration far more challenging...

‘Furthermore, although support was available for people who had been trafficked, we found that it did not meet their needs. The support was not provided in such a way as to be therapeutic. While it met basic material needs, it was often offered on a short-term basis without adequate follow-up, as opposed to long-term support which helps people to become independent gradually over time. Support to enable trafficked people to access employment is particularly narrow. Yet this is important: previous IPPR research (Cherti et al 2013) has found that women’s inability to support themselves through work, whether due to discrimination or low training opportunities, was a key factor that made them vulnerable to trafficking.’<sup>71</sup>

#### 10.1.4 A 2015 research paper published in the Journal of Law, Policy and Globalization noted that:

‘In Nigeria, a dearth of trained psychotherapists and counselors greatly undermine the ability to ensure the comprehensive rehabilitation of victims of human trafficking also very few service are intended for trafficking victims. Where such services exist, they usually are tailored to victims of trafficking

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<sup>70</sup> Institute for Public Policy Research, Homecoming: Return and Reintegration of Irregular Migrants from Nigeria, April 2013 Executive summary p.4 and 2.3.3 Journey to the country of origin p.22 [http://www.ippr.org/images/media/files/publication/2013/04/Homecoming\\_irregular\\_migrants\\_Nigeria\\_Apr2013\\_10661.pdf](http://www.ippr.org/images/media/files/publication/2013/04/Homecoming_irregular_migrants_Nigeria_Apr2013_10661.pdf). Date accessed: 5 February 2016.

<sup>71</sup> Institute for Public Policy Research, Homecoming: Return and Reintegration of Irregular Migrants from Nigeria, p43-44, April 2013, [http://www.ippr.org/files/images/media/files/publication/2013/04/Homecoming\\_irregular\\_migrants\\_Nigeria\\_Apr2013\\_10661.pdf?noredirect=1](http://www.ippr.org/files/images/media/files/publication/2013/04/Homecoming_irregular_migrants_Nigeria_Apr2013_10661.pdf?noredirect=1). Date accessed: 7 February 2016.

for sexual exploitation. Nigeria has thirty-six (36) states and a Federal Capital Territory but there are only seven (7) government-funded shelters for trafficked victims [9 according to NAPTIP and the USSD]. These shelters do not have enough facilities to cater for the needs of trafficked victims. Shelters exist in State capitals not in the communities where most of these victims are trafficked from. The other law enforcement agencies (Police, Immigration) treat trafficked victims as criminals, instead of treating them as victims.<sup>72</sup>

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## 10.2 State agencies

10.2.1 NAPTIP is the primary state support provider of Victims of Trafficking, with a capacity to provide assistance to 313 victims in shelters in 9 shelters<sup>73</sup> in the cities of Abuja, Lagos, Benin, Uyo, Enugu, Kano, Makurdi, Maiduguri and Sokoto. An average of 35 persons can be assisted in any of the agency's shelters at a particular time.<sup>74</sup> Victims can stay for 6 weeks in one of NAPTIP's 9 shelters. In some cases there may be provision for persons to stay a little longer with NAPTIP or another NGO, but the support is short term.<sup>75</sup> The agency provides shelter, counselling, family tracing, medical services, 'empowerment', and vocational training.<sup>76</sup>

10.2.2 A NAPTIP official interviewed that by Ralon stated that the police, immigration, WOTCLEF (an NGO), Federal Ministry of Women's and Affairs also provide support to VoTs. All these organisations liaise with NAPTIP as the co-ordinating agency on all victim of trafficking issues.<sup>77</sup> NAPTIP works with a number of local NGOs - a list of 23 organisations dated 2014 is available on its website.<sup>78</sup> Following release from NAPTIP's shelters, aftercare is provided by contracted NGOs.<sup>79</sup>

10.2.3 NAPTIP's website also stated that:

'From 2004 – July 2012 a total of six thousand, three hundred and twenty-eight (6,328) victims have been referred to the department. One thousand, seven hundred and twenty-Seven (1,727) are male while four thousand, six hundred and fifty-five (4,655) are female. One hundred and Ninety-One (191) of the trafficked persons assisted by the department were empowered

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<sup>72</sup> Kigbu, S.K., Challenges in Investigating and Prosecuting Trafficking in Persons' Cases in Nigeria, Journal of Law, Policy and Globalization, Vol. 38, 2015, <http://www.iiste.org/Journals/index.php/JLPG/article/viewFile/23683/24257>. Date accessed: 5 February 2016.

