

Flygtningenævnets baggrundsmateriale

Bilagsnr.:	598
Land:	Nigeria
Kilde:	UK Home Office
Titel:	Country Policy and Information Note Nigeria: Trafficking of women
Udgivet:	april 2022
Optaget på baggrundsmaterialet:	1. september 2022



Home Office

Country Policy and Information Note

Nigeria: Trafficking of women

Version 6.0

April 2022

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 [Introduction](#) section). It is not intended to be an exhaustive survey of a particular subject or theme.

It is split into 2 parts: (1) an 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 - that is information in the COI section; refugee/human rights laws and policies; and applicable caselaw - by describing this and its inter-relationships, and provides an assessment of, in general, whether one or more of the following applies:

- a person is reasonably likely to face a real risk of persecution or serious harm
- that the general humanitarian situation is so severe that there are substantial grounds for believing that there is a real risk of serious harm because conditions amount to inhuman or degrading treatment as within [paragraphs 339C and 339CA\(iii\) of the Immigration Rules](#)/Article 3 of the [European Convention on Human Rights \(ECHR\)](#)
- that the security situation is such that there are substantial grounds for believing there is a real risk of serious harm because there exists a serious and individual threat to a civilian's life or person by reason of indiscriminate violence in a situation of international or internal armed conflict as within [paragraphs 339C and 339CA\(iv\) of the Immigration Rules](#)
- 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
- a claim is 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 \(COI\)](#), 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. 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
- whether the COI is consistent with and/or corroborated by other sources.

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

The inclusion of a source is not, however, an endorsement of it or any view(s) expressed.

Each piece of information is referenced in a footnote. Full details of all sources cited and consulted in compiling the note are listed alphabetically in the bibliography.

Feedback

Our goal is to provide accurate, reliable and up-to-date COI and clear guidance. We welcome feedback on how to improve our products. 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:

Independent Advisory Group on Country Information
Independent Chief Inspector of Borders and Immigration
5th Floor
Globe House
89 Eccleston Square
London, SW1V 1PN
Email: chiefinspector@icibi.gov.uk

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](#).

Contents

Assessment.....	6
1. Introduction	6
1.1 Basis of claim	6
1.2 Points to note	6
2. Consideration of issues	7
2.1 Exclusion	7
2.2 Credibility.....	7
2.3 Convention reason(s).....	9
2.4 Risk.....	9
2.5 Protection	12
2.6 Internal relocation.....	15
2.7 Certification	16
Country information	17
3. Prevalence	17
3.1 Overview.....	17
3.2 Trafficking from Nigeria.....	17
3.3 Trafficking within Nigeria.....	20
3.4 Children	22
4. Trafficking networks and strategies	23
4.1 Profile of traffickers'	23
4.2 Traffickers' methods and strategies	25
4.3 Profile of victims of trafficking	28
4.4 Violence, ritual oaths and ceremonies	30
4.5 The debt system.....	32
4.6 Trafficking routes and destinations.....	34
5. Returns process and initial support.....	37
5.1 Numbers of return	37
5.2 Process of return.....	38
6. Treatment after return by non-state actors	40
6.1 Reprisals.....	40
6.2 Retrafficking	43
6.3 Initial support following return	44
6.4 Family/societal attitudes and treatment.....	45
7. Protection: the law and its enforcement.....	46
7.1 Overview.....	46

7.2	Law and policy measures	47
7.3	National Referral Mechanism (NRM)	49
7.4	Enforcement agencies and activities	49
7.5	International co-operation	50
7.6	Investigations, prosecutions and convictions	53
7.7	Effectiveness of enforcement agencies	57
8.	Shelter and assistance	59
8.1	Overview	59
8.2	Government support	59
8.3	Non-government organisations	64
9.	Freedom of movement	66
Terms of Reference		68
Bibliography		69
	Sources cited	69
	Sources consulted but not cited	71
Version control		72

Assessment

Updated: 28 April 2022

1. Introduction

1.1 Basis of claim

- 1.1.1 Fear of persecution and/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 Single Competent Authority (SCA) or the Immigration Enforcement Competent Authority (IECA) 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 should consider making appropriate referral into the relevant National Referral Mechanism (NRM). The case will then be routed to the relevant authority.
- 1.2.2 The conclusive grounds decision will be included in the outstanding asylum decision as a finding of fact.
- 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 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 competent authority, considerable weight can be placed on this. In these scenarios, because the competent authority's findings are subject to a higher standard of proof and are findings as to past treatment, it remains open to asylum decision makers to make different findings for the purpose of the asylum claim and future risk.
- 1.2.5 The [Modern Slavery Guidance](#) is aimed at:
 - (a) Competent authority staff in any part of the UK who make decisions on whether or not an individual is a potential victim/victim of modern slavery for the purpose of the National Referral Mechanism (NRM);
 - (b) and staff in England and Wales: • within public authorities who may encounter potential victims of modern slavery; and/or • who are involved in supporting victims.

- 1.2.6 In cases where a ‘positive conclusive grounds’ decision has been made; a grant of discretionary leave may be considered. For further guidance see [Discretionary leave considerations for victims of modern slavery](#).

[Back to Contents](#)

2. Consideration of issues

2.1 Exclusion

- 2.1.1 Decision makers must consider whether there are serious reasons for considering whether one (or more) of the exclusion clauses is applicable. Each case must be considered on its individual facts and merits.
- 2.1.2 If the person is excluded from the Refugee Convention, they will also be excluded from a grant of humanitarian protection (which has a wider range of exclusions than refugee status).
- 2.1.3 For further guidance on the exclusion clauses and restricted leave, see the Asylum Instruction on [Exclusion under Articles 1F and 33\(2\) of the Refugee Convention](#), [Humanitarian Protection](#) and the instruction on [Restricted Leave](#).

Official – sensitive: Start of section

The information on this page has been removed as it is restricted for internal Home Office use.

Official – sensitive: End of section

[Back to Contents](#)

2.2 Credibility

- 2.1.1 For information on assessing credibility, see the 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](#)).

Official – sensitive: Start of section

The information on this page has been removed as it is restricted for internal Home Office use.

The information on this page has been removed as it is restricted for internal Home Office use.

The information on this page has been removed as it is restricted for internal Home Office use.

The information on this page has been removed as it is restricted for internal Home Office use.

2.3 Convention reason(s)

- 2.3.1 Nigerian women who have been trafficked form a particular social group (PSG) in Nigeria within the meaning of the Refugee Convention because they share an innate characteristic or a common background that cannot be changed (their past experience of being trafficked), or share a characteristic or belief that is so fundamental to identity or conscience that a person should not be forced to renounce it **and** have a distinct identity in Nigeria because the group is perceived as being different by the surrounding society.
- 2.3.2 Although Nigerian women who have been trafficked form a PSG, establishing such membership is not sufficient to be recognised as a refugee. The question to be addressed is whether the person has a well-founded fear of persecution on account of their membership of such a group.
- 2.3.3 For further guidance on the 5 Refugee Convention grounds and particular social groups, see the instruction, [Assessing Credibility and Refugee Status](#).
- 2.3.4 For guidance on Humanitarian Protection see the Asylum Instruction, [Humanitarian Protection](#).

[Back to Contents](#)

2.4 Risk

- 2.4.1 Nigeria is a source, transit, and destination country for the trafficking of women and girls for forced labour and sexual exploitation. While there is no exact data, the numbers of persons trafficked to Europe, including the UK, is likely to be in the thousands each year. Women and girls are trafficked into the UK for both labour and sexual exploitation. Similarly, domestic trafficking within Nigeria is also a problem but accurate data on numbers is not available, although it is believed to involve thousands of women and girls (see [Trafficking networks and strategies](#) and [Prevalence](#)).
- 2.4.2 Nigerian organised criminal gangs, some of which are linked to confraternities or 'cults', are thought to be responsible for much of the trafficking of women to Europe, although other groups and actors may be involved too. Many former sex trafficking victims work for their traffickers as madams (prostitution managers) and exploit women once in Europe. Women are recruited often in their home areas, sometimes by family members or pastors (see [Trafficking networks and strategies](#) and [Prevalence](#)).
- 2.4.3 Historically, many women trafficked to Europe, including the UK, were from Edo state, in southern Nigeria. However, they are increasingly also trafficked from other parts of the country. Women may be lured by the promise of false job offers or education in Europe and/or manipulated through traditional beliefs (juju). In some circumstances, a woman's family may support the trafficking for economic reasons ([Trafficking networks and strategies](#)).
- 2.4.4 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 after return by non-state actors](#)).

- 2.4.5 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 and the provenance of the wealth is largely ignored. 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 [Trafficking networks and strategies](#) and [Treatment after return by non-state actors](#)).
- 2.4.6 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 to 192 of [PO \(Trafficked Women\) Nigeria CG \[2009\] UKAIT 00046](#) should no longer be followed (paragraph 187).
- 2.4.7 The UT in [HD](#) found that, for a person who was initially trafficked for the purpose of domestic servitude, even if they lived 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.' (paragraphs 148-149).
- 2.4.8 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.' (paragraph 150).
- 2.4.9 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 (paragraphs 151-152).
- 2.4.10 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 (paragraph 154).
- 2.4.11 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') (paragraphs 155-156).

- 2.4.12 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.’ (paragraph 157).
- 2.4.13 The UT, however, also held 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.’ (paragraphs 159 to 160).
- 2.4.14 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.’ (paragraphs 163 to 164).
- 2.4.15 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’(paragraphs 165 to 166).
- 2.4.16 The UT went on to hold the following country guidance:
- ‘Although the Government of Nigeria recognises that the trafficking of women, both internally and transnationally, is a significant problem to be addressed, it is not established by the evidence that for women in general in **Nigeria** there is a real risk of being trafficked.
- ‘For a woman returning to **Nigeria**, after having been trafficked to the United Kingdom, there is in general no real risk of retribution or of being trafficked afresh by her original traffickers.
- ‘Whether a woman returning to **Nigeria** having previously been trafficked to the United Kingdom faces on return a real risk of being trafficked afresh will require a detailed assessment of her particular and individual characteristics.

Factors that will indicate an enhanced risk of being trafficked include, but are not limited to:

- a. The absence of a supportive family willing to take her back into the family unit;
- b. 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;
- c. 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:

- a. The availability of a supportive family willing to take the woman back into the family unit;
- b. 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. (paragraphs 188 to 191).

- 2.4.17 The CG case of [HD](#) was based on country evidence up to the first half of 2016. The country information available since then does not provide very strong grounds supported by cogent evidence to depart from the UT's findings in that case.
- 2.4.18 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, taking into account factors including any outstanding debt that she may owe the traffickers, the complicity of her family and/or community in the trafficking, the willingness of her family to take her back and provide support, or her own ability to support herself and the availability of a support network.
- 2.4.19 The onus is on the woman to demonstrate that her circumstances are such that on return to Nigeria she will be vulnerable to abuse/re-trafficking which would amount to serious harm or persecution.
- 2.4.20 For further guidance on assessing risk, see the instruction on [Assessing Credibility and Refugee Status](#).

[Back to Contents](#)

2.5 Protection

- 2.5.1 Nigeria has enacted various laws to protect fundamental rights which are enforced through a functioning criminal justice system. This is 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 for an assessment of the availability of protection provided by the security forces generally](#)).

- 2.5.2 The government maintains that it made some progress in its efforts to identify and protect domestic 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 (USSD) assessed that despite efforts to do so, Nigeria did not fully meet the ([USSD - Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000](#)) minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking (see [Protection: the law and its enforcement](#)).
- 2.5.3 Nigeria has ratified most international instruments and established agreements and engaged in practical co-operation with a number of international partners on human trafficking. Domestically, the government enacted the Trafficking in Persons (Prohibition) Enforcement and Administration Act 2003 (the Act), as amended in 2015, which criminalises labour and sex trafficking. The penalties for these offences are up to 5 years' imprisonment (minimum 7 years if the case involves a child) and a one million naira (£1,767) fine. The Act also provided for the establishment of the National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons (NAPTIP), created on 14 July 2003, a multi-disciplinary body with functions to enforce the law (including the investigation, arrest and prosecution of traffickers), protecting and supporting victims of trafficking and taking preventative initiatives against human trafficking, including providing training of other law enforcement agencies. NAPTIP also collaborates 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: the law and its enforcement](#)).
- 2.5.4 During 2020, 1,032 cases of trafficking were reported to NAPTIP for investigation and monitoring, of which 251 were investigated, 733 suspected traffickers apprehended, 69 prosecuted, 38 cases convicted and 51 individual convictions. In 2016 the number of cases reported was 721, with 25 cases convicted and 31 individual convictions. There were slightly fewer prosecutions but slightly higher convictions in 2020 than in 2019. The number of prosecutions and convictions in 2020 may have been affected by the temporary closure of the courts between April and June because of the COVID-19 pandemic. Data for 2021 is more limited, but NAPTIP reported further arrests of traffickers during the year (See [Law and policy measures](#) and [Investigations, prosecutions and convictions](#) for further data on cases reported to NAPTIP including numbers of prosecutions and convictions from 2016 through to 2020).
- 2.5.5 However, sources note that the NAPTIP lacks resources to adequately address the scale of the problem of trafficking in the country, did not always co-ordinate effectively with other law enforcement agencies in prosecuting

traffickers and corruption within all levels of the government undermined accountability for trafficking offenses.

- 2.5.6 Overall effectiveness of anti-trafficking laws is also 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 [Effectiveness of enforcement agencies](#)).
- 2.5.7 As part of NAPTIP's remit, it operates shelters in Abuja and each of its 9 zonal commands - with a total capacity to cater for over 330 people, over 420 were supported during 2020 - which provide access to legal, medical, and psychological services, vocational training, financial empowerment, business management skills and family tracing. Shelter is provided for up to 6 weeks unless victims are exceptionally vulnerable or they collaborate on a criminal investigation. The Agency also co-ordinates with NGOs which provide shelter and services including family tracing, rehabilitation and reintegration for longer periods (see [Shelter and assistance](#)).
- 2.5.8 Some sources, though, are critical of the government's reliance on shelters, rather than community-based services, conditions which were below international standards in some shelters, the short duration of time in shelters (usually up to 6 weeks) and a general lack of resources and oversight. There are also concerns about poor conditions and a lack of adequate resources in some NGO-run shelters, some of which allowed victims to stay up to 2 years (see [Shelter and assistance](#)).
- 2.5.9 In the CG case of [HD](#), the UT found that the prosecution of a '... 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' (paragraph 161).
- 2.5.10 Additionally, the 'incidence of prosecution of the trafficker who trafficked the victim in Nigeria is unlikely to have significant impact upon that individual returnee' (paragraph 173).
- 2.5.11 The UT 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 (paragraph 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).
- 2.5.12 The country information that has become available since [HD](#) was heard in July 2016 indicates that government initiatives, working alongside NGOs and foreign governments, are ongoing, and assistance is available to victims and convictions of traffickers does occur. The government and NGOs, including internationally funded initiatives, are in place aimed at raising awareness of

trafficking amongst young women and their parents. However, the country information available since HD was heard does not provide very strong grounds supported by cogent evidence to depart from the UT's findings in that case.

- 2.5.13 In general the government is willing to protect victims or potential victims of trafficking. However, the implementation of the law is uneven, with support and assistance in the form of shelters usually only up to 6 weeks, and, depending on the size and capability of the criminal group that trafficked the person, is likely to mean that the state is generally not able to provide protection beyond a short period of time, particularly to those women whose circumstances leave her vulnerable to abuse. However, each case must be considered on an individual basis, with the onus on the person to demonstrate that protection would not be available.
- 2.5.14 For further guidance on assessing the availability of state protection, see the instruction on [Assessing Credibility and Refugee Status](#).

[Back to Contents](#)

2.6 Internal relocation

- 2.6.1 Where the person has a well-founded fear of persecution as a victim of trafficking, whether they are able to relocate to escape that risk depends on their particular circumstances (see CG case of [HD](#) and the assessment and background information in the [country policy and information note on internal relocation](#)).
- 2.6.2 The UT in [HD](#) found, in regard to women who were victims of trafficking, that 'For a woman who does face a real risk of being trafficked if she returns to her home area, the question of whether internal relocation will be available as a safe and reasonable alternative that will not be unduly harsh will require a detailed assessment of her particular circumstances. For a woman who discloses the characteristics of vulnerability described above [see section on Risk above] that are indicative of a real risk of being trafficked, internal relocation is unlikely to be a viable alternative.' (paragraph 193).
- 2.6.3 The CG case of HD was based on country evidence up to the first half of 2016. The country information available since then does not provide very strong grounds supported by cogent evidence to depart from the UT's findings in that case.
- 2.6.4 While the onus is on the person to establish a well-founded fear of persecution or real risk of serious harm, decision makers must demonstrate that internal relocation is reasonable (or not unduly harsh) having regard to the individual circumstances of the person.
- 2.6.5 For further guidance on considering internal relocation and factors to be taken into account see the Asylum Instruction [Assessing Credibility and Refugee Status](#).

[Back to Contents](#)

2.7 Certification

- 2.7.1 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.
- 2.7.2 For further guidance on certification, see [Certification of Protection and Human Rights claims under section 94 of the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002 \(clearly unfounded claims\)](#).

[Back to Contents](#)

Country information

Section 3 updated: 23 March 2022

3. Prevalence

3.1 Overview

- 3.1.1 A National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons [NAPTIP] factsheet updated 21 December 2021 stated: 'Nigeria is a source, transit and destination country for trafficking and she [sic] also experiences internal and external trafficking of women and children. Internally, trafficking takes the form of recruitment and transportation of children from rural to urban centres and other forms of exploitative conditions, while external trafficking takes place across borders. Both are exploitative and happen under slave-like conditions.'¹
- 3.1.2 The April 2021 EASO Trafficking in Human Beings report on Nigeria, based on a range of sources, stated:
- 'Human trafficking in Nigeria affects individuals across various age groups, genders and geographical locations within Nigeria. However, children and women dominated the category of victims that were rescued (inside and outside Nigeria) by NAPTIP in 2019: half of the rescued individuals were children, 44 % women and 6 % men. Girls constituted almost 75 % of the rescued children. These data also include children rescued from other situations than exploitation, as NAPTIP also intervenes in family disputes and custody battles, for instance...' ²
- 3.1.3 In the NAPTIP end of year data analysis covering the situation in 2020: 52.4% of victims were children. Of the adults, 87.2% were women and 12.6% men. Of the children, 73% were girls and 27% boys. This also includes data from children rescued from exploitation³.

