Home Office

Country Policy and Information Note
Nigeria: Trafficking of women

Version 7.0

October 2026

Executive summary

Women victims of trafficking from Nigeria form a particular social group (PSG).

In general, a woman who has previously been trafficked is **unlikely** to be at risk of abuse, reprisals and/or discrimination on return that are sufficiently serious by their nature or repetition to amount to persecution or serious harm, solely on account of having previously been trafficked.

In general, a woman is **unlikely** to be at real risk of being re-trafficked on return solely on account of having previously been trafficked.

However, a woman may be at risk of abuse and/or re-trafficking amounting to persecution or serious harm depending on her particular circumstances and vulnerability. Factors which may increase vulnerability include, but are not limited to:

- outstanding debts owed to traffickers or others who financed the journey
- family or community involvement in the trafficking
- the absence of a supportive family or social support network
- social stigma or family rejection
- poverty, destitution or lack of sustainable income
- limited education, vocational skills or employment opportunities
- mental health conditions or psychological trauma arising from trafficking experiences

In general, a victim of trafficking who has a well-founded fear of persecution or serious harm from a rogue state actor and/or a non-state actor is likely to be able to obtain protection from the state. However, the effectiveness of protection remains uneven. Corruption, official complicity in trafficking offences, inadequate funding, weaknesses in victim identification, limited shelter capacity and shortcomings within the criminal justice system may hamper protection in some cases. The onus is on the person to demonstrate that they cannot obtain protection.

Where a woman has a well-founded fear of persecution as a victim of trafficking, whether she is able to relocate to escape that risk depends on her particular circumstances. In the country guidance case of HD (Trafficked women) Nigeria (CG) [2016] UKUT 454 (IAC), heard 18 to 20 July 2016 and promulgated 17 October 2016, the Upper Tribunal held that a woman who discloses characteristics of vulnerability that are indicative of a real risk of being trafficked, internal relocation is unlikely to be a viable alternative. There are not very strong grounds supported by cogent evidence to justify a departure from these findings. The onus is on decision makers to demonstrate that internal relocation is reasonable (or not unduly harsh) having regard to the individual circumstances of the person.

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.

Each case must be considered on its individual facts, with the onus on the person to demonstrate they face persecution or serious harm.

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Assessment

Section updated: 07 September 2026

About the assessment

This section considers relevant evidence – including country information, refugee and human rights laws and policies, and case law – to assess **whether**, **in general**:

- a person faces a real risk of persecution/serious harm by non-state actors because they are a victim of trafficking
- the state (or quasi state bodies) can provide effective protection
- internal relocation is possible to avoid persecution/serious harm
- a claim, if refused, it is unlikely to be certified as 'clearly unfounded' under section 94 of the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002.

Each case must be considered on its individual facts.

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1. Material facts, credibility and other checks

1.1.1 Decision makers must:

- assess credibility (see the Asylum Instruction on Assessing Credibility and Refugee Status
- 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).
- consider making an international biometric data-sharing check, when one has not already been undertaken (see Biometric data-sharing process (Migration 5 biometric data-sharing process)).
- consider language analysis testing, where available, in cases where there are doubts surrounding a person's claimed place of origin (see the Asylum Instruction on Language Analysis).

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1.2 Modern slavery

1.2.1 Decision makers must note that guidance for competent authority staff in any part of the UK who make decisions on whether or not a person is a potential victim/victim of modern slavery for the purpose of the National Referral Mechanism is set out in the 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. The guidance is also aimed at staff within public authorities who may encounter potential victims of modern slavery and/or who are involved in supporting victims.

1.2.2 Decision makers also must note that if a person has a 'positive conclusive grounds' decision, a grant of permission to stay as a victim of human trafficking or slavery by the competent authorities may be considered.

1.2.3 For further information, see Temporary permission to stay for victims of human trafficking or slavery.

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1.3 Assessing weight of 'reasonable or conclusive grounds' decisions

1.3.1 The reported case of DC (trafficking: protection/human rights appeals) Albania [2019] UKUT 00351 (IAC), heard 7 June 2019 and promulgated on 3 September 2019, referencing Secretary of State for the Home Department v MS (Pakistan) [2018] EWCA Civ 594, provides guidance on the weight to attach to a conclusive grounds decision made by a competent authority in an asylum or human rights case, and the order in which the Tribunal would consider overlapping asylum and MS claims.

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2. Exclusion

2.1.1 Decision makers must consider whether there are serious reasons to apply one (or more) of the exclusion clauses. Each case must be considered on its individual facts.

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 guidance on exclusion 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.

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3. Convention reason(s)

3.1.1 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 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.

3.1.2 Although 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.

3.1.3 For further guidance on the 5 Refugee Convention grounds, see the Asylum Instruction, Assessing Credibility and Refugee Status.

