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Country Policy and Information Note

Nigeria: Trafficking of women

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Preface

Purpose

This note provides country of origin information (COI) and analysis of COI for use by Home Office decision makers handling particular types of protection and human rights claims (as set out in [the basis of claim](#) section). It is not intended to be an exhaustive survey of a particular subject or theme.

It is split into two main sections: (1) analysis and assessment of COI and other evidence; and (2) COI. These are explained in more detail below.

Assessment

This section analyses the evidence relevant to this note – i.e. the COI section; refugee/human rights laws and policies; and applicable caselaw – by describing this and its inter-relationships, and provides an assessment on whether, **in general**:

- A person is reasonably likely to face a real risk of persecution or serious harm
- A person is able to obtain protection from the state (or quasi state bodies)
- A person is reasonably able to relocate within a country or territory
- Claims are likely to justify granting asylum, humanitarian protection or other form of leave, and
- If a claim is refused, it is likely or unlikely to be certifiable as ‘clearly unfounded’ under section 94 of the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002.

Decision makers **must**, however, still consider all claims on an individual basis, taking into account each case’s specific facts.

Country of origin information

The country information in this note has been carefully selected in accordance with the general principles of COI research as set out in the [Common EU \[European Union\] Guidelines for Processing Country of Origin Information \(COI\)](#), dated April 2008, and the Austrian Centre for Country of Origin and Asylum Research and Documentation’s (ACCORD), [Researching Country Origin Information – Training Manual, 2013](#). Namely, taking into account the COI’s relevance, reliability, accuracy, balance, currency, transparency and traceability.

The structure and content of the country information section follows a [terms of reference](#) which sets out the general and specific topics relevant to this note.

All information included in the note was published or made publicly available on or before the ‘cut-off’ date(s) in the country information section. Any event taking place or report/article published after these date(s) is not included.

All information is publicly accessible or can be made publicly available and is from generally reliable sources. Sources and the information they provide are carefully considered before inclusion.

Factors relevant to the assessment of the reliability of sources and information include:

- the motivation, purpose, knowledge and experience of the source
- how the information was obtained, including specific methodologies used
- the currency and detail of information, and
- whether the COI is consistent with and/or corroborated by other sources.

Multiple sourcing is used to ensure that the information is accurate, balanced and corroborated, so that a comprehensive and up-to-date picture at the time of publication is provided of the issues relevant to this note.

Information is compared and contrasted, whenever possible, to provide a range of views and opinions. The inclusion of a source, however, is not an endorsement of it or any view(s) expressed.

Each piece of information is referenced in a brief footnote; full details of all sources cited and consulted in compiling the note are listed alphabetically in the [bibliography](#).

Feedback

Our goal is to continuously improve our material. Therefore, if you would like to comment on this note, please email the [Country Policy and Information Team](#).

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 support him in reviewing the efficiency, effectiveness and consistency of approach of COI produced by the Home Office.

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. The IAGCI may be contacted at:

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Information about the IAGCI's work and a list of the documents which have been reviewed by the IAGCI can be found on the Independent Chief Inspector's pages of the [gov.uk website](#).

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Assessment

Updated: 4 July 2019

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 person is a (potential) female victim of trafficking ((P)VoT).

1.2 Points to note

- 1.2.1 Only expert decision makers in the UK's Single Competent Authority 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 an asylum claim. If it has not already been done, decision makers dealing with the asylum claim must make an appropriate referral to the National Referral Mechanism (NRM). The case will then be routed to the 'Single Competent Authority'.
- 1.2.2 The conclusive grounds decision will be included in any outstanding asylum decision made after that decision as a finding of fact on whether the person was a victim of human trafficking or modern slavery or not, unless information comes to light at a later date that would alter the finding on human trafficking or modern slavery.
- 1.2.3 The outcome of the reasonable or conclusive grounds decision is not indicative of the outcome of any asylum claim. A positive or negative reasonable or conclusive grounds decision on modern slavery does not automatically result in asylum being granted or refused. This is because the criteria used to determine asylum claims are not the same as the criteria used to assess whether a person is a victim of modern slavery.
- 1.2.4 When the Single Competent Authority has issued a positive conclusive grounds decision in a case where the person has also claimed asylum, this should be afforded appropriate weight when considering future risk of persecution. Further, where there has been a negative finding by the Single Competent Authority, considerable weight can be placed on this. In these scenarios, because the Single Competent Authority's findings are subject to a higher standard of proof and are findings as to past treatment, it remains open to asylum decision makers to make different findings for the purpose of the asylum claim and future risk.
- 1.2.5 Information for decision makers 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](#).
- 1.2.6 In cases where a 'positive conclusive grounds' decision has been made, a grant of discretionary leave may be considered. For further information, see [Discretionary leave considerations for victims of modern slavery](#).

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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2.1 Exclusion

- 2.1.1 Decision makers must consider whether one (or more) of the exclusion clauses is applicable. Each case must be considered on its individual facts and merits.
- 2.1.2 For further guidance on the exclusion clauses and restricted leave, see the [Asylum Instruction on Exclusion: Article 1F of the Refugee Convention](#) and the [Asylum Instruction on Restricted Leave](#).

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2.2 Refugee Convention reason

- 2.2.1 Nigerian women who have been trafficked form a particular social group (PSG) within the meaning of the 1951 UN Refugee Convention because they share a common background that cannot be changed (their past experience of being trafficked) and have a distinct identity which is perceived as being different by the surrounding society.
- 2.2.2 Although women who are victims of trafficking from Nigeria form a PSG, this does not mean that establishing such membership will be sufficient to be recognised as a refugee. The question to be addressed in each case is whether the particular person will face a real risk of persecution on account of their membership of such a group.
- 2.2.3 In the absence of a link to one of the five Convention reasons necessary for the grant of refugee status, the question to be addressed in each case will be whether the particular person will face a real risk of serious harm sufficient to qualify for Humanitarian Protection.
- 2.2.4 For further guidance on particular social groups, see the [Asylum Instruction on Assessing Credibility and Refugee Status](#).

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2.3 Risk

a. General approach

- 2.3.1 Nigeria is a source, transit and destination country for the trafficking of women and girls for forced labour and sexual exploitation. While there are no

exact data, the numbers of persons trafficked to Europe, including the UK, is likely to be in the thousands, possibly more, each year. The UK NRM reported that 6,993 potential victims of modern slavery were referred in 2018, an increase from 5,142 in 2017, although not all individuals referred to the NRM will ultimately be assessed to be victims of modern slavery. Women and girls are trafficked into the UK for both labour and sexual exploitation (see [Overview of trafficking](#), [Prevalence](#), [The UK National Referral Mechanism \(NRM\)](#) and [The Italian Connection](#)).

- 2.3.2 Some female victims of trafficking who return to Nigeria may be subject to reprisals or re-trafficking, particularly those who have been trafficked for sexual exploitation and have an outstanding debt to traffickers. The woman's family may also be subject to intimidation, threats and attacks (see [Treatment on return](#)).
 - 2.3.3 In some cases, a woman's family or community may have been complicit in the trafficking or put pressure on her to pay any outstanding debt or expect her to provide an income, including from prostitution, which may raise the risk of her being re-trafficked. A woman who returns may also be shunned by her family and experience societal discrimination, marginalisation and stigmatisation, particularly if she returns without having paid any outstanding debt and / or provided an income. However, a woman who returns having obtained 'wealth', regardless of how it is obtained, may not encounter negative social attitudes because she has fulfilled her family's and community's expectations. The degree of stigma and discrimination that a female victim of trafficking faces will depend on her particular circumstances, and the attitudes and expectations of her family and community (see [Reintegration](#) and [Family/societal attitudes and treatment](#)).
 - 2.3.4 In the country guidance case of [HD \(Trafficked women\) Nigeria \(CG\) \[2016\] UKUT 454 \(IAC\)](#), heard 18-20 July 2016 and promulgated 17 October 2016), the Upper Tribunal (UT) found that previous guidance on trafficking set out in paragraphs 191-192 of [PO \(Trafficked Women\) Nigeria CG \[2009\] UKAIT 00046](#) should no longer be followed (para 187).
 - 2.3.5 The UT went on to find that while trafficking is a significant problem in Nigeria, it is not established that women in general in Nigeria are at a real risk of being trafficked (para 188).
 - 2.3.6 It further held that there is in general no real risk of a woman returning to Nigeria, after having been trafficked to the UK, facing reprisal or being re-trafficked by her original traffickers. Instead, whether a woman returning to Nigeria who had previously been trafficked to the UK faces on return a real risk of being re-trafficked and thus persecution will require a detailed assessment of her particular and individual characteristics (paras 189-190).
See also [c. sexual exploitation](#) and [d. vulnerability](#).
- b. Domestic servitude
- 2.3.7 The UT in [HD](#) found that, for a person who was initially trafficked for the purpose of domestic servitude, even outside a state or NGO shelter, there 'is unlikely to be an adverse risk from her original trafficker. There is no outstanding debt to be paid. Whether or not her original trafficker is

successfully prosecuted will make no difference... Generally, there is no real risk of re-trafficking by reason alone of having been previously trafficked. But there may be a risk of trafficking by reason of her vulnerability.' (paras 148-149).

2.3.8 The UT added that, if she '... escaped from servitude, generally there would be no continuing interest by the trafficker or the employer but the possibility cannot be excluded in every case.' (para 150).

2.3.9 The UT went on to find that if a woman's 'family is supportive and takes the victim of trafficking back into the family of their own volition generally she will not face a real risk of future persecution.' However, if the woman was unwilling or unable for good reason to go to her family she may be vulnerable to abuse (paras 151-152).

c. Sexual exploitation

2.3.10 In relation to a person who was trafficked for the purpose of sexual exploitation who returns to Nigeria, the UT in [HD](#) distinguished between a person who had paid her 'debt' to her traffickers and those who had not (para 154).

2.3.11 The UT found that a woman who had paid her debt was not likely to be of interest to her original traffickers and therefore she would generally not be at risk of reprisal or re-trafficking on return by reason alone of having been previously trafficked (although there may be a risk of trafficking by reason of vulnerability - see [Vulnerability](#) below) (paras 155-156).

2.3.12 However, there may in some cases be a real risk of serious harm from her family, whether or not they were initially complicit in her trafficking for sexual exploitation. The UT found that 'It is generally reasonable to conclude that her family would expect an economic and financial return from her consequent upon her travel to Europe. Return to her previous trafficking situation under the duress of family pressure, family violence, ostracism and stigmatisation by her community and possible resultant destitution, homelessness and lack of any financial security is likely in most cases to amount to serious harm.' (para 157).

2.3.13 The UT, however, did also hold that a person who had an outstanding debt to her traffickers may be of continuing interest to them, but this is most likely to be whilst the woman remains in Europe. Generally, neither the woman nor her family were likely to be at real risk of reprisal in Nigeria, although there may be 'some individuals for whom that generality does not apply for example where the young woman has been threatened or her family has been threatened after she left the trafficker.' (paras 159-160).

2.3.14 The UT further found:

'If the victim of trafficking were able to return to her family and they were both willing to accept her and able to provide her with appropriate support she would be unlikely to [be] re trafficked. The evidence before us does not support a finding that Nigerian traffickers, in general, resort to abduction (although that is not the case in the North East of Nigeria).