[Back to Contents](#)

3.2 Trafficking from Nigeria

- 3.2.1 Human Rights Watch in an August 2019 report 'Trafficking of women and girls in Nigeria' (HRW trafficking report 2019) and based on interviews conducted between May 2017 and October 2018, with 76 survivors of human trafficking, representatives of 21 nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) as well as officials of NAPTIP, federal and state government officials, and representatives of bilateral and international assistance agencies, stated:
- '... thousands of Nigerian women and girls have been trafficked within Nigeria, to other countries in Africa, and to Europe in recent years. Many are escaping dire economic situations at home, where jobs are hard to come by. Some are fleeing violent conflicts driven in part by climate change and a scramble over scarce resources, some have suffered exclusion and

¹ NAPTIP, '[Factsheet 1](#)', updated 21 December 2021

² EASO, '[Trafficking in Human Beings](#)' (Page 11-12), April 2021

³ NAPTIP, '[Data Analysis Final 2020](#)' (page 16), no date

discrimination that has left them unable to fend for themselves, while others are vulnerable to exploitation as they seek to escape abusive families.’⁴

3.2.2 The same HRW report stated: There is no comprehensive data on human trafficking in Nigeria, but it is routinely listed as one of the countries with the largest number of trafficking victims overseas, particularly in Europe.’⁵

3.2.3 A press release on the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) webpage and presenting key findings jointly with NAPTIP from the UNODC [2020 report on Trafficking in persons](#), stated: “‘Trafficking in persons is one of the most lucrative criminal markets globally. Nigeria is an origin, transit and destination country and is affected by both domestic and cross-border trafficking...’”⁶

3.2.4 The EASO Trafficking in Human Beings report 2021 stated:

‘Nigeria acts as a source country for human trafficking towards neighbouring countries, destinations in North Africa and the Middle East, the EU, and Eastern European countries such as Russia... In 2019, NAPTIP rescued and returned Nigerian victims from eighteen different countries. The majority of victims rescued from situations of exploitation in third countries by NAPTIP were based in neighbouring countries (Mali, Niger and Cote d’Ivoire), Libya, Russia and various countries in the Middle East...

‘Nigerian women and girls often ended up working in prostitution or domestic servitude... Experts indicated that southern Nigerians were mostly trafficked to west and central Africa, whereas inhabitants from the Middle Belt and northern Nigeria were mostly trafficked to Niger, Chad, Sudan and the Middle East... Some IDP camps in northern Nigeria functioned as gateways for trafficking to neighbouring countries... Specifically with regard to sex trafficking, sources indicated that as it has become more difficult to traffic Nigerian women to Europe, trafficking networks have adjusted their modus operandi and focused more on neighbouring countries and the Middle East as destinations for sex trafficking... The anthropologist Sine Plambeck, who is specialised in the field of sex trafficking from Nigeria, indicated that women from Edo State in southern Nigeria are now also being trafficked towards Dubai in increasing numbers, due to the increased difficulty in crossing the central Mediterranean route since 2017... Due to less stringent visa requirements for the 2018 World Cup in Russia, traffickers fraudulently recruited Nigerian women for jobs in Russia to exploit them in the sex industry... While some of these countries thus increasingly acted as the main trafficking destination for Nigerian women, a large share of the victims got stuck in Libya while they were on their way to Europe... where they can spend months or years...’⁷

3.2.5 The Modern Slavery: National Referral Mechanism and Duty to Notify Statistics UK, End of Year Summary, 2020 does not include Nigeria in the top 10 of most common nationalities of potential victims⁸, this is compared to 2018 when Nigeria was the 8th most common country of origin of potential

⁴ HRW, “[‘You Pray for Death’, Trafficking of Women and Girls in Nigeria](#)”, 27 August 2019

⁵ HRW, “[‘You Pray for Death’, Trafficking of Women and Girls in Nigeria](#)”, 27 August 2019

⁶ UNODC, ‘[Human trafficking in West Africa: three out of four victims...](#)’, 5 February 2021

⁷ EASO, [Trafficking in Human Beings](#) (Page 14-15), April 2021

⁸ NRM and Duty to Notify Statistics, ‘[End of year summary 2020](#)’, 18 March 2021

victims of modern slavery in the UK⁹. The total number of referrals of Nigerian nationals made to the National Referral Mechanism in 2020 was 169¹⁰ compared to 259 in 2019¹¹ and 208 in 2018¹².

3.2.6 The April 2021 EASO Trafficking in Human Beings report on Nigeria, based on a range of sources, stated:

‘NAPTIP data show that in 2019

- ‘41.8 % of the victims they rescued were victims of exploitation outside Nigeria...
- ‘417 out of 1,152 individuals were victims of “Procurement for Foreign Travel which promotes Prostitution” or “Procurement of Persons for Sexual Exploitation or prostitution externally”...
- ‘However, the total number of victims rescued by NAPTIP in 2019 – 1,152 individuals – constitutes only a fraction of the estimated total number of Nigerian individuals who are trafficked on an annual basis; in view of the above mentioned Global Slavery Index 2018 which mentioned 1.4 million Nigerians as victims of modern slavery...

‘Therefore, the NAPTIP figure of rescued victims is not necessarily a reliable picture about the ratio of victims of internal and cross-border trafficking in Nigeria.’¹³

3.2.7 In the NAPTIP end of year data analysis covering the situation in 2020: In 2020, they recorded 1,087 victims rescued, of which 61 (all female) were victims of procurement of persons for sexual exploitation or prostitution externally¹⁴

3.2.8 The US-American/Nigerian NGO Pathfinders Justice Initiative, in their 2020 Human Trafficking fact sheet and citing a number of sources, outlined:

‘The total number of human trafficking victims outside of Nigeria is largely unknown. However, it is undisputed that principally due to Nigeria’s population, Nigeria is routinely listed as one of the countries with the largest number of trafficking victims overseas (particularly in Europe), with victims identified in 34 countries in four regions in 2018. The recent scourge of unsafe migration has highlighted Nigeria’s challenges in this area, with one former Nigerian Permanent Representative to the United Nations (Mr. Martin Uhomoibhi) contending in June 2017 that in 2016 alone, 602,000 Nigerians endeavoured to migrate to Europe via the Sahara Desert. ...

‘Most estimates, however, place the total number of Nigerians arriving Europe in 2016 at about 40,000 and about 18,000 in 2017 (men, women and children). In 2016, Nigerians accounted for about 21% of the total 181,000 migrants braving the Mediterranean to arrive into Italy. In 2017, that number decreased to 15.5% of total migrants arriving Italy (119,000) in light of the numerous efforts made by Italy and the European Union to stem the flow of

⁹ NRM Statistics, [‘End of Year Summary 2018’](#), (Page 7), 20 March 2019

¹⁰ NRM and Duty to Notify Statistics, [‘End of year summary 2020’](#) (Table 4), 18 March 2021

¹¹ NRM and Duty to Notify Statistics, [‘End of year summary 2019’](#) (Table 4), 18 March 2021

¹² NRM and Duty to Notify Statistics, [‘End of year summary 2019’](#) (Table 4), 18 March 2021

¹³ EASO, [Trafficking in Human Beings](#) (Page 11-12), April 2021

¹⁴ NAPTIP, [Data Analysis Final 2020](#) (page 14), no date

migrants from Libya. [UNHCR statistics indicate that in 2018](#), the number of Nigerian arrivals by sea and land into Europe continued to decline (1,250 arrived in Italy- 5% of total arrivals).¹⁵

3.2.9 The United States Department of State's Trafficking in Persons Report (USSD TiP Report 2021 - Nigeria), covering government efforts undertaken from 1 April 2020 through to 31 March 2021 and published in July 2021¹⁶ stated:

'The government increased efforts to identify victims, although services for many victims remained insufficient. In total, the government – including NAPTIP [National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons], NPF [Nigeria Police Force], and ETAHT [Edo State Task Force Against Human Trafficking] efforts – identified approximately

- '499 victims and 812 potential victims, according to official, NGO, and media reporting.
- 'During the previous reporting period, NAPTIP identified 181 forced labor victims and 636 potential victims, and ETAHT identified 195 victims. NAPTIP reported identifying 434 victims (135 forced labor and 299 sex trafficking) as well as 321 potential victims, compared with 181 forced labor victims and 636 potential trafficking victims in the previous reporting period...
- 'NPF officers reported identifying 20 potential victims during the course of law enforcement operations in 2020 but did not report referring the victims to services; NPF did not disclose similar statistics for 2019.'¹⁷

3.2.10 The USSD TiP Report 2021 – Nigeria - stated:

'... Cases of labor trafficking involving domestic workers to the Middle East and Gulf States, as well as men coerced into sexual exploitation and drug running to Europe, increased during the reporting period, according to an international organization. In 2019, media and an international organization reported that networks consisting of illicit actors profiting from human trafficking and smuggling recruited women and girls from IDP camps in Northeast Nigeria for ostensibly legitimate jobs in Europe but exploited them in commercial sex in the northern Nigerien [sic] city of Agadez, North Africa, the Persian Gulf, and Europe.'¹⁸

[Back to Contents](#)

3.3 Trafficking within Nigeria

3.3.1 In 2018 the Walk Free Foundation [Global slavery index] it was estimated that there were almost 1.4 million individuals living in modern slavery in Nigeria, although it does not indicate how many of those were victims of human trafficking¹⁹.

¹⁵ Pathfinders Justice Initiative, [Nigeria: Human Trafficking Factsheet](#), September 2021

¹⁶ USSD, [TiP Report 2021](#) (section Methodology), 1 July 2021

¹⁷ USSD, [TiP Report 2021 – Nigeria](#), (section Protection), 1 July 2021

¹⁸ USSD, [TiP Report 2021 – Nigeria](#), (section Trafficking profile), 1 July 2021

¹⁹ Walk Free Foundation, [Global Slavery Index – data](#), 2018

- 3.3.2 The April 2021 EASO Trafficking in Human Beings report on Nigeria, based on a range of sources, stated: ‘Stakeholders, who were consulted for a report on human trafficking in Nigeria by an international organisation, estimated that two-thirds of Nigerian victims of trafficking are victims of domestic human trafficking... The UN Special Rapporteur on Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children also indicated that this type of trafficking was “rampant”...’²⁰
- 3.3.3 The USSD TiP Report 2021 – Nigeria - stated:
 ‘As reported over the past five years, human traffickers exploit domestic and foreign victims in Nigeria, and traffickers exploit victims from Nigeria abroad. Internal trafficking is prevalent with Nigerian perpetrators recruiting victims from rural areas, especially the country’s southern regions, for exploitation in commercial sex and forced labor in domestic work in cities such as Aboekuta, Calabar, Ibadan, Kaduna, Kano, Lagos, and Port Harcourt. Traffickers – including some community members – exploit women and girls in domestic service and sex trafficking... Criminal elements recruit foreigners for labor trafficking within the country.’²¹
- 3.3.4 With regard internally displaced persons in Nigeria the same USSD TiP report stated:
 ‘As of December 2020, there were approximately 2.1 million IDPs in the country and 305,000 Nigerian refugees in other countries; many of these IDPs and refugees are vulnerable to traffickers due to their limited access to economic opportunity and formal justice. Increasing violence stemming from expanding terrorist threats exacerbated the vulnerability of many IDPs and limited access throughout much of the country for observers to provide updates on past allegations of government officials exploiting IDPs in sex trafficking. As in past years, reports indicate other IDPs, aid workers, government officials, and security forces commit sexual exploitation, including sex trafficking, in government-run IDP camps, informal camps, and local communities around Maiduguri, the Borno State capital. Additionally, there were reports traffickers exploited IDPs moving to cities such as Gombe and Kano, as well as to neighboring countries to include Niger in forced labor.’²²
- 3.3.5 A February 2022 UNHCR factsheet identifies 3.1 million persons in Nigeria as ‘persons of concern’, including IDPs, refugees and stateless persons and points out that ‘Since 2015, forced displacement in WCA [Western and Central Africa] has nearly quadrupled (174% increase in number of IDPs, 235% for refugees). This trend is likely to continue due to instability in parts of the region.’²³
- 3.3.6 The USSD TiP Report 2021 – Nigeria - stated:
 ‘During the reporting period, Boko Haram and ISIS-WA increased their practice of forcibly recruiting, abducting, and using child soldiers as young as 12 years of age as cooks, spies, messengers, bodyguards, armed

²⁰ EASO, [Trafficking in Human Beings](#) (page 11-12), April 2021

²¹ USSD, [TiP Report 2021 – Nigeria](#), (section Trafficking profile), 1 July 2021

²² USSD, [TiP Report 2021 – Nigeria](#), (section Trafficking profile), 1 July 2021

²³ UNHCR, [West and Central Africa Fact Sheet](#), (page 2), February 2022

combatants, and suicide bombers in attacks in Nigeria, Cameroon, and Chad. The groups continue to abduct women and girls in the northern region of Nigeria, some of whom they subject to domestic servitude, sexual slavery, and forced labor. Boko Haram routinely forces girls to choose between forced marriages to its fighters – for the purpose of sexual slavery – or becoming suicide bombers, with the terrorist organization frequently using drugs to control victims' behavior. An NGO reported in prior rating periods children detained for association with armed groups in Maiduguri Maximum Security Prison in Borno state were confined with adult inmates who allegedly exploited the children in commercial sex rings in the prison.²⁴

- 3.3.7 See also [Country Policy Information Note: Nigeria – Islamist extremist groups in North East Nigeria](#).

[Back to Contents](#)

3.4 Children

- 3.4.1 The April 2021 EASO Trafficking in Human Beings report on Nigeria, based on a range of sources, stated:

'Children were subjected to various types of exploitation, including: domestic servitude, forced labour (in agriculture, mining, quarrying), and street hawking... Forced begging is a major problem in Nigeria as well. While reliable estimates of the number of children who engage in (forced) begging do not exist, in northern Nigeria millions of children who cannot be taken care of by their parents attend a specific type of religious boarding schools, known as almajiri schools, which rely on child begging/labour for their financing... In 2014, UNICEF estimated that out of the 13.2 million children outside of Nigeria's formal school system, 9.5 million were in the almajiri system... In the south – particularly in big urban centres – street children and child beggars also are a common sight... In some cases, parents also forced their children to beg, or recruiters lured children away from their families...

'In conflict zones such as the Middle Belt, north-west and north-east Nigeria children are vulnerable to (sexual) exploitation... There have been reports of recruitment of girls from internally displaced people (IDP) camps across northern Nigeria for the purpose of sexual exploitation... In the north-east in particular there were cases of recruitment of children as child soldiers... According to UN data the total number of Nigerian child soldiers and the number of new recruitments have, however, significantly decreased since 2017.'²⁵

- 3.4.2 In respect of children specifically, the USSD TiP report noted:

'Rapid population growth drives the country's informal education sector, including Quranic schools – most prevalent in northern regions – known as Almajiri, where some teachers abuse their students and coerce them to beg; in the latest available estimate from 2010, the government estimated as many as 9.5 million boys were studying in Quranic schools. Observers report worsening poverty related to the pandemic's economic impacts may increase the enrollment of these schools, as well as the risks of exploitation

²⁴ USSD, [TiP Report 2021 – Nigeria](#), (section Trafficking profile), 1 July 2021

²⁵ USSD, [TiP Report 2021 – Nigeria](#), (section Trafficking profile), 1 July 2021

of the children by teachers, businesses, and local community members seeking labor. Extreme poverty, lack of economic opportunity, corruption, insecurity throughout the country, and climate change-related pressure to migrate increase Nigerians' vulnerability to trafficking.' ²⁶

3.4.3 The USSD TiP Report 2021 – Nigeria - stated:

'Artisanal miners exploit West African children in forced labor in Nigeria, including in granite and gold mines. Observers have reported agricultural firms in rural Nigeria force Togolese to work in palm wine production in rural Nigeria. Nigeria's ports and waterways around Calabar remain transit points for West African children subjected to forced labor in Cameroon, Equatorial Guinea, and Gabon. During the prior reporting period, NGO and media sources reported Nigerian traffickers compelled Cameroonian child refugees displaced by Cameroon's Anglophone crisis staying in camps in Nigeria to work in forced labor in domestic service and, in some cases, into sex trafficking; there were allegations some parents were involved in selling their children.' ²⁷

3.4.4 The same USSD TiP Report 2021 – Nigeria - also stated with regard 'baby factories':

'Primarily in Cross River and other southern states, as well as from IDP populations in the north, illicit actors – including some church leaders – operate "baby factories," which the government and NGOs describe as a widespread criminal industry in the country; experts state the phenomenon is driven by poverty and a lack of opportunity for young girls, as well as the demands of the illegal adoption market and cultural pressure for large families in Nigeria. Recruiters – or "mamas" – operating out of unregulated clinics work with enforcers to control the women through childbirth. The traffickers then sell the children, sometimes with the intent to exploit them in forced labor and sex trafficking. In southern Nigeria, especially Lagos, some women drug and "rent" their infants out to street beggars to increase the beggars' profits.' ²⁸

[Back to Contents](#)

Section 4 updated: 23 March 2022

4. Trafficking networks and strategies

4.1 Profile of traffickers'

4.1.1 [Afruca](#) is a UK registered charity, their 'about us' page stated that their 'aims [are] to promote the well-being and protection of children in UK Black and Minority Ethnic communities'²⁹. In a blog post from January 2021 by Debbie Ariyo OBE, whose biography describes her as a former UK civil servant who founded Afruca in 2001 and 'also chairs the BME Anti-Slavery Network (BASNET) which she founded in 2019 to help promote racial equity, diversity

²⁶ USSD, [TiP Report 2021 – Nigeria](#), (section Trafficking profile), 1 July 2021

²⁷ USSD, [TiP Report 2021 – Nigeria](#), (section Trafficking profile), 1 July 2021

²⁸ USSD, [TiP Report 2021 – Nigeria](#), (section Trafficking profile), 1 July 2021

²⁹ AFRUCA, '[About us](#)', no date

and inclusion in the UK anti-trafficking sector³⁰, stated, citing a number of sources:

'The terms "Nigerian Mafia" or "Costra Negra" have been employed to describe the range of Nigerian confraternities operating across much of Nigeria and Europe with Italy and Nigeria as the epicentres and Nigerians as the victims... These confraternities are the brain behind majority of the human and drug trafficking operations ongoing between Nigeria and Europe, with Italy as the European hub...

'The Nigerian confraternities have specific characteristics and modus operandi that distinguish them from other criminal gangs but that also help to sustain and strengthen their roles in the human trafficking chain.'³¹

4.1.2 AFRUCA in the same blog continued:

'It seem[s] very clear that the Nigerian confraternities are able to function and profit based on the laws of demand and supply. As long as there are throngs of desperate young Nigerians there will always be a supply pool of victims of trafficking to help meet the demand for cheap, exotic and younger sex workers on the streets of Europe where prostitution is not illegal in most countries.

'Nigerian human trafficking gangs linked to criminal confraternities or "cults" are very powerful, brutal and violent in their operations. These confraternities have millions of members spread out across Nigeria and in different European countries with strict codes of loyalty and solidarity and with the use of traditional religion as a hallmark of their business operations. The deteriorating socio-economic situation in Nigeria is creating a growing pool of potential victims of human trafficking. "Fortress Europe" is not a deterrent to Nigerian human traffickers based on their extensive operations in multiple countries as well as demand for cheap, young and exotic prostitutes in Europe.'³²

4.1.3 Europol in their 2021 second most recent (2021) report European Migrant Smuggling Centre stated:

'Nigerian criminal networks are largely active in THB [Trafficking in human beings] for the prostitution market in Europe, posing a great challenge to EU law enforcement agencies since Nigerian networks have achieved significant influence in EU organised crime by regular cooperation with local criminal groups. Besides THB, Nigerian Confraternities are known to be active in other criminal businesses in the EU, such as drug trafficking, fraud, money laundering, migrant smuggling, corruption and currency counterfeiting. Europol has been supporting several priority investigations involving a wider range of destination and transit countries used by Nigerian human traffickers³³.