<sup>73</sup> NAPTIP, Counseling & Rehabilitation Department, <http://www.naptip.gov.ng/counselling.html#.undated>. Date accessed: 13 January 2016.

<sup>74</sup> UK Foreign Office / Home Office, Ralon interview with NAPTIP official, p5, 25 May 2016, hard copy on request,. Date accessed: 11 July 2016

<sup>75</sup> NAPTIP, Counseling & Rehabilitation Department, <http://www.naptip.gov.ng/counselling.html#.undated>. Date accessed: 13 January 2016.

<sup>76</sup> UK Foreign Office / Home Office, Ralon interview with NAPTIP official, p5, 25 May 2016, hard copy on request. Date accessed: 11 July 2016.

<sup>77</sup> UK Foreign Office / Home Office, Ralon interview with NAPTIP official, p7, 25 May 2016, hard copy on request. Date accessed: 11 July 2016.

<sup>78</sup> NAPTIP, List of NGOs that meet NAPTIP's criteria, 2014, <http://www.naptip.gov.ng/index.php/downloads/finish/3/13>. Date accessed: 11 July 2016

<sup>79</sup> UK Foreign Office / Home Office, Ralon interview with NAPTIP official, 25 May 2016, hard copy on request. Date accessed: 11 July 2016.



to return to school or acquire vocational training. While additional Four Hundred and Fifty-Three (453) were further supported to establish their own businesses through the donation of trade equipments and provision of resettlement allowance to enable them cater for their personal needs.

'The department collaborates with relevant government ministries, agencies, NGOs and development partners in realizing its mandate. It is divided into five sections/units and each has distinctive roles to play in realizing the mandate of the department.'<sup>80</sup>

10.2.4 In its annual report for 2015, NAPTIP reported:

'The Agency rescued a total number of Eight hundred and ninety four (894) victims of human trafficking in 2015. This brings the total to Nine thousand, Four hundred and Fifty three (9,453) victims rescued by the Agency since inception.

'Out of the total number of victims rescued, Two hundred and thirteen (213) were males and Six hundred and eighty one (681) were females.

'Further analysis indicated that there were 138 boys, 288 girls, 75 men and 393 women.'<sup>81</sup>

10.2.5 In an interview with a Home Office Ralon official on 25 May 2016, a NAPTIP representative stated that the agency had assisted 562 person in 2014, 453 in 2015 and 230 in 2016 (it is not stated which period the 2016 data relates).<sup>82</sup>

10.2.6 The USSD TIP report 2016 noted:

'The government maintained strong efforts to protect trafficking victims. The government identified 943 trafficking victims, including 429 victims of sex trafficking and 514 of labor trafficking, compared with 914 victims identified in the previous reporting period. NAPTIP provided initial screening and assistance for all victims it identified and referred them to government-run care facilities for further medical care, vocational training, education, and shelter. The government has formal written procedures to guide law enforcement, immigration, and social services personnel in proactive identification of trafficking victims among high-risk populations. NAPTIP provided police, immigration, and social services personnel with specialized training on how to identify trafficking victims and direct them to NAPTIP. Additionally, the government's national referral mechanism provides formal guidelines for law enforcement, immigration officials, and service providers to improve protection and assistance to trafficking victims, both within Nigeria and abroad.'<sup>83</sup>

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<sup>80</sup> NAPTIP, Counseling & Rehabilitation Department, undated <http://naptip.gov.ng/index.php/departments/counseling-and-rehabilitation>. Date accessed: 13 January 2016.

<sup>81</sup> NAPTIP, 2015 Data Analysis Report, undated, p15, <http://naptip.gov.ng/index.php/downloads> (see Report folder). Date accessed: 8 July 2016.

<sup>82</sup> UK Foreign Office / Home Office, Ralon interview with NAPTIP official, 25 May 2016, hard copy on request. Date accessed: 11 July 2016.