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4. Risk

4.1.1 In general, a woman who has previously been trafficked is unlikely to be at risk of abuse, reprisals and/or discrimination on return that are sufficiently serious by their nature or repetition to amount to persecution or serious harm, solely on account of having previously been trafficked. In general, a woman is unlikely to be at real risk of being re-trafficked on return solely on account of having previously been trafficked. However, a woman may be at risk of abuse and/or re-trafficking amounting to persecution or serious harm depending on her particular circumstances and vulnerability. Factors which may increase vulnerability include, but are not limited to:

- outstanding debts owed to traffickers or others who financed the journey
- prior threats or intimidation by traffickers
- family or community involvement in the trafficking
- particularly in cases of trafficking for sexual exploitation, an expectation of financial reward for the family, whether or not they were complicit in the original trafficking
- the absence of a supportive family willing to accept the person on return
- social stigma, rejection or ostracism by family or community members
- lack of a social support network
- poverty, destitution or lack of sustainable income
- limited education, vocational skills or employment opportunities
- mental health conditions or psychological trauma arising from trafficking experiences
- inadequate access to reintegration support and assistance

4.1.2 Each case must be considered on its individual facts, with the onus on the person to demonstrate they face persecution or serious harm.

4.1.3 Human trafficking affects men, women and children in Nigeria, although women and girls continue to comprise most identified victims, particularly in cases involving sexual exploitation. Victims commonly come from poor, marginalised or otherwise vulnerable backgrounds. Trafficking occurs both within Nigeria and across international borders for a range of exploitative purposes (see Prevalence and Profile of victims of trafficking).

4.1.4 Victims of trafficking commonly leave Nigeria in search of improved economic opportunities, employment, education or a better standard of living. Sources indicate that traffickers exploit these aspirations through false job offers, fraudulent recruitment schemes, deceptive promises of education or training, and offers to facilitate travel abroad. Some victims may start by paying for their travel, before being exploited or trapped into debt bondage by traffickers. Recruitment can take place in shops or markets, but victims are also identified and recruited online, particularly on social media platforms. Poverty, lack of economic opportunities, family and community pressure, displacement and limited educational opportunities are among the factors which may increase vulnerability to recruitment for trafficking. Victims may be exploited during transit or upon arrival in destination countries (see Profile of victims of trafficking, Traffickers' profile and Traffickers' strategies).

4.1.5 Trafficking is often facilitated through personal and community networks, including family members, community members and individuals in religious settings. Organised criminal groups are also among the main actors involved. Corrupt government officials and security officers may facilitate transit in exchange for bribes or sexual acts or sexually exploit victims in settings such as government-run IDP camps, informal camps and local communities (see Traffickers' profile).

4.1.6 Victims are coerced and controlled at various stages of the trafficking process by means such as intimidation through juju (black magic), physical, psychological or sexual abuse, false promises, denial of basic needs, threats to the victim or family, debt bondage, withholding of wages, withholding of documents and blackmail, including 'sextortion'. Traffickers sometimes use technology to monitor or restrict victims' movements (see Means of coercion and control).

4.1.7 Victims of trafficking may face reprisals on return to Nigeria, particularly where debts remain unpaid, where victims have escaped their traffickers, or where they have cooperated with law enforcement. Reprisals may take the form of threats, intimidation, psychological pressure, family pressure linked to debt repayment, and, in some reported cases, physical violence. Traffickers may also target families. Sources indicate that fear of reprisals is common amongst victims, although the extent to which reprisals occur in practice is unclear (see Reprisals).

4.1.8 The experience of returnee victims of trafficking varies, with some receiving support from family and communities, while others experience stigma, rejection and pressure linked to societal expectations and financial obligations. Women, particularly those perceived to have engaged in prostitution or who return with children, are more likely to face social stigma, including negative impacts on marriage prospects and community acceptance. Family members may also pressure returnees to repay money invested in migration or expected earnings (see Reprisals and Family/social

attitudes and treatment).

4.1.9 Women's trafficking-related health conditions, which may include untreated sexually-transmitted infections, reproductive injuries and mental health difficulties, are reportedly viewed as shameful matters to be concealed rather than legitimate medical needs, and trauma-informed healthcare and psychological support are lacking (see Family/social attitudes and treatment).

4.1.10 Some returnees remain vulnerable to re-trafficking and re-exploitation. Factors that may increase vulnerability include poverty, limited educational attainment, unemployment, debt, family rejection, social stigma, inadequate reintegration support, and continuing contact with traffickers. Sources suggest that some returnees seek to migrate again because of economic hardship and pressure to support dependants. However, the availability of family support, livelihood opportunities, accommodation and reintegration assistance may reduce vulnerability (see Re-trafficking). See the guidance on Internal relocation, below, for an assessment of support services.

4.1.11 In the country guidance case of HD (Trafficked women) Nigeria (CG) [2016] UKUT 454 (IAC), heard 18 to 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).

4.1.12 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).

4.1.13 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).

4.1.14 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).

4.1.15 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).

4.1.16 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).

4.1.17 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).

4.1.18 The UT, however, also held that a person who had an outstanding debt to her traffickers will be of some 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.' (para 159 to 160).

4.1.19 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).

4.1.20 The UT found that 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).

4.1.21 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).

4.1.22 The CG case of HD was based on country evidence up to the first half of 2016. The country information in this note does not indicate that there are 'very strong grounds supported by cogent evidence' to justify a departure from these findings.

4.1.23 For further guidance on assessing risk, see the Asylum Instruction on Assessing Credibility and Refugee Status.

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5. Protection

5.1.1 In general, a victim of trafficking who has a well-founded fear of persecution or serious harm from a rogue state actor and/or a non-state actor is likely to be able to obtain protection from the state.