'There may be some cases where the family pose a real risk. For example, if the young woman was close to paying off the debt, her family may require

her to return to the trafficker to enable her to start sending money back to the family. Close links between victim and trafficker through family or community ties would result in her being identified as having returned home. There may be psychological and emotional pressure either for the victim to "voluntarily" return to her exploiters or she will simply be trafficked again.' (paras 163-164).

- 2.3.15 In general, a woman who has been trafficked for sexual exploitation and returns to Nigeria is unlikely to be at risk of being re-trafficked by her original traffickers by reason alone of having been previously trafficked. However, that person may be at risk of abuse and / or being re-trafficked depending on her particular 'vulnerability' (paras 165-166).

See also [d. Vulnerability](#).

d. Vulnerability

- 2.3.16 A woman's particular circumstances may mean that she will be vulnerable to further exploitation and being re-trafficked following her return. The UT in [HD](#) held that

'... factors that will indicate an enhanced risk of being re-trafficked include, but are not limited to:

- 'The absence of a supportive family willing to take her back into the family unit;
- 'Visible or discernible characteristics of vulnerability, such as having no social support network to assist her, no or little education or vocational skills, mental health conditions, which may well have been caused by experiences of abuse when originally trafficked, material and financial deprivation such as to mean that she will be living in poverty or in conditions of destitution;
- 'The fact that a woman was previously trafficked is likely to mean that she was then identified by the traffickers as someone disclosing characteristics of vulnerability such as to give rise to a real risk of being trafficked. On returning to Nigeria, it is probable that those characteristics of vulnerability will be enhanced further in the absence of factors that suggest otherwise.

'Factors that indicate a lower risk of being trafficked include, but are not limited to:

- 'The availability of a supportive family willing to take the woman back into the family unit;
- 'The fact that the woman has acquired skills and experiences since leaving Nigeria that better equip her to have access to a livelihood on return to Nigeria, thus enabling her to provide for herself.' (paras 190-191)

- 2.3.17 While a woman is, in general, not likely to be at risk of reprisal or being re-trafficked by her original traffickers, each case will need to be considered on its merits. The onus is on the woman to demonstrate that her circumstances

are such that on return she will be vulnerable to abuse / re-trafficking which would amount to serious harm or persecution.

- 2.3.18 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 Nigeria has a functioning criminal justice system composed of the security forces - the National Police Force, the military, civilian defence militias and the security services - and the judiciary, made-up of various federal and state courts, including Sharia courts in the north of the country (see country and policy information note on [Nigeria: Actors of Protection](#)).
- 2.4.2 The National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons (NAPTIP) was created on 14 July 2003 by the Trafficking in Persons (Prohibition) Enforcement and Administration Act 2003. Since 2000, Nigeria has been a signatory to the Palermo Protocol which exists in order to prevent, suppress and punish trafficking in persons especially women and children.
- 2.4.3 The Act, as amended in 2015, criminalised labor and sex trafficking. The penalties for these offences are five years imprisonment (7 years if the case involves a child) and 1 million naira (£2127) fine. There were 20 individual convictions in the 2nd and 3rd quarter of 2018 (See [Law and policy position](#) and [Investigations and convictions](#)).
- 2.4.4 Overall effectiveness of anti-trafficking laws is hampered due to judges' insufficient familiarity with the 2015 anti-trafficking law, for example issuing sentences giving offenders the option of a fine in lieu of imprisonment despite this option having been removed (See [Protection and effectiveness of enforcement agencies](#)).
- 2.4.5 The government maintains efforts to identify and protect internal trafficking victims as well as maintaining anti-trafficking law enforcement efforts including increased efforts to assist Nigerians exploited abroad. However, the United States Department of State's Trafficking in Persons Report 2018 assessed Nigeria as not meeting the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking (see [Protection and assistance](#)).
- 2.4.6 NAPTIP produced a document in 2015 outlining its basic principles for the Nigerian National Referral Mechanism (NRM) (see '[Guidelines on National Referral Mechanism for Protection and Assistance to Trafficked Persons in Nigeria 2014](#)' and [The Nigerian National Referral Mechanism \(NRM\)](#)), however NRM data does not appear in NAPTIP's most recent quarterly (2018 quarters 2 and 3) or annual (2017) statistical reports. It is unclear whether the police or NAPTIP have standard procedures for dealing with victims of trafficking and despite increased funding, NAPTIP did not have sufficient resources to tackle trafficking given the scale of the problem. However, NAPTIP have increased the number of shelters available to victims of trafficking which provide short term shelter as well as access to legal, medical, and psychological services, vocational training, financial empowerment, and business management skills. NAPTIP are continuing in

their efforts to combat trafficking under its 2018-2023 national action plan (see [Protection and assistance](#)).

- 2.4.7 NAPTIP collaborate on tackling and prosecuting human trafficking alongside other national government agencies such as the Nigeria Police Force, the Nigeria Immigration Service and the Joint Border Taskforce including state agencies like the Edo State Taskforce (see [Protection and assistance](#)).
- 2.4.8 The UK's National Crime Agency, alongside Immigration Enforcement, Border Force and the Crown Prosecution Service, have continued to work extensively with NAPTIP. This includes training and mentoring a (Nigerian) Joint Border Task Force (JBTF) and joint working on European investigations. Immigration Enforcement International provides a mentor from the overseas investigations team to support NAPTIP officers seconded into the JBTF (see [Protection and assistance](#)).
- 2.4.9 Although the Nigerian Police Force (NPF) is one of the largest police forces in the world, the ratio of police officers to citizens is below the UN-recommended number. The police's effectiveness is undermined by a lack of suitable staff, funding, proper equipment and facilities, inadequate training, as well as poor pay and wide-spread corruption. Further, the NPF reportedly focuses its resources on protecting important persons, including politicians and wealthy individuals, rather than on community policing. As a result the NPF is generally perceived to be corrupt and ineffective by the population, nonetheless people continue to approach it for assistance (See country and policy information note on [Nigeria: Actors of Protection](#)).
- 2.4.10 In the CG case of [HD](#), the UT found that the prosecution of the victim of trafficking's '... trafficker may have some impact but... the evidence indicates that the very organisation of Nigerian trafficking groups means that prosecution of one person does little to prevent trafficking from occurring. Thus even if the victim identifies one or more of those involved in her trafficking, it is unlikely that this would prevent her being re-exploited by that [organised criminal group] OCG if identified as vulnerable to being trafficked again' (para 161). Additionally, the 'incidence of prosecution of the trafficker who trafficked the victim in Nigeria is unlikely to have significant impact upon that individual returnee' (para 173).
- 2.4.11 The UT also found that a woman will not in general be at risk of being re-trafficked once she is received at one of the shelters operated by NAPTIP or a local NGO, for the time that she is there. However, this support is likely to be temporary, possibly for a few weeks, and there will need to be a careful assessment of the position of the woman when she leaves the shelter (para 192). It also observed that once a woman who is likely to be vulnerable to abuse because of her particular circumstances had left a state or NGO shelter, she is unlikely to be able to obtain sufficient protection from the state (para 174).
- 2.4.12 The country information that has become available since [HD](#) was heard indicates that government initiatives, working alongside NGOs and foreign governments, are being expanded, and assistance is available to victims and convictions of traffickers does occur. The government and NGOs, including Home Office-funded initiatives, are in place aimed at raising awareness of

trafficking amongst young women and their parents (see [Protection and assistance](#) and [Government and NGO assistance](#)).

- 2.4.13 Overall the government has made some efforts to improve its response to trafficking in recent years and, in general, is willing to protect victims or potential victims of trafficking. However, the implementation of the law is uneven, and this protection may not be sufficient in every case. Each case must therefore be considered on an individual basis, with the onus on the person to demonstrate that protection would not be available.
- 2.4.14 For an assessment of risk and information on women in Nigeria generally, and on protection generally, see the country policy and information notes [Nigeria: Gender-Based Discrimination/Harm/Violence Against Women](#), and [Nigeria: Actors of Protection](#).
- 2.4.15 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 Nigeria is a large (around 4 times the size of the UK), relatively densely populated, culturally and ethnically diverse country of around 190 million people. People can generally freely travel around the country, although government-imposed curfews and insecurity in areas of civil conflict - the north-east; the 'Middle Belt'; the Niger Delta region; and Zamfara state in particular - are likely to make travel difficult and unsafe in these parts of the country. Nonetheless, many Nigerians move within the country for economic and other reasons (see [Freedom of movement](#) and the country policy and information notes, [Nigeria: Internal Relocation](#) and [Nigeria: Fear of Boko Haram](#)).
- 2.5.2 The UT in [HD](#) found that, in general, where a woman's particular circumstances make her vulnerable to being re-trafficked relocation is unlikely to be a viable alternative (para 193).
- 2.5.3 Decision makers must give careful consideration to the relevance and reasonableness of internal relocation, taking full account of a woman's individual circumstances (see [Government and NGO assistance](#) and [Freedom of movement](#)).
- 2.5.4 For country information and a general assessment of internal relocation and on gender-based violence, see the country policy and information notes on [Nigeria: Internal Relocation](#) and [Nigeria: Gender-Based Discrimination/Harm/Violence Against Women](#).
- 2.5.5 For further information on considering internal relocation and the factors to be taken into account, see the [Asylum Instruction on Assessing Credibility and Refugee Status](#).

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2.6 Certification

- 2.6.1 Where a claim is 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 guidance on certification, see [Certification of Protection and Human Rights claims under section 94 of the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002 \(clearly unfounded claims\)](#).

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Country information

Section 3 updated: 24 June 2019

3. Overview

3.1 Introduction

- 3.1.1 The February 2019 EASO Country Guidance report on Nigeria, based on a range of sources, stated:

‘Trafficking in human beings (THB) is defined in the EU Anti-Trafficking Directive as: ‘The recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or reception of persons, including the exchange or transfer of control over those persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation.’¹

- 3.1.2 The United States Department of State’s Trafficking in Persons Report 2018, which covers the period April 2017 to March 2018, published 27 June 2018, (US SD TiP Report 2018), stated:

‘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 [...]

‘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... ‘Women from West African countries transit Nigeria en route to Europe and the Middle East, where they are forced into prostitution [...]’²

- 3.1.3 A report produced following a shared learning event (SLE) held in Lagos on 17 January 2018, conducted in partnership with the University of Bedfordshire and the IOM (University of Bedfordshire/IOM report 2018) reported that:

‘[...] it became clear that there are distinct narratives around trafficking within and from Nigeria to other EU countries such as Italy and a considerably smaller, less well-informed narrative around human trafficking to the UK. Overall, it appeared that the experience of those being trafficked from

¹ EASO Country Guidance Nigeria, February 2019, [url](#).