<sup>83</sup> United States Department of State (USSD), Trafficking in Persons Report 2016, Nigeria, published June 2016, <http://www.state.gov/j/tip/rls/tiprpt/countries/2016/258834.htm>. Date accessed: 6 July 2016.

#### 10.2.7 The same source noted:

'NAPTIP operated nine shelters specifically for trafficking victims, with a total capacity of 313 victims. Through these shelters, NAPTIP provided access to legal, medical, and psychological services, as well as vocational training, trade and financial empowerment, and business management skills. Victims who required additional medical and psychological treatment were provided services by hospitals and clinics through existing agreements with NAPTIP. NAPTIP shelters offered short-term care, generally limiting victims' stays to six weeks, although victims were allowed to extend their stays under special circumstances. If victims needed longer-term care, NAPTIP collaborated with two shelters operated by the Ministry of Women's Affairs and NGO-run shelters. Victims in NAPTIP shelters were not allowed to leave unless accompanied by a chaperone. NAPTIP provided funding, in-kind donations, and services to NGOs and other organizations that afforded protective services to trafficking victims.'<sup>84</sup>

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### 10.3 Non-government organisations

#### 10.3.1 The EASO report published in October 2015 noted that:

'A large number of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) assist in the reintegration of victims and conduct awareness campaigns against human trafficking. These NGOs generally receive weak support and are poorly coordinated, even though some service providers are highly professional and well-informed. The organisations feel unsupported by NAPTIP and consider that the agency attempts to dominate and lead all anti-trafficking work to raise its own profile. Because of the poor funding, the organisations may not necessarily be able to provide the specialist support that victims require.'<sup>85</sup>

#### 10.3.2 The EASO report lists (and provides further background for the main organisations) NGOs active in providing support to victims of trafficking in [section 4.4](#). The same report stated:

'The International Organisation for Migration (IOM) Nigeria started its activities in 2001 and focused on anti-trafficking activities, migration issues, return and reintegration of stranded migrants, and Voluntary Returns from abroad (355).

'IOM Nigeria receives the victims upon return and supports them in their reintegration, together with local NGOs, such as COSUDOW and Idia Renaissance. If a victim comes back with a reintegration budget, it is easier to provide sustainable help for the victim to be able to rebuild her life. Help is

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<sup>84</sup> United States Department of State (USSD), Trafficking in Persons Report 2016, Nigeria, published June 2016, <http://www.state.gov/j/tip/rls/tiprpt/countries/2016/258834.htm>. Date accessed: 6 July 2016.

<sup>85</sup> European Asylum Support Office (EASO), Nigeria Sex Trafficking of Women, 4.4 Support organisations (NGOs) in Nigeria, October 2015, <https://coi.easo.europa.eu/administration/easo/PLib/BZ0415678ENN.pdf>. Date accessed: 9 November 2015.

always provided in kind, according to IOM staff, to prevent the money from ending up in the hands of traffickers.<sup>86</sup>

- 10.3.3 In a written response to a Home Office questionnaire in July 2016, representatives of [Human Development Initiatives](#), a Nigeria NGO which works with ‘vulnerable groups in society to safeguard the rights of children, adolescents, youths & women through advocacy and programmes to address their needs and concerns’, stated that it belonged to a network of civil society organisations working to support victims of trafficking, including the Network Against Child Trafficking Abuse and Labour (NACTAL) South - West Zone, Nigeria, and the Child Protection Network, Lagos, Nigeria. The representatives stated that there were a number of other NGOs working with victims of trafficking, although it did not specify what services these organisations provided and to whom. They listed the following groups:

‘Emmanuel World Children Foundation, Patriotic Citizen Initiatives (PCI), Women Consortium of Nigerian, Galilee Foundation (WOCON), Grassroot Advocacy Centre For Economic Development (GRACED), Rehoboth Homes & Skills Acquisition Center, Egwu Care Foundation (ECF), African Center for Advocacy and Human Development (ACAHD), Livingspring Human Development Initiative (LHDI), Best Option Health Initiative, Grassroot Health Organisation of Nigeria (GHON), KAF Care Foundation, Idia Renaissance, IRRRAG, Human Peace Care Foundation, Integrated Anti-Human Trafficking and Community Development Initiative (INTACOM AFRICA), Women Trafficking and Child Labour Eradication Foundation (WOTCLEF), Child & Youth Protection Foundation (CYPF), Save The Child Initiative, Youth Child Support Initiative, COSUDOW.’<sup>87</sup>