5.1.2 However, the effectiveness of protection remains uneven. Corruption, official complicity in trafficking offences, inadequate funding, weaknesses in victim identification, limited shelter capacity and shortcomings within the criminal justice system may hamper protection in some cases. As established in Horvath v Secretary of State for the Home Department [2000] UKHL 37, the state is not required to guarantee protection against every act of persecution. The existence of shortcomings within the protection system does not, in itself, demonstrate that the state is unwilling or unable to provide sufficient protection. Corruption, sympathy or weakness of some individuals in the justice system does not mean that the state is unwilling to afford protection, and there may be various sound reasons why criminals may not be brought to justice.

5.1.3 Each case must be decided on its individual facts, with the onus on the person to demonstrate that they cannot obtain protection.

5.1.4 For general guidance on protection, see the Country Policy and Information Note Nigeria: Actors of protection.

5.1.5 Nigeria has ratified a number of international protocols and conventions to prevent and tackle trafficking in persons. Domestic legislation criminalises

trafficking and there is a legal and institutional framework to prevent trafficking, prosecute offenders and support victims. The Trafficking in Persons (Prohibition) Enforcement and Administration Act, as amended in 2015, criminalises trafficking for sexual exploitation, forced labour and other forms of exploitation. The Act established the National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons (NAPTIP), the lead agency responsible for anti-trafficking activities (see Legal and policy measures).

5.1.6 NAPTIP works alongside the Nigeria Police Force, Nigeria Immigration Service, state anti-trafficking task forces and other government agencies. It has responsibility for investigations, prosecutions, victim identification, protection and prevention activities. Sources report strong ongoing cooperation between NAPTIP and international partners, foreign law enforcement agencies and civil society organisations (see Enforcement agencies and activities and International cooperation).

5.1.7 The government continues to investigate, prosecute and convict traffickers and has established mechanisms for victim identification and referral. During the April 2024 to March 2025 reporting period covered by the US State Department's (USSD) 2025 Trafficking in Persons Report, authorities investigated 744 trafficking cases, initiated prosecutions against 71 alleged traffickers and secured 49 convictions, representing an increase on the figures reported for 2024. However, data covering the period 2021 to 2025 fluctuates and does not indicate a sustained upward trend. While the increase recorded in 2025 may reflect improvements in enforcement or reporting, the available evidence does not establish the reasons for the increase or demonstrate that trafficking prevalence has risen. Enforcement data should therefore be considered alongside evidence relating to victim identification, access to protection, institutional capacity and the effectiveness of the criminal justice system (see Investigations, arrests, prosecutions and convictions).

5.1.8 Access to protection and assistance depends on a victim being identified or successfully self-referring to an appropriate organisation in Nigeria. Victims are identified and referred to protection services through NAPTIP and partner organisations. Screening efforts are reportedly inadequate among vulnerable populations such as internally displaced persons (IDPs) and women allegedly associated with non-armed state groups. In some cases, authorities detained or returned victims to their Boko Haram husbands and traffickers (see Victim identification and the National Referral Mechanism (NRM), Investigations, arrests, prosecutions and convictions and Effectiveness of agencies and criminal justice system).

5.1.9 The USSD assesses that, whilst the government is making significant efforts to combat trafficking, Nigeria does not fully meet the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking (see Action to combat trafficking). The report nevertheless notes over the April 2024 to March 2025 period that Nigeria increased investigations, prosecutions, victim identification, funding for victim protection and prevention activities compared to previous reporting periods. However, it does not explicitly explain the reasons for the increases in enforcement activity and victim identification (see Effectiveness of agencies and criminal justice system).

5.1.10 NAPTIP and partner organisations operate shelters and provide legal,

medical, psychosocial, vocational and reintegration support to victims. However, shelter capacity is limited, and support may be constrained by funding and resource shortages. Sources also reported that some victims, particularly those returning outside assisted return programmes, may encounter difficulties accessing support services (see Shelters and assistance, Federal and state government support, International Organisation for Migration (IOM) and Non-governmental and religious organisations).

5.1.11 Accommodation options are not limited to NAPTIP shelters. In addition to shelters operated by NAPTIP and state authorities, victims may access support provided by non-governmental and religious organisations. Sources report that some NGO-operated shelters function on an open basis and do not restrict residents' contact with the outside world. While this may afford greater freedom of movement, the same sources noted that such shelters may be less able to protect victims who fear reprisals from traffickers, and that victims requiring enhanced protection were generally referred to NAPTIP shelters. The availability and suitability of accommodation and support should therefore be considered in light of the individual's circumstances and protection needs (see Shelters and assistance, Federal and state government support and Non-governmental and religious organisations). For location-specific information on shelters, see Internal relocation, below.

5.1.12 In the country guidance case of HD (Trafficked women) Nigeria CG [2016] UKUT 454 (IAC), the Upper Tribunal found that a trafficked woman would generally not be at risk whilst accommodated in a NAPTIP or NGO shelter, but that because that support would be likely to be temporary, her long-term position would require careful assessment on the facts of the individual case (paragraphs 141 to 142). The country information in this note does not indicate that there are 'very strong grounds supported by cogent evidence' to justify a departure from these findings.