[Back to Contents](#)

³⁰ AFRUCA, '[Biography: Debbie Ariyo OBE](#)', February 2021

³¹ AFRUCA, '[Nigerian Confraternities and the Increase in Human Trafficking...](#)', 25 January 2021

³² AFRUCA, '[Nigerian Confraternities and the Increase in Human Trafficking...](#)', 25 January 2021

³³ Europol, [European Migrant Smuggling Centre - 5th Annual Report](#), Luxembourg, 2021

4.2 Traffickers' methods and strategies

4.2.1 The HRW trafficking report 2019 found that:

'[Women and girls were often]... trafficked by people they know, who prey on their desperation, making false promises of paid employment, professional training, and education. They are transported within and across national borders, often under life-threatening conditions. Survivors recounted harrowing journeys as traffickers forced them through the Sahara Desert to destinations in Libya, or in some cases, Europe via the Mediterranean Sea. Their journeys were wrought with death, rape, beatings, fear, theft, extortion, and lack of food and water.'³⁴

4.2.2 The same HRW report noted: 'Trafficking and smuggling are distinct but related crimes: some trafficked people might start their journey by agreeing to be smuggled into a country, only to then be deceived, coerced, or forced into an exploitative situation...' ³⁵

4.2.3 A final report titled 'Between Two Fires', is a 2-year research study partnership and shared learning event between the University of Bedfordshire and the International Organization for Migration (IOM) - (University of Bedfordshire/IOM report March 2019). The study sought to understand the causes, dynamics and 'vulnerabilities' to human trafficking in three source countries – Albania, Vietnam and Nigeria. These countries have consistently been among the top countries of origin for potential trafficked persons. The qualitative study involved 164 semi-structured interviews with adults who had experience human trafficking and key informants, with data collected between February and November 2018. The report stated:

'A key informant in Nigeria highlighted the impact that the culture of migration in some areas of the country had on people's attitudes towards migrating:

"Some of them believe if I don't travel abroad I cannot succeed and that's a major challenge..."

'This was clearly reflected by a Nigerian trafficked woman:

"When I saw this opportunity I jumped at it, it was like a gold mine you understand me because I've also wanted to travel to, to travel out of the country because that was what was reigning back then. Everybody wants to travel . . . the decision I took, I took it because of the environment I was living, because everybody was leaving, everybody was traveling. You know, it's like when you don't travel you don't belong."

'... the decision making behind an individual travelling and accepting offers of employment or education could be very strongly influenced by their family. A trafficked woman from Nigeria described how she had some awareness of the risk but her mother had forced her to travel:

³⁴ HRW, "[You Pray for Death](#)", [Trafficking of Women and Girls in Nigeria](#)', 27 August 2019

³⁵ HRW, "[You Pray for Death](#)", [Trafficking of Women and Girls in Nigeria](#)', 27 August 2019

“She [the interviewee’s mother] say whether this suffering, whether I like this suffering? That ‘is it not my mate that is travelling?’ So, I now tell her that no, that’s why I travel. No [I did not want to travel] because why? Because I’ve heard things about traveling outside before. So it’s my mother that forced me...”

‘...One trafficked adult from Nigeria described how their motivations were driven by wanting to provide for their family:

“They didn’t force me but my family was pressed, telling me I should travel because of suffering. So I can’t bear it. So I need to take them out of the suffering. So that was why I was still pressed that I have to travel.”³⁶

4.2.4 Afruca in a blog post from January 2021 by Debbie Ariyo OBE stated:

‘More recently, strict regional immigration policies have curtailed the direct movement of people from Africa, including Nigeria, to Europe, especially via the Mediterranean sea. However, this has not actually stopped or deterred human trafficking. This is simply because demand for “cheaper and younger prostitutes” has not abated, despite government or regional immigration policies... With the increasing challenges of moving and trafficking victims via Libya and the Mediterranean sea, the confraternities have devised new methodologies to traffic women. It seems that direct trafficking from Nigeria has been displaced with more victims originating or carrying the passports of other African countries, but with the stamp of the Nigerian mafia all too visible. Earlier in 2020, a government agency in the UK reported the case of four Ghanaian girls trafficked into the country under the influence of witchcraft and juju rituals – a hallmark of the involvement of the Nigerian mafia.’³⁷

4.2.5 The same Afruca blog post noted:

‘ECPAT France [[A French NGO](#) whose mandate is to end the sexual exploitation of children] in its report, co-financed by the European Commission as part of the PACKING European project (2017-2019) “[Religious, Social and Criminal Groups in the Trafficking of Nigerian Girls and Women: The Case of Shrines, Ladies Clubs and Cultist Groups](#)”...identified some of the core characteristics of these criminal groups.

‘First is the **excessive use of violence**. The confraternities are well known to employ excessive violence and brutality in every aspects of their operations both in Europe and across Nigeria. Violence is a key element in the recruitment and initiation of victims of trafficking as well as cult members, which can include physical abuse, rape, excessive use of force and torture... Violence is employed in the course of trafficking and exploitation of victims who are beaten, raped and mentally tortured in different ways to make them compliant and obedient...

‘**Traditional rituals** are also employed as the main tool of recruitment, compliance, loyalty and psychological control of female victims of sex

³⁶ University of Bedfordshire, ‘[Between Two Fires](#)’ (page 48 - 50), March 2019

³⁷ AFRUCA, ‘[Nigerian Confraternities and the Increase in Human Trafficking...](#)’, 25 January 2021

trafficking, as seen in many cases across the UK and many other trafficking cases across Europe. Many victims of human trafficking who have been made to undergo juju rituals as part of their recruitment are petrified of breaking these oaths due to the perceived terrible consequences on them, including "running mad" or experiencing a horrible, violent death. This is perhaps a key reason many victims do not co-operate with the authorities – for fear of the repercussions of breaking the oath sworn. A recent declaration by the Oba of Bini, in Edo State where he cursed human traffickers and those using traditional religion to recruit victims only helped to displace the problem with different sets of victims now targeted in other parts of Nigeria

'The above, in addition to the fear of juju, accounts for why many victims of human trafficking are fearful of approaching the authorities or talking about their experiences, as we have seen at AFRUCA. The thought of putting themselves and their family members at risk of harm from the confraternities are enough reasons to stay silent, stay put and work hard to pay off the huge debt the traffickers claim is owed them.

'Perhaps the key factor in the success of the confraternities is that they are very versatile, very well organised criminal networks, very quick to adapt and change their modus operandi as the situation requires. These networks are broken down into cells with hierarchical membership structures. Each cell has well run operations in different countries in Nigeria, other African countries and across Europe. A typical cell might consist of an agent who acts as the main recruiter of victims who are usually known to him or her. The agent will arrange travel documents, ritual ceremonies involving a traditional medicine man and prepare the victim for travel. Next are the "trolleys" or "coyotes" whose key role is to accompany victims on their journeys so they do not escape or get stolen by other traffickers...' ³⁸

4.2.6 The USSD TiP Report 2021 – Nigeria stated:

'Criminal actors increased their exploitation of Nigerians in Turkey in 2020, according to observers. Experts stated traffickers recruit victims directly from asylum or migrant reception centers in Italy and elsewhere in Europe. Larger, well-financed, and highly organized criminal groups – some of which are linked to Nigerian criminal organizations or confraternities originating in Nigerian universities, including Black Axe, Eiye, or Maphite – are responsible for much of the sex trafficking to Europe, especially in Italy, Spain, and the United Kingdom. Additionally, Nigerian sex traffickers operate in highly organized criminal webs throughout Europe – known as the "Nigerian mafia" in Italy – and many former sex trafficking victims referred to as "madams" begin to work for their traffickers in exchange for leaving sex trafficking themselves. While some sex trafficking victims arrive in Europe believing they will be in commercial sex, traffickers coerce them to stay in commercial sex by altering working conditions and increasing victims' travel debts. Some victims' parents encourage them to obey their traffickers and endure exploitation to earn money.' ³⁹

4.2.7 The USSD TiP Report 2021 – Nigeria continued:

³⁸ AFRUCA, '[Nigerian Confraternities and the Increase in Human...](#)', 25 January 2021

³⁹ USSD, '[TiP Report 2021 – Nigeria](#)', (section Trafficking profile), 1 July 2021

‘Illicit recruiters – including family members and increasingly pastors – in Edo and other southern states continue to target individuals seeking to travel by air to the Middle East, where wealthy individuals and other actors exploit those migrants in forced labor or commercial sex. Further, criminal elements exploit irregular migrants in forced labor and sexual exploitation at multiple stages of their journey through Nigeria, Niger, and Libya. Libyan and Nigerian illicit actors exploit Nigerians in Libya in forced labor in construction and agriculture, as well as in commercial sex in Benghazi, Misrata, Sabha, and Tripoli; traffickers keep victims in “control houses” or “prostitution camps” near Tripoli or Misrata until they can repay travel debts.’⁴⁰

[Back to Contents](#)

4.3 Profile of victims of trafficking

4.3.1 The IOM/University of Bedfordshire report ‘Between Two Fires’ stated the following with regards trafficked persons:

‘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 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...

‘... it was emphasised during interviews that trafficked persons commonly have limited formal **education**

‘A key informant in Nigeria offered their opinion on why more females are trafficked than boys: “It’s girls that are more trafficked than boys. Most of these traffickers traffic them with the mindset that they are going to do the work of prostitution there which fetches more money and higher fees for them. So that is why more girls are trafficked than boys...”

‘Having limited and or costly education may create vulnerability because it enables recruiters to target people using the promise of providing them an education. Key informants in the UK working with trafficked persons highlighted that young Nigerians in particular, can be recruited through this method:

“... two mothers were approached by different individuals saying actually I can take your daughter to London, my friend has a baby, she can just be there, and she’ll go to school. And the attraction I’ve found for a lot of these parents has been education and being educated in the UK.”

“... it is a vulnerability, definitely, that’s one of the reasons why people want to come here. It’s interesting how, within Nigeria, that education is held highly, ‘I just want to study’, they come here, and they go, “I just want to go to school and study”⁴¹

4.3.2 The same report stated with regard to **gender**:

⁴⁰ USSD, [TiP Report 2021 – Nigeria](#), (section Trafficking profile), 1 July 2021

⁴¹ University of Bedfordshire, [‘Between Two Fires’](#) (page 43 and 44), March 2019

‘Key informants recognised the impact of gender on other vulnerabilities. A key informant in Nigeria highlighted how women may be unable to access education, which again may cause other vulnerabilities which others may take advantage of:

” Gender is there obviously because when you have a case of maybe, you have 5 in a family and the gender they will ask to step back not to go to school is the female gender.” ...

‘These reflect how the individual level factor of gender as a vulnerability is determined by gender roles at the household and family. Being a man may also contribute towards vulnerability in circumstances where men might have to put themselves into dangerous situations to fulfil the expectations and requirements of male gender roles.’⁴²

4.3.3 The University of Bedfordshire/IOM report March 2019 when discussing employment and socio-economic status with regard vulnerability of trafficked persons stated:

‘Trafficked adults interviewed for the research described their situations of poverty, indebtedness and a lack of resources in their lives before they were trafficked. They also described being unemployed or having a job which was poorly paid or doing work which was unpleasant and unsatisfying before they were trafficked.

‘Across... Nigeria, migration for work was seen to be the best way to address this. Key informants across the countries emphasised the importance of their employment status in creating vulnerability:

“If these kids are employed as an individual, I don’t think they will have the urge to move out to fetch for money outside their village.”

‘...Key informants across the countries summarised how people in situations of poverty were willing to take risks to improve their lives, such risks which result in them being trafficked:

“And if you look at the level of poverty also, the challenge is ‘will I remain poor forever? If I die let me die, let me go and take the risk like other people are going.’ So poverty plays a very big role in their vulnerability.”

‘...One trafficked woman from Nigeria described how she had been deceived about the nature of work she had been promised by her trafficker and how she had been coerced into sex work to pay off the debt she owed:

“So when I get there, the lady I met, the woman I want to stay with now told me that it’s not nanny, that I come here for prostitute. I told her ‘why?’ That, that is not what they told me from Nigeria. That I come here for nanny so why prostitute? She told me she can’t take me back to Nigeria, that I have to pay her because she spent a lot of money to bring me. I was so shocked because I don’t have any other way. So I had to do the job.”⁴³

⁴² University of Bedfordshire, [‘Between Two Fires’](#) (page 46), March 2019

⁴³ University of Bedfordshire, [‘Between Two Fires’](#) (page 44 and 45), March 2019

- 4.3.4 A Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MofFA) COI report on Nigeria, published in March 2021 and citing various sources, stated:

‘In the Netherlands and the EU, the main group of Nigerian victims consists of female victims from southern Nigeria who are exploited in the sex industry...

‘[Frontex](#) [European Border and Coast Guard Agency], stated in 2018 that most of the Nigerian trafficking victims that reached Europe were women and girls from southern Nigeria... who were brought to Europe for sexual exploitation... Most of these women come from poor communities, especially in the southern states of Nigeria...

‘Some of these women were lured to Europe with the prospect of a paid job as a nanny, hairdresser or domestic help... However, there has been a growing realisation (among academics and policymakers) over the last five to ten years that many women from southern Nigeria are aware that they will end up in the sex industry and that they have often been induced (or coerced) to leave by family members who have stayed behind... Their stay in Europe is seen as a way in which they can raise their family out of poverty... However, most of these victims – whether they are aware that they will be employed as prostitutes or not – are unaware that once they are in Europe, in the early years they will see virtually nothing of the money they earn through prostitution, and underestimate the extent and nature of the exploitation. On their arrival, they are informed that all their earnings will be used to reimburse the costs incurred for their crossing to Europe; the amounts concerned are exponentially higher than the actual cost of their journey and/or what the women thought at the time of their departure from Nigeria that they would owe their traffickers... For most of these women, both the route to and the stay in Europe are accompanied by serious forms of abuse and human rights violations... After paying off their debts, many of these women end up as "madames", overseeing the sexual exploitation in Europe of Nigerian girls once they arrive at their destination. Working as a madame offers former and current victims the opportunity to earn money themselves and provide for the livelihood of family members in Nigeria... In addition, this work often seems to be the only way to earn income for victims of human trafficking who are in Europe illegally and have no other work experience or networks⁴⁴ (see also [The debt system](#)).

- 4.3.5 The USSD TiP Report 2021 – Nigeria - stated: ‘Historically, the majority of Nigerian trafficking victims in Europe have come from Edo State, via Libya; however, observers noted an increasing number originating in other states, to include Delta and Kano. Additionally, officials noted Abia, Delta, Ebonyi, Edo, Imo, and Kogi states are common origins for trafficking of victims to West Africa and Europe.⁴⁵

[Back to Contents](#)

4.4 Violence, ritual oaths and ceremonies

- 4.4.1 The USSD TiP Report 2021 – Nigeria - stated:

⁴⁴ Netherlands – Ministry of Foreign Affairs, [COI report Nigeria](#) (paragraph 6.1.1), March 2021

⁴⁵ USSD, [TiP Report 2021 – Nigeria](#), (section Trafficking profile), 1 July 2021

‘Before departure for work abroad, or upon arrival in Europe, many Nigerian women participate in a traditional ceremony with a juju priest; some traffickers exploit this tradition and tell the women they must obey their traffickers or a curse will harm them, which prevents victims from seeking assistance or cooperating with law enforcement. Although the Oba of Benin – the religious leader of Benin City – revoked all previously administered juju spells and publicly renounced sex traffickers in 2018, reports continued to note traffickers performed the juju ceremonies in neighboring states such as Delta.’⁴⁶

- 4.4.2 An article by Ana Dois Garcia, an ‘independent researcher’, in the June 2020 edition of [Forced Migration Review](#), an in house publication by the Refugee Studies Centre of the Oxford Department of International Development, University of Oxford, stated: ‘Reportedly, this [revocation of juju curses by Oba of Benin] gave strength to some women to flee their traffickers, although there are no data available about how this revocation might have affected criminal investigations...’⁴⁷

- 4.4.3 The same article continued:

‘Oaths play a crucial role in Nigerian trafficking networks. By sealing the pact between women who want to migrate to Europe and their traffickers, oaths strengthen the ties between women and their traffickers, their family and the spirit world. Through these vows – known as juju oaths – women promise to pay off the debt, respect the traffickers and not report their traffickers to the police.

‘Oaths directly ties women with the spirits, from whom retaliation is expected if the agreement is breached. Women are persuaded that terrible things, including illness, death and madness, will befall them and their families if they do not repay their debt. Furthermore, breaking the pact is seen as an act of dishonour that reflects badly upon a woman's family. Women also consider that, having accepted the oath, they have accepted the situation of exploitation and this serves to reinforce the authority that their madams have over them.

‘The taking of the oath is performed in symbolic and theatrical ceremonies, usually in shrines to the deity Ayelala, who is known for delivering justice. In the course of these oath-taking ceremonies, women may be asked to remove their clothes, take baths, and drink or eat specific concoctions. Small incisions may be made to their bodies. Items including animal blood, kola nuts, water, palm oil, alcohol or herbs are usually used in addition to fingernails, blood, sweat, menstrual blood or hair, which are generally taken from both the oath-taker and from one of her female relatives. Priests use these corporeal extractions and other symbolic elements such as a woman's underwear to make a small “packet”. It is believed that whoever has the packet can control the woman. Anecdotal accounts suggest that at times pacts are also being sanctioned in some Pentecostal churches, and that some churches may be involved in trafficking networks, both in Nigeria and in destination countries.

⁴⁶ USSD, [TiP Report 2021 – Nigeria](#), (section Trafficking profile), 1 July 2021

⁴⁷ Forced Migration Review, [‘Trafficking and smuggling feature’ \(page 14\)](#), June 2020

‘Fear of breaking the pact is so intense that sometimes traffickers may not need to exert other means of control. The result of this is that trafficked Nigerian women appear relatively free from constraints, which in turn hinders their identification as victims by law enforcement actors and renders subsequent police and judicial processes more difficult.’⁴⁸

4.4.4 The Dutch MofFA COI report 2021 stated:

‘Many female trafficking victims from southern Nigeria have a great fear of supernatural reprisals if they flee sexual exploitation in Europe before paying off their debt. Traffickers operating out of this region make most of their victims swear an oath of obedience (a juju oath) under the watchful eye of a voodoo priest before their departure. Victims are afraid that if they break this oath by evading the authority of madames/human traffickers, they will meet with some serious misfortune... However, the intervention of the Oba (traditional ruler) of Benin... in March 2018 seems to have diminished the impact of these spells on trafficking victims from Edo state. Together with 500 voodoo priests, the Oba declared all these juju oaths invalid. Several sources stated that this has had a positive effect on human trafficking victims from Edo state inside and outside Nigeria... However, the sphere of influence of the Oba of Benin does not extend beyond the state of Edo, and some sources indicated that traffickers have started recruiting victims... and using voodoo priests from outside Benin City/Edo... The number of victims from the states of Delta and Anambra has increased in recent years...’⁴⁹

[Back to Contents](#)

4.5 The debt system

4.5.1 The HRW trafficking report 2019 stated:

‘Women and girls said they were exploited in forced prostitution and various forms of forced labor, especially forced domestic work, by their traffickers....