² US SD TiP 2018’, 27 June 2018, [url](#)

Nigeria to the UK was less well known or understood within Nigeria. While Nigeria has been one of the most significant source countries for potential victims of trafficking in the UK for a number of years it appears that within Nigeria there is limited knowledge and understanding about the UK as a destination country for trafficked person.’³

- 3.1.4 As noted within the 2018 UK Annual Report on Modern Slavery, two competent authorities make decisions about whether referred individuals in the UK are victims of modern slavery: the National Crime Agency’s Modern Slavery Human Trafficking Unit (NCA MSHTU), and UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI) in the Home Office⁴.
- 3.1.5 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.’⁵
- 3.1.6 For further information see [EASO’s report, Nigeria: Sex trafficking of Women, October 2015.](#)

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Section 4 updated: 24 June 2019

4. Prevalence

4.1 Victims of trafficking from Nigeria

- 4.1.1 The 2018 UK NRM Statistics End of Year Summary published by the National Crime Agency states that in 2018 Nigeria was the 8th most common country of origin of potential victims of modern slavery in the UK. The total number of Nigerian potential victims referred was 208, of those 159 were adults and 49 were children⁶.
- 4.1.2 The USSD TiP Report 2018 noted:
- ‘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

³ University of Bedfordshire, ‘Vulnerability to Human Trafficking, p37, October 2018 [url](#).

⁴ 2018 UK Annual Report on Modern Slavery, October 2018, p9, [url](#)

⁵ EASO, Nigeria: Sex trafficking of Women, section 1.2, October 2015, [url](#).

⁶ National Referral Mechanism Statistics, End of Year Summary 2018, p7, [url](#)

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. The National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons (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.⁷

4.1.3 The report went on to state that:

‘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 (Internally displaced person) camps in Northeast Nigeria for ostensibly legitimate jobs in Italy but exploit them in prostitution in Italy.’⁸

4.1.4 NAPTIP in their 2017 end of year data analysis report (undated), stated that 876 cases were received by the Agency in 2017 for investigation/monitoring, of these 148 (16.9%) were fully investigated. Foreign Travel which Promotes Prostitution was the most reported type of case with 217, followed by Employment of Child as domestic worker and inflicting grievous harm and Procurement of Persons for Sexual Exploitation with 161 and 120 cases respectively⁹.

4.1.5 According to United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) in their 2016 report on Trafficking in persons, published 21 December 2016, 42% of detected victims of trafficking between 2012 and 2014 were adults, 58% were children¹⁰.

4.1.6 Non-EU victims of human trafficking for the purpose of sexual exploitation mainly originate from 4 countries worldwide of which one is Nigeria¹¹.

4.1.7 The UNODC Global Report on Trafficking in Persons for 2018, published 7 January 2019, observed that a large number of victims of trafficking was for the purpose of forced labour, the majority of which were females, in particular girls¹².

4.1.8 In the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Country of Information Report, Nigeria (DFAT – COI 2018) published 9 March 2018 and

⁷ US SD TiP 2018’, 27 June 2018, [url](#)

⁸ US SD TiP 2018’, 27 June 2018, [url](#)

⁹ NAPTIP, Data Analysis Final 2017, [url](#).

¹⁰ UNODC, Global Report on Trafficking in Persons 2016, p113, 2018, [url](#)

¹¹ Europol, Situation Report Trafficking in Human Begins in the EU, p3, February 2016, [url](#)

¹² UNODC, Global Report on Trafficking in Persons 2018, p81, 2018, [url](#)

based on a range of sources it was stated that 'Human trafficking remains a significant border concern. The Nigerian Immigration Service (NIS) works closely with the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime to combat human trafficking. Nigeria receives significant levels of international support and capacity building aimed at improving its migration systems through the United Nations Global Initiative to Fight Human Trafficking.'¹³

- 4.1.9 The Office of the High Commissioner United Nations Human Rights (OHCHR) published an end of visit statement by the UN Special Rapporteur on Trafficking in Persons on 10 September 2018 which stated, 'Nigeria remains a source, transit and destination country for victims of trafficking'.¹⁴
- 4.1.10 Frontex, the European Border and Coast Guard Agency, reported in their Risk Analysis for 2018, published February 2018, that:

'Trafficking in human beings, from Nigeria in particular, has in the past few years become of particular concern to law enforcement authorities across the EU. Although human trafficking from Nigeria has, for decades, supplied the European sex market, the spike in the number of Nigerian females arriving in mixed migration flows to Italy (and, to a lesser extent, Spain), has brought the phenomenon of THB [Trafficking of Human Beings] from Nigeria to light. Currently, Nigeria represents the top nationality of third-country victims of THB in the EU. The Nigerian victims are mostly women and increasingly younger girls, many of whom are minors. The great majority originates from states in southern Nigeria, particularly Edo, Ogun, Osun, Lagos, Anambra, Enugu, Imo, Rivers, Cross-River, Delta and Akwa Ibom. The victims are recruited from poor communities where families struggle to survive economically. They are often approached by former prostitutes turned traffickers or people working on their behalf with offers of well-paid jobs or studies in European countries. The future, however, turns out to be much grimmer for the many women and girls who embark on the journey to Europe.'¹⁵
- 4.1.11 The University of Bedfordshire/IOM report 2018 found that 'There was less knowledge about trafficking from Nigeria to the UK and less experience of working with people who had been trafficked to the UK than there was of other forms and geographies of exploitation and trafficking. However, some links are emerging between the Nigerian and UK governments.'¹⁶
- 4.1.12 The report also noted that not all victims are being identified or profiled by NAPTIP as victims of trafficking¹⁷.
- 4.1.13 The same report also observed that: 'Gender, gender inequalities, sex discrimination and a lack of good governance were each suggested to be exacerbating factors. Gender imbalances within the society were outlined as

¹³ DFAT Country of Information Report – Nigeria, paragraphs 3.52-3.53, March 2018, [url](#).

¹⁴ OHCHR, 'End of visit statement, Nigeria (3-10 September) ...', 10 September 2018, [url](#).

¹⁵ Frontex, European Border and Coast guard agency, Risk analysis for 2018, p36, February 2018, [url](#)

¹⁶ University of Bedfordshire, 'Vulnerability to Human Trafficking, p37, October 2018 [url](#).

¹⁷ University of Bedfordshire, 'Vulnerability to Human Trafficking, p37, October 2018 [url](#).

key factors for understanding trafficking within and from Nigeria. Further research to understand these imbalances is recommended.¹⁸

- 4.1.14 Following a visit to Nigeria by the then International Development Secretary Priti Patel the UK Government announced in a press release (August 2017) further measures to tackle modern slavery in Nigeria. The report said,

‘This new package of support builds on progress already being made by the UK in Nigeria and across the world. The UK’s existing support to Nigeria is helping to support investigations and bring perpetrators to justice, as well as providing protection for victims.

‘The British Government is driving reform within the international system to coordinate a more effective and focused approach to stamp out this exploitation.’¹⁹

For more information see the Gov.uk [press release](#).

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4.2 The Italian Connection

- 4.2.1 The Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner Annual Report 2016-2017 (IASC Annual Report 2016/2017), published October 2017 observed that: ‘According to the International Organization for Migration (IOM), in 2016 just over 11,000 Nigerian women and girls arrived in Italy from Libya. This is an eightfold increase from the numbers arriving in 2014. IOM believes that 80% of these individuals are trafficking victims, destined for exploitation in brothels across Europe, including the UK.’²⁰

- 4.2.2 Pathfinders citing a number of sources reported the following:

[...] ‘According to Italian authorities, there are between 10,000 to 30,000 Nigerian women working in prostitution on the streets of Italy. 90% of migrant women arriving into Italy from Libya arrive with bruises and other signs of violence. (In general, 83.5% of all Nigerians interviewed in 2017 reported to have suffered from physical violence of any kind during the journey, most often in Libya. A more recent December 2018 UN Report notes narratives by Nigerian migrants of unlawful killings, gang rape, prostitution, arbitrary detention, torture and inhumane treatment, unpaid wages, slavery, human trafficking, racism and xenophobia in Libya.) By July 2017, 14,000 Nigerians had already arrived via the Mediterranean in Italy, 4,000 of which were women. At the end of the year, a total of 18,000 Nigerian migrants are recorded to have arrived into Europe via the Mediterranean, 5,400 of which were women (UNHCR, 2018) [...]’²¹

- 4.2.3 The United Nations Migrations Agency reported that in 2017 ‘...IOM Italy has seen an almost 600% increase in the number of potential sex trafficking victims arriving in Italy by sea. This upward trend has continued during the

¹⁸ University of Bedfordshire, ‘Vulnerability to Human Trafficking, p7, October 2018 [url](#).

¹⁹ Gov.UK Press release 31 August 2017, [url](#).

²⁰ IASC, Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner Annual Report 2016/17, October 2017 [url](#).

²¹ Pathfinders, ‘Nigeria: Human Trafficking Factsheet’, 30 November 2018, [url](#).

first six months of 2017, with most victims arriving from Nigeria.’²² The same report also observed that most sex trafficking victims are women, and that that most are young and often underage, between 13 and 24 years old ²³.

- 4.2.4 The [Swiss Refugee Council](#) monitors the situation in Italy very closely. See their website for further reports/data.

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4.3 Victims of trafficking in the UK

- 4.3.1 The 2018 UK Annual Report on Modern Slavery estimated that the numbers of persons trafficked to Europe, including the UK, is likely to be in the thousands, possibly more, each year. The NRM reported that 5143 potential victims of modern slavery were referred within the UK in 2017, an increase from 3804 in 2016, although not all the individuals referred to the NRM will ultimately be assessed to be victims of modern slavery²⁴.

- 4.3.2 Kevin Hyland in his Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner (IASC) Annual Report 2016/2017 stated that ‘In the 2016 National Referral Mechanism (NRM) statistics, detailing the number of potential victims of modern slavery in the UK [...] ‘Nigeria ranked 4th with 243 referrals [...] The top five nations represent 2,028 (over half) of the 3,805 potential victims referred into the NRM during 2016.’²⁵

- 4.3.3 The UK’s National Crime Agency (NCA) reported in their end of year summary report for 2018 that there were 208 Nigerians referred to the National Referral Mechanism (NRM) in 2018 as potential victims of trafficking, compared to 264 in 2017 a decrease of 21%. Of these, 47 were trafficked for domestic servitude, 38 for labour exploitation, 103 for sexual exploitation and 20 for ‘unknown exploitation’. Out of the 208 cases referred 159 were adults (at the time of exploitation), a 28% decrease on 2017. Minor referrals were up by 16% in 2018 with a total received of 49 compared to 42 in 2017 ²⁶.

- 4.3.4 The NCA stated on their website that:

‘Although it is impossible to know exact numbers of victims, we do know that modern slavery has been on the increase. Many victims work in the construction industry, in agriculture, in the sex industry, and in places like nail bars, car washes, and cannabis farms. Children are found working in all of these situations, as well as in sexual slavery.

‘Many victims have been trafficked from overseas – frequently from eastern Europe, south east Asia, and Africa – and their exploitation often begins en route. [...]

‘Most victims are “recruited” in person, although some who find themselves trapped in the sex industry have been ensnared through online job adverts and social media websites. In cases of sexual exploitation, adult services

²² UN Migration Agency, ‘Arrivals of Sexually Exploited Migrants, Chiefly from Nigeria’, 21 July 2017, [url](#).

²³ UN Migration Agency, ‘Arrivals of Sexually Exploited Migrants, Chiefly from Nigeria’, 21 July 2017, [url](#).