5.1.13 For further guidance on assessing state protection, see the Asylum Instruction on Assessing Credibility and Refugee Status.

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6. Internal relocation

6.1.1 Where a woman has a well-founded fear of persecution as a victim of trafficking, whether she is able to relocate to escape that risk depends on her particular circumstances (see the CG case of HD and the assessment and background information in the Country Policy and Information Note Nigeria: Internal relocation).

6.1.2 The UT in HD found, in regard to women victims of trafficking:

'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).

6.1.3 The CG case of HD was based on country evidence up to the first half of 2016. The country information in this note does not indicate that there are 'very strong grounds supported by cogent evidence' to justify a departure from these findings.

6.1.4 While the onus is on the person to establish a well-founded fear of persecution or real risk of serious harm, the onus is on decision makers to demonstrate that internal relocation is reasonable (or not unduly harsh) having regard to the individual circumstances of the person.

6.1.5 NAPTIP operates shelters in the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Lagos, Benin, Enugu, Sokoto, Uyo, Kano, Maiduguri, Osogbo, Ekiti, Yobe, Makurdi, Katsina and Ondo. Other state-run shelters operate in Lagos State and Benin City (Edo State). In Lagos State, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the Lagos State Government operate transit shelters where returnees may stay temporarily pending evacuation arrangements and onward travel. Various NGOs and faith-based organisations also provide shelter and support services. Most shelters available through government, civil society and international partners are for women and girls. In Abuja, the Women Trafficking and Child Labour Eradication Foundation (WOTCLEF) provides assistance to women, boys and girls who are victims of internal and transnational trafficking (see Shelters and assistance).

6.1.6 Support may be available to returnees and victims of trafficking through government, international and NGO programmes. Such support may include temporary accommodation, counselling, family tracing and reunification, skills acquisition and vocational training, and reintegration assistance (see Shelters and assistance and Process of return and initial support). In major urban centres such as Lagos and Abuja, support services are available through NAPTIP and NGO partners, and these locations may offer greater access to employment, education and support services than some other parts of the country. However, the available evidence indicates that reintegration support is not comprehensive and there is no centralised system for monitoring long-term reintegration outcomes (see the Country Policy and Information Note Nigeria: Actors of protection, Shelters and assistance and Re-trafficking).

6.1.7 For further guidance on internal relocation and factors to consider, see the Asylum Instruction on Assessing Credibility and Refugee Status.

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7. Certification

7.1.1 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.

7.1.2 For further guidance on certification, see Certification of Protection and Human Rights claims under section 94 of the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002 (clearly unfounded claims).

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Country information

About the country information

The COI provides the basis for the assessment and the executive summary. Decision makers must use relevant COI as the evidential basis for decisions.

The cut-off date for COI included in this note is **5 October 2026**.

Some country information quoted in this CPIN was published in languages other than English and has been translated using free online translation tools. Sources originally published in other languages are clearly signposted throughout.

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8. Prevalence

8.1 General

8.1.1 The US Department of State's 2025 Trafficking in Persons Report, dated 29 September 2025, covered the period April 2024 to March 2025 (USSD 2025 TiP report). In a section summarising government and civil society reporting on the nature and scope of trafficking over the previous 5 years, the report stated: 'Trafficking affects all communities … Human traffickers exploit domestic and foreign victims in Nigeria, and traffickers exploit victims from Nigeria abroad. Internal trafficking is more prevalent … However, authorities identified Nigerian trafficking victims – often exploited by Nigerian traffickers – in countries in Africa, Europe, Asia, and the Middle East.'[1]

8.1.2 IOM (International Organisation for Migration) Nigeria, in an article dated 24 September 2024 (2024 IOM Nigeria article), stated: 'In 2023, an estimated 1.4 million Nigerians were involved in forced labour or sexual exploitation, with many trafficked within the country or to Europe …'[2]

8.1.3 For data on:

- convictions, see Investigations, arrests, prosecutions and convictions
- returns, see Number of returns

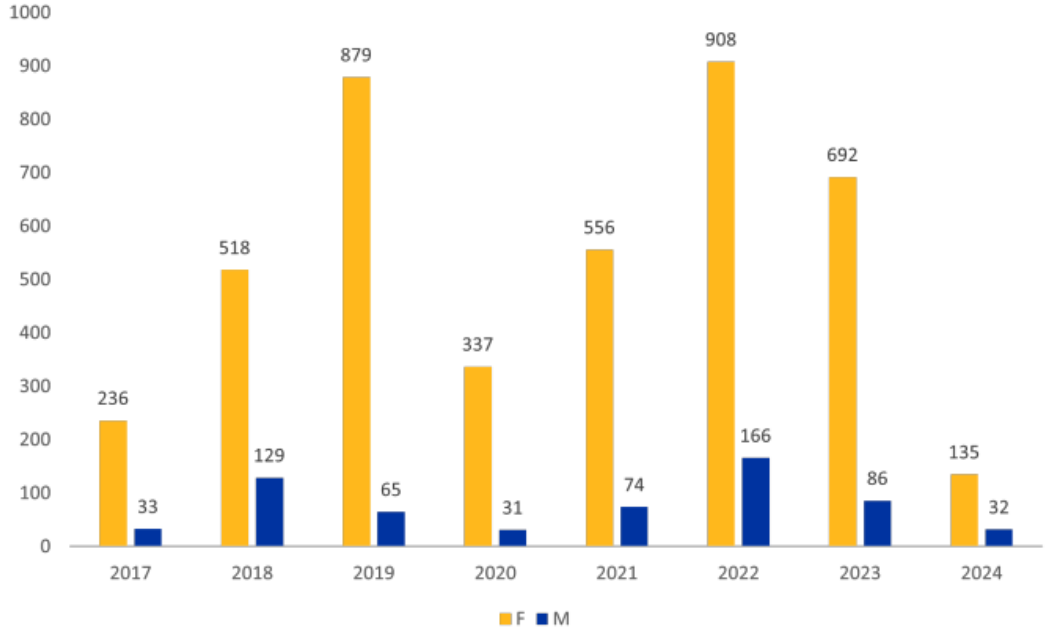
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8.2 Trafficking from Nigeria

