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PREVENTION

The government marginally increased efforts to prevent trafficking. The National Coordinating Commission for the Fight against Trafficking in Persons continued to serve as the coordinating body for the government's anti-trafficking efforts, and the ANLTP/TIM was the government's permanent implementing body to address trafficking in persons, although budget constraints impeded anti-trafficking efforts. The ANLTP/TIM increased its public awareness campaigns and used multiple media platforms to familiarize the public with trafficking, and partnered with an Islamic cleric to address the common issue of *marabouts* using children for forced labor and begging, in addition to traditional slavery practices. The government increased public engagement around its annual September 28 anti-trafficking day events, which featured government officials on radio and television to raise awareness of the crime. The government may have shut down or charged labor recruiters or brokers who recruited workers with knowingly fraudulent offers of employment or job placement. The government took no discernible measures to address the demand for forced labor or commercial sex acts. The government was in the final year of its five-year national action plan to combat trafficking in persons, but implementation was an issue due to funding constraints.

The ANLTP/TIM expanded its national engagement with prosecutors' offices, improving its collection of trafficking statistics and law enforcement coordination across the country, and partnered with an international organization to study forced begging. The government did not take measures to establish the identity of local populations, although the majority of Nigeriens lacked valid identity documents, the lack of which increased individuals' vulnerability to trafficking. The government increased monitoring of its borders. Bylaws governing the armed forces required troops to receive anti-trafficking training prior to their deployment abroad on international peacekeeping missions and the government addressed such requirements through a program conducted by a foreign donor. The government did not report providing anti-trafficking training for its diplomatic personnel.

TRAFFICKING PROFILE

Niger is a source, transit, and destination country for men, women, and children subjected to forced labor and sex trafficking. Traditional slavery practices perpetuated by politically powerful tribal leaders continue primarily in the northern part of the country. No reliable estimate exists of the number of traditional slaves in the country, though a study in 2003 estimated traditional slavery may affect some 40,000 people.

Victims from West and Central Africa are exploited in sex and labor trafficking in Niger. Nigerien boys are subjected to forced labor, including forced begging, within the country and in neighboring countries, especially by corrupt *marabouts*. Loosely organized clandestine networks may also place Nigerien girls into domestic servitude. Nigerien children are subjected to forced labor in gold, salt, trona, and gypsum mines; agriculture; stone quarries; and manufacturing within the country. In the Tahoua region of Niger, girls born into slavery are sold or given as gifts to men as "fifth wives," a status in which they are subject to forced labor and sexual servitude, a practice known as *wahaya*; their children are then born into slave castes which perpetuates the cycle. Traditional chiefs play a primary role in this form of exploitation by arranging "marriages" for other powerful individuals. Some girls in forced marriages may be exploited in commercial sex after fleeing these nominal unions. In Algeria,

Nigerien children are forced to beg and Nigerien women and girls are vulnerable to sex trafficking.

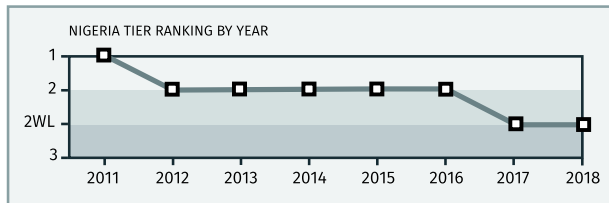
Nigerien women and children are recruited from Niger and transported to Nigeria, North Africa, the Middle East, and Europe where they are subjected to domestic servitude, sex trafficking, or forced labor in agriculture or animal herding. Some migrants were suspected to be traffickers, particularly Nigerien migrants to Algeria traveling with children unrelated to them. Traffickers operated primarily small, freelance operations in loosely organized networks of individuals. There have been reports of freelance businesspeople (both men and women) and informal travel agencies recruiting women for exploitation in sex trafficking or domestic servitude in the Middle East or northern Nigeria.