- 10.3.4 The EASO report published in October 2015 also noted that:

‘The NGOs state that they lack grants for victims’ school tuition, vocational training or setting up business. The shelter personnel have limited capacity to provide psychosocial and rehabilitation support to mentally handicapped victims, and the follow-up of rehabilitated victims is inadequate. Although shelters have bars on the windows, they are considered unsafe. It is common knowledge that the buildings house victims of human trafficking, wanted by traffickers.’<sup>88</sup>The same report, citing various sources, provided information on the availability of shelters operated by both government and non-state organisations:

‘There are a number of shelters available for returning victims of human trafficking, run by NAPTIP and various NGOs... Through the shelters, victims can access legal, medical and psychological services. Victims who require special attention and treatment have an opportunity to receive help from hospitals and clinics cooperating with NAPTIP. The agency’s shelters

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<sup>86</sup> EASO, Nigeria Sex Trafficking of Women, section 4.4, October 2015, <https://coi.easo.europa.eu/administration/easo/PLib/BZ0415678ENN.pdf>. Date accessed: 6 July 2016.

<sup>87</sup> Human Development Initiatives, Written response to Home Office questionnaire, July 2016, copy available on request

<sup>88</sup> European Asylum Support Office (EASO), Nigeria Sex Trafficking of Women, 4.4 Support organisations (NGOs) in Nigeria, October 2015, <https://coi.easo.europa.eu/administration/easo/PLib/BZ0415678ENN.pdf>. Date accessed: 7 February 2016.

offer short-term care. Victims staying at NAPTIP's shelters are not allowed to leave the premises unless accompanied by a chaperone. NAPTIP collaborates with non-governmental organisations, and victims requiring longer-term shelter and care are directed to the shelters of these NGOs...

'The number of women staying in the NAPTIP shelters is not exactly known. The maximum length of stay differs according to sources: some say six weeks, according to others this ranges from two to six weeks. It happens that if after six weeks women still lack a safe place to stay or resources to maintain themselves, the stay in the NAPTIP shelter may be extended. According to IOM the only women who stay in shelters for more than two weeks are those who have testified against traffickers and whose cases are under investigation by NAPTIP (359). On the other hand, women who stay in a NAPTIP shelter are stigmatised as everyone assumes that they have been working in prostitution abroad. NAPTIP staff therefore says they send the women to their families as soon as possible, or to shelters in other areas in Nigeria.

'Some NGOs run shelters for returning victims of human trafficking as well. In Benin City, the Nigerian Conference of Women Religious runs a shelter for women, Resource Centre for Women, which can accommodate 18 women at a time... WOTCLEF has a small rehabilitation centre for minor victims in Abuja, with a maximum capacity for 30 persons, and offices in four other states. The centre faces extreme challenges in terms of space, staff capacities and facilities... Grace Gardens has a shelter in Jos, Plateau State... GPI runs a shelter in Benin City...'<sup>89</sup>

10.3.5 Ralon officials in Abuja interviewed representatives of 2 Nigerian NGOs which provide support to victims of trafficking – [Daughters of Abraham Foundation \(DAF\)](#) and [Women Trafficking and Child Labour Eradication Foundation \(WOTCLEF\)](#) in May 2016.

- DAF assisted 25 VoTs in 2015, 23 in 2015 and 20 in 2016. The organisation has 16 staff and operate 1 shelter in Abuja which can accommodate 80 persons. VoTs are stay for a minimum of 6 months and maximum of 2 years, with the organisation providing counselling, vocational, literacy skills and access to healthcare. The profile of VoTs assisted were female, aged between 12-40 years old, mixed Christian and non-Christian, and from all over Nigeria.<sup>90</sup>
- WOTCLEF is a national organisation, present in the Federal Capital Territory, and in the states of Plateau, Kaduna, Niger, Taraba, Iwo, Osun and Rivers. VoTs are brought to the organisations attention by NAPTIP, the police, other NGOs, concerned Nigerians, media, schools and churches. The profile of the VoTs assisted: aged 9-25 years old; poor; poorly educated / school drop-outs; both male and female but mostly female; Christian and Muslim; and different ethnicities. The persons have experienced a range of abuse, including

<sup>89</sup> EASO, Nigeria Sex Trafficking of Women, section 4.5.1, October 2015, <https://coi.easo.europa.eu/administration/easo/PLib/BZ0415678ENN.pdf>. Date accessed: 6 July 2016.