8.2.1 IOM Nigeria, in their Profile of Nigerian Victims of Human Trafficking Since 2017, last updated 22 July 2024 (2024 IOM Nigeria report), featured a bar chart to show data collected by the IOM on the number of male (M) and female (F) victims trafficked from Nigeria and identified between 2017 and Quarter 1 of 2024. IOM Nigeria explained: 'The data does not represent a sample of the underlying population … [The figures] are based on individuals identified as victims of trafficking, either by the IOM through case management, as part of a referral mechanism by the authorities, most often

[1] USSD, 2025 Trafficking in Persons Report (Trafficking profile), 29 September 2025
[2] IOM Nigeria, Final Evaluation Workshops Shed Light on Increased Support …, 24 September 2024

in the country of exploitation, or from frontline civil society organizations that work directly to assist victims of trafficking.'[3] The chart is reproduced below[4]:



8.2.2 Referring to the same cohort, the 2024 IOM Nigeria report stated: '… [F]orced labor, sexual exploitation, slavery, and begging collectively represent 98% of the reported types of exploitation. Across all categories of exploitation, women appear to be more susceptible. A significant number of women experienced forced labor and sexual exploitation. Additional forms of exploitation include forced marriage, illicit activities, begging, forced military service, and organ removal[.]'[5]

8.2.3 The ENACT (Enhancing Africa's capacity to respond more effectively to transnational organised crime) project is implemented by the Institute for Security Studies (ISS, a pan-African civil society organisation[6]), INTERPOL and the Global Initiative against Transnational Organised Crime (GI-TOC, an international civil society organisation[7]). In a report dated 13 June 2025 (2025 ENACT report), based on various sources, ENACT stated:

'Open sources [of] information on African victims in Europe shows that Nigerian women are the most represented. As shown in the figure 4, in 2022, Nigeria was the main country of citizenship of non-EU victims in the EU, with 1,312 Nigerian citizens reported victims, most of which were women.

'In France, according to the annual conclusions of NGOs in charge of assisting victims of trafficking, in 2022, 52 per cent of all victims of sexual exploitation were Nigerians, a stable figure compared to 2021.'[8]

8.2.4 The same ENACT report stated: 'European countries have requested most INTERPOL Notices and Diffusions [international police alerts[9]] targeting West and North African offenders involved in sex trafficking, with a majority

[3] IOM Nigeria, Profile of Nigerian Victims of Human Trafficking … (page 4), updated 31 March 2024
[4] IOM Nigeria, Profile of Nigerian Victims of Human Trafficking … (page 4), updated 31 March 2024
[5] IOM Nigeria, Profile of Nigerian Victims of Human Trafficking… (page 8), updated 31 March 2024
[6] ENACT, What we do, no date
[7] ENACT, What we do, no date
[8] ENACT, Trafficking in women in West and North Africa and towards … (page 23), 13 June 2025
[9] GHERSON LLP, What is an INTERPOL diffusion (and how does it differ from an …, 15 April 2024

of these targeting Nigerian nationals. This suggests strong linkages between OCGs [organised crime groups] from these countries, notably Nigeria, and sex trafficking in Europe. Since 2021, there has been a decrease in INTERPOL Notices and Diffusions requested by European countries targeting individuals from Nigeria for trafficking in human beings and sexual exploitation, with the coincidental emergence of INTERPOL Notices and Diffusions targeting other West and North African nationals.

'Some European countries also noted a decrease in arrests of Nigerian sex traffickers starting in 2021. This trend may be explained by the weakening of these OCGs due to an increased enforcement pressure. Alternatively, it may be attributed to a potential lack of detection, due to the adoption of new modi operandi.'[10]

8.2.5 The 2025 ENACT report further observed: 'Several European countries noted a recent and ongoing decrease in the number of identified victims from Nigeria. In some country, it decreases by more than 80 per cent from 2021 to 2023 [sic].'[11] The report suggested the following possible explanations for the decrease in identified Nigerian victims:

- a decrease in the overall number of migrants travelling via the Mediterranean route
- a revocation in 2018 by the oba (religious leader) of Benin City of juju oaths binding victims to their traffickers
- international cooperation and operations resulting in a reduction in trafficking
- a 'trend towards hidden prostitution' since the Covid pandemic, in which case the decrease would represent a decline in detection rather than a reduction in the number of victims[12]