Niger is a transit country for men, women, and children from West and Central Africa migrating to North Africa and Western Europe, where some are subjected to forced labor or sex trafficking. Increasingly, West African migrants fall victim to traffickers while transiting Niger en route to Libya and Europe. Niger's implementation of its 2015 anti-smuggling law has forced the previously open (albeit illicit) transportation industry underground, which has increased migrants' vulnerability to forced labor or sex trafficking. Nigerien women are transported into neighboring West African countries, and are exploited in sex trafficking inside Niger, especially in northern mining cities or in transportation centers. In some instances, law enforcement and border officials reportedly accepted bribes from traffickers to facilitate the transportation of victims through the country. Boko Haram and ISIS-West Africa forcibly recruit Nigerien boys and girls to serve as child soldiers. According to several reports, the Government of Niger provided some limited material and logistical support within Niger to the Imghad Tuareg and Allies Self-Defense Group (GATIA). GATIA has been reported to recruit and use child soldiers.

NIGERIA: TIER 2 WATCH LIST

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. The government demonstrated significant efforts during the reporting period by disbursing significantly more funding to the National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons (NAPTIP); supporting the signing and implementation of a UN action plan to end and prevent the recruitment and use of children by the Civilian Joint Task Force (CJTF); with an international organization, beginning a screening and sensitization campaign to identify and prevent sexual exploitation and abuse of IDPs; and prosecuting three suspected traffickers for child forced begging, although judges ultimately acquitted them. However, the government did not demonstrate overall increasing efforts compared to the previous reporting period. Despite persistent and egregious reports of government employees complicit in human trafficking offenses, the government made negligible efforts to address the allegations, and the military generally denied such allegations without investigation. The Nigerian military continued to conduct on-the-ground coordination with the CJTF, a non-governmental self-defense militia that recruited and used children, and which received limited financial and material support from the Borno State government. In addition, the government failed to provide evidence that use of children in support roles in detention in the Giwa Barracks had

ceased. The government has never reported an investigation, prosecution, or conviction—including of any government official—for child soldiering offenses. Sexual exploitation of women and girls displaced by Boko Haram and the Islamic State-West Africa (ISIS-WA) remained widespread, including by state security, military personnel, and CJTF, some of whom forced women and girls to provide commercial sex acts in exchange for food and freedom of movement inside IDP camps and others who fraudulently recruited female IDPs for jobs outside of IDP camps but transported them to military barracks for sexual exploitation by Nigerian military personnel. The Nigerian military continued to inappropriately detain, arrest, and interrogate female and child trafficking victims for alleged association with the insurgencies and did not provide trafficking victim protections. Therefore Nigeria remained on Tier 2 Watch List for the second consecutive year.



RECOMMENDATIONS FOR NIGERIA

Ensure the Nigerian military has ceased unlawful use of children, including in collaboration with CJTF, and investigate any reports of military personnel's use of children; work with CJTF and the UN to implement fully the child soldier action plan to remove all children from CJTF's ranks and, if it is not, cut provision of financial and in-kind support to CJTF; vigorously investigate, prosecute, and convict traffickers—including complicit officials, those who recruit and use child soldiers and sexually exploit IDPs, and labor traffickers, including those who force children to beg—and impose sufficiently stringent sentences involving imprisonment; expand existing efforts to identify trafficking victims among IDPs, investigate cases, and implement preventative measures; release those suspected child ex-combatants and women who are inappropriately detained, screen for trafficking among those detained, and provide appropriate care; further increase funding for NAPTIP, particularly to provide adequate victim care; increase investigations into forced begging in Quranic schools; finalize the draft protocol to hand children identified in armed conflict over to civilian authorities; implement programs for the disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration (DDR) of child ex-combatants that take into account their specific needs, and work with the Nigerian military and CJTF to implement these plans; increase training for judges on the 2015 law, specifically the provision prohibiting the issuance of fines in lieu of imprisonment; allow trafficking victims to obtain employment and move freely in and out of NAPTIP shelters; expand ongoing police and immigration training to include identifying trafficking victims among vulnerable populations, such as women in prostitution and young females traveling with non-family members; increase the capacity of Nigerian embassies to identify and provide assistance to victims abroad, including by providing replacement travel or identity documents free of charge; and provide pre-departure information for migrants on how to find assistance if exploited abroad.

PROSECUTION

The government maintained anti-trafficking law enforcement efforts, but there were continued reports of, and negligible

efforts to address, government officials complicit in human trafficking offenses. The Trafficking in Persons Law Enforcement and Administration Act, as amended in 2015, criminalized labor and sex trafficking and prescribed a minimum penalty of five years imprisonment and 1 million naira (\$2,790) for both sex and labor trafficking; the minimum penalty for sex trafficking increased to seven years imprisonment if the case involved a child. These penalties were sufficiently stringent and, with regards to sex trafficking, commensurate with those prescribed for other serious crimes, such as rape.