²⁴ 2018 UK Annual Report on Modern Slavery, October 2018, p9, [url](#)

²⁵ IASC, Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner Report 2016-2017, p36, October 2017, [url](#).

²⁶ NCA, ‘National Referral Mechanism Statistics End of Year Summary 2018, [url](#).

websites often unwittingly play a key role in expanding offenders' client bases.

'In some cases victims are threatened and can suffer extreme violence as the criminals exert control. Many have their identity documents confiscated and have most of their earnings withheld as "payment" for living costs or for their journey to the UK.

'Although some larger organised crime groups are involved, people are also trafficked by looser collaborating networks often involved in additional forms of serious criminality, including drugs and firearms trafficking.'²⁷

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

4.3.6 The University of Bedfordshire/IOM report 2018 stated:

'This intentionally descriptive report provides an interim report for the study, relating solely to Nigeria [...] 'The causes or drivers of human trafficking appeared to be multiple, intertwining and overlapping. Stakeholders highlighted multiple vulnerabilities to trafficking across the different levels of the Determinants of Vulnerability model. These included poverty, unemployment, lower levels of education and literacy, corruption, conflict, the lack of social safety nets, abuse of traditional fostering practices, cultural or religious norms that support exploitation, the erosion of values and limited options for safe and legal migration. Increasing demand for sex and cheap labour were considered an integral part of this.'²⁸

Also, that, [...] 'IOM London discussed what is known about trafficking from Nigeria to the UK based on official statistics from the UK government and details of the Modern Slavery Act 2015. IOM UK presented statistics collected from the National Crime Agency reports on Nigerian nationals referred into the UK NRM. IOM UK illustrated how during 2016, the fourth most common nationality of people referred to the NRM came from Nigeria and emphasised how Nigeria has been one of the largest source countries in recent years. It was noted that these statistics do not help to understand the individual circumstances of people who have experienced trafficking and do not provide any information to help understand what makes people vulnerable to trafficking or the capacities that can provide resilience against it.'²⁹

The same report also showed that: 'Statistics on trafficking could be improved in Nigeria and the UK. [...] 'The available NRM data on trafficking of Nigerian nationals to the UK only focuses on referrals, with no disaggregated data provided for people officially identified as trafficked in the UK in terms of their gender, exploitation type or place of origin.'³⁰

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Section 5 updated: 24 June 2019

²⁷ NCA, 'Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking', undated website page, [url](#).

²⁸ University of Bedfordshire, 'Vulnerability to Human Trafficking, p18, October 2018 [url](#).

²⁹ University of Bedfordshire, 'Vulnerability to Human Trafficking, p28, October 2018 [url](#).

³⁰ University of Bedfordshire, 'Vulnerability to Human Trafficking, p39, October 2018 [url](#).

5. Profiles of victims of trafficking

- 5.1.1 The UNODC Global Report on Trafficking in persons 2016, published 21 December 2016, said that: 'For adult victims, trafficking of women is more prevalent than trafficking of men. Women victims are mostly detected in Nigeria and Uganda, while at the regional level, they accounted for 27 per cent of victims in the year 2014 (or most recent). Trafficking of men is limited compared to trafficking in children and women.'³¹
- 5.1.2 The University of Bedfordshire/IOM report 2018 outlined factors that shaped vulnerability to human trafficking, noting that reasons for leaving Nigeria were generally for socio-economic and political reasons, including unemployment, poverty, greed for material acquisition, complicity between parents and victims and their traffickers and the perception that life is better elsewhere. The report went on to suggest that economic conditions that made the UK and Europe attractive to traffickers and victims, included demand for sex workers, cheap labour in urban areas and the perception that women and children are 'commodities' to be exploited. Also factors that allow the trafficking to occur is likely down to lack of public awareness of human trafficking, ineffective law enforcement and poor collaboration among stakeholders ³².
- 5.1.3 The report also stated that, 'The effects of trafficking were disaggregated, with a focus on sexual, physical and emotional abuses and exploitation affecting not only victims, but their families and the society more broadly. The economic cost of loss of wages was also outlined, as was the social cost of "shame" and resultant loss opportunities.'³³
- 5.1.4 The same report concluded that centralising statistics from different agencies could be useful as existing data from both the UK and Nigeria does not give a complete view of the nature and trends of trafficking or what makes people vulnerable to trafficking³⁴.
- 5.1.5 The EASO, Nigeria: Sex trafficking of Women 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.'³⁵

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³¹ UNODC, Global Report on Trafficking in Persons 2016, p112, 2018, [url](#)

³² University of Bedfordshire, 'Vulnerability to Human Trafficking, p33, October 2018 [url](#).

³³ University of Bedfordshire, 'Vulnerability to Human Trafficking, p33, October 2018 [url](#).

³⁴ University of Bedfordshire, 'Vulnerability to Human Trafficking, p39, October 2018 [url](#).

³⁵ EASO, Nigeria: Sex trafficking of Women, section 1.4, October 2015, [url](#).

6. Trafficking networks and strategies

6.1 Traffickers' strategies

- 6.1.1 The USSD TiP Report 2018 states that '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.'³⁶
- 6.1.2 The EASO Country Guidance report on Nigeria, published February 2019, stated:

'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.'³⁷
- 6.1.3 The report concluded that:

'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.'³⁸
- 6.1.4 The Anti-Slavery Commissioner Annual Report 2016-2017 published October 2017 noted that: 'For decades, transnational traffickers have operated from southern Nigeria, deceiving victims with false promises of better lives in Europe. These criminals are now taking advantage of conflict and instability in the Lake Chad Basin and in Libya and have massively scaled up their trafficking operations by utilising these now ungoverned routes.'³⁹
- 6.1.5 NAPTIP recorded in their 2017 end of year report that a total of 641 traffickers were apprehended that year, 363 were male and 278 were female. The highest suspected offence was 'foreign travel which promotes prostitution or sexual exploitation' which totalled 139 (21.7%)⁴⁰.
- 6.1.6 The University of Bedfordshire noted that:

'Key causes of trafficking were considered to include poverty, the burden of large family sizes, unemployment, the absence or inadequacy of social security and welfare systems, the abuse of traditional fostering by family

³⁶ US SD TiP 2018', 27 June 2018, [url](#)

³⁷ EASO Country Guidance Nigeria, p13, February 2019, [url](#).

³⁸ EASO Country Guidance Nigeria, p60, February 2019, [url](#).

³⁹ Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner Report 2016-2017, p36, October 2017, [url](#).

⁴⁰ NAPTIP, Data Analysis Final 2017, [url](#).

members, widespread illiteracy that facilitates deception by traffickers, the breakdown and erosion of cultural and moral values as well as increasing global demand for sex and labour. The lucrative nature of the crime was also considered a key element. Free movement within the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) sub-region was outlined as important in that it encouraged cross-border movement. [...] It was suggested that human traffickers “establish formidable networks” at entry and exit points in almost all African countries resulting in victims suffering near-death experiences whilst trying to get to the destination countries, be this by land or by sea. Air travel was considered to be used sparingly due to cost and airport security implications.’⁴¹

6.1.7 Europol, in their Trafficking in Human Beings in the EU report published February 2016 stated that

‘Nigerian women (often called madams or mamans) also play important roles in the exploitation process, and some of them supervise the entire trafficking process. These madams are commonly former victims of trafficking who engage in exploitation for economic gain; they manage victims’ movements, debts and other logistical tasks, sometimes supported by a male driver and/or a warden. African victims often do not perceive themselves as exploited but rather as migrants who must repay their transportation and harbouring costs; they are prone to support or form an alliance with their offenders. This often results in victims being reluctant to cooperate with law enforcement. Nigerian networks involved in THB are usually not active in other types of crime.’⁴²

See [section 2.1.2 of the EASO 2015 report](#) for more information on ‘madams’.

6.1.8 Reuters World News reported on 22 January 2019 that:

‘As many as 20,000 women and girls are feared to have been trafficked from Nigeria to Mali where they are stranded after being forced into prostitution, the head of Nigeria’s anti-trafficking agency said on Tuesday.

‘Julie Okah-Donli, director general of the National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons (NAPTIP), said a fact-finding team from NAPTIP and the International Organization for Migration (IOM) had uncovered the extent of the trafficking during a visit to southern Mali last month.

‘Dozens of women and girls were repatriated from the Kangaba area of southern Mali in the preceding months. The team, which went to the area to investigate, found hundreds more being held there, Okah-Donli said in a telephone interview.

“They were reliably informed by the locals that they had over 200 such places scattered around the southern part of Mali. In each of the shacks where they held them they had 100 to 150 girls in the area. That is how we came to the figure” of at least 20,000 being held, she said.

⁴¹ University of Bedfordshire, ‘Vulnerability to Human Trafficking, p22, October 2018 [url](#).

⁴² Europol, Trafficking in Human Beings in the EU, February 2016, [url](#).

'The women and girls, most aged 16-30, had been told they would be taken to Malaysia to work in hospitality but instead were forced into prostitution.

"They are held in horrible, slave-like conditions," said Okah-Donli. "They can't escape because they are kept in remote locations, like deep in forests."

'Thousands of women and girls are taken out of Africa's most populous country each year, where 70 percent of the 190 million inhabitants live on less than two dollars a day. A large proportion of them arrive in Europe but others are transported to other parts of west Africa.

'Okah-Donli said her agency had partnered with IOM, which arranged the repatriation of 41 women and girls from Mali in December and was working on returning others home.

'They come mostly from states in southern Nigeria, including Delta, Rivers, Bayelsa, Anambra and Edo.

'Others are also thought to be trafficked to other west African countries including Ghana, Burkina Faso and Ivory Coast, said Okah-Donli.'⁴³

6.1.9 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.'⁴⁴

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6.2 Recruitment of victims for sex trafficking

6.2.1 The University of Bedfordshire/IOM report 2018 found that: 'Recruitment methods were varied, ever changing and often related to close personal and family ties. It was suggested that traffickers are rarely strangers and often work within communities with people they are very familiar with. Further research is necessary to understand this aspect.'⁴⁵

⁴³ Reuters World News, 'Sex Traffickers hold 20,000 Nigerian Women and Girls in Mali', Jan 2019, [url](#).

⁴⁴ Europol, 'Joint action to tackle West African human trafficking networks', 4 May 2016, [url](#).

⁴⁵ University of Bedfordshire, 'Vulnerability to Human Trafficking, p7, October 2018 [url](#).

6.2.2 The same report also added that in addition to poverty there was a range of other factors that caused human trafficking, this includes livelihoods, stigma, discrimination, issues around gender, social norm and social values ⁴⁶.