8.2.6 For more information on juju oaths and revocation by the oba, see Means of control and coercion.

8.2.7 The European Union Agency for Asylum (EUAA) published a report, 'Nigeria: Country Focus', on 3 November 2025 (2025 EUAA country report), based on various sources including EUAA interviews with Sarah Adeyinka, a postdoctoral researcher at the University of Amsterdam, and Roland Nwoha, director at IRARA Nigeria, an NGO based in Benin, Edo State, that provides temporary accommodation and reintegration assistance to returnees[13]. The report stated: 'As per latest available data, the European Commission (EC) reported that Nigerians rank first among the top five nationalities of trafficking victims identified within the European Union. Most of the victims are women primarily trafficked for the purpose of sexual exploitation.'[14]

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8.3 Trafficking within Nigeria

8.3.1 The USSD 2025 TiP report stated:

[10] ENACT, Trafficking in women in West and North Africa and towards … (page 15), 13 June 2025
[11] ENACT, Trafficking in women in West and North Africa and towards … (page 22), 13 June 2025
[12] ENACT, Trafficking in women in West and North Africa and towards … (page 22), 13 June 2025
[13] EUAA, COI Report - Nigeria: Country Focus (pages 30-31), 3 November 2025
[14] EUAA, COI Report - Nigeria: Country Focus (page 28), 3 November 2025

'The government identified and provided services to 2,058 trafficking victims, including 1,076 sex trafficking victims, 508 labor trafficking victims, and 474 victims where the form of trafficking was unspecified; this compared with identifying and referring to services 1,194 trafficking victims the previous year. Of the 2,058 victims, 812 were women, 768 were girls, 302 were boys, and 176 were men.'[15]

8.3.2 The same USSD report also stated: 'The National Bureau of Statistics worked with an international organization to publish two comprehensive surveys and analysis on forced labor and child labor in Nigeria. The forced labor survey estimated more than 617,00 [sic – 617,000 according to the International Labour Organisation[16]] adults are exploited in forced labor, with highest prevalence in the agriculture and service sectors.'[17] It further reported: 'Boko Haram has kidnapped and subjected thousands of women and girls to forced marriage, including for the purposes of sexual slavery and forced labor …'[18]

8.3.3 Referring to so-called baby factories – 'facilities disguised as orphanages, religious centres, maternity homes or private medical clinics, where young women are lured, impregnated and held until they give birth to infants, who are then sold and trafficked'[19] – the Guardian, a Nigerian privately-owned newspaper[20], in an article dated 28 May 2025, quoted a statement by the Human Rights Writers Association of Nigeria (HURIWA), a rights advocacy group[21], as saying that more than 200 baby factories had been discovered and shut down by security agencies in the previous 5 years[22]. The article did not state the group's source for the statistic. It reported that earlier in May 2025, '16 pregnant girls and eight children' had been rescued from a baby factory in Abia State[23].

8.3.4 The USSD 2025 TiP report stated: 'The government and NGOs describe the factories as a widespread criminal industry most prevalent in the southern part of the country …'[24]

8.3.5 Similarly, the 2025 EUAA report observed: 'The practice is especially prevalent in southern states such as Abia, Lagos, Anambra, Ebonyi, Enugu, and Imo.'[25]

8.3.6 For more information on baby factories, see Traffickers' profile and Traffickers' strategies.

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8.4 Children

8.4.1 The USSD 2025 TiP report stated:

[15] USSD, 2025 Trafficking in Persons Report (Protection), 29 September 2025
[16] ILO, Nigeria forced labour survey 2022, 2024
[17] USSD, 2025 Trafficking in Persons Report (Prevention), 29 September 2025
[18] USSD, 2025 Trafficking in Persons Report (Trafficking profile), 29 September 2025
[19] EUAA, COI Report - Nigeria: Country Focus (page 33), 3 November 2025
[20] The Guardian (Nigeria), About Us, no date
[21] Daily Post, HURIWA accuses Buhari govt of hypocrisy …, 11 March 2021
[22] The Guardian (Nigeria), HURIWA seeks emergency action on baby factories …, 28 May 2025
[23] The Guardian (Nigeria), HURIWA seeks emergency action on baby factories …, 28 May 2025
[24] USSD, 2025 Trafficking in Persons Report (Trafficking profile), 29 September 2025
[25] EUAA, COI Report - Nigeria: Country Focus (page 33), 3 November 2025

'Traffickers exploit children in sex trafficking and forced labor, including in granite quarries and artisanal mines, domestic work, begging, street vending, textile manufacturing, and agriculture. Traffickers exploit adults and children in forced labor on cocoa farms. Impoverished families send children as young as 5 years old to work as domestic workers, sometimes through labor brokers, for better access to education and economic opportunities; some traffickers exploit the children in domestic servitude and subject them to physical, emotional, and sexual abuse. Some corrupt Quranic school teachers ("mallams") exploit children, mostly boys from rural areas, in forced labor in begging and seasonal agricultural work, including in Cameroon and Chad.'[26]

8.4.2 The same USSD report stated: 'Boko Haram and ISIS-WA [ISIS West Africa, also known as Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP)[27]] continue recruiting and using – including through force, fraud, and coercion – child soldiers as young as 12 years old as cooks, domestic workers, spies, porters, messengers, bodyguards or guards at checkpoints, "morality police," armed combatants, human shields, and suicide bombers in attacks in Nigeria, Cameroon, Chad, and Niger; these children are subjected to physical and sexual abuse and forced drug use.' It further reported: 'Traffickers recruit children in IDP [internally displaced persons] camps for exploitation in domestic servitude.'[28]

8.4.3 For further information on Boko Haram and ISWAP, see Chapter 5 of the USSD 2023 Country Report on Terrorism, dated 12 December 2024[29].