NAPTIP received 662 cases for investigation, completed 116 investigations, prosecuted at least 43 suspects in 43 cases, and convicted 26 traffickers, compared with 654 cases for investigation, 24 prosecutions, and 23 convictions the previous reporting period. NAPTIP did not report how many investigations remained pending, led to prosecutions for other offenses, or had been dismissed at the end of the reporting period. NAPTIP reported newly initiating all 662 investigations during the reporting period but did not report the status of the 630 investigations it had initiated in the previous reporting period. Judges convicted most traffickers under the 2015 anti-trafficking law, although some judges also convicted traffickers under the 2003 anti-trafficking law. Prison sentences upon conviction ranged from six months to 15 years imprisonment. Despite a 2015 amendment that removed judges' ability to sentence traffickers with fines in lieu of imprisonment, Nigerian courts penalized seven traffickers with the option of a fine or imprisonment; this is an increase from the previous reporting period, when judges only penalized one trafficker with the option of a fine. Judges issued fines reportedly due to a lack of familiarity with the 2015 anti-trafficking law and at times due to corruption. The government convicted five labor traffickers, an increase from two labor trafficking convictions the previous reporting period but still not commensurate to the scale of the labor trafficking problem. NAPTIP prosecuted three alleged traffickers for child forced begging, having identified at least 175 child forced begging victims during the reporting period, but judges acquitted all three suspects. The government had convicted one trafficker for child forced begging the previous reporting period. Enforcement of the anti-trafficking law remained ineffective in many parts of the country, and while officials made efforts to address trafficking cases, insufficient resources hampered efforts. The government acknowledged many judges remained insufficiently familiar with the anti-trafficking law—including the provision requiring judges to prescribe sentences that include imprisonment—which hindered law enforcement efforts. In addition, the judiciary remained slow and corrupt generally, which impeded prosecutions and convictions of most crimes, including trafficking.

Widespread and pervasive corruption affected all levels of government and the security forces and undermined accountability for trafficking offenses; for example, one NGO reported a suspected trafficking case to police, but the police refused to investigate the case because the NGO did not pay a bribe. There were continued reports of egregious trafficking offenses committed by government officials. Several international organizations and media reported that the sexual exploitation of IDPs in camps, settlements, and host communities around Maiduguri remained a pervasive problem. In more than 14 IDP camps, reports documented government officials, service providers, and security forces, including the Nigerian military and CJTF, who forced IDPs to have sex in exchange for food and freedom of movement in and outside of the camps. As previously reported by media, there were continued reports that camp officials and members

of security forces, including some individual Nigerian military personnel, used fraudulent or forced marriages to exploit girls in sex trafficking and new reports that the Nigerian military, CJTF, and other camp officials fraudulently recruited female IDPs for jobs outside of IDP camps but transported them to military barracks for sexual exploitation by Nigerian military personnel. Although NAPTIP reportedly investigated two cases of sexual exploitation of IDPs, which were identified through NAPTIP's sensitization and screening campaign, NAPTIP was unable to investigate or prosecute accusations of trafficking perpetrated by military or law enforcement personnel. The government did not report any prosecutions or convictions for sexual exploitation of IDPs, including children, and did not investigate, prosecute, or convict any government security officials, including military officials alleged to have exploited IDPs. In the previous reporting period, the government had arrested seven government officials and two CJTF members for alleged sexual misconduct towards IDPs, including sex trafficking. During the reporting period, however, no entity could provide information on the status of the investigations, including if they were ongoing, and several law enforcement entities denied knowledge of and responsibility for these cases. Furthermore, despite NAPTIP receiving reports of individual military personnel involved in trafficking crimes, the Nigerian Army categorically denied that any of its personnel used child soldiers or sexually exploited IDPs, which impeded investigation of such reports.