‘Women and girls who believed they were migrating for high-paying overseas employment as domestic workers, hairdressers, or hotel staff, said they were shocked to learn they were tricked and trapped in exploitation. They were horrified when they realized that they would not be paid what they were promised, or anything at all, and instead had huge “debts” to repay. Often these debts were vague, unpredictable, and constantly growing. Women and girls stated that traffickers used violence, threats, and retaliation against them or their families back home to control them. They also described traffickers’ threats of selling them to other traffickers, surveillance, passport confiscation, confinement, and isolation to keep them trapped and terrified, and to avoid law enforcement detection. Other women and girls said the madams forced them to undergo juju rituals—traditional oath-taking rites that usually involve use of human blood, hair, and clothing—to compel women and girls to pay their debts and not report traffickers to authorities.’⁵⁰

4.5.2 The University of Bedfordshire/IOM report of March 2019 stated:

⁴⁸ Forced Migration Review, ‘[Trafficking and smuggling feature](#)’ (page 14), June 2020

⁴⁹ Netherlands – Ministry of Foreign Affairs, [COI report Nigeria](#) (paragraph 6.2), March 2021

⁵⁰ HRW, “[You Pray for Death](#)”, [Trafficking of Women and Girls in Nigeria](#)’, 27 August 2019

'Financial costs discussed by nationals of Nigeria related to either direct flights to the UK, or protracted and lengthy journeys from Nigeria, through the Sahara Desert, via Libya en-route to European countries and Russia. In the interviews with participants who had reached the UK, for those who had been brought to the UK as children to work within the houses of others, they rarely knew the costs of their travel. For those Nigerians who have been trafficked to the UK under the false promises to them and their families that they will be educated in the UK, they may not be expected to pay any money for their journey to the UK. One key informant in the UK described how most of the Nigerian cases they had experience of had not been required to pay money prior to their journey:

"... so most of the Nigerian cases that I've seen, they're told if you come to the UK with me I'll get you educated, I'll get you a better life and once you're working then you can pay me back. That seems to be what they're told . . . So yes, there's no, they're not paying up front for anything."...

'Trafficked persons from Nigeria described how they were not required to pay anything for their travel prior to departure, however once the journey had been made they could be told that they had to pay back a debt to cover the costs of the journey, as Joy recounted:

"No, I didn't pay anything before I left Nigeria, everything was on her head. She told me, she said I would pay her back for the expenses, but she didn't tell me how much I would pay . . . I regret sometimes why I go. Sometimes I won't regret but at least during that period my family was okay, they pay some debt, even till now there are some debts we are still owing."...

'Precious, from Nigeria, who was trafficked to Italy explained how her trafficker did not request any money from her up-front and that she could pay it once she was in Italy:

"... she said I'm going to pay 35,000 Euro plus that fifty thousand naira. So, when I even told somebody in the crèche she said "the money is easy there" that she has somebody there. She said I should not even think that the thirty-five thousand Euros, is something that is nothing there. That I will just pay it the first it in no time."⁵¹

4.5.3 Further, the University of Bedfordshire/IOM report March 2019 stated that:

'Key informants in the UK and in Nigeria working with trafficked persons highlighted a specific issue in people becoming indebted to those involved in helping them migrate because of a lack of understanding about the exchange rate between the Nigerian Naira and Pound sterling or Euro... Nigerian nationals may believe that they are taking on a debt in Naira but are then told that the debt they owe is in pounds Sterling or Euros or they do not understand the significance of taking on a debt of thousands of pounds or Euros compared to thousands of Nigerian Naira. This was stated as being linked to the vulnerability of having limited education:

⁵¹ University of Bedfordshire, ['Between Two Fires'](#) (page 44 and 45), March 2019

“I would say that there’s an issue with literacy or education or just an understanding of general knowledge to say when they tell them that how much it’s going to cost you, £70,000, they believe it’s £70,000 because they relate £70,000 to 70,000 Naira and not really understanding how you do the exchange rate”.⁵²

4.5.4 Afruca, in a blog post from January 2021 by Debbie Ariyo OBE noted:

“Madams” are responsible for putting the victims to work, housing them and collecting payment from them. These madams themselves were victims of sex trafficking who have paid off their debt and gone into the business. This is not surprising as over the years, they would have learnt a lot about the business, how it operates and especially how to control and engage with the victims, based on their own experiences of trafficking and exploitation. Additionally, for these women, deploying their knowledge of the business in this way is a guaranteed source of wealth.⁵³

4.5.5 The EASO trafficking report 2021, citing various sources, noted:

‘The incurring and repaying of a debt are a central feature of sex trafficking from Benin City/Edo State to Europe. Madams or criminal gangs finance the journey of trafficking victims to Europe, but require victims to repay a highly inflated debt through sex work upon arrival in Europe. These debts are estimated to be between EUR 30 000 [£25,069⁵⁴] and EUR 70 000 [£58,489⁵⁵]... The 2015 EASO report indicated that most trafficking victims from Edo/Benin City were aware of the fact they would have to repay a debt, but that they were not aware of or did not understand the actual (highly inflated) amount of the debt... Nevertheless, research indicated that many trafficking victims in Europe tried to fully repay their debts... even though very few succeeded...’⁵⁶

[Back to Contents](#)

4.6 Trafficking routes and destinations

4.6.1 The University of Bedfordshire noted that speakers at a Shared Learning Event held in Lagos outlined that:

‘... 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.’⁵⁷

4.6.2 The University of Bedfordshire/IOM report March 2019 stated:

⁵² University of Bedfordshire, ‘[Between Two Fires](#)’ (page 46), March 2019

⁵³ AFRUCA, ‘[Nigerian Confraternities and the Increase in Human...](#)’, 25 January 2021

⁵⁴ [Xe Currency Converter](#), 17 February 2022

⁵⁵ [Xe Currency Converter](#), 17 February 2022

⁵⁶ EASO, [Trafficking in Human Beings](#) (page 33), April 2021

⁵⁷ University of Bedfordshire, ‘[Vulnerability to Human Trafficking](#)’, (page 22), October 2018

‘...Key informants in the UK suggested that most trafficked persons from Nigeria in the UK flew directly from Nigeria to the UK or had flown from Nigeria to a different European country and then flown from there into the UK...

‘...Nigerian key informants in contrast to those in the UK highlighted that while trafficked persons from Nigeria may fly directly to Europe that it is more common for people to travel across land to reach Europe.

‘These key informants acknowledged that the routes trafficked persons take are determined by the decision of the traffickers and whether they are able or not to finance direct travel to Europe...

‘There was some suggestion by Nigerian key informants that the increased use of biometrics meant more people are now travelling across land as the previous direct routes are no longer accessible...

‘The improvements in preventing illegitimate use or acquisition of travel documents may not have prevented trafficking but may have simply caused traffickers to adapt and move to sending people through the significantly more dangerous land routes to Europe.’⁵⁸

- 4.6.3 The Australian Government’s Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) country information report of December 2020, based on a range of public and non-public available sources including on-the-ground knowledge and discussions with a range of sources, stated: ‘Europe is the predominant destination for trafficking, with Nigerian victims identified in more than 34 countries in 2018. According to the International Organization for Migration, an estimated 80 per cent of women and girls arriving in Europe from Nigeria were potential victims of trafficking for sexual exploitation. Many Nigerian trafficking victims in Europe come from Edo state, typically via Libya.’⁵⁹

- 4.6.4 The EASO report 2021, citing various sources, noted:

[The 2015 EASO report](#) indicated that most Nigerian trafficking victims used the central Mediterranean route through Niger and Libya to travel to Italy. In 2020, this was still the case. Nigerians using this route continued to predominantly favour Italy as primary destination country, followed by Greece... Data from interviews with Nigerian migrants in Italy by the Mixed Migration Centre indicated that most Nigerian migrants (including victims of trafficking) followed a similar journey. Migrants from other places in Nigeria travelled to Kano in northern Nigeria first, to subsequently cross the border with Niger. Most migrants then directly travelled to the Nigerien city Agadez, but some indicated they made a stop before in the Nigerien town Zinder. From Agadez they continued to the southern Libyan desert town Sabha to subsequently travel to Tripoli or in some cases Sabratha, both on the north coast of Libya..., where they hoped to embark on a boat journey to Italy across the Mediterranean Sea. The 2015 report mentioned the use of the western Mediterranean route to Spain... IOM data showed that Nigerians do not figure amongst the most common nationalities of arrivals in Spain.

⁵⁸ University of Bedfordshire, ‘[Between Two Fires](#)’ (page 72-74), March 2019

⁵⁹ DFAT, ‘[Country information report: Nigeria](#)’ (paragraph 3.121), updated 3 December 2020

Nevertheless, various sources indicated that Nigerian trafficking victims have used the western Mediterranean route to enter Europe... A European NGO indicated that a small fraction of Nigerian sex trafficking victims still arrived via plane in Europe... The main airports of embarkation indicated by Frontex (2018) - in its database of irregular entries at EU air borders - also included Lagos (in the top six)...⁶⁰

4.6.5 The USSD TiP Report 2021 – Nigeria - stated:

‘Nigerian criminal elements transport women and children to other West and Central African countries – including Cabo Verde, Cote d’Ivoire, Mali, and Senegal – as well as to South Africa, where they exploit them in forced labor and sex trafficking; experts report mixed migration networks were well organized and involved in both smuggling and trafficking operations. Observers reported traffickers and smugglers using the mixed migration route through Mali sold Nigerian girls into commercial sex in Mali.’⁶¹

4.6.6 The USSD TiP Report 2021 – Nigeria also stated:

‘Authorities identified Nigerian trafficking victims – often exploited by Nigerian traffickers – in countries in Africa, Europe, and the Middle East during the reporting period. Criminal groups and brothel owners exploit Nigerian women and girls in sex trafficking within Nigeria and throughout Europe, including in and around Paris, France; Turin and Ferrara, Italy; and Madrid, Spain, as well as Austria and Russia. NGOs reported that while Italy remained the primary destination for Nigerian trafficking victims, illicit networks have shifted to other destinations such as France and Spain. According to reports, 80 percent of women in Spain’s unlicensed brothels are victims of sex trafficking, with Nigerians forming a large percentage of that population. In France, Nigerian trafficking networks force women and girls into commercial sex around Paris and threaten victims’ families in Nigeria to maintain control; illicit recruiters target women and girls predominantly from impoverished families in Edo State and require them to take a loyalty oath to their traffickers. Nigerian women and children are recruited and transported to destinations in North Africa, the Middle East – including Lebanon, Oman, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates – as well as Central Asia, and exploited in sex trafficking or forced labor.’⁶²

4.6.7 A NAPTIP factsheet stated that 90% of trafficked persons were transported by road across the Sahara Desert with the remaining 10% being moved through airports and seaports⁶³. The factsheet also provided a list of common trafficking routes:

- ‘Nigeria- Cotonou -Togo-Morocco by road
- ‘Europe (by air)
- ‘Nigeria-Ghana- Morocco-Libya-Spain (by road)
- ‘Kano, Kwara, Kaduna-Saudi Arabia (by air)

⁶⁰ EASO, [Trafficking in Human Beings](#) (page 37-38), April 2021

⁶¹ USSD, [TiP Report 2021 – Nigeria](#), (section Nigeria – Trafficking profile), 1 July 2021

⁶² USSD, [TiP Report 2021 – Nigeria](#), (section Nigeria – Trafficking profile), 1 July 2021

⁶³ NAPTIP, [‘Factsheet 1’](#), updated 21 December 2021

- 'Abuja-Maiduguri-Chad-Libya-Spain (by road)
- 'Akwa Ibom-Cameroun-Gabon (by road and by sea)
- 'Lagos-Spain-Germany (by air)
- 'Lagos-Liberia (by air)¹³
- 'Lagos-Cote D'Ivoire (by air)
- 'Lagos-US/London (by air)
- 'Shaki (Oyo)-Guinea-Mali-Cote Di'voire (by road)
- 'Edo- Italy (by air)
- 'Kano-Niger (by road)
- 'Edo-Sokoto-Niger-Mali- Burkina Faso
- 'Oron-Calabar-Cameroun.'⁶⁴

[Back to Contents](#)

Section 5 updated: 23 March 2022

5. Returns process and initial support

5.1 Numbers of return

5.1.1 Home Office returns datasets for 2016 – 2021 show the following numbers of Nigerians returned within a 12 month period, however, it is not known how many of these are trafficked or are victims of modern slavery:

Year	Total Nigerian returns	Total Nigerian returned to their home country	Total Nigerian women returned to their home country
2016	2473	1856	741
2017	1844	1310	518
2018	1443	937	377
2019	1199	787	318
2020	454	268	96
2021	356*	343*	153*

*Includes quarters 1-3 only.

5.1.2 The April 2021 EASO Trafficking in Human Beings report on Nigeria, based on a range of sources and referring to returns in general not specifically victims of trafficking, stated: 'No information was found in regard to the percentage of returnees from Europe who are recognised to be victims of human trafficking.'⁶⁵

[Back to Contents](#)

⁶⁴ NAPTIP, 'Factsheet 1', updated 21 December 2021

⁶⁵ EASO, [Trafficking in Human Beings](#) (page 43), April 2021

5.2 Process of return

- 5.2.1 The website for the IOM stated in a news article from March 2021: 'Since 2017, IOM has assisted the voluntary return and reintegration of more than 21,500 Nigerian migrants, of which approximately 15 per cent are victims of trafficking from Libya, Mali, Europe and the Middle East, among others.'⁶⁶
- 5.2.2 The website for the IOM stated in an undated news article: 'There is currently no specialised programme to assist survivors of trafficking who would like to return to their country of origin from the UK but need support to do so. IOM is advocating for this to change to ensure that there are appropriate risks assessment measures in place and access to reintegration assistance in the place of return.'⁶⁷
- 5.2.3 For those that are eligible, a UK Government [voluntary return programme](#) provides up to £3000 financial support. To be used in the home country of a returnee, this can be used to find somewhere to live, find a job or start a business.
- 5.2.4 The April 2021 EASO Trafficking in Human Beings report on Nigeria, based on a range of sources and referring to returns in general not specifically victims of trafficking, stated:
- 'On an annual basis, many migrants return to Nigeria. European governments have established a range of programmes to support Nigerian returnees with their returns and reintegration in Nigeria. The departure country and the question whether the migrant does or does not cooperate with his/her return determine for what type of support programme he/she can apply. Prospective Nigerian returnees based in Europe can use programmes by EU Member State immigration agencies, IOM programmes or support provided through the European Return and Reintegration Network (ERRIN) in the framework of their joint reintegration programmes... Support by national immigration agencies and IOM support is predominantly reserved for voluntary returnees, whereas ERRIN support is provided to both voluntary and forced returnees according to policies in place in the respective sending countries.'⁶⁸
- 5.2.5 The April 2021 EASO Trafficking in Human Beings report on Nigeria, based on a range of sources, stated:
- '[The 2015 EASO report](#) on sex trafficking indicated that victims of human trafficking who were deported from Europe often did not receive adequate support at the airport due to a lack of coordination between European authorities and NAPTIP... During the last couple of years, most victims of trafficking who returned to Nigeria came from Libya in the framework of the EU-IOM [International Organization for Migration] programme. In case of return from Europe, it is most likely that victims of trafficking were amongst forced returnees. Research by an international organisation in Nigeria indicated that both under the EU ERRIN [European Return and Reintegration Network] programme and the EU-IOM programme screening committees involving multiple government agencies have received returnees

⁶⁶ IOM, '[IOM Nigeria Joins Authorities to Launch New "Blue Bus" Project to Fight...](#)', 30 March 2021

⁶⁷ IOM, '[Voluntary return and reintegration for survivors of trafficking](#)', no date

⁶⁸ EASO, '[Trafficking in Human Beings](#)' (page 43), April 2021

at airports and identified their status and assistance needs... Those who got identified as trafficking victims, were transferred to NAPTIP... This research indicated that cooperation between Europe-based and Nigerian NGOs working on sexual exploitation also sometimes resulted in the identification of trafficking victims after return from Europe...'⁶⁹

5.2.6 The EASO report, citing various sources, also stated:

'Most voluntary return programmes provide support to returnees upon arrival in Nigeria consisting of the reception of returnees and accommodation during the first day(s) after arrival. Most information about the experiences of migrants upon arrival at Nigerian airports concerns return flights from Libya. These returnees arrive in big groups of hundreds of migrants. Various sources who witnessed the arrival of this type of return flights, did not register abuse of voluntary returnees from Libya by the authorities... One source captured "patronizing remarks" by customs agents against women perceived to have worked in prostitution...

'IOM cooperates with various Nigerian government agencies to conduct vulnerability scans with returnees in the countries in which they are stranded, as well as at their point of entry into Nigeria. This helps to identify vulnerable returnees such as survivors of trafficking, torture, and slavery. The Nigerian Port Health collaborates with IOM medics to attend to the emergency needs of survivors via the screening of returnees, the provision of immediate medical assistance and psychosocial aid, and the delivery of a brief orientation session on available assistance options. The IOM's protection team also cooperates with NAPTIP's rehabilitation and counselling team in the management of identified trafficking survivors... Human Rights Watch expressed concerns about the efficacy of vulnerability scans/victim identification efforts at the airport... A witness of a return flight from Libya observed a generally well-organised process, but also indicated that some (traumatised) migrants refused to participate in registration procedures, and that groups of returnees started protesting in the registration area, demanding empowerment and jobs...