8.4.4 In regard to child trafficking, the Australian Government Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) in its Country Information Report on Nigeria, dated 9 June 2026 (DFAT 2026 Nigeria report), citing NAPTIP, reported:

'[T]he rate of child trafficking, abduction and forced labour had increased in recent years with 15 the average age of trafficked children. Trafficking groups often targeted vulnerable families and children from socioeconomically disadvantaged backgrounds, sometimes operating under the pretext of offering support or charitable assistance. Those being trafficked may believe they are migrating for high-paying overseas employment. At the time of writing there was no reliable data on how many children were trafficked from Nigeria.'[30]

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9. Trafficking networks and strategies

9.1 Traffickers' profile

9.1.1 The 2025 EU country report stated:

'Many actors are involved in trafficking, including family and community members, or individuals in religious settings. Organised criminal groups are among the main actors involved in trafficking of human beings in Nigeria. In the context of migration routes, actors involved in migrant smuggling may

[26] USSD, 2025 Trafficking in Persons Report (Trafficking profile), 29 September 2025
[27] USSD, Country Reports on Terrorism 2023 (ISIS-West Africa), 12 December 2024
[28] USSD, 2025 Trafficking in Persons Report (Trafficking profile), 29 September 2025
[29] USSD, Country Reports on Terrorism 2023 (Africa), 12 December 2024
[30] DFAT, Country Information Reports (Nigeria) (Children), 9 June 2026

also engage in trafficking, either by collaborating with trafficking networks or by directly exploiting migrants themselves.

'Trafficking networks exploit Nigerian victims in Europe, the Middle East (including the Gulf countries) mostly in sex trafficking and domestic servitude. Criminal groups, some linked to cults or confraternities … play a central role also in international trafficking.'[31]

For information on specific cults and their trafficking strategies, see Traffickers' strategies.

Official – sensitive: Not for disclosure – Start of section

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Official – sensitive: Not for disclosure – End of section

9.1.2 The 2024 IOM Nigeria report stated that of the 4,261 Nigerian female victims of trafficking identified outside Nigeria between 2017 and Q1 2024, 46.6% were recruited by a friend or acquaintance, 8.9% by family or a relative and 44.5% by 'others'[32]. The report did not provide more details of recruiters in the latter category.

9.1.3 The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), in their Global Report on Trafficking in Persons 2024, dated December 2024 (2024 UNODC global trafficking report), cited research undertaken by the University of Amsterdam's Sarah Adeyinka on the role of family members in trafficking from Nigeria (see page 91 of the 2024 UNODC report for the research methodology). It stated:

'… [T]here were different types of family involvement, and family involvement did not always mean family approval of trafficking in persons. Three main groups emerged from the analysis:

'In the first group, participants' family members were part of the recruitment, and enforcement of exploitation …

'In the second group, although family members were not explicitly pushing the participants to embark on the journey, they did not stop them and/or were supportive of the idea that they were going with a trafficker, as it meant some remittances would come their way.'[33]

[The third group were] 'Family members who were aware of their children and wards traveling but were deceived, and thought it was for other purposes – vocational jobs, education, etc.'[34]

9.1.4 The 2025 EUAA country report stated:

'Trafficking is often facilitated through personal and communal networks, and in some contexts, it is viewed not as exploitation but as a voluntary and viable path to economic and social advancement. Especially in Edo State, trafficking victims are often familiar with their traffickers, who are typically part of their community and perceived as 'sponsors' offering assistance in

[31] EUAA, COI Report - Nigeria: Country Focus (page 29), 3 November 2025
[32] IOM Nigeria, Profile of Nigerian Victims of Human Trafficking … (page 11), updated 31 March 2024
[33] UNODC, Global report on trafficking in persons 2024 (page 92), December 2024
[34] UNODC, Global report on trafficking in persons 2024 (page 92 table), December 2024

traveling abroad. Traffickers are often perceived not as criminals, but as business associates or migration agents, comparable to recruiters of professionals like doctors and nurses. As explained by Roland Nwoha, director at IRARA Nigeria [International Returns and Reintegration, an organisation that delivers reintegration assistance to returning migrants across Nigeria through local partner organisations[35]] most people do not recognise the criminal nature of trafficking: "some victims even view traffickers as saviours, as people who have come to rescue them from harsh economic conditions."'[36]

9.1.5 The same EUAA report observed: 'In January 2025, the Nigeria Immigration Service (NIS) uncovered a sect in Kaduna State, Northwestern Nigeria, allegedly linked to trafficking in human beings' activities. The group, known as ACHAD Life Mission International, is reported to promote the revival of African traditions and operates independently of any mainstream religion. Its leader, identified as Yokana, is based in Jos, Plateau State, an area recently classified as a human trafficking hotspot, particularly for cases involving the trafficking of children. According to authorities, more than 100 victims were rescued in Plateau State over the past year.'[37]

9.1.6 With regard to roles within the trafficking process, the Punch, a Nigerian privately-owned newspaper[38], in an article dated 14 July 2024 (2024 Punch roles article), explained:

'In the world of trafficking, various individuals play crucial roles. Typically, the process begins with someone presenting an opportunity to vulnerable individuals. These victims are then linked to a key player known as the 'Connection Man' or 'Border' who facilitates the trafficking operation.