As reported by the Secretary-General of the UN, as of May 2016, Nigerian military personnel were using four boys between ages 14 and 16-years-old in support roles. At the close of the reporting period, there was no evidence the government had released these children. The CJTF also reportedly used some child trafficking victims recovered from Boko Haram to lead CJTF and army personnel to Boko Haram camps, putting the children at serious risk for retaliation and denying them trafficking victim care. The government did not report any investigations, prosecutions, or convictions for child soldiering offenses, including of government officials who committed such offenses. Both NAPTIP and the police reported addressing the crime of child soldiering was not within their mandates. NAPTIP arrested two immigration officials at Lagos International Airport for allegedly facilitating travel of six girls to Oman and Kuwait, purportedly for exploitation; the investigation was ongoing at the close of the reporting period. A foreign government reported to NAPTIP a Nigerian diplomat who attempted to secure a visa for their domestic employee by posing as a family member—an indicator of trafficking; neither NAPTIP nor the Ministry of Foreign Affairs reported conducting an investigation or taking disciplinary action against the suspect. The government continued an investigation from the previous reporting period of a Department of Petroleum Resources official allegedly complicit in a trafficking offense. There were reports 46 Nigerian soldiers deployed as UN peacekeepers to Liberia sexually exploited 58 women and children from 2003-2017, including in sex trafficking. Some trafficking victims in Libya reported Nigerian embassy officials in Tripoli asked for payment before removing victims from Libyan detention camps. For the fourth consecutive year, the government did not report any prosecutions or convictions of government employees complicit in human trafficking offenses, despite consistent reports of officials committing trafficking offenses each year. Despite 15 years of reports of significant government complicity in human trafficking offenses and trafficking-related corruption, the government has only reported convicting one official for complicity in human trafficking.

The government demonstrated significantly more sophisticated collaboration with foreign governments on anti-trafficking cases. It participated in joint investigations with nine countries and assisted 11 other countries through training courses, joint intelligence sharing, and mutual legal assistance on trafficking cases. Through the UK-Nigerian Joint Border Task Force, NAPTIP supported law enforcement to make significant arrests and prosecutions in multiple European countries and improved investigative capacity domestically. The government and a foreign donor trained officials and law enforcement academy instructors on identifying and investigating human trafficking. The government increased NAPTIP's budget by 86 percent over the previous year. Despite this increase, however, NAPTIP did not have sufficient resources given the scale of the problem. For example, the agency did not have resources to carry out sufficient proactive anti-trafficking operations, and NAPTIP officers were often concentrated in state capitals, which hindered identification and investigation of trafficking in rural areas.

PROTECTION

The government maintained efforts to identify and protect internal trafficking victims and increased efforts to assist Nigerians exploited abroad. The government identified 1,121 potential trafficking victims, including 538 people in prostitution, 203 child labor victims—some of whom were forced—and 188 forced labor victims. This was similar to 1,128 potential trafficking victims (529 people in prostitution, 165 child labor victims, and 434 forced labor victims) identified in the previous reporting period. NAPTIP provided initial care for all trafficking victims, which could have included referrals to government facilities for medical care, shelter, vocational training, or education assistance. NAPTIP did not report how many victims it referred to NGOs for additional care, compared to referring 302 victims to NGOs the previous reporting period. The government had formal written procedures to guide law enforcement, immigration, and social services personnel in proactive identification of trafficking victims among high-risk populations, and NAPTIP trained police, immigration, and social services personnel to identify trafficking victims and direct them to NAPTIP. Additionally, the government's national referral mechanism provided formal guidelines for law enforcement, immigration officials, and service providers to improve protection and assistance to trafficking victims, both within Nigeria and abroad. NAPTIP, in conjunction with an international organization, also developed a referral mechanism specifically for sex trafficking and sexual abuse victims in the Northeast.

The government allocated approximately 3.14 billion naira (\$8.7 million) to NAPTIP in 2017, a significant increase from 1.69 billion naira (\$4.7 million) allocated in 2016. The government disbursed at least 2.64 billion naira (\$7.4 million) to NAPTIP during the reporting period, an increase from 1.48 billion naira (\$4.1 million) disbursed in the previous reporting period. Although the law mandated NAPTIP to care solely for victims of crimes under the 2015 anti-trafficking law, the government often referred victims of other crimes to NAPTIP, which reduced its capacity to care for trafficking victims. NAPTIP opened a new zonal command and victim shelter during the reporting period, increasing its total to 10 shelters for trafficking victims with a total capacity of 315, compared to nine shelters with a combined capacity of 313 the previous reporting period. NAPTIP required victims to go to its shelters for short-term care and determined how long victims were required to stay, while also requiring their support in law enforcement investigations. NAPTIP staff did not permit victims to leave shelters without a