6.2.3 EASO in their Targeting Individuals report of 2018 and citing various sources stated:

‘Recruitment is mainly conducted in Nigeria by national criminal groups who traffic victims of the same nationality. These groups continue to exploit their victims at the destination country, with the occasional support of local traffickers. Victims are recruited with promises of safe travel and entry into destination countries. Recruitment also occurs within the victim’s family (close or extended); traffickers take advantage of those trust relations, and often women and girls are encouraged to leave by their family members. The recruitment of victims of trafficking occurs throughout Nigeria. Sources consulted by L’Office français de protection des réfugiés et apatrides (OFPRA) in 2016 during a mission to the country specify that Benin City is a hub for most victims that travel to Europe. According to Omoregie Pat Iziengbe, researcher on THB at the University of Ibadan, Benin City has been the centre of international prostitution and trafficking since the 1980s.’⁴⁷

6.2.4 Europol, citing various sources, stated in their Trafficking in Human Beings in the EU report, published February 2016, that:

‘Recruitment usually begins in the country of origin, where victims are deceived, persuaded and abducted. The most common means through which vulnerable people become victims of trafficking is deception, typically by false promises of employment, good working conditions, perhaps even free housing and a good salary [...]

‘Traffickers usually share links with the territory in which they operate and originate from the same ethnic community or even share family ties with their victims. This ethno-linguistic aspect is crucial, especially where the trafficking of minors is concerned. The recruitment and transportation of victims is usually arranged by their fellow nationals. The final exploiters may be either local or foreign citizens. [...]

‘Victims are made highly dependent on the members of the criminal organisation: receiving threats and subjected to coercion, through physical, psychological and/or financial threats. In cases of African victims, exploiters use voodoo rituals to make them more compliant with the abuse. However, the majority of victims are kept under control without violence. This is done through “soft methods” of psychological intimidation, which reduce public attention and the chance of detection by law enforcement. Some cases involve the use of digital surveillance systems (e.g. geo-location services provided by social media), through which exploiters monitor victims’ activities while remaining distanced from the sites of the exploitation. This provides an advantage to the offenders, who tend to operate from afar and thus reduce the risk of being detected by law enforcement [...].

⁴⁶ University of Bedfordshire, ‘Vulnerability to Human Trafficking, p28, October 2018 [url](#).

⁴⁷ EASO ‘Targeting Individuals’, 2018, [url](#).

'Victims of trafficking for sexual exploitation are also forced to perform a range of criminal activities such as committing property crimes (e.g. 'smash and grab' raids, burglaries, thefts), begging, trafficking and selling drugs, sham marriages, forced labour and benefit fraud.'⁴⁸

- 6.2.5 The EASO, Sex Trafficking of Women report of October 2015 citing various 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.'⁴⁹

- 6.2.6 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](#).

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6.3 The debt system

- 6.3.1 The Europol report, Trafficking in Human Beings in the EU, February 2016 observed that:

'Once in the destination country, victims are forced into prostitution. They work for many hours a day and most of their earnings are collected by their exploiters, though they may receive a very small salary in order to fulfil their basic needs. In many cases, victims are forced to repay the cost of their transportation and accommodation to their exploiters and are kept in debt bondage for indefinite periods. Usually, the profits from the exploitation are sent back to the country of origin of the exploiters via different channels, mainly wire transfers or by cash couriers [...].'⁵⁰

- 6.3.2 The UNODC Global Report on Trafficking in Persons 2016 observed that:

'In some cases, the "means" by which victims are trafficked can take the form of debt bondage schemes in which traffickers require the victim(s) to work under exploitative conditions in order to pay back expenses incurred in the smuggling process. Nigerian criminal groups typically "offer" victims an irregular migration package to Europe for about 50-70,000 Nigerian naira (roughly 250 euros) during the recruitment in Nigeria. Such a package promises land, sea or air transportation, making use of counterfeit

⁴⁸ Europol, Trafficking in Human Beings in the EU, p21-22, February 2016, [url](#).

⁴⁹ EASO, Nigeria: Sex trafficking of Women, 2.2, October 2015, [url](#).

⁵⁰ Europol, Trafficking in Human Beings in the EU, February 2016, [url](#).

documents or other means. The person accepts the price with the idea of paying it back by working in Europe. Once at destination, the debt is converted into 50-70,000 euros to be paid by forced prostitution for a period that could last up to three years or longer.’⁵¹

6.3.3 US SD TiP Report 2018 noted that,

‘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.’⁵²

6.3.4 The EASO, Nigeria: Sex trafficking of Women, report published 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 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

⁵¹ UNODC Global Report on Trafficking in Persons, p60, 2016, [url](#).

⁵² US SD TiP 2018’, 27 June 2018, [url](#)

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.'⁵³

6.3.5 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 [...].'⁵⁴

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6.4 Juju / Voodoo ceremonies

6.4.1 USSD TiP Report 2018 noted that '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

⁵³ EASO, Nigeria: Sex trafficking of Women, 2.2, October 2015, [url](#).

⁵⁴ EASO, Nigeria: Sex trafficking of Women, 2.2, October 2015, [url](#).

traffickers, or a curse will harm them, which prevents victims from seeking assistance or cooperating with law enforcement...'⁵⁵

- 6.4.2 The EASO, Targeting of Individuals report published November 2018 citing various sources stated:

'Part of the modus operandi of Nigerian traffickers is the use of juju, the Nigerian popular term for "traditional" medicine and charms. The juju ceremony takes place at a religious shrine in order to seal and confirm the contract (the ritual oath) between the trafficker and the trafficked person. The oath is seen as binding and when breaking it, it is believed that it would evoke punishment by the god involved, leading to misfortune, illness or worse. The 2015 EASO report showed that juju is used as a tool to control the victims' and only has relative importance. "Not every woman participating in juju rituals necessarily believes in juju, nor is she a voodoo worshipper. Many consider it a mere contract ritual with no magic powers and perceive the oath as a sealing of agreements."⁵⁶

- 6.4.3 The report further stated that; 'the Oba (king) of Benin "placed a curse on perpetrators of human trafficking in Edo State as well as native doctors who administer oath of secrecy on victims, asserting that the gods of Benin Kingdom would destroy those involved in the illicit trade." The Oba "nullified all the oaths secrecy administered on all victims of human trafficking and urged them to speak out and seek assistance."⁵⁷

- 6.4.4 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. and Ikeora, M., 'The Role of African Traditional Religion and 'Juju' in Human Trafficking: Implication for Anti-trafficking', Journal of International Women's Studies, vol. 17\(1\).](#)

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Section 7 updated: 4 July 2019

7. Protection and assistance

7.1 Law and policy position

- 7.1.1 The University of Bedfordshire/IOM report 2018 stated:

'In terms of human trafficking, Nigeria became a signatory to the Palermo Protocol on 13 December 2000, with Edo State enacting a specific law in the same year – the Edo State Criminal Code (Amendment Law) 2000. The National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons (NAPTIP) was created on 14 July 2003 by the Trafficking in Persons (Prohibition) Law Enforcement and Administration Act 2003, a bill that was led by the Women Trafficking and Child Labour Eradication Foundation (WOTCLEF), one of the foremost Non-Governmental Organisations (NGO) in Nigeria fighting against child trafficking and established in 1999.'⁵⁸

⁵⁵ US SD TiP 2018', 27 June 2018,

⁵⁶ EASO, 'Targeting of Individuals' 2018, page 51, [url](#).

⁵⁷ EASO, 'Targeting of Individuals' 2018, page 51, [url](#).

⁵⁸ University of Bedfordshire, 'Vulnerability to Human Trafficking, p20, October 2018 [url](#).

7.1.2 The US SD TiP report commented that:

‘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.’⁵⁹

7.1.3 The US SD TiP report 2018 also 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. 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 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.’⁶⁰

7.1.4 The USSD TiP report 2018 assessed Nigeria to be a Tier 2 Watchlist country for the second consecutive year⁶¹, which it defined as ‘The government of countries that do not fully meet the [TVPA's minimum standards](#), but are

⁵⁹ US SD TiP 2018', 27 June 2018, [url](#)

⁶⁰ US SD TiP 2018', 27 June 2018, [url](#)

⁶¹ US SD TiP 2018', 27 June 2018, [url](#)

making significant efforts to bring themselves into compliance with those standards.’⁶²

- 7.1.5 During a visit to Nigeria in August 2018 the UK Prime Minister Theresa May unveiled a series of measures to cut illegal and unsafe migration into Europe from West Africa and support victims of modern slavery, this included plans to tackle the serious organised crime behind people trafficking and help victims rebuild their lives. The announcements included support to migrants and modern slavery victims returning to Nigeria from Libya, including counselling and training in business and vocational skills delivered in partnership with the International Organisation of Migration.

A UK and France led project to assist Nigeria and Niger strengthen their border cooperation to prevent trafficking along one of the main migration routes towards Libya and Europe.

The UK-funded headquarters of the Joint Border Task Force has been established at Lagos airport, where UK and Nigerian authorities have been working together to identify traffickers and bring them to justice⁶³.

For more information see press release [UK steps up fight against human trafficking in West Africa](#).

- 7.1.6 EASO in their 2018 Actors of Protection report, citing other sources said:

‘A new Director General of NAPTIP, Barrister Julie Okah-Donli, was appointed in April 2017 and NAPTIP continued to lead government efforts to combat trafficking, as well as drafting a 2018-2023 national action plan and awareness campaigns at schools, churches, and transit centres. It also “significantly expanded” media outreach via television and radio to educate the public on the issue of human trafficking. To tackle the rise of trafficking of Nigerian women and girls to Europe in 2017, NAPTIP began stepping up efforts in October 2017 (being backed with a 7 million pound aid package from the UK’s foreign aid department in December), mainly via more aggressive awareness campaigns and by rewarding whistleblowers with shares of traffickers’ gains.’⁶⁴

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7.2 Enforcement agencies, activities and UK assistance

- 7.2.1 The National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons (NAPTIP) is Nigeria’s multidisciplinary agency created to tackle human trafficking. The agency is headquartered in Abuja and there are 9 Zonal Commands located in Lagos, Benin, Enugu, Uyo, Sokoto, Kano, Maiduguri, Osogbo and Makurdi. The Agency also has a liaison office in Port-Harcourt. The Headquarters in Abuja and All the Zonal Commands have transit shelters which were created to cater to the physical and psychological well-being of victims of trafficking⁶⁵.

⁶² US SD TiP 2018’, 27 June 2018, [url](#)

⁶³ Gov.UK Press Release, ‘UK Steps up fight against human trafficking in W. Africa’, 28 Aug 2018, [url](#).

⁶⁴ EASO, Actors of Protection, November 2018, [url](#).

⁶⁵ NAPTIP, About us, undated webpage, [url](#).