<sup>90</sup> UK Foreign Office / Home Office, Ralon interview representative of Daughters of Abraham Foundation, 19 May 2016, hard copy on request. Date accessed: 11 July 2016.

physical, sexual and emotional, and denied rights of education and healthcare.

WOTCLEF works with NAPTIP, the police, the Social Development Secretariat and Ministry of Women's Affairs. The organisation assisted 22 VoTs in 2014; 31 in 2015; and 9 in 2016. It provides VoTs access to shelter, psycho-social counselling, education, vocational training, medical care, family tracing and reunification, food, clothing, and after-care monitoring. WOTCLEF has 1 shelter in Abuja which can assist a total of 30 person (20 female, 10 male). VoTs may be able to stay for a short, medium or long-term depending on the type of case. The organisation also assists with the relocation of persons within Nigeria, although no details of how and what it does were provided.<sup>91</sup>

10.3.6 In their response to the Home Office, representatives of Human Development Initiatives (HDI), stated that the organisations has 12 full time staff, 1 'share' staff member, 6 volunteer staff, and 1 intern as of July 2016. The group operates Lagos, Ogun, Ondo, Oyo, Osun, Kwara, Edo, Delta, Enugu, Kano State and Federal Capital Territory, Abuja. HDI supports 810 children (boys/girls between 12-15 years of age) withdrawn from the forced labour in Ondo State, Oyo and Osun State of Nigeria.<sup>92</sup>

10.3.7 The UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) maintains a database of NGOs operating in Nigeria, which can be sorted by area of work including anti-trafficking activities. However it is not clear from the database if all the organisations are currently active or the extent and / or nature of the activities. The database is available on UNODC website:  
<https://www.unodc.org/ngo/showExtendedSearch.do>

10.3.8 For more information on support and assistance for women, see country information and guidance, [Nigeria: Gender-based violence against women](#).

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## 11. Freedom of movement

11.1.1 For information generally on freedom of movement, see [Nigeria: Background information, including actors of protection, and internal relocation](#) and [Nigeria: Gender-Based Discrimination/Harm/Violence Against Women](#)

11.1.2 The EASO report of October 2015 citing various sources stated:

'Interlocutors of the Danish Immigration Service in 2007 observed that in southern Nigeria anyone who originates from the North was called 'stranger', and vice versa; in many Nigerian cities, there were special quarters for non-indigenes. Nigerian communities tend not to grant children from non-indigenous entitlements such as jobs or political positions. Therefore, people identify strongly with and feel safer in their home states. Although relocation in another part of Nigeria might be feasible and possible for victims who feel

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<sup>91</sup> UK Foreign Office / Home Office, Ralon interview representative Women Trafficking and Child Labour Eradication Foundation, 19 May 2016, hard copy on request. Date accessed: 11 July 2016.

<sup>92</sup> Human Development Initiatives, Written response to the Home Office, July 2016, copy available on request.

threatened by traffickers, they would need economic support and a social network or members of their ethnic group to sustain a safe livelihood in their new place of residence.

‘Cherti et al. discuss possible alternatives to returning victims of trafficking to their local communities, in specific cases, such as when they had been forced by their families to return to Europe; or when families in Nigeria had been attacked by traffickers, with the message that the trafficked woman would be next. In these cases, internal relocation within other areas of Nigeria might be an alternative but is considered problematic as well, and increases their vulnerability. This would be especially the case when the victim is young and uneducated, without much working experience and of a different religion and ethnicity than the area of relocation. The study concludes:

“Tribal and religious difference across the country, the concentration of services in areas where trafficked people typically originate from and the stigma of trafficking can preclude successful reintegration, particularly of somebody with high support needs’.<sup>93</sup>

#### 11.1.3 The same report noted:

‘The main aim of NAPTIP and other NGOs is to reunite victims with their families. However, the large-scale phenomenon of family complicity in the recruitment and trafficking of their daughters complicates this aim. The study by Cherti et al. demonstrates that family reunification is often inappropriate as many have been victimised due to various family situations, such as fleeing from abuse or being trafficked by the family. Emphasising the significance of family reunification may jeopardise the recovery of victims and lead to abuse, violence and re-trafficking.