chaperone, which limited victims' freedom of movement and educational and work opportunities. Because NAPTIP operated closed shelters, it referred school-aged victims to foster care so they could attend school. NAPTIP generally limited victims' stays to six weeks, although victims could extend their stays under special circumstances; both men and women received specialized care. Through these shelters, NAPTIP provided access to legal, medical, and psychological services, as well as vocational training, financial empowerment, and business management skills. These shelters were also available to Nigerian trafficking victims exploited abroad upon repatriation. NAPTIP had agreements with certain hospitals and clinics to provide additional medical and psychological treatment for victims, as needed. Additional government and NGO shelters provided services, including long-term shelter, to vulnerable children and victims of crime, including trafficking; authorities sometimes assigned child trafficking victims to foster homes or orphanages for care. Foreign victims had access to the same services as domestic victims. In contrast with previous years, for the second consecutive year NAPTIP did not report providing funding, in-kind donations, or services to NGOs and other organizations that provided protection and services to trafficking victims. NAPTIP authorities sometimes deemed adults in prostitution, who claimed to be working voluntarily, trafficking victims and detained them in shelter facilities against their will.

In response to continued reports of sexual exploitation of IDPs in the Northeast, NAPTIP partnered with an international organization to create and implement a screening and sensitization campaign to identify sex trafficking victims. NAPTIP reached at least 14 camps in the Maiduguri area—including all 13 state-run IDP camps—with screening, sensitization, or both. In response to a large number of Nigerian migrants stranded in Libya, including some trafficking victims, the government created an inter-ministerial committee to facilitate repatriation and resettlement in Nigeria for those migrants; in January 2018, the government repatriated more than 1,501 Nigerians from Libya and, with funding from a foreign donor, provided some reintegration assistance. The influx of migrants returned from Libya, some of whom were trafficking victims, overwhelmed the shelter and service system, including NAPTIP facilities, and not all trafficking victims received care. During the reporting period, the governor of Edo State created the Edo State Task Force (ESTF), chaired by the state attorney general, to combat transnational trafficking of Nigerians to Europe in one of the regions of Nigeria most affected. Its mandate included investigation and prosecution of trafficking cases, alongside NAPTIP, and coordinating national and international actors' protection and reintegration efforts for returning trafficking victims. ESTF increased coordination among victim protection actors and screened some returnees from Libya for trafficking and referred the identified trafficking victims to NAPTIP facilities. The Edo State government allocated additional funding for victim protection, including 36,000 naira (\$100) to 200 trafficking or smuggling victims repatriated from Libya. Several Nigerian embassies, particularly within West Africa, provided funding or in-kind support to repatriate Nigerian trafficking victims exploited abroad. Victims and activists, however, reported some Nigerian embassies did not always assist trafficking victims with removal from situations of exploitation or law enforcement efforts against their traffickers, which impeded access to care and justice. One Nigerian embassy reportedly stopped issuing identity documents to Nigerian trafficking victims seeking repatriation, which required NGOs and the host government to provide such documents and facilitate repatriation.

Although the anti-trafficking law prohibited the penalization

of trafficking victims for unlawful acts committed as a result of being subjected to trafficking, multiple credible international organizations reported the government continued to arrest and in some cases inappropriately detain for prolonged periods, reportedly for screening and perceived intelligence value, women and children removed from or allegedly associated with Boko Haram and ISIS-WA, including women and girls who had been forcibly married to or sexually enslaved by the insurgents; authorities did not screen for trafficking. The military, in cooperation with an international organization, released some adults and children from detention but also newly detained other children during the reporting period. The government began working with an international organization to develop standard procedures to refer children identified in armed conflict to civilian care providers. After release from detention, the military generally referred women and children classified through a security screening process as "low risk" or "inactive" in the conflict to a government-run rehabilitation center. While the process improved identification of potential trafficking victims among those detained, some trafficking victims—including women and children forced to be combatants—remained in the detention system and subject to criminal prosecution for crimes committed as a result of being subjected to trafficking. International organizations provided medical care, psycho-social support, education, and nutritional services through a 12-week rehabilitation program at the center. The government also had a separate 16-week deradicalization and rehabilitation program for individuals classified as both "low risk" and "surrendered." Some women and child ex-combatants participated in this program, in addition to men, and the project remained in development at the end of the reporting period. The government adopted a communique and national action plan on DDR for persons formerly associated with Boko Haram or ISIS-WA, including children.

