



## **Nigeria - Researched and compiled by the Refugee Documentation Centre of Ireland on Monday 17 June 2019**

### **Information on trafficking including: situation for returnees of previous trafficking and risk of re-trafficking**

In June 2018, the *United States Department of State* notes that:

“There were reports of re-trafficking among the trafficking victims repatriated from Libya” (United States Department of State (28 June 2018) *Trafficking in Persons Report 2018 - Country Narratives – Nigeria*, p.9).

A report published in November 2018 by the *European Asylum Support Office* states that:

“The National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons (NAPTIP)418 manages eight (or nine419) shelters for victims of trafficking (VoT) in human beings across Nigeria, with the capacity to welcome 313 victims. There is one shelter in each of the nine zonal commands: Abuja (38), Lagos (60), Benin (40), Uyo (45), Enugu (30), Kano (30), Sokoto (30), Maiduguri (20), and Makurdi [20]...” (European Asylum Support Office (November 2018) *Nigeria - Key Socio-Economic Indicators*, p.58).

A report issued in November 2018 by the *European Asylum Support Office* states that:

“NAPTIP’s main tasks are to suppress human trafficking, investigate and prosecute its perpetrators and offer a range of protection services to victims of the crime, including temporary sheltering, counselling, rehabilitation, reintegration and access to justice...Foreign victims have access to the same services as domestic victims...NAPTIP is present in nine zonal commands...which are in turn responsible for all 36 states of the country...and the Federal Capital Territory...” (European Asylum Support Office (November 2018) *Nigeria; Actors of Protection*, p.48)

In November 2018 *European Asylum Support Office* states in a report that:

“Bearing in mind the phenomenon of re-trafficking, NAPTIP’s shelter for victims in Benin City is a closed facility, to prevent victims from suffering retaliation from traffickers and being re-trafficked. The agency indicates that most victims do not want to return to their original area (in Nigeria) to avoid being re-trafficked; the most vulnerable, however, tend to face the first trafficking situation as a ‘preparation for the following’ one...Nigerian NGOs fighting human trafficking in Nigeria state that the solution to avoid re-trafficking situations is to actively interact with the victim and the victim’s family, creating sustainable conditions for the victim’s reintegration and permanence in Nigeria...” (United States Department of State (28 June 2018) *Trafficking in Persons Report 2018 - Country Narratives – Nigeria*, p.142).

In November 2018 the *United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs* states that:

“The situation facing women and girls is particularly dire. Violence against women and girls, including sexual violence, and exposure to trafficking and abduction is widespread but underreported” (United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (November 2018) *2019; Humanitarian Needs Overview; Nigeria*, p.8).

A report published in 2019 by *Freedom House* commenting on events of 2018 states that:

“Nigerian organized crime groups are heavily involved in human trafficking...The National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons (NAPTIP) continues to rescue trafficking victims and prosecute some suspected traffickers, but its funding is reportedly inadequate, and there have been few prosecutions against labor traffickers” (Freedom House (2019) *Freedom in the World 2019, Nigeria*, p.10).

A report issued in January 2019 by the *World Bank* states that:

“Nigeria is a source, transit, and destination country for human trafficking” (World Bank (1 January 2019) *Gender-Based Violence, An Analysis of the Implications for the Nigeria For Women Project*, p.16).

This document also states that:

“Edo State is an internationally recognized sex trafficking hub, with built-in infrastructure and networks that support the sale of human bodies. An astounding 94 percent...of all Nigerian women trafficked to Europe for prostitution hail from Edo State, and Italy is the primary destination country” (ibid, p.17).

A report published in February 2019 by the *European Asylum Support Office* states that:

“Trafficking within Nigeria and to other countries, including in EU Member States, is a significant problem concerning applicants from Nigeria. The traffickers may use deception, such as false offers of jobs and promises of safe travel to destination countries, and manipulation through traditional beliefs (juju). In some circumstances, the victims’ families support and encourage the trafficking for economic reasons. The exploitation can take different forms, such as prostitution or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labour, slavery, removal of organs, etc. Traffickers and trafficking networks are considered actors of persecution or serious harm” (European Asylum Support Office (February 2019) *Country Guidance: Nigeria; Guidance note and common analysis*, p.13).

This document also states that:

“While anti-trafficking legislation exists and officials have made efforts to address trafficking cases, enforcement is considered ineffective in many parts of the country. Insufficient resources and jurisdictional problems between state and federal governments are reported to hamper efforts in this regard. Victims of human trafficking often fear retaliation by the traffickers or ‘madams’, especially in case of a remaining ‘debt’. Some sources find it more likely for the victim to be re-trafficked than subjected to physical violence as retaliation. However, reported examples of reprisals include physical violence, kidnapping, intimidation, burning of the victim’s home, killing of family members, etc. Victims of trafficking may be unwilling to testify against traffickers due to fear of reprisals. Most victims do not want to return to their

home region in Nigeria to avoid being re-trafficked; however, many victims of trafficking may return to a trafficking situation. They may do so on their own initiative or be forced by the trafficker or the 'madam', or by their family. This is in particular the case when they have not repaid their 'debt' or they have not fulfilled the expectation of becoming wealthy" (ibid, p.60).

It is also pointed out in this document that:

"Returning migrants have no access to services from Nigerian authorities, except when they are defined as victims of human trafficking. As victims of trafficking, they receive very limited assistance from authorities and local organisations, mainly in the form of vocational training provided by local NGOs collaborating with the Nigerian National Agency for Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons (NAPTIP)" (ibid, p.61).