'Whether there is support for forced returnees from Europe upon arrival at the airport depends on the arrangements made by Frontex or the countries organising repatriation. Sources only described the arrival of forced returnees for whom there was no support by third parties... Most of these sources did not report abuse by airport officials of returnees... , contrary to the 2015 EASO report on sex trafficking, which cited various sources describing the arrest of deported trafficking victims and cases in which trafficking victims were forced to pay bribes to airport officials to get released... A more recent publication did allude to such experiences, but was based on fieldwork with Nigerian victims before 2015... One source reported to be aware of (more recent) cases where Nigerian airport officials had confiscated ID documents of forced returnees... Another source reported to be aware of a case where airport officials had threatened to put a forced returnee in prison if he would not pay them a bribe... Sources indicated that the key issue forced returnees faced was the lack of accommodation upon arrival in Nigeria... This is problematic, as the airports

⁶⁹ EASO, [Trafficking in Human Beings](#) (page 45-46), April 2021

where returnees arrive can be hundreds of kilometres away from their regions of origin. This is particularly problematic when planes arrive late at night, as is often the case... A source indicated that forced returnees who had no place to go upon arrival were sometimes supported by churches... The return of forced returnees was sometimes perceived by witnesses as hectic...⁷⁰

- 5.2.7 The USSD TiP Report 2021 – Nigeria - stated: ‘During the previous reporting period, NAPTIP and an international organization screened all returnees from Libya for trafficking indicators and referred the identified trafficking victims to NAPTIP facilities or NGOs.’⁷¹

[Back to Contents](#)

Section 6 updated: 23 March 2022

6. Treatment after return by non-state actors

6.1 Reprisals

- 6.1.1 While details of reprisals also appear in sections under traffickers strategies, the following gives a picture of the more general information on the risk of reprisals from traffickers and the risk of women being re-trafficked after returning to Nigeria:

- 6.1.2 The Dutch MofFA COI report 2021 stated:

‘Many ... victims [female trafficking victims] fear reprisals against themselves or their family members if they flee sexual exploitation without paying off their debt. However, there is no clear picture of the scale and extent to which victims were actually subjected to reprisals after returning to Nigeria and few concrete cases of reprisals during this reporting period are known. Several sources noted that traffickers’ attitudes towards victims who return to Nigeria without paying their debt had hardened... This resulted in reprisals against family members of victims and/or the re-trafficking of returned trafficking victims. No information was available on the prevalence of reprisals against male victims of trafficking.’⁷²

- 6.1.3 The Dutch MofFA COI report 2021 also noted:

‘Although there is great fear of reprisals among human trafficking victims, there is less information about the scale on which reprisals (violent or otherwise) occur in practice...

‘In addition to the fact that victims of human trafficking fear the consequences of breaking a juju oath, research conducted with Nigerian victims (in Europe) shows that there is also great fear of the violent practices of the criminal networks/cults that coordinate human trafficking from Nigeria... There is less clarity about the extent to which these groups do actually use violence against female trafficking victims who return to Nigeria without paying their debt. During the reporting period, several sources noted a hardening of traffickers’ attitudes toward trafficking victims who returned without paying off their debts... An article in [De Correspondent](#) [an online

⁷⁰ EASO, [Trafficking in Human Beings](#) (page 46-47), April 2021

⁷¹ USSD, [TiP Report 2021 – Nigeria](#), (section Nigeria – Protection), 1 July 2021

⁷² Netherlands – Ministry of Foreign Affairs, [COI report Nigeria](#) (paragraph 6.2), March 2021

Dutch journalistic news platform] attributes this to the fact that the traffickers' earnings model has come under pressure since it has become more difficult to get women to Europe due to the more active role of the Libyan coastguard in combating human trafficking... This means that from a financial point of view it has become more important for traffickers to ensure that women stay in work and pay off their debts, according to this source. This hardening of traffickers' attitudes was also referred to by Daniel Atokolo, the head of the NAPTIP office in Lagos, in an interview with Deutsche Welle... Several sources indicate that they believe this development lies behind an increase in violence and threats against victims and their families. A number of sources indicated that they were aware of cases in which returning victims of human trafficking had been threatened... A confidential source indicated that contacts within the Nigerian police had stated that there had been lethal violence against female trafficking victims on their return to Nigeria during the reporting period... However, none of the confidential sources interviewed for this country of origin information report could provide specific details of cases of this type, such as date/location. There were also confidential sources that indicated that they had hardly ever encountered cases of reprisals against victims in daily practice... Traffickers, according to one of these sources, prefer to stay off the radar of the judicial system, and it is more efficient for them to send a new victim to Europe than to use force against a returned victim...

'Regarding the reasons behind these differing views on the prevalence and nature of reprisals against returned victims, the literature consulted for this report gave the impression that there has historically been a wide range of views in this area... The above analysis of recent sources confirmed that there is still a lack of reliable figures on this phenomenon and that few concrete cases of reprisals are reported in Nigerian media. Some confidential sources indicated that this is the case because female trafficking victims are not a newsworthy topic in southern Nigeria in particular... One of these sources stated that this was also the case because so many people in southern Nigeria are caught up in human trafficking, so that few people want more attention to be paid to this subject in the media... A source working with trafficking victims in Nigeria stated that after experiencing threats or abuse, most victims are afraid to share their stories with the media for fear of further reprisals... Another source indicated that the lack of clarity about whether trafficking victims suffer reprisals is partly due to the fact that Benin City is a dangerous place for women in general. According to this source, it is therefore not always clear whether violence against returning trafficking victims is a reprisal or some other form of violence.'⁷³

6.1.4 The same Dutch MofFA report 2021 stated:

'In many cases, threats and violence against victims serve the purpose of forcing women to pay off their debt through sexual exploitation. According to EASO, the main form of reprisal against trafficking victims was re-trafficking: forcing victims to return to prostitution in Europe or elsewhere... For traffickers primarily interested in collecting "the debt" that is still outstanding, this is the most efficient measure to take against a "disobedient victim",

⁷³ Netherlands – Ministry of Foreign Affairs, [COI report Nigeria](#) (paragraph 6.2), March 2021

according to several confidential sources... A confidential source stated that eight or nine out of every ten female trafficking victims who are forcibly repatriated to Edo state will become victims of human trafficking/sexual exploitation again... Another confidential source reported receiving regular calls from victims who, after returning from Italy to Nigeria, had ended up in a situation of sexual exploitation again in another country, such as Israel or Russia... Several online publications also indicated that re-trafficking is a common phenomenon... Sources also stated that as it has become harder to bring victims to Europe, victims are more likely to be employed in the sex industry in neighbouring countries such as Ghana or Libya, or in Nigeria itself...'⁷⁴

6.1.5 The EASO report 2021, citing various sources, noted:

'While the fear of reprisals is significant, insight into the actual prevalence and nature of reprisals remains spotty, as was the case in 2015. Various sources identified a tendency on behalf of traffickers to use more violence to guarantee the obedience of victims during this reporting period because of the actions by the Oba of Benin, and the fact that it has become more difficult to transfer women to Europe. Nevertheless, the various (anonymous) sources who were interviewed for this report provided conflicting accounts in relation to the actual occurrence of (violent) reprisals. Overall, experts distinguished three categories of reprisals: threats and (mortal) violence against returnee trafficking victims, threat and (mortal) violence against family members of victims who returned or who remained in Europe, and the re-trafficking of returnee victims. Sources' views mostly diverged with regard to the question to what extent victims themselves are at risk of being subjected to violence upon return. Most did recognise that family members have become victims of threats and violence, and that women/girls have been re-trafficked. Some sources, however, indicated that trafficking victims choose themselves to return to Europe, in order to flee stigmatisation, pay off debts, earn money themselves, and escape a general lack of economic opportunities in Nigeria.'⁷⁵

6.1.6 The EASO report 2021, citing various sources, also stated:

'Various sources identified a toughening in the attitude of traffickers towards victims who failed to repay their debts. An article in the Dutch newspaper De Correspondent ascribed this development to the fact that Italian measures to stem migration from Libya have put under pressure Nigerian traffickers' "business model", which was dependent on a continuous influx of new Nigerian sex trafficking victims. Sources prior to 2015 stated that reprisals against trafficking victims, who decided to escape, were rare, as it was easy for traffickers to replace them with a new victim. However, as this influx has been partly blocked, it has become more important for traffickers to ascertain that the women who are already in Europe continue working to repay their debts according to an article in international media. A nun who supports returnee trafficking victims in Benin City mentioned that since 2018 she was witnessing, for the first time, traffickers using violence against trafficking victims and their families in order to ensure that they would repay their debts.

⁷⁴ Netherlands – Ministry of Foreign Affairs, [COI report Nigeria](#) (paragraph 6.2), March 2021

⁷⁵ EASO, [Trafficking in Human Beings](#) (page 59-60), April 2021

Another NGO representative from Edo State indicated the need to be aware of specific cases in which returnee victims had been subjected to dead [death] threats. The director of NAPTIP's zonal command in Lagos stated that:

"The traffickers are increasingly brutal. According to Atokolo, efforts to dispel juju superstition among West Africans mean the madams in Europe now mainly resort to violence, instead of the psychological pressure of spells, to control the young women forced into prostitution. [...] That the secret societies active in Europe today, commonly referred to as the Nigerian mafia, 'are no longer out to psychologically condition their victims with magic spells. They now use sheer terror. There is a clear relationship between the decrease in juju spells and the stronger presence of these gangs, who demand total obedience from their victims.'"...

'Other sources stated that Nigerian traffickers have always been violent and that violent reprisals against trafficking victims have always existed. One of these sources indicated that contacts within the Nigerian police force indicated that trafficking victims have been killed after their return to Nigeria. However, these observations could not be supported by reports in the media or by linking them to a specific time and date. At the same time, various sources indicated to almost never receive reports about violent reprisals against returnee trafficking victims. A source indicated that traffickers prefer not to attract the attention of Nigerian law enforcement and instead to send a new victim to Europe, as did some sources cited in the 2015 EASO report.'⁷⁶

[Back to Contents](#)

6.2 Retrafficking

- 6.2.1 Euronews, an international online news channel reported in June 2020: '...having escaped violence and sexual abuse in Libya, many women [who had been trafficked] arriving home fell back into the cycle of exploitation in Nigeria - others said they received little support once they got home.'⁷⁷
- 6.2.2 The same Euronews report stated: 'An officer working with the Nigerian Immigration Service, who investigates returned victims of trafficking through their Facebook accounts, told Euronews that despite the multiple efforts to stop the trafficking, many women are re-trafficked or leave again after only a few months. In 2018, NAPTIP intercepted 134 previous victims of trafficking who had been re-trafficked again outside the country.'⁷⁸
- 6.2.3 The Dutch MofFA report 2021 noted:

'It was not always clear to what extent victims of retrafficking were driven by violence and threats when they travelled abroad for a second time to end up in the sex industry. Both confidential sources and articles in the media referred to cases in which women, out of financial or other forms of despair/shame at having returned empty-handed, decided to travel to

⁷⁶ EASO, [Trafficking in Human Beings](#) (page 60-61), April 2021

⁷⁷ Euronews, ['Abused in Libya and forced into prostitution back home...'](#), 21 June 2020

⁷⁸ Euronews, ['Abused in Libya and forced into prostitution back home...'](#), 21 June 2020

Europe or another destination again with the help of a human trafficker... A source indicated that women who have paid off a large or smaller part of their debt wanted to return to Europe in order to pay off the entire debt and then be able to work for their own account...'⁷⁹

6.2.4 The EASO report 2021, citing various sources, also stated:

'Threats and violence against victims and their families usually serve the goal of forcing them to repay the outstanding debt. As returnee victims or their families usually do not have the means to repay these debts, traffickers sometimes try to retraffic victims to gain profits... Sources indicated that as it has become more difficult to traffic victims to Europe, women have also been re trafficked to neighbouring countries or Libya... However, as was mentioned in the 2015 EASO report on sex trafficking of Nigerian women, re trafficking does not always result from intimidation and force... Various sources indicated that financial hardship and shame incited trafficking victims to try to travel to Europe again... Some trafficking victims who have repaid a significant share of their debt hope to return to Europe to start earning money on their own account as sex workers or madams...'⁸⁰

[Back to Contents](#)

6.3 Initial support following return

6.3.1 Euronews, an international online news channel reported in June 2020

'...One women, Evelin, told Euronews she was forced into prostitution in Libya, became pregnant and then had a miscarriage. In Nigeria she was offered no health check either for the miscarried pregnancy nor for potential infections.

'Another woman who was brought back to Nigeria in October 2019 told Euronews that she had been forced into prostitution in Benin City, Edo State.

'Here, it is hard not to find a person who doesn't have a family member in Europe. Many hundreds of young Edo girls have been trafficked to Europe via Libya and Asia yearly and Edo State is an internationally recognised sex-trafficking hub...

'Life is not easy for those women who had survived sexual and labour exploitation in Libya and are now back home in Nigeria, said Evon Benson-Idahosa, founder of Pathfinders Justice Initiative an NGO in Benin City.

"They will tell you they don't have any option here. It's a toxic environment where women think that prostitution is an alternative to poverty," she said...

'One NGO worker told Euronews that it is difficult to keep returning women and girls away from the networks that trafficked them in the first place. "Our girls tried their best to return to their families, yet many return to prostitution, others are still in contact with their traffickers," he said.

'And in Edo State, the conviction rates are pitiful...

'But even those who have suffered in Libya have not given up the hope to try and reach Europe again.

⁷⁹ Netherlands – Ministry of Foreign Affairs, [COI report Nigeria](#) (paragraph 6.2), March 2021

⁸⁰ EASO, [Trafficking in Human Beings](#) (page 62), April 2021

“I will not go to Libya again, it’s too dangerous,” a women in Benin City told Euronews after her return, “but I will try another way. I want to go to Europe.”⁸¹

- 6.3.2 An IOM press release from November 2021 stated that a new transit centre for returned Nigerian migrants in Lagos state had been commissioned by the European Union and IOM . It said that it would

‘... serve as a reception point for the provision of safe, temporary accommodation, as well as ensure access to social support and specialised services to returned migrants, unaccompanied children, and Victims of Trafficking (VoTs).

‘The transit center has the capacity to host up to 400 migrants who can benefit from direct medical assistance, mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS), counselling, provision of food and a safe, clean, and secure location to rest. Returned migrants accommodated in the facility can stay between two and 12 nights based on their needs. During this time, they can finalise their return plans, contact their family and ensure the existence of social contacts and willingness of their family to receive them back home.’⁸²

[Back to Contents](#)

6.4 Family/societal attitudes and treatment

- 6.4.1 The HRW trafficking report 2019 stated that:

‘Upon return to Nigeria, many women and girls said they struggled with depression, anxiety, insomnia, flashbacks, aches and pains, and other physical ailments that have sometimes limited their ability to work effectively. They said they struggled to provide financially for their families, lacked adequate food, or struggled to find money to access health care. For some, their suffering is worsened by families who blamed them for the abuses, ostracized them, or complained that they returned without money.’⁸³

- 6.4.2 The University of Bedfordshire/IOM report March 2019 stated: ‘Key informants in Nigeria acknowledged stigmatization that victims [of] trafficking and returning migrants can face on their access to support and their recovery from their experiences. Key informants gave accounts of how some families have rejected their children because they are returned victims of trafficking.’⁸⁴

- 6.4.3 The Dutch MofFA COI report 2021 on Nigeria stated:

‘It is difficult to paint a clear picture of society’s views on women who have been exploited in the sex industry in Europe. This is related to the country’s high degree of cultural diversity and the differing profiles of trafficking victims. Victims of sexual exploitation in Europe are at high risk of being stigmatised on their return because of the negative views of prostitution/sex work in Nigeria... Despite this, research shows that victims of sexual exploitation are not always subject to stigma, and that the extent to which

⁸¹ Euronews, ‘[Abused in Libya and forced into prostitution back home...](#)’, 21 June 2020

⁸² IOM, ‘[EU and IOM Provide Safe and Secure Transit Centre for Returned...](#)’, 11 November 2021

⁸³ HRW, “[You Pray for Death](#)”, *Trafficking of Women and Girls in Nigeria*, 27 August 2019

⁸⁴ University of Bedfordshire, ‘[Between Two Fires](#)’ (page 92), March 2019

victims are able to provide their families with an income largely determines whether or not this is the case... If a trafficking victim (eventually) succeeds in sending money home (especially if the amount sent home is considerable), the victim can probably expect to receive more respect within her family, partly because its accumulated wealth will have increased its prestige within the wider community. Research and media articles show that when sexual exploitation victims from southern Nigeria manage to make a living, the provenance of this new wealth is largely ignored...' ⁸⁵

- 6.4.4 The April 2021 EASO Trafficking in Human Beings report on Nigeria, based on a range of sources, stated:

'... victims of trafficking feared stigmatisation by their families and communities upon return because "there are both negative attitudes and high expectations towards victims of trafficking who have returned or been forced to return from Europe." In particular, the report emphasised that attitudes towards trafficking victims who have engaged in prostitution depend on the extent to which they have managed to make and send remittances back home. In case women succeed in making money, "people are not interested in the origin of the earnings." ⁸⁶

[Back to Contents](#)

Section 7 updated: 23 March 2022

7. Protection: the law and its enforcement

7.1 Overview

- 7.1.1 The USSD TiP Report 2021 stated:

'The Government of Nigeria does not fully meet the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking but is making significant efforts to do so [[USSD - Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000](#) – the minimum standards are generally consistent with the United Nations [Palermo Protocol](#)]. The government demonstrated overall increasing efforts compared to the previous reporting period [2019], considering the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on its anti-trafficking capacity; therefore Nigeria was upgraded to Tier 2 [Countries whose governments do not fully meet the TVPA's minimum standards but are making significant efforts to bring themselves into compliance with those standards⁸⁷]. These efforts included convicting more traffickers and sanctioning the majority of perpetrators with significant prison terms; prosecuting officials suspected of being complicit in trafficking crimes; improving intra-governmental coordination on anti-trafficking operations; launching nine new state task forces; and for the first time, the Ministry of Defense acknowledged service members sexually exploited internally displaced persons (IDPs). Additionally, officials increased collaboration with foreign governments on international trafficking investigations. However, the government did not meet the minimum standards in several key areas. Members of the Civilian Joint Task Force (CJTF) in Borno State used two children at an IDP camp checkpoint; there continued to be reports of sex

⁸⁵ Netherlands – Ministry of Foreign Affairs, [COI report Nigeria](#) (paragraph 6.2), March 2021

⁸⁶ EASO, [Trafficking in Human Beings](#) (page 47), April 2021

⁸⁷ USSD, [TiP Report 2021](#) (section Methodology – Tier placement), 1 July 2021

trafficking in government-run IDP camps; and officials prosecuted fewer suspected traffickers. Further, corruption remained a significant concern in the judiciary and immigration services, and the Ministry of Defense did not finalize its handover protocol to refer child soldiers to care for the sixth consecutive year.⁸⁸

[Back to Contents](#)

7.2 Law and policy measures

7.2.1 The HRW trafficking report 2019 found that: ‘Nigeria has taken some positive steps to address its widespread problem of trafficking. It has taken the important step of ratifying most international instruments on human trafficking. It has also established the National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons (NAPTIP) and developed an anti-trafficking law that is line with international standards.’⁸⁹

7.2.2 The DFAT country information report of December 2020 and based on a range of sources stated:

‘Since 2000, Nigeria has been a signatory to the Palermo Protocol to prevent, suppress and punish trafficking in persons, especially women and children. The government enacted the Trafficking in Persons (Prohibition) Law Enforcement and Administration Act (the Act) in 2003, [TPPLEAA] establishing the National Agency for the Prohibition of Traffic in Persons (NAPTIP) to support trafficking victims. The Act was amended in 2015 to criminalise labour and sex trafficking, which now attract penalties of five years’ imprisonment (seven years if the case involves a child) and substantial fines.’⁹⁰

7.2.3 The April 2021 EASO Trafficking in Human Beings report on Nigeria, based on a range of sources, stated:

‘The Nigerian government considers a person to be trafficked if:

- (i) ‘the individual was sold in exchange for money;
- (ii) ‘the individual was put in debt bondage;
- (iii) ‘his/her travel documents were seized by agents, employers or traffickers;
- (iv) ‘his/her freedom of movement was restricted;
- (v) ‘the individual was subjected to or suffered violence or threat against his/her family;
- (vi) ‘the individual’s traffickers gained any form of benefits at their expense through the use of force, deceit, and other forms of exploitation;
- (vii) ‘the individual has suffered physical, mental and/or sexual abuse; and/or

⁸⁸ USSD, [TiP Report 2021 – Nigeria](#), (section Nigeria – Tier 2), 1 July 2021

⁸⁹ HRW, “[You Pray for Death](#)”, [Trafficking of Women and Girls in Nigeria](#)’, 27 August 2019

⁹⁰ DFAT, ‘[Country information report: Nigeria](#)’ (paragraph 3.121), updated 3 December 2020

- (viii) ‘the individual had no prior knowledge of the exploitative nature of the job they were promised....