Officials encouraged victims to assist in the investigation and prosecution of trafficking cases but did not report how many did so during the reporting period, compared with 43 victims who served as witnesses or gave evidence during trial in the previous reporting period. The government did not have a formal policy to prevent the removal of victims to countries where they would face hardship or retribution; there were no reports of trafficking victims removed to such countries during the reporting period. It could grant temporary residence visas to a trafficking victim that had a pending criminal, civil, or other legal action; the government did not report that any foreign victims requested this relief during the reporting period. The victims' trust fund, financed primarily through confiscated assets of convicted traffickers, was available to all victims. The government did not allocate any funding to or disburse funding from the fund during the reporting period, although overall spending on victim support through the normal budget process increased. In the previous reporting period, it had allocated 2.5 million naira (\$6,960) to and disbursed 5.6 million naira (\$15,600) from the fund to provide vocational training and school tuition to trafficking victims. The anti-trafficking law provided for victim restitution and allowed victims to file civil suits against their traffickers. While NAPTIP prosecutors regularly sought restitution in trafficking cases, NAPTIP did not report successfully receiving restitution for victims in any cases, largely because judges were unfamiliar with that provision of the anti-trafficking law.

PREVENTION

The government increased efforts to prevent human trafficking. The government appointed a new director general of NAPTIP

in April 2017, and NAPTIP continued to lead government efforts to combat trafficking. The inter-ministerial committee on trafficking met several times throughout the year and helped to develop national policies on trafficking, including the first draft of a Protocol for Identification, Safe Return, and Rehabilitation of Trafficked Persons. NAPTIP continued drafting a 2018-2023 national action plan, which was considered by the inter-ministerial committee. NAPTIP continued awareness campaigns at schools, churches, and transit centers, among other places, and significantly expanded media outreach via television and radio to educate the public on the identification and dangers of human trafficking. In response to reports that some individual government employees, service providers, and security officials sexually exploited female IDPs, NAPTIP and an international organization conducted a screening and sensitization campaign in IDP camps around Maiduguri, including all state-run camps, which reportedly led to the arrests of two alleged sex traffickers. NAPTIP also conducted outreach activities in IDP camps in Benue State for persons displaced by mass flooding and rural violence, worked with local celebrities and social media influencers to support the fight against human trafficking, and increased outreach to traditional community and religious leaders to address traffickers' use of the *juju* oath to coerce victims. After consistent engagement by Edo State government and NAPTIP officials, in March 2018 the Oba of Benin—the most powerful religious ruler in Benin City—issued a curse on sex traffickers and revoked all *juju* spells that had been administered by priests to bind victims to their traffickers, which could increase victim identification and victims' willingness to participate in trials against their traffickers. The government did not provide sufficient protections for workers employed in the informal economy—including children working in agriculture, domestic work, and artisanal mining—rendering such workers vulnerable to trafficking. In addition, despite identifying 606 child labor violations in 2017, which likely included child forced labor violations, NAPTIP only penalized and referred three exploiters for prosecution. Furthermore, at the close of the reporting period, none of the penalties imposed on the three penalized violators had actually been implemented. NAPTIP began, but did not complete, discussions on how to provide pre-departure information to migrants on available assistance if exploited abroad. The government did not make discernible efforts to reduce the demand for forced labor. To reduce the demand for commercial sex acts, several states maintained prohibitions on soliciting commercial sex. There were reports Nigerians traveled to Togo for child sex tourism.

The Borno State government continued to provide financial and in-kind resources to the CJTF, a non-governmental self-defense militia, which according to credible observers continued to use and recruit children. The Borno State government witnessed the signature of, and provided administrative support to help implement, an action plan between CJTF and an international organization to end CJTF's recruitment and use of children. The Nigerian government has publicly criticized and imposed restrictions on those who have portrayed the government in a negative light on human rights, including human trafficking. The government provided anti-trafficking training for its diplomatic personnel and, with foreign donor support, to Nigerian troops prior to their deployment abroad on international peacekeeping missions. A foreign government reported to NAPTIP a Nigerian diplomat suspected of attempted smuggling, trafficking, or both. There were reports that 46 Nigerian soldiers deployed on a UN peacekeeping mission to Liberia exploited 58 women and children, including in sex trafficking.