- 7.2.2 On its website, NAPTIP states that its functions include 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 ⁶⁶.
- 7.2.3 NAPTIP's Public Enlightenment Department stated:
 'The Public Enlightenment Department of NAPTIP is one of the core departments of the Agency [...]. It has organized and executed several awareness/sensitization programmes, in virtually all the states of the country in collaboration with our 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 publication Electronic media messages Outdoor publicity vans Jingles Local media Newsletter publication Traditional methods of communication e.g. Town Crier Drama Feedback mechanism.'⁶⁷
- 7.2.4 The Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner Report (IASC) Report 2016-2017 declared in relation to the UK's fights against modern slavery that:
 'In late October 2016, following a commitment of £33.5 million overseas aid funding made earlier in the year, the Home Secretary revealed that some of this funding would be dedicated to a Modern Slavery Innovation Fund of £11 million and a Child Trafficking Protection Fund of £3 million. In addition, tackling modern slavery has become a foreign policy priority. In the last year, the Department for International Development has committed £7 million to fight trafficking and slavery in Nigeria (a top source country for UK victims of the crime) and included the prevention of modern slavery and protection of vulnerable women and girls as a core objective in responding to the Mediterranean migration crisis. Furthermore, in September 2017, the Secretary of State for International Development, the Rt Hon Priti Patel, announced that the UK will increase its development spending on modern slavery to £150 million.'⁶⁸
- 7.2.5 In summary the same report advised that the UK government has dedicated £5 million towards enhanced collaboration in Nigeria. The funds will be used to develop solutions at source to prevent exploitation occurring in the first place. A further £7 million will be provided by the Department for International Development (DFID). The Commissioner Kevin Hyland OBE visited Nigeria in July 2017 presenting at a high level national conference in Abuja alongside the Nigerian Attorney General, and Cardinal John Onayekien, the Archbishop of Abuja. It was acknowledged that more needs

⁶⁶ NAPTIP, About us, undated webpage [url](#).

⁶⁷ NAPTIP, Public Enlightenment, undated webpage [url](#).

⁶⁸ Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner Report 2016-2017, p6, October 2017, [url](#).

to be done to address human trafficking. The Commissioner also held meetings with the Director General of the Nigerian Anti-Trafficking Agency (NAPTIP) to identify opportunities to further develop efforts to improve law enforcement responses. This included the introduction of judicial training for the Nigerian judiciary, which is to be delivered by current serving British judges.⁶⁹

7.2.6 A final report titled 'Between two fires' which was published in March 2019 following a 2-year research study partnership and shared learning event between the University of Bedfordshire and the International Organization for Migration (IOM) observed that NAPTIP's recognition in the area of prosecutions is linked to their role as the leading government agency on human trafficking alongside its collaboration with other national government agencies like the Nigeria Police Force, the Nigeria Immigration Service, the Joint Border Taskforce including state agencies like the Edo State Taskforce⁷⁰.

7.2.7 The 2018 UK Annual Report on Modern Slavery, published October 2018, gave more information about how some of the UK money was being spent: 'The Home Office also funded pilot activity to prevent women in Nigeria from becoming victims of modern slavery in the UK. This communications programme aimed to inform young women and their parents and guardians about the risks of domestic servitude, trafficking and exploitation and the local alternatives. It was delivered by locally recruited community advisors who held information events and one-to-one consultations and delivered educational outreach activity.'⁷¹

7.2.8 The same report also said that:

'The NCA has a network of International Liaison Officers (ILOs) across the globe, including in key source and transit countries for modern slavery victims and offenders. The ILOs work with host country law enforcement agencies to ensure an effective international law enforcement response to modern slavery. For example, the NCA, alongside Immigration Enforcement, Border Force and the CPS, has continued to work extensively with the Nigerian Anti-Trafficking Agency (NAPTIP). This includes training and mentoring a Joint Border Task Force (JBTF) and joint working on European investigations. Immigration Enforcement International provides a mentor from the overseas investigations team to support NAPTIP officers seconded into the JBTF. The team has built a strong reputation for delivery over the last 18 months and has conducted joint investigations with law enforcement partners in Europe. In 2017, NAPTIP officers were deployed to Heathrow and Gatwick Airports (during Project AIDANT) to build their expertise in identifying potential victims of trafficking, and also attended a number of intelligence led enforcement visits that indicated Nigerian nationals were being forced into domestic servitude and exploitation.'⁷²

⁶⁹ Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner Report 2016-2017, p36, October 2017, [url](#).

⁷⁰ University of Bedfordshire, "Between Two Fires": ... Final report', p97, 2018 [url](#).

⁷¹ 2018 UK Annual Report on Modern Slavery, October 2018, para 2.72, [url](#)

⁷² 2018 UK Annual Report on Modern Slavery, October 2018, para 2.36, [url](#)

7.2.9 US SD TiP 2018 report found that:

‘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.’⁷³

7.2.10 EASO observed in their 2019 report 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.’⁷⁴

7.2.11 The IASC report also stated that: ‘The Commissioner has commended joint working between the UK’s National Crime Agency (NCA), Immigration Enforcement International (IEI) and NAPTIP, which included the first ever deployment of NAPTIP officers to the UK, assisting law enforcement officials through targeted action at London’s airports. NCA and IEI collaborative working with NAPTIP has also increased the numbers of the most vulnerable being safeguarded after returning from Libya.’⁷⁵

For further information see the [2018 UK Annual Report on Modern Slavery](#).

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7.3 The UK National Referral Mechanism (NRM)

7.3.1 The Home Office document, ‘Victims of human trafficking: competent authority guidance’, April 2019, stated:

‘Decisions about who is recognised as a victim of modern slavery are made by trained specialists in the [Single Competent Authority] SCA. The SCA replaced the previous Competent Authorities on 29 April 2019.

‘All referrals to the NRM from first responders must be sent to the SCA for consideration. The SCA also manages the data on NRM referrals.

‘The SCA makes decisions on all NRM cases, regardless of nationality or immigration status of the individual. The SCA therefore considers a case for:

- a UK national
- an European Economic Area (EEA) national
- a non-EEA national’⁷⁶

7.3.2 The National Crime Agency (NCA) described the NRM as ‘The National Referral Mechanism (NRM) is a framework for identifying victims of human

⁷³ USSD, ‘TiP 2018’, 27 June 2018, [url](#)

⁷⁴ EASO Country Guidance Nigeria, February 2019, [url](#).

⁷⁵ Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner Report 2016-2017, p36, October 2017, [url](#).

⁷⁶ Home Office, ‘Victims of modern slavery...’, p16, 29 April 2019, [url](#)

trafficking or modern slavery and ensuring they receive the appropriate support. The NRM is also the mechanism through which the [Modern Slavery Human Trafficking Unit \(MSHTU\)](#) collect data about victims. This information contributes to building a clearer picture about the scope of human trafficking and modern slavery in the UK.⁷⁷

- 7.3.3 The IASC Report 2016-2017 identified as part of their key achievements that: ‘The National Referral Mechanism (NRM) is the UK’s framework for potential victims of modern slavery to be identified and referred for appropriate support; however, the existing NRM has many flaws that have been allowed to operate for too long. The Commissioner has therefore called for complete reform of the system, with more coordination, accountability, oversight and monitoring. Such a system will ensure a more robust and professional response to modern slavery crime.’⁷⁸

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7.4 The Nigerian National Referral Mechanism (NRM)

- 7.4.1 NAPTIP in 2015 finalised a document, funded by the European Union called, [‘Guidelines on National Referral Mechanism for Protection and Assistance to Trafficked Persons in Nigeria 2014’](#). The document contained an ad campaign ‘Look beneath the surface’ and helpline number.
- 7.4.2 The document identified basic principles which was to ‘ensure that every Trafficked Person (TP) is empowered, supported and protected with a view to ensuring that he/she is effectively rehabilitated and reintegrated. [...] ‘The Guidelines also define the roles and responsibilities of the NRM partners [unspecified], and the programmes and services that should be available to TPs. The NRM is designed to enhance service delivery to TPs.’⁷⁹

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7.5 Protection and effectiveness of enforcement agencies

- 7.5.1 EASO in their Actors of Protection report 2018 citing various sources note ‘NAPTIP employs various methods for its investigations, such as proactive investigation, reactive investigation, disruptive operations, surveillance and joint operations and other intelligence cooperation mechanisms.’⁸⁰
- 7.5.2 The same report goes on to say that despite a significant increase in funding from the previous year (86% budget rise) NAPTIP does not have sufficient resources to carry out sufficient proactive anti-trafficking operations and its officers were often concentrated in state capitals which got in the way of identification and investigation of trafficking in rural areas⁸¹.
- 7.5.3 The report also stated that:

⁷⁷ National Crime Agency (NCA) website, undated, [url](#).

⁷⁸ Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner Report 2016-2017, p13, October 2017, [url](#).

⁷⁹ NAPTIP, ‘Guidelines on National Referral Mechanism for Protection and Assistance to Trafficked Persons in Nigeria 2014’, undated, [url](#).

⁸⁰ EASO, Actors of Protection, November 2018, [url](#).

⁸¹ EASO, Actors of Protection, November 2018, [url](#).

‘Among NAPTIP’s departments, the arguably most relevant ones in relation to protection are the Counselling and Rehabilitation department and the Investigation and Monitoring department. The Counselling and Rehabilitation department collaborates with relevant government ministries, agencies, NGOs and development partners. It is divided into four sections and two units: the Programme Development Section (programme development, policy formulation and mainstreaming gender in NAPTIP’s activities); Rehabilitation Section (direct assistance to trafficked persons, including counselling and rehabilitation); Shelter Management Section (day-to-day operation of the shelter facilities); NGO Section (coordination of relationship between NAPTIP and relevant NGOs); Medical Unit (medical care for the victims and coordination of relationship with other healthcare service providers); and Coordination Unit (coordinates and documents all the activities of the department).’⁸²

7.5.4 The EASO Country Guidance report of 2019 citing various sources stated:

‘NAPTIP is Nigeria’s principal agency to combat human trafficking. 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 shelter, counselling, rehabilitation, reintegration and access to justice. In 2017, NAPTIP received significantly more funding from the government compared to previous years. Despite this increase, the agency did not have sufficient resources, given the scale of the problem. For example, NAPTIP did not have resources to carry out sufficient proactive antitrafficking operations, and its officers were often concentrated in state capitals, thereby hindering identification and investigation of trafficking in rural areas.’⁸³

7.5.5 EASO, citing several sources, also reported in a Key Socio-Economic Indicators report of 2018 that: The National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons (NAPTIP) manages eight (or nine) 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]. The shelters – transit or closed -, are managed by NAPTIP’s Shelter Management Section and offer the victims food, clothing, hygiene products, physical exercise and basic educational courses. Victims can stay in NAPTIP shelters up to six weeks, and if needed, can then be referred to shelters run by ‘collaborating NGOs’.⁸⁴

7.5.6 The same report also stated that:

‘In September 2017, NAPTIP announced it “will vet all Non-Governmental Organization (NGOs) working against human trafficking.” According to NATIP’s Director General, Julie Okah-Donli, “the era of haphazard programming and interventions largely un-measurable and unaccountable must stop” and “all partners working in the field of human trafficking must be

⁸² EASO, Actors of Protection, November 2018, [url](#).

⁸³ EASO Country Guidance Nigeria, February 2019, [url](#).

⁸⁴ EASO Key Socio-Economic Indicators, November 2018 [url](#).

credible, accountable and reputable.” NACTAL (Network of Civil Society organization against Child trafficking, abuse and labour) also “should be subjected to monitoring and evaluation.”⁸⁵

7.5.7 US SD TiP 2018 found that, ‘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.’⁸⁶

7.5.8 The same report continued to state:

‘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 Civilian Joint Task Force (CJTF), who forced IDPs to have sex in exchange for food and freedom of movement in and outside of the camps. [...] 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.’⁸⁷

7.5.9 Also, that: ‘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.’⁸⁸

⁸⁵ EASO Key Socio-Economic Indicators, November 2018 [url](#).