‘The law establishes a National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons (NAPTIP) to enforce and administer the TIPLEAA [Trafficking in Persons (Prohibition) Law Enforcement and Administration Act]...’⁹¹

7.2.4 The United States Department of State’s Trafficking in Persons Report, reporting on the year 2020 and published in June 2021, noted:

‘The Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000, as amended (TVPA), defines “severe forms of trafficking in persons” as:

- ‘sex trafficking in which a commercial sex act is induced by force, fraud, or coercion, or in which the person induced to perform such an act has not attained 18 years of age; or
- ‘the recruitment, harboring, transportation, provision, or obtaining of a person for labor or services, through the use of force, fraud, or coercion for the purpose of subjection to involuntary servitude, peonage, debt bondage, or slavery. A victim need not be physically transported from one location to another for the crime to fall within this definition.’⁹²

7.2.5 The USSD TiP Report 2021 also stated:

‘The Trafficking in Persons Law Enforcement and Administration Act (TIPLEAA), as amended in 2015, criminalized sex trafficking and labor trafficking and prescribed a minimum penalty of two years’ imprisonment and a fine of 250,000 naira (\$649) [£441⁹³] for both sex and labor trafficking; the minimum penalty for sex trafficking increased to seven years’ imprisonment and a fine of 1 million naira (\$2,600) [£1,767⁹⁴] if the case involved a child victim. These penalties were sufficiently stringent and, with regard to sex trafficking, commensurate with those prescribed for other serious crimes, such as kidnapping. The Edo State anti-trafficking law criminalized sex trafficking and labor trafficking and prescribed a minimum penalty of five years’ imprisonment and a fine of 1 million naira (\$2,600) [£1,767⁹⁵] for both sex and labor trafficking; the minimum penalty for sex trafficking increased to seven years’ imprisonment and a fine of 1 million naira (\$2,600) [£1,767⁹⁶] if the case involved a child victim. These penalties were sufficiently stringent and, with regard to sex trafficking, commensurate with those prescribed for other serious crimes, such as kidnapping.’⁹⁷

7.2.6 A NAPTIP factsheet updated in December 2021 listed the national response to human trafficking:

- ‘The ratification of the Palermo Protocol on December 28th June 2001

⁹¹ EASO, [Trafficking in Human Beings](#) (Page 11), April 2021

⁹² USSD, [TiP Report 2021](#) (page 9), 1 July 2021

⁹³ [Xe Currency Converter](#), 17 February 2022

⁹⁴ [Xe Currency Converter](#), 17 February 2022

⁹⁵ [Xe Currency Converter](#), 17 February 2022

⁹⁶ [Xe Currency Converter](#), 17 February 2022

⁹⁷ USSD, [TiP Report 2021 – Nigeria](#), (section Nigeria – Prioritized recommendations), 1 July 2021

- ‘Enactment of TIPPLEA Act 2003 on -14th July 2003
- ‘Establishment of NAPTIP on the 14th July, 2003
- ‘Amendment of the Trafficking in Persons (Prohibition) Law Enforcement and Administration Act, (TIPPLEA) 2003 in December 2005
- ‘Re-enactment of the Trafficking in Persons (Prohibition) Enforcement and Administration Act 2015 on 26th March 2015.
- ‘Setting up the National Task Force on TIP on October 4th, 2006
- ‘Establishment of the Victims of Trafficking Trust Fund in 2008
- ‘Signing of bilateral and multilateral agreements
- ‘Approval of the National Policy on Protection and Assistance to Trafficked Persons in Nigeria by the Federal Executive Council (FEC) on the 12th of November, 2008
- ‘Approval of the National Plan of Action on TIP by the Federal Executive Council (FEC) in 2008.’⁹⁸

[Back to Contents](#)

7.3 National Referral Mechanism (NRM)

- 7.3.1 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.

The document identified basic principles 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, and the programmes and services that should be available to TPs. The NRM is designed to enhance service delivery to TPs.’⁹⁹

- 7.3.2 The USSD TiP Report 2021 stated: ‘... the government’s national referral mechanism provided formal guidelines for law enforcement, immigration officials, and service providers to improve protection and assistance to trafficking victims, both within Nigeria and abroad.’¹⁰⁰

[Back to Contents](#)

7.4 Enforcement agencies and activities

- 7.4.1 The USSD TiP Report 2021 stated:

‘NAPTIP, under the Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs and Disaster Management, continued to lead the federal government’s efforts to combat trafficking, although officials from the Nigerian Immigration Service, NPF, Labor Inspectorate, Economic and Financial Crimes Commission – as well

⁹⁸ NAPTIP, [‘Factsheet 1’](#), updated 21 December 2021

⁹⁹ NAPTIP, [‘Guidelines on National Referral Mechanism for Protection and Assistance...’](#), no date

¹⁰⁰ USSD, [TiP Report 2021 – Nigeria](#), (section Protection), 1 July 2021

as the Nigerian Financial Intelligence Unit, in coordination with prosecutors and the judiciary – all had responsibilities in supporting the country’s criminal justice response to human trafficking.’¹⁰¹

7.4.2 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 the cities of Lagos, Benin, Enugu, Uyo, Sokoto, Kano, Maiduguri, Osogbo and Makurdi. The Agency also has State Commands in Anambra, Bayelsa, Imo & Cross River as well as liaison offices in Abia, Adamawa, Akure, Ekiti, Gombe, Jos, Kaduna, Katsina, Nassarawa, Port-Harcourt, Yobe and Oyo¹⁰².

7.4.3 On its website, NAPTIP gives a list of functions which include law enforcement, protection and preventive initiatives of the various levels of Government and Non-Governmental Organisations working on all forms of trafficking. NATIP also states that it has the power to investigate, arrest, detain and prosecute offenders¹⁰³.

7.4.4 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 Zonal Commands, State Commands and Liaison 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 red cards, fact sheets, Face caps, T/shirts, stickers and posters, Advocacy/courtesy visits, awareness campaigns, rallies, organized excursions, Pre-Sensitization tours to human-trafficking endemic areas, Newspaper sensitization and awareness, publication of electronic media messages, outdoor publicity using bill boards, Jingles, Local media Newsletter publications, Dramas, Feedback mechanism, publication of Social Media messages etc.’¹⁰⁴

[Back to Contents](#)

7.5 International co-operation

7.5.1 The DFAT country information report 2020 observed:

‘Nigeria receives significant levels of international support and capacity building aimed at improving its migration systems through the UN Global Initiative to Fight Human Trafficking, and the Nigeria Immigration Service works closely with the IOM and the UN Office on Drugs and Crime to combat trafficking. Although the government has substantially increased NAPTIP’s budget in recent years, international observers report NAPTIP remains under-resourced given the scale of the problem.’¹⁰⁵

¹⁰¹ USSD, [TiP Report 2021 – Nigeria](#), (section Prosecution), 1 July 2021

¹⁰² NAPTIP, [About us – Organizational Structure](#), no date

¹⁰³ NAPTIP, [About us](#), no date

¹⁰⁴ NAPTIP, [Public Enlightenment](#), no date

¹⁰⁵ DFAT, [‘Country information report: Nigeria’](#) (paragraph 3.122), updated 3 December 2020

7.5.2 A press release from September 2021 stated that

‘The Nigerian Ports Authority, (NPA) is set to partner with the United Kingdom Border Force, on port security and facilitation of legitimate movement of persons and goods at all seaports in the country...

‘... the partnership will enhance Nigeria’s border management capabilities including strengthening the capacity of border law enforcement agencies to protect revenue, to disrupt criminal activities like money laundering, drugs, human trafficking and terrorism.’¹⁰⁶

7.5.3 The USSD TiP Report 2021 stated:

‘In August 2020, NAPTIP coordinated with an international organization to launch two legal hubs in Edo and Lagos states, in collaboration with the Ministry of Justice and NGOs, with the aim of enhancing victims’ access to justice through legal aid counseling and representation in court. In February 2021, NAPTIP partnered with an international organization and donor to establish a Judicial Research Center in Abuja; the center provided NAPTIP officers access to resources to strengthen trafficking cases and enhance prosecution efforts.

‘The Nigerian-United Kingdom (UK) Joint Border Task Force (JBTF) – which is Nigerian-led and UK-supported – continued operations during the rating period, with observers reporting Nigerian judges convicted the country’s first perpetrator for conspiracy related to human trafficking, as well as completing their first conviction based solely on digital evidence. Experts noted the development of a panel of judges focused solely on transnational organized crime – including human trafficking – resulted in some courts operating more efficiently, and witness testimony provided via video mitigated a common delay tactic previously used by some defense attorneys. In 2020 – under the JBTF initiative – officials shared intelligence on joint investigations with UK and Spanish authorities.

‘Over the course of the reporting period, Nigerian law enforcement officials collaborated with the Governments of France, The Gambia, Germany, Ghana, Italy, Spain, Sweden, and Switzerland on joint investigations, intelligence sharing, and prosecutions. NAPTIP reported collaborating with countries to investigate 19 cases of transnational human trafficking crimes. Nigerian judicial officials were prosecuting one transnational case in the Federal High Court in Ibadan and another in the Federal High Court in Lagos as of March 2021. In October 2020, the government entered into force its bilateral agreement with Italy on investigations and extraditions; authorities from the two countries coordinated in 2020 on a case involving a Nigerian trafficker in Italy. International partners reported corruption and capacity issues with some government agencies – including the judiciary and the Nigeria Immigration Service – hindered cooperation at times. In 2019, two European countries transmitted case files to NAPTIP to prosecute organized trafficking networks.’¹⁰⁷

7.5.4 Amnesty International in a November 2021 report stated:

¹⁰⁶ Nigerian Ports Authority, ‘[Press release](#)’, 7 September 2021

¹⁰⁷ USSD, [TiP Report 2021 – Nigeria](#), (section Nigeria – Prosecution), 1 July 2021

On 1 June 2021, the Agency [NATIP] established a VAPP [Violence Against Persons Prohibition] department which is tasked with the responsibility of handling all cases of violence against persons... The administration and enforcement of the VAPP Act are an additional mandate to the National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons' primary function of combatting human trafficking. This additional responsibility has, however, not been matched with adequate supplementary resources by the government, particularly financial and human resources, to ensure the effective enforcement and implementation of both mandates (trafficking and violence against persons) by NATIP. The Agency told Amnesty International that through its supervising Committee at the National Assembly, it has made "proposals for the inclusion of the Agency on government agencies on first line charge in respect of allocations."... However, this is yet to translate into improved budgetary allocation for its enforcement of VAPP.¹⁰⁸

7.5.5 The website for the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) stated in a news article from March 2021:

'The International Organization for Migration (IOM), in collaboration with the National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons (NAPTIP), launched a new project in Abuja, Nigeria, to raise awareness of the scourge of human trafficking among populations at risk in migration prone areas across the country.

'The 23 March [2021] launch marked the tenth anniversary of the Nigeria–Switzerland Migration Partnership. The partnership between the two countries began in February 2011 and has so far successfully implemented close to 50 projects dedicated to migration and border management, fighting trafficking in persons, and voluntary return and reintegration...

'Across West and Central Africa, IOM's counter-trafficking efforts focus on a "whole of route approach", aiming to eliminate the incentive of embarking on perilous journeys, and encourage stronger partnerships between the European Union and Africa in addressing irregular migration, exchange of information on migratory flows, prevent irregular migration and increase the capacities of border protection and improve protection in line with international law.

'The project was kickstarted by Karin Keller-Sutter, the Federal Councillor and Head of the Federal Department of Justice and Police of Switzerland.

"I believe this project is a perfect symbol of our current state of the migration partnership and, more importantly, our future cooperation," said Keller-Sutter at the inauguration event. "We are not afraid to tackle difficult issues such as human trafficking jointly and we are doing it in an innovative, holistic and balanced partnership approach.," she added.

'As part of creating awareness and promoting sustainable reintegration, IOM purchased and designed an awareness-raising travelling bus equipped with audio-visual and printed information to alert potential migrants risks and dangers that may rise with irregular migration Nigeria.

¹⁰⁸ AI, '[Nigeria: A harrowing journey: Access to justice for women and girls...](#)', November 2021

“The Blue Bus is a one-stop shop where vulnerable migrants, including community members, can get information on risks associated with trafficking in persons, where to report cases, and on-spot counselling services,” said Prestage Murima, IOM Nigeria Officer in Charge.

‘Since 2001, IOM has been supporting the efforts of the Government of Nigeria to manage migration through capacity-building, advisory services, and technical assistance on migration matters, including migration health and information, assisted voluntary return and reintegration, and counter-trafficking. Strong collaboration has been established with national migration stakeholders to enhance border management, fight trafficking in persons, reduce irregular migration, and mainstream migration in the country’s development plans.

‘The project Preventing Trafficking in Persons through a Travelling Awareness-Raising Exposition is funded by the Government of Switzerland through the Swiss State Secretariat for Migration.’¹⁰⁹

[Back to Contents](#)

7.6 Investigations, prosecutions and convictions

- 7.6.1 The HRW trafficking report 2019 found that: ‘The agency [NAPTIP] and the law have helped to improve investigation and prosecution of trafficking cases.’¹¹⁰
- 7.6.2 NAPTIP in their 2020 end of year data analysis report (undated), stated that 1,032 cases were reported to the Agency in 2020, of these 251 (24%) were investigated. The total amount of cases reported was made up of 28 categories. ‘Foreign travel which promotes prostitution’ was the most reported type of case with 196, followed by ‘procurement of persons for sexual exploitation’ and ‘child abuse’ with 146 (14%) and 118 (11%) cases respectively¹¹¹. In comparison, whilst no figure was provided for the total number of cases reported to NAPTIP in 2019 their end of year data analysis reported that 203 cases were investigated. Of the cases investigated, ‘foreign travel which promotes prostitution’ accounted for 46 (22.7%), child abuse 36 (17.7%) and procurement of persons for sexual exploitation 19 (9.4%)¹¹².
- 7.6.3 NAPTIP in their 2020 end of year data analysis report confirmed that in the reporting period (2020) 733 suspected traffickers were apprehended, of those 442 were male and 291 were female. The largest number of arrests were for foreign travel which promotes prostitution (122), buying and selling of human beings for any purpose (108), procurement of persons for sexual exploitation (104), employment of a child as a domestic worker and inflicting grievous harm (88) and forced labour outside of Nigeria (69)¹¹³. In 2019 NAPTIP recorded 701 arrests were made of suspected traffickers¹¹⁴.

¹⁰⁹ IOM, ‘[IOM Nigeria Joins Authorities to Launch New “Blue Bus” Project to Fight...](#)’, 30 March 2021

¹¹⁰ HRW, ‘[“You Pray for Death”, Trafficking of Women and Girls in Nigeria](#)’, 27 August 2019

¹¹¹ NAPTIP, [Data Analysis Final 2020](#) (pages 2-3), no date

¹¹² NAPTIP, [Data Analysis Final 2019](#) (pages 2-3), no date

¹¹³ NAPTIP, [Data Analysis Final 2020](#) (pages 5-6), no date

¹¹⁴ NAPTIP, [Data Analysis Final 2019](#) (page 4), no date

- 7.6.4 The NAPTIP report for 2020 recorded that the agency had won 38 cases with 51 traffickers convicted, 11 of which were for the procurement of persons for sexual exploitation¹¹⁵ an increase from 2019 when 18 convictions were secured, 7 of which were for the procurement of persons for sexual exploitation¹¹⁶.
- 7.6.5 A summary of cases from 2016 through to 2020 follows. Data is taken from NAPTIP end of year reports 2016-2020¹¹⁷, where there is a gap then no data was provided for that reporting period:

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Cases reported to NAPTIP	721	876	1076	-	1032
Fully or successfully investigated	389	148	206	203	251
Suspected traffickers apprehended	519	641	823	701	733
Prosecutions (charged to court)	-	70	75	-	69
Convictions - cases	25	21	31	18	38
Number of traffickers convicted	31	26	50	25	51
Rescued victims – total	1017	1890	1173	1152	1087
Male	197	447	190	223	219
Female	820	1443	983	929	868
Rescued victims: Procurement for sexual exploitation or prostitution – externally, internally and for foreign travel	356	929	495	485	459

- 7.6.6 Euronews, an international online news channel reported in June 2020
 ‘As of 2020, only 33 trafficking cases are under investigation, while only 14 cases have been brought to court. No verdict has been signed yet, and nobody has been convicted.
 ‘An investigator working with the Edo Task Force in Benin City told Euronews that the justice system was “slow and corrupt, generally.”
 “Sometimes the trafficker is a family member, or they can even offer money to the victim, so that they will refuse to attend court as a witness,” she said.

¹¹⁵ NAPTIP, [Data Analysis Final 2020](#) (pages 5-6), no date

¹¹⁶ NAPTIP, [Data Analysis Final 2019](#) (page 4), no date

¹¹⁷ NAPTIP, [Reports/Data Analysis](#), no date

‘A senior NAPTIP official, meanwhile, said that while a “victims’ story or evidence is key to successful conviction in view of our judicial system and we do our best to encourage them to come over to give their testimony, we can’t force them.”...’¹¹⁸

7.6.7 The USSD TiP Report 2021 gave data for convictions and investigations, and covers government efforts undertaken from 1 April 2020 through 31 March 2021:

‘The government increased convictions, but overall anti-trafficking law enforcement efforts were mixed...