TRAFFICKING PROFILE

As reported over the past five years, Nigeria is a source, transit, and destination country for women and children subjected to forced labor and sex trafficking, and a source country for men subjected to forced labor. Nigerian trafficking victims are recruited from rural areas—especially the country's southern regions—and, to a lesser extent, urban areas. Women and girls are victims of domestic servitude and sex trafficking, and boys are victims of forced and bonded labor in street vending, domestic service, mining, stone quarrying, agriculture, textile manufacturing, and begging. The government estimates as many as 9.5 million young boys studying in Quranic schools, commonly known as *Almajiri*, are subjected to forced begging. Traffickers operate “baby factories”—often disguised as orphanages, maternity homes, or religious centers—where traffickers hold women against their will, rape them, and force them to carry and deliver a child. The traffickers sell the children, sometimes with the intent to exploit them in forced labor and sex trafficking. In southern Nigeria, especially Lagos, some women drug and “rent” their infants out to street beggars to increase the beggars' profits; in at least one case, an infant died from a drug overdose. Nigerian traffickers take women and children to other West and Central African countries—including Mali, Senegal, Cote d'Ivoire, and Cabo Verde—as well as to South Africa, where they are exploited in forced labor and sex trafficking. Nigerian women and children are recruited and transported to destinations in North Africa, the Middle East—including Saudi Arabia, Oman, and United Arab Emirates—and Central Asia, and held captive in commercial sexual exploitation or forced labor. West African children are subjected to forced labor in Nigeria, including in granite and gold mines. Women from West African countries transit Nigeria en route to Europe and the Middle East, where they are forced into prostitution. Nigeria's ports and waterways around Calabar are transit points for West African children subjected to forced labor in Cameroon, Equatorial Guinea, and Gabon. Nigerians travel to Togo for child sex tourism.

Authorities identified Nigerian trafficking victims—often exploited by Nigerian traffickers—in at least 40 countries during the reporting period. Nigerian women and girls are subjected to sex trafficking within Nigeria and throughout Europe, including in Italy, Spain, Austria, and Russia; an international organization estimated 80 percent of all female Nigerian migrants in Italy are or will become sex trafficking victims. In 2015, a foreign government reported that with the exception of internal trafficking within the EU, Nigerian nationals are the most common trafficking victims in the EU. The majority of Nigerian trafficking victims in Europe come from Edo State, via Libya. One local press report noted that traffickers recruit women and girls from IDP camps in Northeast Nigeria for ostensibly legitimate jobs in Italy but exploit them in prostitution in Italy. Nigerian sex traffickers operate in highly organized criminal webs throughout Europe, and many sex trafficking victims begin to work for their traffickers in exchange for leaving sex trafficking themselves. Before departure for work abroad, many Nigerian women participate in a traditional ceremony with a *juju* priest; some traffickers exploit this tradition and tell the women they must obey their traffickers or a curse will harm them, which prevents victims from seeking assistance or cooperating with law enforcement. While some sex trafficking victims arrive in Europe believing they will be working in prostitution, traffickers coerce them to stay in prostitution by changing the working conditions and increasing victims' travel debts. Some victims' parents encourage them to obey their traffickers and endure exploitation to earn money. Nigerians are increasingly exploited in Libya—by both Libyans and Nigerians—in forced labor in

construction, agriculture, and prostitution in Tripoli, Sabha, Benghazi, and Misrata. Lured by the promise of reaching Europe, traffickers keep victims in “control houses” or “prostitution camps” located on the outskirts of Tripoli and Misrata until they can repay travel debts; sometimes before victims repay the debt, traffickers sell them again. Some trafficking victims in Libya reported Nigerian embassy officials in Tripoli asked for payment before removing victims from Libyan detention camps. In 2017, an international organization repatriated more than 4,316 Nigerians from Libya, some of whom were trafficking victims or vulnerable to trafficking; 4,000 had departed from Edo State. There were reports of re-trafficking among the trafficking victims repatriated from Libya. A foreign government estimated as many as 20,000 Nigerians await repatriation from Libya, some of whom are trafficking victims. ISIS has captured Nigerian women and girls in Libya and exploited them in sexual slavery. Criminal gangs—some of whom might have had ties to so-called student cults—partner with organized crime networks to transport Nigerians to Europe for exploitation.