⁸⁶ US SD TiP 2018’, 27 June 2018, [url](#)

⁸⁷ US SD TiP 2018’, 27 June 2018,

⁸⁸ US SD TiP 2018’, 27 June 2018, [url](#)

- 7.5.10 However, '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.'⁸⁹
- 7.5.11 US SD TiP report 2018 said that '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.'⁹⁰
- 7.5.12 A NAPTIP Factsheet, undated on its website, stated the following:
- 'To implement its mandate to protect victims of human trafficking, the Agency has articulated frameworks and instruments to support this mandate. The main instrument is the National Policy on Protection and Assistance to Trafficked Persons in Nigeria [...].
- 'The Policy adopts a holistic approach in the protection and assistance to trafficked persons through rehabilitation programmes that provide appropriate integration into their various communities.
- 'The scope/method includes reception, identification, sheltering, counselling, family tracing, return/repatriation, integration, empowerment, follow up/after-care and disengagement.'⁹¹
- 7.5.13 The EASO 2015 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...
- '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.'⁹²

⁸⁹ US SD TiP 2018', 27 June 2018, [url](#)

⁹⁰ US SD TiP 2018', 27 June 2018, [url](#)

⁹¹ NAPTIP website, Factsheet, undated [url](#).

⁹² EASO, Nigeria: Sex Trafficking of Women, 4.3, October 2015, [url](#).

7.5.14 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 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 [...].’⁹³

7.5.15 US SD TiP 2018 report found that in relation to the number of convicted traffickers in their reporting period that:

[...] ‘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’ [...].’⁹⁴

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⁹³ EASO, Nigeria Sex Trafficking of Women, section 4.8, October 2015, [url](#).

⁹⁴ US SD TiP 2018’, 27 June 2018, [url](#)

7.6 Investigations and convictions

7.6.1 With regard to prosecutions in Nigeria, the USSD TiP report stated:

‘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 in 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.’⁹⁵

7.6.2 The same report also observed that:

‘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.’⁹⁶

7.6.3 NAPTIP reported on their website on 23 December 2018 that a 25-year-old man had pleaded guilty for the trafficking of a 19-year-old woman to Mali for sexual exploitation. The defendant was sentenced to 7 years in prison⁹⁷.

7.6.4 Also, on 11 February 2019 NAPTIP reported that a 29-year-old person had been convicted of trafficking. The charge against the defendant was for organising the foreign travel of a 19-year-old female to Mali for exploitative prostitution. The victim was rescued by the Nigerian Immigration Service. The defendant was sentenced to a total of 9 years imprisonment⁹⁸.

7.6.5 In the 2nd and 3rd quarter of 2018 a report by NAPTIP showed that out of 88 possible cases 33 were charged to court. Within the same period there were 12 convictions under review, this resulted in 20 individual people convicted⁹⁹.

7.6.6 The table below¹⁰⁰ illustrates cases received, charged to court and convictions won or lost as recorded by NAPTIP in their 2nd/3rd quarter report for 2018.

Offences	No of cases received	No of cases charged to court	Convictions won	Convictions lost

⁹⁵ US SD TiP 2018', 27 June 2018, [url](#)

⁹⁶ US SD TiP 2018', 27 June 2018, [url](#)

⁹⁷ NAPTIP website, 'Court Jails 25-year-old man for Human trafficking', 23 December 2018, [url](#).

⁹⁸ NAPTIP website, 'Court Jails 29-year-old for Human trafficking', 11 February 2019, [url](#).

⁹⁹ NAPTIP, 2nd and 3rd quarter report 2018, p7/8, [url](#).

¹⁰⁰ NAPTIP, 2nd and 3rd quarter report 2018, p7, [url](#).

Exportation of persons for prostitution	4	1		
Procurement of Persons for Sexual Exploitation	24	9	5	1
Recruitment of Persons Under 18 years for Prostitution	6	1		
Recruitment of Persons for Pornography or Brothel	3	2		
Foreign Travel which Promotes Prostitution	17	2	1	0
Buying or Selling of Human Beings for any purpose	6	4	1	0
Forced Labour within Nigeria	12	11	2	0
Forced Labour outside Nigeria	2	0		
Employment of Child as domestic worker and inflicting grievous harm	3	0	1	0
Fraudulent Entry of Persons	10	0	1	0
Obstruction of the Agency or its authorized Officer	0	2		
Omitting to do anything to stop Human Trafficking	0	1		
Rape	1	0		
Attempting to commit an offence under this Act	0	0	1	0
TOTAL	88	33	12	1

7.6.7 The year-end report from NAPTIP for 2017 showed that The Legal Department of NAPTIP received 256 cases for legal opinion, of those 40 were for 'Procurement of persons for sexual exploitation'. Under the year in review the agency had 70 which resulted in a total of 113 persons charged to court. The highest number of these cases were associated with the 'Procurement of persons for sexual exploitation', which had 22 cases (27 persons charged to court)¹⁰¹.

¹⁰¹ NAPTIP, Data Analysis Final 2017, [url](#).

- 7.6.8 The same report asserted that the Agency secured a total of 21 cases, of which 26 people were convicted. Bringing the total number of convictions since inception to 282 with 337 persons convicted. The recruitment of persons under 18yrs for prostitution/sexual exploitation had the highest number of convictions with 12 cases won (14 people convicted)¹⁰².

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Section 8 updated: 24 June 2019

8. Treatment on return

8.1 Process of return and risks

- 8.1.1 EASO reported in their Country Guidance 2019 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).'¹⁰³

- 8.1.2 Landinfo, in the English summary of their 'Thematic Note Nigeria: Returns for women who have worked in prostitution in Europe' (Google translate), published 20 March 2017 found that:

'Female migrants who return to Nigeria after having worked in prostitution in Europe face challenges which are common to other returning migrants, and to the majority of Nigerians who never left the country. They do also face some additional challenges particular to their situation. Migrants who return with few resources tend to be perceived as failing in achieving the goals that motivated their migration. Returning migrants have no access to services from Nigerian authorities, except when they are defined as victims of human trafficking. But also victims of trafficking receive very limited assistance from authorities and local organisations, mainly in the form of vocational training provided by local NGOs collaborating with NAPTIP. All state services for victims of trafficking are organised by the federal agency NAPTIP, both concerning reintegration and protection. Some women who are forcibly returned are still in debt to the people who sponsored their migration to Europe, and a number of these women, but not all, face problems with their sponsors for not repaying their debt. NAPTIP can assist these women and their family with investigating their sponsors in order to prosecute them for human trafficking, but this depends on the victims collaborating by providing information and testifying in court.'¹⁰⁴

- 8.1.3 Following on from this and citing various sources EASO stated that:

'According to researchers Adeleye Modupe and Omoregie Pat Iziengbe interviewed by OFPRA during a mission to Nigeria in 2016, victims of trafficking can be discriminated against and be marginalised, as their return is perceived as a failure to thrive in Europe. In addition, as victims often do

¹⁰² NAPTIP, Data Analysis Final 2017, [url](#).

¹⁰³ EASO Country Guidance Nigeria, February 2019, [url](#).

¹⁰⁴ Landinfo, Nigeria: Returforhold for kvinner som har arbeidet i prostitusjon i Europa, 20 Mar 2017, [url](#).

not succeed in paying their debt, they are therefore not able to support their families left behind. Sine Plambech, anthropologist and researcher at the Danish Institute for International Studies refers that all women returned (voluntarily or forcibly) have a debt. After working in the sex industry in Europe (and when there is no man in their families to support them), the returned women are kept in the role of family provider - as when they worked abroad. This, Plambech states, brings added insecurity to these women upon return: "This also makes women very vulnerable upon return. It is not that they would be safe necessarily if they were living with men, but it is single women households living women on the outskirts of Benin City, with very limited access to any kind of safety or security and many of them have experienced violence upon returning."¹⁰⁵

8.1.4 The University of Bedfordshire found in their 2018 report that:

'There is a gap between the number of Nigerian nationals referred into the UK NRM and the numbers of people accessing support service for trafficked persons in Nigeria. The difference between the numbers referred into the UK NRM and the numbers of Nigerian nationals identified and supported who had experienced trafficking to the UK was stark. Only 6 people over a 5-year period (2013-2017) who had experienced trafficking in the UK were known to NAPTIP. This means that those returning to Nigeria may not be accessing any support upon return.'¹⁰⁶

8.1.5 EASO in its 2019 Country guidance when referring to victims of trafficking and risk of persecution on their return to Nigeria:

'Individuals under this profile could be exposed to acts which are of such severe nature that they would amount to persecution (e.g. violence, re-trafficking). Where the risk is of discrimination and/or mistreatment by society and/or by the family, the individual assessment of whether or not this could amount to persecution should take into account the severity and/or repetitiveness of the acts or whether they occur as an accumulation of various measures. Not all individuals under this profile would face the level of risk required to establish well-founded fear of persecution. The individual assessment of whether or not there is a reasonable degree of likelihood for the applicant to face persecution should take into account risk-impacting circumstances, such as: amount of "debt" to traffickers, whether the applicant has testified against the traffickers, level of power/capability of the traffickers, the traffickers' knowledge about the victims' family and background, age, family status (e.g. orphan, single woman), socio-economic background and financial means, level of education, availability of support network (family or other) or the family's involvement in the trafficking, etc.'¹⁰⁷

8.1.6 The EASO report on sex trafficking, 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

¹⁰⁵ EASO, 'Targeting Individuals', p141, November 2018, [url](#).

¹⁰⁶ University of Bedfordshire, 'Vulnerability to Human Trafficking, p18, October 2018 [url](#).

¹⁰⁷ EASO Country Guidance Nigeria, p61, February 2019, [url](#).

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).¹⁰⁸

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8.2 Reintegration

8.2.1 EASO stated however that, '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.'¹⁰⁹

8.2.2 The US SD TiP report 2018 stated that:

'In response to a large number of Nigerian migrants stranded in Libya, including some trafficking victims, the [Nigerian] 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

¹⁰⁸ EASO, Nigeria: Sex trafficking of Women, section 4.1, October 2015, [url](#).

¹⁰⁹ EASO Country Guidance Nigeria, February 2019, [url](#).

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.’¹¹⁰

- 8.2.3 The University of Bedfordshire paper stated that: ‘The issue of social stigma and discrimination as a result of trafficking were considered key to reintegration efforts. The issue of social stigma and discrimination were outlined as being key issues faced by those who had experienced human trafficking. Adults who had been trafficked for sexual exploitation were routinely referred to in media reports and official accounts as “prostitutes” and other discriminatory labels.’¹¹¹
- 8.2.4 Nigerian victims rescued from other countries in the reporting period of 2017 totalled 681, of those 373 were rescued from Libya. The United Kingdom had one person rescued. The victims rescued within the reporting period were empowered by the Agency [NAPTIP] under various vocational training programmes including shoe making, hairdressing, knitting/weaving and hat making¹¹².
- 8.2.5 A news report dated 2 February 2018 by DW Africa interviewed women who had returned to Nigeria from Libya with the help of the IOM, one is reported to have said: “(When we arrived) we were given 40.000 Naira (€90). That is what they give us, each and every one of us. 40.000 Naira is not going to do anything. As I came back, I knew there would be no food in my house. I just used the money to buy food and take it to my children.”¹¹³
- 8.2.6 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.’¹¹⁴

¹¹⁰ US SD TiP 2018’, 27 June 2018, [url](#)

¹¹¹ University of Bedfordshire, ‘Vulnerability to Human Trafficking, p18, October 2018 [url](#).