‘In addition, when families have not been involved in the trafficking, it has been mentioned that they may refuse to take their daughter back because they live in poverty. In these cases, mediation and reunification are not the best options. Furthermore, victims of trafficking are said to be afraid to return to their communities where traffickers come from.

‘In March 2014, the Dutch-Bulgarian-Nigerian Safe Return Project organised a round table discussion in Nigeria with 30 representatives from 17 governmental and non-governmental organisations. Participants observed the following:

“Nigeria is a collective society and the role of the family is very important to provide support to its individual members. If a family was involved in the trafficking process or if they condemn the client for what has happened to her, it will be very difficult for the victim to return to her family. In such cases it is recommended that the victim relocates in another part of Nigeria. To this regard, participants considered Lagos a safe destination for resettlement, as

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<sup>93</sup> European Asylum Support Office (EASO), Nigeria Sex Trafficking of Women, 4.4 Support organisations (NGOs) in Nigeria, October 2015, <https://coi.easo.europa.eu/administration/easo/PLib/BZ0415678ENN.pdf>. Date accessed: 27 June 2016.

it is a very large city with plenty of opportunities to start a new life unnoticed” .<sup>94</sup>

11.1.4 The US State Department human rights report for 2015 noted:

‘The constitution and law provide for freedom of internal movement, foreign travel, emigration, and repatriation, but security officials restricted freedom of movement at times by imposing curfews in areas experiencing terrorist attacks and ethnoreligious violence... In-country Movement: The federal, state, or local governments imposed curfews or otherwise restricted movement in Adamawa, Borno, and Yobe States in connection with operations against Boko Haram. Other states imposed curfews in reaction to various types of events such as ethnoreligious violence.’<sup>95</sup>

11.1.5 In interviews with a Ralon officer and in response to a Home Office questionnaire, representatives of NAPTIP<sup>96</sup>, WOTCLEF<sup>97</sup> and HDI<sup>98</sup>, stated it is possible that victim of trafficking may be able to relocate. However, none of the representatives provided detail in their responses how and in what circumstances internal relocation might be possible.

11.1.6 For background information on Nigeria, including provision of health- and social-care and transport see [IOM Country Fact Sheet: Nigeria](#).

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<sup>94</sup> European Asylum Support Office (EASO), Nigeria Sex Trafficking of Women, 4.5.2, October 2015, <https://coi.easo.europa.eu/administration/easo/PLib/BZ0415678ENN.pdf>. Date accessed: 9 November 2015.

<sup>95</sup> US State Department, Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2015, Nigeria, April 2016, <http://www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/hrrpt/humanrightsreport/index.htm#section2dfreedom>. Date accessed: 27 June 2016.

<sup>96</sup> UK Foreign Office / Home Office, Ralon interview with NAPTIP official, p5, 25 May 2016, hard copy on request, accessed: 11 July 2016

<sup>97</sup> UK Foreign Office / Home Office, Ralon interview representative Women Trafficking and Child Labour Eradication Foundation, 19 May 2016, hard copy on request. Date accessed: 11 July 2016.

<sup>98</sup> Human Development Initiatives, Written response to Home Office questionnaire, July 2016, copy available on request

# Version Control and Contacts

## Contacts

If you have any questions about the guidance and your line manager or senior caseworker cannot help you or you think that the guidance has factual errors then email [the Country Policy and Information Team](#).

If you notice any formatting errors in this guidance (broken links, spelling mistakes and so on) or have any comments about the layout or navigability of the guidance then you can email [the Guidance, Rules and Forms Team](#).

## Clearance

Below is information on when this version of the guidance was cleared:

- version **1.0**
- valid from **9 August 2016**

## Changes from last version of this guidance

First version in CIG template

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