As in past years, reports continue to indicate government officials and security forces commit widespread sexual exploitation—including sex trafficking—and such exploitation is a major concern across the Northeast, including in informal IDP camps and all of the 13 formal, state-run IDP camps in and around Maiduguri, the Borno State capital, which hosts IDPs affected by the ongoing conflict with Boko Haram and ISIS-WA. “Gatekeepers” in control of some IDP camps, at times in collusion with Nigerian policemen and soldiers, reportedly force women and girls to provide sex acts in exchange for food and services in the camps. In July 2016, a Nigerian research organization surveyed 400 IDPs in Adamawa, Borno, and Yobe states, and 66 percent said camp officials sexually abused women and girls, some of which constitutes sex trafficking. As previously reported by media, there were continued reports that camp officials and members of security forces, including some individual Nigerian military personnel, used fraudulent or forced marriages to exploit girls in sex trafficking. Some Nigerian military personnel and CJTF members promised female IDPs jobs but instead took them to military barracks for sexual exploitation by Nigerian military personnel. Various NGOs and news outlets report that children in IDP camps are victims of labor and sex trafficking, and some alleged that government officials managing the camps are complicit in these activities. Media and an international organization reported Cameroonian soldiers coerced Nigerian female refugees in a Cameroon refugee camp to have sex in exchange for food or protection from deportation.

Boko Haram and ISIS-WA continued to forcibly recruit, abduct, and use child soldiers as young as 12-years-old as cooks, spies, messengers, bodyguards, armed combatants, and increasingly as suicide bombers in attacks in Nigeria, Cameroon, and Chad. In 2017, Boko Haram used at least 158 children as human bombers, significantly more than 19 used in all of 2016. The groups continue to abduct women and girls in the northern region of Nigeria, some of whom they subject to domestic servitude and forced labor. Boko Haram routinely forces girls to choose between forced marriages to its fighters—for the purpose of sexual slavery—or becoming suicide bombers. In some cases, Boko Haram forced child soldiers to marry one another. International organizations continue to express concerns about the arrest and detention of children by the Nigerian military for alleged association with Boko Haram. The government continued to arrest and, in some cases, inappropriately detain for prolonged periods, reportedly for screening and perceived intelligence value, women and children

removed from or allegedly associated with Boko Haram and ISIS-WA, including women and girls who had been forcibly married to or sexually enslaved by the insurgents. For example, as previously reported, in 2016, the government detained and considered to be combatants at least 78 child trafficking victims aged 13-17-years-old.

As previously reported, the Nigerian military unlawfully used children as young as 12 years old in support roles such as messengers, porters, and guards and failed to provide evidence these activities had ceased. The Nigerian military interrogated children in detention for later use as collaborators to identify Boko Haram members among newly arrested persons. As reported by the Secretary-General of the UN, as of May 2016, Nigerian military personnel were using four boys between ages 14 and 16-years-old in support roles. At the close of the reporting period, there was no evidence the government had released these children. The Nigerian military also conducted on-the-ground coordination with the CJTF, a non-governmental self-defense militia that received state government funding and continued to recruit and use children in support roles. Media reported that the CJTF also used some child trafficking victims recovered from Boko Haram to lead CJTF and army personnel to Boko Haram camps, putting the children at serious risk for retaliation and denying them trafficking victim care. CJTF continued to recruit and use children. As previously reported, CJTF has recruited children as young as 12-years-old to man checkpoints, conduct patrols, search and arrest suspected insurgents, guard IDP camps, and gather intelligence, at times in collaboration with the Nigerian military. As of March 2018, CJTF and an international organization compiled a list of children potentially associated with CJTF and were in the process of interviewing the children and separating those associated with the group.

NORWAY: TIER 1

The Government of Norway fully meets the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking. The government continued to demonstrate serious and sustained efforts during the reporting period; therefore Norway remained on Tier 1. The government demonstrated serious and sustained efforts by increasing prosecutions and convictions, referring more victims to care, and allocating more funding for victim assistance. Although the government meets the minimum standards, it continued to lack formal written victim identification procedures and a national victim referral mechanism. Legal procedures for appealing rejected asylum applications risked limiting identification of trafficking victims among asylum-seekers. Also, a lack of training and will among investigators, prosecutors, and judges to pursue complex trafficking cases has reportedly led many trafficking cases to be tried as lesser crimes—which leads to diminished rights for victims of trafficking—or not be prosecuted at all.