- ‘In total, federal and state authorities investigated 409 cases, prosecuted 49 suspects, and convicted 36 traffickers during the reporting period, according to multiple sources.
- ‘Authorities reported investigating 943 cases, prosecuting 64 suspects, and convicting 27 perpetrators during the previous year; prison sentences ranged from two to 10 years’ imprisonment and at least one convicted trafficker was given the option of fines in lieu of imprisonment.
- ‘During the rating period, NAPTIP reported opening 381 new investigations (243 sex trafficking, 138 forced labor) and continuing 452 investigations opened in previous reporting periods; initiating prosecutions against 40 suspects (36 sex trafficking, four forced labor) and continuing 13 prosecutions opened in prior years.
- ‘Authorities reported judges convicted 36 perpetrators (14 sex trafficking, two forced labor, 20 other forms of trafficking) under the TIPLEAA anti-trafficking sections 13, 15, 16, 18, 21, 23, 24, and 27, sentencing 23 traffickers to average terms of imprisonment of three and half years with no option of paying fines, sentencing 13 traffickers to terms of imprisonment or fines, and ordered two traffickers to pay restitution of 100,000 naira (\$260 [£176¹¹⁹] and 300,000 naira (\$780)[£530]¹²⁰.
- ‘Separately, media reported law enforcement officers investigated four suspects, two of whom were government officials, and officers from the Nigeria Security and Civil Defense Corps opened an investigation into two suspects; the cases were pending at the close of the reporting period.
- ‘Law enforcement data from prior reporting periods may have included crimes outside the international definition of trafficking. Pandemic-related court closures lasting from April to June 2020 limited overall judicial activity during that period.’¹²¹

7.6.8 The same USSD TiP report stated with regard to baby factories:

¹¹⁸ Euronews, ‘[Abused in Libya and forced into prostitution back home...](#)’, 21 June 2020

¹¹⁹ [Xe Currency Converter](#), 17 February 2022

¹²⁰ [Xe Currency Converter](#), 17 February 2022

¹²¹ USSD, [TiP Report 2021 – Nigeria](#), (section Nigeria – Prosecution), 1 July 2021

‘Unlike previous years, NPF reported its officers arrested two traffickers in 2020, and media noted NPF officers arrested three suspected traffickers exploiting women in “baby factories,” as well as additional potential victims in December 2020 and March 2021 in the Ogun and Katsina states respectively. “Baby factories” refer to criminal enterprises often disguised as orphanages, maternity homes, or religious centers – where traffickers hold women against their will, rape them, and force them to carry and deliver a child. Experts stated this illicit activity was widespread in the country.’¹²²

7.6.9 The USSD TiP report also provided information on investigations and prosecutions within states:

‘The **Edo State** Task Force Against Human Trafficking (ETAHT) investigated 17 cases (13 forced labor and four sex trafficking) and initiated prosecutions against nine suspects, compared to investigating 38 cases and prosecuting 22 suspects in the previous reporting period; since its establishment in 2018, the ETAHT has not reported convicting a trafficker, although officers stated Edo State courts ordered five perpetrators to pay restitution to victims during the reporting period. ETAHT officers stated they investigated one government official for suspected complicity in trafficking without providing additional details on the status of the case; officers did not report investigating complicit officials in the prior year...

‘An international organization verified the CJTF – a non-governmental self-defense militia receiving state government funding – used two children aged between 15 and 17 to assist at a check point in **Borno State** during the reporting period. The federal and state governments did not report investigating or prosecuting CJTF members for recent or past allegations of child soldiering recruitment or use. Corruption affected all levels of government – including the judiciary, security forces, and law enforcement – and undermined accountability for trafficking offenses.’¹²³

7.6.10 The USSD report with regard IDPs stated:

‘...Sex trafficking reportedly occurred in government-run detention centers and IDP camps. Without providing statistics, observers reported NAPTIP investigated allegations of human trafficking in IDP camps, in coordination with Ministry of Defense zonal commanders.

‘Despite multiple years of allegations, the government did not report prosecuting or convicting any suspects – including officials or CJTF members – for sex trafficking of IDPs during the reporting period; however, the Armed Forces of Nigeria court martialed an enlisted soldier in September 2020 for sexually abusing – without clear indicators of sex trafficking – a 13-year-old IDP and sentenced him to five years imprisonment. Additionally, in response to reports of sex trafficking of IDPs in Borno State, the government’s National Human Rights Commission partnered with an international organization to investigate allegations; officials did not disclose the results of the inquiries, although observers noted authorities investigated multiple cases but had not prosecuted any suspects as of March 2021. The

¹²² USSD, [TiP Report 2021 – Nigeria](#), (section Nigeria – Prosecution), 1 July 2021

¹²³ USSD, [TiP Report 2021 – Nigeria](#), (section Nigeria – Prosecution), 1 July 2021

government did not report investigating or prosecuting officials for reports of sex trafficking in Giwa Barracks or IDP camps dating back to 2016.

‘For the first time, the federal Ministry of Defense acknowledged publicly its personnel had sexually exploited individuals, although it continued to deny soldiers recruited children, which impeded investigations of allegations from prior reporting periods. During the reporting period, NAPTIP stated officers investigated and prosecuted two senior officials from the federal ministries of Agriculture and Finance, one immigration officer, an Osun State Agricultural Development Corporation official, and an officer in Lagos state responsible for enforcing the pandemic-related quarantine; all cases were for sex trafficking and were ongoing as of March 2021. The government prosecuted and convicted three mid-level and senior-level officials for trafficking offenses during the previous reporting period.’¹²⁴

7.6.11 NAPTIP in August 2021 on their website stated:

‘Director General of the National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons (NAPTIP), Senator Basheer Garba Muhammed has disclosed that a total of 104 victims of human trafficking have been intercepted and rescued by operatives of the Agency on their way to Europe enroute Libya since the last two weeks in a renewed effort by the Agency to truncate activities of human traffickers in the Country.

‘According to him, 8 suspected human trafficker[s] were also arrested in the process just as efforts are on to apprehend other members of the trafficking syndicates who are at large.’¹²⁵

7.6.12 NAPTIP reported in December 2021 that they had commenced prosecution against Patricia Ekhoie Igbinovia (Aka Mama Bobby, Aka Audu Mariam Olayemi), a known trafficker of Nigerian young women. Patricia Igbinovia had been living in Spain but was arrested on return to Nigeria and subsequently remanded in custody pending trial¹²⁶. The prosecution is supported by British and Spanish authorities through via Mutual Legal Assistance (MLA) which is a ‘method of cooperation between states for obtaining assistance in the investigation or prosecution of criminal offences.’¹²⁷

[Back to Contents](#)

7.7 Effectiveness of enforcement agencies

7.7.1 An article by Ana Dois Garcia, an ‘independent researcher’, in the June 2020 edition [Forced Migration Review](#) stated:

‘To combat the fear that is created in victims, the Nigerian National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons (NAPTIP) recommends that law enforcement [sic] officials and NGOs supporting victims inform the women that any contracts they may have signed are not legal, and assist them to seek spiritual counsel, if requested... It encourages law enforcement actors to call on expert witnesses to emphasise the effects of ritual oaths in a

¹²⁴ USSD, [TiP Report 2021 – Nigeria](#), (section Nigeria – Prosecution), 1 July 2021

¹²⁵ NAPTIP, ‘[DG Promises Hell for Traffickers as the Agency Rescues...](#)’, 26 August 2021

¹²⁶ NAPTIP, ‘[NAPTIP Commences Prosecution Of a Spain Based Nigerian...](#)’, 24 December 2021

¹²⁷ Home Office, ‘[Mutual legal assistance – Guidance](#)’, last updated 8 June 2021

prosecution, and also recommends the intervention of religious advisors to help bring forward a prosecution...'¹²⁸

7.7.2 The April 2021 EASO Trafficking in Human Beings report on Nigeria, based on a range of sources, stated:

'International organisations and other experts largely agree that the Nigerian government at the federal and state level – particularly in Edo State...– has made various efforts to address trafficking in human beings... Sources, however, also posited that this acknowledgment has not been followed up with the allocation of adequate resources to the fight against human trafficking..., and that this acknowledgement predominantly concerns human trafficking aimed at the sexual exploitation of women... Positive developments during the last couple of years were efforts aimed at the creation of a new National Action Plan against Human Trafficking... and the creation of multiple state task forces on human trafficking...' ¹²⁹

7.7.3 The USSD TiP Report 2021 stated:

'... NAPTIP did not have resources to carry out sufficient proactive anti-trafficking operations in much of the country, and the agency's officers remained concentrated in state capitals, hindering identification and investigation of trafficking in many rural areas.

'Observers reported that poor coordination between NAPTIP and other government agencies impeded prosecution efforts in prior years; NAPTIP and other law enforcement agencies failed to coordinate with each other when mandates overlapped, although collaboration with other government entities reportedly improved during the rating period. Experts stated the lack of a centralized database linking relevant law enforcement agencies continued to prevent effective coordination. However, from January to March 2021, NAPTIP officers conducted law enforcement operations with [National Police Force] NPF, Nigeria Immigration Service, Armed Forces of Nigeria, and the Office of the National Security Advisor to identify 80 child trafficking victims, according to media; however, officials stated they have not yet prosecuted any human traffickers through these operations, although investigations into these cases continued as of March 2021.

'During the reporting period, increasing terrorist activity as well as banditry throughout much of the country hindered law enforcement and judicial officials' ability to execute their respective mandates, with community defense groups playing a substantial role in judicial service delivery and dispute resolution. The government's capacity to respond to trafficking cases in northeast Nigeria continued to be limited as Boko Haram, Islamic State West Africa (ISIS-WA), and other terrorist groups killed hundreds of Nigerian soldiers, took additional territory, and displaced tens of thousands of inhabitants, limiting access to remote areas of Borno State.

'Throughout 2020, NAPTIP and observers reported courts increased their use of online technology in response to restrictions on in-person meetings to slow the pandemic's spread. NAPTIP reported delivering 32 trainings for 963 officials in 2020 on topics including identifying and investigating human

¹²⁸ Forced Migration Review, '[Trafficking and smuggling feature](#)' (page 14), June 2020

¹²⁹ EASO, [Trafficking in Human Beings](#) (page 11), April 2021

trafficking; in 2019, the government reported training 1,165 NAPTIP officers. While the Ministry of Justice implemented strict training requirements for federal and state judges, there was no corresponding mechanism for judges at the local level, which contributed to corruption and misapplication of the law. Despite courts sanctioning traffickers with increasingly stringent sentences compared to prior years, the government acknowledged many judges remained unfamiliar with the anti-trafficking law – including the provision requiring judges to prescribe sentences that included imprisonment – which hindered law enforcement efforts. Further, the judiciary remained slow and corrupt generally, which impeded prosecutions and convictions of most crimes, including trafficking. NAPTIP's funding constraints – made increasingly dire by diminished revenue due to the pandemic's economic impacts – remained a perennial challenge for the agency, exacerbated by costs associated with the agency's mandate to provide shelter to victims.' ¹³⁰

- 7.7.4 A press release on the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) webpage and presenting key findings jointly with NAPTIP from the UNODC [2020 report on Trafficking in persons](#), stated: 'A collaborative approach is crucial in tackling this crime [trafficking in persons] and NAPTIP has made efforts to ensure trafficking cases are being investigated in close collaboration with other law enforcement agencies,' said Imaan Sulaiman-Ibrahim, NAPTIP Director-General.' ¹³¹

[Back to Contents](#)

Section 8 updated: 23 March 2022

8. Shelter and assistance

8.1 Overview

- 8.1.1 A HRW report from August 2019 found that:

'With support of international development agencies, Nigeria has also established shelters, assisted with medical care, and created skills training and economic support programs for trafficking survivors. There is a strong network of NGOs who provide services to trafficking victims, including shelter accommodation, identification and family tracing, as well as rehabilitation and reintegration. However, these efforts are limited, and a number of factors impede a rights-respecting response to trafficking in Nigeria.' ¹³²

[Back to Contents](#)

8.2 Government support

- 8.2.1 NAPTIP's website stated that its headquarters in Abuja and the 9 zonal commands - in Lagos, Benin, Enugu, Uyo, Sokoto, Kano, Maiduguri, Osogbo and Makurdi - operate shelters which offer a range of services catering for physical and psychological well-being of victims of trafficking¹³³.

¹³⁰ USSD, [TiP Report 2021 – Nigeria](#), (section Nigeria – Prosecution), 1 July 2021

¹³¹ UNODC, '[Human trafficking in West Africa: three out of four victims...](#)', 5 February 2021

¹³² HRW, "[You Pray for Death](#)", [Trafficking of Women and Girls in Nigeria](#)', 27 August 2019

¹³³ NAPTIP, [About us – Organizational Structure](#), no date

- 8.2.2 Euronews, an international online news channel reported in June 2020
 ‘In August 2017, a [state-led task force](#) against human trafficking was established in Benin City, and in January 2020, NAPTIP opened an office funded by the UK government.
 ‘The IOM, in partnership with NAPTIP and other local organisations, provides access to special reintegration programmes for trafficked women, which includes housing, training, financial and medical assistance.
 ‘It offers a four-day workshop to all returned migrants, including victims of trafficking. The workshop includes business and management training, plus a specific focus on the psychosocial aspect of the reintegration process...’¹³⁴
- 8.2.3 Euronews, also reported in June 2020 ‘... NAPTIP also [in addition to other reintegration programmes] holds returned victims in “closed” shelters, to investigate cases and try to convince victims to testify in court against their traffickers. A parallel system of open shelters managed by local NGOs also exists to host victims who don’t want to go back to their families...’¹³⁵
- 8.2.4 Freedom House’s 2022 Freedom of the World Report on Nigeria states that: ‘The National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons (NAPTIP) continues to rescue trafficking survivors and prosecute some suspected traffickers, but its funding is reportedly inadequate and labor traffickers face few prosecutions. Survivors often find their freedom of movement withheld by NAPTIP in poorly managed shelters and experience discrimination when seeking access to public services after their release.’¹³⁶
- 8.2.5 A HRW report from August 2019 found that:
 ‘A key problem is the government’s overreliance on shelters, as opposed to community-based services, as the primary means of promoting safety and providing services to survivors. In fact, the Nigerian authorities are actually detaining trafficking survivors in shelters, not allowing them to leave at will, in violation of Nigeria’s international legal obligations. The detentions overwhelmingly affect women and girls, and put their recovery and well-being at risk. Some survivors in the NAPTIP shelters complained about not being able to receive visitors or contact their families, not having clear information about when they would reunite with their families, monotonous daily schedules, or boredom from doing nothing. Those referred by NAPTIP to private shelters were unhappy about poor conditions and services, including inadequate food, lack of soap or body lotion, lack of medical and psychosocial care, and lack of job training. They also expressed concerns about limited communication with NAPTIP officials. These problems are heightened by poor oversight over shelters and assistance programs.’¹³⁷
- 8.2.6 The same HRW report from August 2019 also found that:
 ‘Other problems include weak systems for victim identification, currently limited to law enforcement agents and immigration officials, leaving out other actors that could help, such as health workers, educators, communities

¹³⁴ Euronews, ‘[Abused in Libya and forced into prostitution back home...](#)’, 21 June 2020

¹³⁵ Euronews, ‘[Abused in Libya and forced into prostitution back home...](#)’, 21 June 2020

¹³⁶ Freedom House, [Freedom of the World 2022 - Nigeria](#), 28 February 2022

¹³⁷ HRW, ‘[You Pray for Death”, Trafficking of Women and Girls in Nigeria](#)’, 27 August 2019

leaders, church officials, labor officials, social workers, and others; lack of individualized and comprehensive services tailored to survivors' individual needs; failure to provide survivors with real job and employment opportunities and instead overly relying on skills training in professions such as tailoring and hairdressing that risk reinforcing gender stereotypes about the roles of women and girls in society; failure to link survivors to broader programs by government and others where they can get help; and problems with funding, coordination, and evaluation of assistance efforts.'¹³⁸

8.2.7 The April 2021 EASO Trafficking in Human Beings report on Nigeria, based on a range of sources, stated: 'The Nigerian government is in charge of the residential rehabilitation model for the assistance and protection of survivors of trafficking...' and 'In Nigeria, NAPTIP coordinates the provision of shelter for and reintegration of trafficking victims....'¹³⁹

8.2.8 The EASO report 2021, citing various sources, noted:

'... NAPTIP shelters provide shelter for up to six weeks, unless victims are exceptionally vulnerable and/or they decide to collaborate with the criminal investigation into and prosecution of their traffickers... Based on interviews with NAPTIP officials Human Right Watch, however, found that "the time limit is up to NAPTIP's discretion, taking into account things like family problems."... According to the academics Okoli and Idemudia, the actual time that victims stay in NAPTIP shelters varies:

"The length of stay in the shelters is determined by the peculiarities of each case. For example, survivors who were coerced into trafficking and suffered severe trauma may stay for up to six weeks in the shelters to recuperate while some survivors who were aware of the probable dangers before being trafficked or who were intercepted by law enforcement before arriving at the final destination may want to stay for just one or two weeks or decline shelter stay because they do not necessarily consider themselves 'victims'."

'In September 2018, the UN Special Rapporteur has expressed concern about the short duration of the provision of shelter by NAPTIP and the fact that NAPTIP centres have been used to accommodate victims of other types of gender-based violence as well, resulting in a reduction of available spaces for victims of human trafficking... Other sources, however, indicated not to be aware of a lack of shelter opportunities for trafficking victims. NAPTIP coordinates with NGOs that provide shelter and other services to victims of human trafficking for a longer period... An NGO representative in Edo indicated that taken together, sufficient capacity was available for the accommodation of trafficking victims in Edo...'¹⁴⁰

8.2.9 The same EASO report noted the 'inaccessibility of rehabilitation services for persons who are HIV and Hepatitis C positive, pregnant and with children'. According to research by Okoli [Academic], two out of the three Lagos-based

¹³⁸ HRW, "[You Pray for Death](#)", [Trafficking of Women and Girls in Nigeria](#)', 27 August 2019

¹³⁹ EASO, [Trafficking in Human Beings](#) (page 50 and 45), April 2021

¹⁴⁰ EASO, [Trafficking in Human Beings](#) (page 51), April 2021

NGO shelters she studied, did not admit these categories of survivors, because they did not have the necessary capacity to cater to their needs.’¹⁴¹

8.2.10 The EASO report 2021, citing various sources, also noted:

‘NAPTIP shelters do not live up to international standards for the shelter of human trafficking victims, according to OHCHR. As was the case in 2015, a lack of sufficient resources negatively affected the overall quality of the services provided by NAPTIP. Sources indicated that due to the poor living conditions in NAPTIP shelters many human trafficking victims – and particularly those who returned from Europe – refused to reside there. The closed nature of NAPTIP shelters has been the subject of criticism by various stakeholders, including the UN Special rapporteur. During their six-week stay in a NAPTIP shelter victims are not allowed to be in touch with the outside world, including their families. The rationale behind this approach is to protect victims against re-trafficking and/or reprisals while they cooperate with law enforcement. It is not clear to what extent this approach is effective. The UN Special Rapporteur on Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children stipulated that closed shelters breach human trafficking victims’ fundamental rights. Victims also indicated not to be aware of when they would be allowed to leave the facilities.’¹⁴²

8.2.11 With regard economic reintegration the EASO trafficking report stated:

‘Besides providing shelter, NAPTIP is in charge of programmes aimed at the (economic) reintegration of trafficking victims. According to its website, NAPTIP has a rehabilitation department with 107 staff members who contribute both to the provision of counselling and training aimed at economic reintegration... This training focuses on skills such as ‘knitting, weaving, fashion design, hair dressing, catering, hat making, beads making and photography’... However, research by Okoli and Idemudia indicated that for instance in Lagos the NAPTIP shelter did not provide vocational training, because of a lack of equipment... , and that therefore (in Lagos) NAPTIP referred victims to NGO partners who do have the capacity to provide economic reintegration support. In addition, sources indicate that trafficking victims did not always end up under NAPTIP’s umbrella and ended up participating in the regular EU/IOM economic reintegration programme...’