This document also states that:

"NAPTIP is Nigeria's principal agency to combat human trafficking. It is supervised by the Federal Ministry of Justice and consists of eight specialised departments (Investigation and Monitoring, Legal and Prosecution, Counselling and Rehabilitation, Public Enlightenment, Research and Programmes Development, Training and Manpower Development, Administration, Finance and Accounts). It has nine Zonal Commands covering all states...In 2017, NAPTIP received significantly more funding from the government compared to previous years; however, the agency does not have sufficient resources given the scale of the problem. NAPTIP's capability for protection is weaker in rural areas...NAPTIP manages shelters for victims of trafficking in Abuja, Lagos, Benin, Uyo, Enugu, Kano, Sokoto, Maiduguri and Makurdi, with the capacity to accommodate a total of 313 victims. Victims can stay in NAPTIP shelters up to six weeks, and if needed, can then be referred to shelters run by 'collaborating NGOs'. Over 13 000 victims have passed through the NAPTIP shelters..." (ibid, p.95).

In April 2019 the *United Nations Human Rights Council* states in a report that:

"Nigeria remains a source, transit and destination country for victims of trafficking. Victims are trafficked to Europe through the central Mediterranean route, but also to Gulf States, the Russian Federation and West and Southern African countries for the purpose of both sexual and labour exploitation. Some are already recruited by their traffickers in the country of origin, others may start their migration journey voluntarily. However, owing to the absence of safe and regular migration channels, the vast majority of them fall prey to traffickers in transit countries, such as Libya, and are subject to all forms of human rights violations, including torture, rape, extortion, forced labour, sexual and labour exploitation amounting to trafficking and contemporary forms of slavery...Internal trafficking, mainly from rural to urban areas is also reportedly rampant in Nigeria, although often overlooked. It mainly affects women and girls for the purpose of domestic servitude and sexual exploitation and men and boys for the purpose of child begging, and labour exploitation in street vending, mining and stone quarrying, agriculture and textile manufacturing" (United Nations Human Rights Council (16 April 2019) *Report of Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons, especially women and children*, p.2).

This report also states that:

"Nigeria is party to the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children supplementing the United Nations

Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, as well as to a number of international human rights instruments, including the Slavery Convention (1927); the Convention for the Suppression of the Traffic in Persons and of the Exploitation of the Prostitution of Others (1949); the Forced Labour Convention, 1930 (No. 29); the Abolition of Forced Labour Convention, 1957 (No. 105); and the Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182)...Regrettably, Nigeria has not yet ratified the Protocol of 2014 to the Forced Labour Convention, 1930; the Forced Labour (Supplementary Measures) Recommendation, 2014 (No. 203); and the Domestic Workers Convention, 2011 (No. 189)" (ibid, p.6).

It is also noted in this report that:

"The State has taken laudable steps towards strengthening the legislative framework to address human trafficking in Nigeria by the passage of the Trafficking in Persons Act. It has also taken an innovative approach to criminalizing commercial carriers who use their vessel, or whose vessels are used, to transport potentially trafficked persons and has instituted stiffer penalties by restricting the ability of judges to penalize human trafficking offenders with fines in lieu of prison time. In addition, the amended Act criminalizes the employment of children under age 12 for domestic work...Nonetheless, the Special Rapporteur notes that the legislation is more oriented towards the prosecution of traffickers than to the prevention of trafficking and the protection of trafficked persons, and it mainly focuses on trafficking for sexual purposes at the expense of trafficking for labour and other forms of exploitation" (ibid, pp.6-7).

It is also pointed out in this document that:

"The fact that Nigeria is one of the first African countries to enact specific anti-trafficking legislation is noticeable. Yet even the most innovative legislation remains a dead letter if it is not seriously and strongly enforced. Throughout her visit, the Special Rapporteur noted that key challenges remained in the implementation of the law. Implementation and enforcement are proportionally linked to the capacity of the various institutions, including law enforcement agencies and the judiciary, to exercise their mandate and functions in relation to the fight against trafficking. In that regard, the Special Rapporteur is convinced that a lack of resources, training and equipment for the various public offices involved in the fight against trafficking are important obstacles to robust implementation and enforcement" (ibid, p.7).

This document also states that:

"Reintegration and rehabilitation of trafficked victims in Nigeria has proven to be particularly challenging" (ibid, p.11).

This report also notes:

"...a lack of sufficient resources to manage and maintain shelters run by the Agency has had detrimental consequences for the quality of the services provided, in particular with regard to the social reintegration of trafficked victims. For instance, the Special Rapporteur heard that an assessment by a civil society organization of the Agency shelter in Borno State in June 2018 found that the facility was empty, despite being overcrowded in the past, and that the staff were poorly trained in protection measures for victims, who were often sent back to camps for internally displaced persons or onto the streets, where they were at risk of being re trafficked" (ibid, p.10).

Inter Press Service in May 2019

“Nigeria ranks 32 out of 167 countries with the highest number of slaves (1,38 million), according to the 2018 Global Slavery Index report. While Nigeria has the institutional framework and laws against trafficking, at least one million people are trafficked there every year, according to the country’s National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons (NAPTIP)” (Inter Press Service (3 May 2019) *West Africa’s Fine Line Between Cultural Norms and Child Trafficking*).

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This response was prepared after researching publicly accessible information currently available to the Refugee Documentation Centre within time constraints. This response is not and does not purport to be conclusive as to the merit of any particular claim to refugee status or asylum. Please read in full all documents referred to.

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