¹¹² NAPTIP, Data Analysis Final 2017, [url](#).

¹¹³ DW Africa, ‘Nigerian returnees face poverty and destitution back home’, 02 February 2018, [url](#).

¹¹⁴ EASO, Nigeria: Sex trafficking of Women, section 4.1, October 2015, [url](#).

8.2.7 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 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 [...].’¹¹⁵

8.2.8 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’.¹¹⁶

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8.3 Family/societal attitudes and treatment

- 8.3.1 The Australian Government, DFAT Country of Information Report – Nigeria, stated in March 2018 that ‘DFAT assesses as credible advice from local NGOs that trafficked women who have worked as prostitutes abroad are generally not subjected to negative social attitudes on their return to Nigeria. On the contrary, many people held the women in high regard because they had been overseas and often had improved income prospects. Many

¹¹⁵ EASO, Nigeria: Sex trafficking of Women, section 4.6, October 2015, [url](#).

¹¹⁶ EASO, Nigeria: Sex trafficking of Women, section 4.9, October 2015, [url](#).

returned prostitutes continue to have outstanding debts to either the madam or trafficker.¹¹⁷

- 8.3.2 EASO noted that: ‘Women who return wealthy generally do not encounter negative societal attitudes and may enjoy high socio-economic status and greater influence within their family. On the other hand, returning victims of trafficking may be discriminated against and be marginalised, when their return is perceived as a failure to become wealthy in Europe. The social stigmatisation is also high if the victim returns with health problems.’¹¹⁸

- 8.3.3 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 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.’¹¹⁹

- 8.3.4 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.’¹²⁰

- 8.3.5 The EASO report, citing various sources referred to ‘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

¹¹⁷ Australian Government, DFAT Country of Information Report – Nigeria, paragraphs 3.54

¹¹⁸ EASO Country Guidance Nigeria, February 2019, [url](#).

¹¹⁹ EASO, Nigeria: Sex trafficking of Women, section 2.4, October 2015, [url](#).

¹²⁰ EASO, Nigeria: Sex trafficking of Women, p38, October 2015, [url](#).

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.¹²¹

8.3.6 The EASO report also referred to '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. [...] '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. [...] '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. [...] 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.'¹²²

8.3.7 The report also considered 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.'¹²³

8.3.8 And looked at 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

¹²¹ EASO, Nigeria: Sex trafficking of Women, p38, October 2015, [url](#).

¹²² EASO, Nigeria: Sex trafficking of Women, p38-39, October 2015, [url](#).

¹²³ EASO, Nigeria: Sex trafficking of Women, p38-39, October 2015, [url](#).

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.¹²⁴

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Section 9 updated: 24 June 2019

9. Government and NGO assistance

9.1 Shelters

- 9.1.1 The EASO Country Guidance Nigeria, February 2019 states that: '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.'¹²⁵
- 9.1.2 EASO in their Nigeria: Key Socio-Economic Report of November 2018 citing other sources stated: 'The Ministry of Women's Affairs runs two shelters that receive VoT referred to by NAPTIP. Some NGOs run shelters across Nigeria: The African Network Against Human Trafficking (ANAHT) in Bakhita Villa, Lagos; the Nigerian Conference of Women Religious, in Benin City; The Women Trafficking and Child Labour Eradication Foundation (WOTCLEF), in Abuja; Grace Gardens in Jos, Plateau State.'¹²⁶
- 9.1.3 The USSD TiP 2018 reported that,
'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.'¹²⁷
- 9.1.4 The same report stated:
'NAPTIP staff did not permit victims to leave shelters without a chaperone, which limited victims' freedom of movement and educational and work opportunities [...].
'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

¹²⁴ EASO, Nigeria: Sex trafficking of Women, p38-39, October 2015, [url](#).

¹²⁵ EASO Country Guidance Nigeria, February 2019, [url](#).

¹²⁶ EASO, Nigeria: Key Socio-Economic Indicators, p58, [url](#).

¹²⁷ US SD TiP 2018', 27 June 2018, [url](#)

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. [...] 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.’¹²⁸

9.1.5 NAPTIP stated on its website that the length of stay in one of its shelters is limited to 6 weeks, those who need to stay longer are referred to shelters run by collaborating NGOs¹²⁹.

9.1.6 DW Africa reported on 02 February 2018 that: ‘several women (are) currently living at the "Welcome House" run by the Committee for the Support and Dignity of Women (COSUDOW) – an initiative organized by Catholic nuns aimed at providing a safe house to young women without families’.¹³⁰

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9.2 State agencies

9.2.1 US SD TiP report 2018 observed that:

‘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.’¹³¹

9.2.2 In its annual undated report for 2017 (the most recent one available on NAPTIP website) NAPTIP reported:

‘Under the year in review (2017), [...]1890 victims were rescued, bringing it to a total of [...] 12,360 victims rescued by the Agency since inception.

‘Out of the total number, [...] 429 victims, representing 22.7% of the number, were rescued under the Procurement for sexual exploitation or Prostitution externally case, making it the highest. Following it is the Procurement for Foreign Travel which Promotes Prostitution and Child domestic labour, with [...] 374 and 299 cases, respectively.’¹³²

¹²⁸ US SD TiP 2018’, 27 June 2018, [url](#)

¹²⁹ NAPTIP, Website, Counselling and Rehabilitation, undated [url](#).

¹³⁰ DW Africa, ‘Nigerian returnees face poverty and destitution back home’, 02 February 2018, [url](#).

¹³¹ US SD TiP 2018’, 27 June 2018, [url](#)

¹³² NAPTIP, Data Analysis Final 2017, [url](#).

9.3 Funding

- 9.3.1 EASO in their Targeting of Individuals Report 2018, citing various sources, said: 'The Nigerian National Agency for Prohibition of Trafficking in Person's (NAPTIP) Director General, Julie Okah-Donli has identified funding as a major challenge for the agency. [...] 'On 16 May 2018, the Nigerian Senate passed the annual budget, six months after it was presented to the National Assembly. No information was found on the budget allocation for NAPTIP.'¹³³
- 9.3.2 The US SD TiP Report observed in 2018:
'The government increased NAPTIP's budget [in 2017] by 86% 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.'¹³⁴

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9.4 Non-government organisations

- 9.4.1 The NGO section within NAPTIP describes itself as
- 9.4.2 '[...] responsible for coordinating the relationship between NAPTIP and NGO partners, both local and international, working in the area of rehabilitation and integration of victims of human trafficking. It collates, compiles and updates the directory of NGOs working in the area of human trafficking. It also pays serious attention to their authenticity and track record in addressing human trafficking issues.'¹³⁵
- For further information see the [NAPTIP website](#).
- 9.4.3 The EASO Country Guidance 2019 observed that: 'Civil society organisations have also expressed concerns that draft legislation to regulate NGOs is an attempt to crack down and monitor NGOs, by providing the government with an opportunity to use State power without accountability. Human rights defenders are frequently subjected to threatening phone calls or messages, visits from security agents, surveillance, intimidation and summons to police stations.'¹³⁶
- 9.4.4 A final report titled 'Between two fires' published March 2019 following a 2-year research study partnership and shared learning event between the University of Bedfordshire and the International Organization for Migration (IOM) observed that:
'NGOs are beginning to embark on assessment and data gathering exercises around vulnerabilities factors, knowledge, attitude and practice as well as mapping exercises to enable their interventions to better target

¹³³ EASO, 'Targeting Individuals', p49, November 2018, [url](#).

¹³⁴ US SD TiP 2018', 27 June 2018, [url](#)

¹³⁵ NAPTIP, Counselling and Rehabilitation, [url](#).

¹³⁶ EASO, Country Guidance Nigeria, p53, February 2019, [url](#).

potential victims. In addition, most key informants believe that there is need to embark on long term behavioural, cultural and attitude change interventions as this could be a more lasting solution to eliminating human trafficking in high risk communities and states in Nigeria. [...]

'A local NGO in Benin also spoke about the organisation's work around prosecution of traffickers and the organisation stated that it is advocating the House of Representatives for the amendment of the anti-trafficking law especially in relation to getting stricter penalties and this could include a life sentence for traffickers if it is the second trafficking conviction. The organisation also provides legal support to victims who want to testify against their traffickers.'¹³⁷

9.4.5 The report went onto state:

'In Nigeria, most trafficking interventions by state and non-state actors are centred around advocacy and campaign activities with a heavy focus on awareness raising and community sensitisation across different platform and networks. Key informants spoke about how they go to schools, religious organisations, local markets and communities warning vulnerable families and youths on the dangers of human trafficking and irregular migration. Some organisations are undertaking anti-human trafficking campaigns using different media channels like hosting series on television and local radio stations as well as campaigning online (social media) and offline (billboards and posters) to further spread key messages on the dangers of human trafficking and irregular migration to a much broader audience. Such 'edutainment-focused' NGOs have been found to be effective in running awareness campaigns around other issues such as domestic violence.'¹³⁸

9.4.6 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-

¹³⁷ University of Bedfordshire, "Between Two Fires": ... Final report', p96, 2018 [url](#).

¹³⁸ University of Bedfordshire, "Between Two Fires": ... Final report', p89, 2018 [url](#).

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.¹³⁹

9.4.7 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.’¹⁴⁰

9.4.8 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 -.

‘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 always provided in kind, according to IOM staff, to prevent the money from ending up in the hands of traffickers.’¹⁴¹

9.4.9 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.’¹⁴² 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

¹³⁹ Human Development Initiatives, Written response to HO q’aire, July 2016, available on request

¹⁴⁰ EASO, Nigeria: Sex trafficking of Women, p40-42, October 2015, [url](#).

¹⁴¹ EASO, Nigeria: Sex trafficking of Women, p40-42, October 2015, [url](#).

¹⁴² EASO, Nigeria: Sex trafficking of Women, p40-42, October 2015, [url](#).

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...'143

- 9.4.10 The World Association of Non-Governmental Organizations (WANGO) is an international organization which maintains a database of NGOs operating in Nigeria, which can be sorted by area of work. 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 the WANGO website: <https://www.wango.org/resources.aspx?section=ngodir&sub=list&newsearch=1®ionID=11&col=ffcc00>
- 9.4.11 The UNODC NGO database is currently unavailable but can be found here <https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/ngos/NGO-Database.html>.
- 9.4.12 For more information on support and assistance for women, see country information and guidance, [Nigeria: Gender-based violence against women](#).

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Section 10 updated: 24 June 2019

10. Freedom of movement

- 10.1.1 For information generally on freedom of movement and for women in particular, see [Nigeria: Internal Relocation](#), [Nigeria: Background information](#) [Nigeria: Actors of Protection](#) and [Nigeria: Gender-Based Discrimination/Harm/Violence Against Women](#)

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¹⁴³ EASO, Nigeria Sex Trafficking of Women, p43, October 2015, [url](#).

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Clearance

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