‘With regard to quality of the (vocational) training programmes, sources remarked there is a ‘saturation in certain areas (hairstyling, catering, fashion design), which ultimately limits the earning potential of survivors’...

‘In Edo returnees are encouraged to take part in The Edo Jobs Programme... Despite the predominantly negative assessment of the current state of economic reintegration support in Nigeria, reports also identified positive exceptions. Some programmes provide trafficking victims up to 24 months of training... , and/or tailored training to the specific needs and preferences of trafficking victims, including with regard to placement opportunities... In general, it should be noted that returnees and returnee trafficking victims have access to more training opportunities for economic empowerment than most of their peers who did not leave Nigeria.

¹⁴¹ EASO, [Trafficking in Human Beings](#) (page 53), April 2021

¹⁴² EASO, [Trafficking in Human Beings](#) (page 51), April 2021

‘In case of voluntary return from European countries trafficking victims and other returnees receive an (in kind) grant to accelerate their economic reintegration in Nigeria... The available amount seems to differ according to the country from which the person returns... , and is almost entirely provided through in kind support... Trafficking victims who participate in EU-IOM programmes, facilitating return from other African countries, can also try to access funding packages for economic reintegration... Many returnees indicate that this funding is not sufficient to provide for basic needs, particularly when victims have children and family members to take care of...

‘Specifically with regard to the (economic) reintegration of female victims of human trafficking, various sources imply that a minority of them manages to become economically independent after return’¹⁴³

8.2.12 The USSD TiP Report 2021 – Nigeria noted that the government, including NAPTIP, NPF and ETAHT (Edo State Task Force Against Human Trafficking).

- ‘... Through its shelters, NAPTIP provided initial care for all 434 victims and 321 potential victims, which may have included referrals to government facilities for medical care, shelter, legal assistance, psychological services, vocational training, or education assistance.
- ‘During the previous reporting period, NAPTIP provided direct support to 1,009 victims at NAPTIP shelters and referred 71 victims to NGO shelters...’¹⁴⁴

8.2.13 The USSD TiP Report 2021 and covering government efforts undertaken from 1 April 2020 through to 31 March 2021 stated: ‘In 2020, the ETAHT opened a shelter for trafficking victims with capacity for 100 victims (60 men and 40 women in separate facilities); officials disclosed there was one victim in the shelter as of February 2021. Several Nigerian embassies, particularly within West Africa, provided funding or in-kind support to repatriate Nigerian trafficking victims exploited abroad.’¹⁴⁵

8.2.14 The USSD TiP report 2021 also noted:

‘... ETAHT reported identifying and providing comprehensive services to 65 victims; these included psychosocial support, medical, and pro-bono legal assistance. Additionally, ETAHT delivered pandemic relief materials to more than 1,000 returning migrants, some of whom may have been victims. This is compared to assisting 428 returned migrants, 195 of whom were trafficking victims, in the previous reporting period....

‘Nigerian law mandated NAPTIP to provide care for victims of crimes under both the 2015 anti-trafficking law and 2015 Violence Against Persons (Prohibition) Act; NAPTIP’s resources were insufficient to provide specialized care for all trafficking victims. Each of NAPTIP’s 10 zonal commands, including the Abuja headquarters, operated a victim shelter during the reporting period, for a total of 10 shelters for trafficking victims with a total capacity of 334. NAPTIP shelters offered six weeks of initial care, although

¹⁴³ EASO, [Trafficking in Human Beings](#) (page 54-56), April 2021

¹⁴⁴ USSD, [TiP Report 2021 – Nigeria](#), (section Protection), 1 July 2021

¹⁴⁵ USSD, [TiP Report 2021 – Nigeria](#), (section Protection), 1 July 2021

officials often allowed women to stay longer if they desired to do so; access to the shelters was not based on victims' cooperation with law enforcement. If there was not space in NAPTIP shelters, agency officials referred the victim to NGOs for care. Measures to slow the pandemic's spread – including a five-week nationwide lockdown from March to May 2020 – limited shelter capacity throughout the country. In 2019, an NGO reported a lack of funding combined with NAPTIP's utilization of shelters, as opposed to community-based services, resulted in substandard conditions in some shelters; a lack of oversight allegedly exacerbated these issues.

'NAPTIP typically required victims to remain in shelters for six weeks, although individuals staying longer were able to leave shelters unaccompanied absent case-specific security concerns. Through these shelters, NAPTIP provided access to legal, medical, and psychological services, as well as vocational training, financial empowerment, family reunification, and business management skills. These shelters were also available to Nigerian trafficking victims exploited abroad upon repatriation. NAPTIP had agreements with certain hospitals and clinics to provide additional medical and psychological treatment for victims, as needed. Additional government and NGO shelters provided services, including long-term shelter, to vulnerable children and victims of crime, including trafficking; authorities sometimes assigned child trafficking victims to foster homes or orphanages for care. Foreign victims had access to the same services as domestic victims.'¹⁴⁶

[Back to Contents](#)

8.3 Non-government organisations

8.3.1 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 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.'¹⁴⁷

8.3.2 The report went onto state:

¹⁴⁶ USSD, [TiP Report 2021 – Nigeria](#), (section Protection), 1 July 2021

¹⁴⁷ University of Bedfordshire, ['Between Two Fires'](#) (page 96), March 2019

'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.'¹⁴⁸

8.3.3 The EASO report 2021, citing various sources, noted:

'Shelters managed by NGOs can have an open or a closed policy. Some NGOs provide victims with the opportunity to reside for up to one or two years in a different region of the country, allowing them to escape their traffickers and/or family members who stigmatise them or force them to return to situations of exploitation. The Network of CSOs Against Child Trafficking, Abuse and Labour (NACTAL), which represents various Nigerian anti-trafficking NGOs, runs fourteen open shelters in Nigeria.

'In 2020, Lagos counted at least twelve NGO shelters catering to underage and female trafficking victims , managed by:

1. Real Women Foundation (Peace Villa)
2. Sought After Women and Children Foundation (House of Sharon)
3. Web of Heart Foundation
4. Project Alert
5. Cece Yara
6. PBO (Genesis Home and Grace Home)
7. Mirabel Center, Project ALERT
8. Echoes of Mercy and Hope Foundation
9. Women helping Ends Initiative Shelter
10. Freedom Foundation (Genesis House)
11. Bakhita Foundation

'Edo State counted at least four such shelters, managed by the NGOs:

1. Committed Support for the Dignity of Women (COSUDOW)
2. Society for empowerment of young People (SEYP)
3. Pathfinders Justice initiative Edo also has a shelter run by its state task force (instead of NAPTIP).

¹⁴⁸ University of Bedfordshire, '[Between Two Fires](#)' (page 89), March 2019

‘The quality of NGO shelters greatly differs depending on the available resources/donor funding. This is reflected in research with trafficking victims in various NGO shelters. Some victims indicated their basic needs are met and they have access to education and training, while others indicated they did not get sufficient food and experienced abuse by the staff running the shelter. Research by an international organisation in Nigeria concluded that overall “shelters are generally in poor condition, ill-equipped and with minimal service provision”, and that this was the case particularly regarding civil society shelters. Other research indicated that due to lack of resources most NGO shelters in Edo do not have the required skills and expertise in managing unstable behaviours of survivors of trafficking and unsafe migration, which is reflected in the slow response to counselling requests from victims who are dealing with a range of mental health issues.’¹⁴⁹

8.3.4 In respect of economic reintegration provided by NGO’s the EASO trafficking report stated:

In general, throughout the country, NAPTIP coordinates with a range of other government agencies and NGOs to provide economic reintegration support. In Edo the Ministry of Social Development and Gender Issues runs a skills acquisition centre, as do the NGOs Pathfinders Justice Initiative, Idia Renaissance, Genius Hub Global Initiative, Fullness of Life Counselling and Development Initiative (FULIFE)... In Lagos the Real Women Foundation, Bakitha, Rehoboth Homes and Skill Acquisition Center, and the Web of Heart Foundation provide economic reintegration support... According to various sources, NAPTIP and this type of service providers had a ‘cordial’... working relationship... However, actual coordination between different service providers was considered to be lacking resulting in a poor offer of reintegration services with too much overlaps.’¹⁵⁰

[Back to Contents](#)

Section 9 updated: 23 March 2022

9. Freedom of movement

9.1.1 For information generally on freedom of movement and for women in particular, see [Nigeria: Internal Relocation, Nigeria: Background information and Nigeria: Actors of Protection.](#)

9.1.2 The EASO report 2021, citing various sources, noted:

‘As a result of the fear – real or imagined - of disappointing their families and getting stigmatised upon return to Nigeria, and – for those who did not have a sponsor - the desire to repay the debts they incurred when embarking on the journey to Europe, many returnees/victims of trafficking want to build up their lives in another region of the country before facing their family members and communities. The 2015 EASO report indicated that the concept of “indigeneity” – which treats individuals whose families originate from a region preferentially– posed an obstacle to those wanting to relocate to a different part of the country. It concluded that “although relocation in another part of Nigeria might be feasible and possible for victims who feel threatened by

¹⁴⁹ EASO, [Trafficking in Human Beings](#) (page 52-53), April 2021

¹⁵⁰ EASO, [Trafficking in Human Beings](#) (page 54), April 2021

traffickers, they would need economic support and a social network or members of their ethnic group to sustain a safe livelihood in their new place of residence.” Since the last report, the situation has not significantly changed in this regard. The system of indigeneity is still reported. It mostly erects obstacles to access to political office, jobs in civil service, and – in some places – land. The Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) indicated that the system is not applied in big cities such as Abuja and Lagos , but other research contests this claim with regard to Lagos. Sources agreed that having a social network is still a core prerequisite for moving to another region in Nigeria, as without a social network it is nearly impossible to find a job and housing. International return programmes and certain Nigerian NGOs pay housing for returnees, including trafficking victims, in different regions of the country.’¹⁵¹

[Back to Contents](#)

¹⁵¹ EASO, [Trafficking in Human Beings](#) (page 49-50), April 2021

Terms of Reference

A 'Terms of Reference' (ToR) is a broad outline of what the CPIN seeks to cover. They form the basis for the [country information section](#). The Home Office's Country Policy and Information Team uses some standardised ToR, depending on the subject, and these are then adapted depending on the country concerned.

For this particular CPIN, the following topics were identified prior to drafting as relevant and on which research was undertaken:

- Law on trafficking – women - legal status; state and civil society protection and assistance; and state and societal treatment
- Trafficking – women, children
 - Prevalence and nature
 - Risk factors
 - Forms of trafficking
- Action by the state
 - Government action to address trafficking
 - Law on trafficking – legal status
 - Action by the police
 - Action by the judiciary
- Assistance for victims of trafficking - women
 - Shelters
 - Financial assistance
 - Employment
 - Situation for those leaving shelters, including accommodation
- Healthcare for victims of trafficking - women
 - General
 - Mental health
- Societal attitudes
 - Attitudes to victims of trafficking
 - Attitudes to single mothers
 - Life for single women/mothers

[Back to Contents](#)

Bibliography

Sources cited

AFRUCA,

[‘About us’](#), no date. Last accessed: 12 January 2022

[Biography: Debbie Ariyo OBE](#), February 2021. Last accessed: 12 January 2022

[‘Nigerian Confraternities and the Increase in Human Trafficking Across Europe’](#), 25 January 2021. Last accessed: 12 January 2022

Amnesty International, AI, [‘Nigeria: A harrowing journey: Access to justice for women and girls survivors of rape in Nigeria’](#), November 2021. Last accessed: 12 January 2022

Australian Government – Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, DFAT, [‘Country information report: Nigeria’](#), updated 3 December 2020. Last accessed: 12 January 2022

European Asylum Support Office, [Trafficking in Human Beings](#), April 2021. Last accessed: 12 January 2022

Euronews, [‘Abused in Libya and forced into prostitution back home: the nightmare of trying to reach Europe’](#), 21 June 2020. Last accessed: 12 January 2022

Europol,

[‘Trafficking in Human Beings’](#), no date. Last accessed: 12 January 2022

[European Migrant Smuggling Centre - 5th Annual Report](#), Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg, 2021. Last accessed: 12 January 2022

Freedom House, [Freedom of the World 2022 - Nigeria](#), 28 February 2022. Last accessed: 11 March 2022

Garcia, Ana Dois, Forced Migration Review, [‘Trafficking and smuggling feature’](#), Volume 64, June 2020. Last accessed: 12 January 2022

Human Rights Watch, [“‘You Pray for Death”, Trafficking of Women and Girls in Nigeria’](#), 27 August 2019. Last accessed: 12 January 2022

International Organisation for Migration, IOM,

[‘IOM Nigeria Joins Authorities to Launch New “Blue Bus” Project to Fight Human Trafficking’](#), 30 March 2021. Last accessed: 12 January 2022

[‘Voluntary return and reintegration for survivors of trafficking’](#), no date. Last accessed: 12 January 2022

[‘EU and IOM Provide Safe and Secure Transit Centre for Returned Nigerian Migrants in Lagos State’](#), 11 November 2021. Last accessed: 12 January 2022

National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons, NAPTIP,

[‘Factsheet 1’](#), updated 21 December 2021. Last accessed: 12 January 2022

[About us](#), no date. Last accessed: 12 January 2022

[Data Analysis Final 2020](#), no date. Last accessed: 12 January 2022

[Data Analysis Final 2019](#), no date. Last accessed: 12 January 2022

[‘DG Promises Hell for Traffickers as the Agency Rescues 104 Victims, Arrests 8 Suspects – NAPTIP’](#), 26 August 2021. Last accessed: 12 January 2022

[‘NAPTIP Commences Prosecution Of a Spain Based Nigerian Trafficker’](#), 24 December 2021. Last accessed: 12 January 2022

[Guidelines on National Referral Mechanism for Protection and Assistance to Trafficked Persons in Nigeria 2014’](#), no date. Last accessed: 12 January 2022

Netherlands – Ministry of Foreign Affairs, [COI report Nigeria](#), March 2021. Last accessed: 12 January 2022

Nigerian Ports Authority, [‘Press release’](#), 7 September 2021. Last accessed: 12 January 2022

Pathfinders Justice Initiative, [Nigeria: Human Trafficking Factsheet](#), September 2021. Last accessed: 11 March 2022

UK Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office, [‘OSCE report on combating trafficking in human beings: UK response’](#), 25 November 2021. Last accessed: 12 January 2022

UK Home Office,

[‘2021 UK Annual Report on Modern Slavery’](#), 25 November 2021. Last accessed: 12 January 2022

[‘2020 UK Annual Report on Modern Slavery’](#), October 2020. Last accessed: 12 January 2022

[‘Mutual legal assistance – Guidance’](#), last updated 8 June 2021. Last accessed: 12 January 2022

[Modern Slavery: Statutory Guidance for England and Wales \(under s49 of the Modern Slavery Act 2015\) and Non-Statutory Guidance for Scotland and Northern Ireland’](#), November 2021. Last accessed: 12 January 2022

UK National Referral Mechanism (NRM) and Duty to Notify Statistics,

[‘End of year summary 2020’](#), 18 March 2021. Last accessed: 12 January 2022. Last accessed: 12 January 2022

[End of year summary 2019](#) (Table 4), 18 March 2021. Last accessed: 12 January 2022

UNHCR, [West and Central Africa Fact Sheet](#), (page 2), February 2022, last accessed 11 March 2022

UN OCHCR, [‘End of visit statement, Nigeria \(3-10 September\)’](#) by Maria Grazia Giammarinaro, UN Special Rapporteur on Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children’, 10 September 2018. Last accessed: 12 January 2022

UNODC,

[‘Human trafficking in West Africa: three out of four victims are children says UNODC report’](#), 5 February 2021. Last accessed: 12 January 2022

[‘Global report on Trafficking in persons’](#), 2020. Last accessed: 12 January 2022

US State Department,

[Trafficking in Persons Report 2021](#), 1 July 2021. Last accessed: 12 January 2022

University of Bedfordshire,

[‘Between Two Fires’](#), March 2019. Last accessed: 12 January 2022

[‘Vulnerability to Human Trafficking’](#), October 2018. Last accessed: 12 January 2022

Walk Free Foundation, [Global Slavery Index – data](#), 2018. Last accessed: 12 January 2022

[Back to Contents](#)

Sources consulted but not cited

Iodie Apard, Éléonore Chiossone, Precious Diagboya, Aurélie Jeannerod, Bénédicte Lavaud-Legendre, et al.. Religious, Social and Criminal Groups in Trafficking of Nigerian Girls and Women. [Research Report] - ECPAT, [Religious, Social and Criminal Groups in the Trafficking of Nigerian Girls and Women: The Case of Shrines, Ladies Clubs and Cultist Groups](#)"..., March 2019. Last accessed: 17 February 2022

Council on Foreign Relations, [‘Ending Human Trafficking in the Twenty-first century’](#), June 2021. Last accessed: 12 January 2022

European Asylum Support Office,

[‘EASO Nigeria: Actors of Protection’](#), November 2018, Last accessed: 12 January 2022.

[Country Guidance Nigeria](#), February 2019. Last accessed: 12 January 2022

Frontex, [Frontex releases Risk Analysis for 2021 \(europa.eu\)](#), Last accessed: 12 January 2022

UK Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner, [‘IASC - Annual Report 2019-2020’](#), Presented to Parliament pursuant to Section 42 (10) (b) of the Modern Slavery Act 2015, September 2020. Last accessed: 12 January 2022

UK Independent Commission for Aid Impact, ICAI, [‘New ICAI review’](#), 14 October 2020. Last accessed: 12 January 2022

UK National Crime Agency,

[‘Modern slavery and human trafficking – website’](#), no date. Last accessed: 12 January 2022

NRM Statistics, [‘End of Year Summary 2018’](#), 20 March 2019. Last accessed: 12 January 2022

United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, ‘UNODC - [Global Report on Trafficking in Persons 2018](#)’, December 2018, Last accessed: 5 January 2022

[Back to Contents](#)

Version control

Clearance

Below is information on when this note was cleared:

- version **6.0**
- valid from **28 April 2022**

Official – sensitive: Start of section

The information on this page has been removed as it is restricted for internal Home Office use.

Official – sensitive: End of section

Changes from last version of this note

Updated country of information.

[Back to Contents](#)