The Connection Man acts as an agent responsible for overseeing the victims' travel arrangements and linking them with 'Buyers' overseas who financially support the victims. Investigations revealed that some Buyers cover the travel expenses of the victims to decrease the payment owed to the Connection Man upon the victims' arrival. From the buyers who are referred to as madams or masters, the victims are either sold again to 'Users' or rented out for different purposes.'[39]

9.1.7 The 2025 EUAA country report stated: 'During transport, 'movement facilitators' use bribery to bypass law enforcement, while 'escorting traffickers' (also called 'Trolleys' or 'Coyotes') maintain physical control over victims. 'Logisticians' arrange travel, and 'migrant smugglers' (some of whom exploit or sell victims) support with the movement across borders.'[40]

9.1.8 Regarding the definition of a trafficking 'madam', the University of Amsterdam's Sarah Akeyinka, Ine Lietaert, associate professor at Ghent University, Belgium[41], and Ilse Derluyn, professor at Ghent University and director of the university's Centre for the Social Study of Migration and Refugees[42], in a paper dated November 2023, based on various sources,

[35] IRARA, Who We Are – About IRARA, no date
[36] EUAA, COI Report - Nigeria: Country Focus (pages 28-29), 3 November 2025
[37] EUAA, COI Report - Nigeria: Country Focus (page 29), 3 November 2025
[38] The Punch, About us, no date
[39] The Punch, Harrowing tales of survivors trapped in the web of trafficking, 24 July 2024
[40] EUAA, COI Report - Nigeria: Country Focus (page 30), 3 November 2025
[41] ResearchGate, Ine LIETAERT | Professor (Associate) | Professor | Ghent University…, no date
[42] ResearchGate, Ilse DERLUYN | Director Centre for the Social Study of Migration …, no date

reported:

'In this phenomenon [trafficking of Nigerian women and girls overseas], a "madam" is a woman who was formerly trafficked but stayed with the trafficking network … [T]hey are usually at the top of the trafficking hierarchy, and they control the girls and women working for them. Madams organize victims' recruitment, they collude with government officials and smugglers to secure passage for victims, and they ensure that the victims work in prostitution after arrival in the destination country. They don't do this on their own, but collaborate with extensive criminal networks.'[43]

9.1.9 The 2025 ENACT report observed:

'Austrian police noted that Nigerian OCGs in Europe are managed by 'Madams,' who are high ranking members of Nigerian sex trafficking OCGs. Some of them travel between Nigeria and Europe and have several Nigerian victims forced to work for them. Their victims often reside in different European countries. The 'Madams' use Nigerian OCGs member [sic] to monitor the victims during the transport from Nigeria and during the exploitation phase in Europe.'[44]

9.1.10 Regarding 'baby factories' and their operators, the USSD 2025 TiP report stated: 'Illicit actors operate "baby factories" – often disguised as orphanages, maternity homes, or religious centers – where traffickers hold women against their will, rape them, and force them to carry and deliver a child. They then sell the children, sometimes with the intent of exploiting them in forced labor and sex trafficking.'[45]

9.1.11 The Nation, a Nigerian privately-owned newspaper[46], in an article dated 19 January 2026 (2026 Nation article), quoted a statement issued by NAPTIP Director General Binta Bello as saying that among the high-profile traffickers convicted or pursued by NAPTIP in 2025 'were some popular operators and care homes across the country whose alleged nefarious activities were busted …'[47]

9.1.12 In relation to northern Nigeria, the USSD 2025 TiP report stated: 'These non-state armed groups [Boko Haram and Islamic State West Africa Province (ISIS-WA or ISWAP)] continue to abduct women and girls in the northern regions of Nigeria, many of whom they exploit in forced labor, including in domestic servitude, and in sexual slavery … Boko Haram punishes girls, including for refusing to marry, by forcing them to be suicide bombers … Criminal gangs in the south recruit and use children in forced criminality, including kidnappings and robberies, and exploit them in sex trafficking. Criminal gangs in the north west also exploit victims in forced labor in agriculture and mining.'[48]

9.1.13 The same USSD report further stated: 'Reports indicate government officials, as well as security officers, have sexually exploited victims in government-run IDP camps, informal camps, and local communities, including around Maiduguri … During a previous reporting period, an NGO alleged soldiers

[43] Adeyinka and others, The Role of Juju Rituals in Human … (page 3), SAGE Open, October 2023
[44] ENACT, Trafficking in women in West and North Africa and towards … (page 16), 13 June 2025
[45] USSD, 2025 Trafficking in Persons Report (Trafficking profile), 29 September 2025
[46] The Nation, The Nation Newspaper, no date
[47] The Nation, 93 traffickers jailed, 120 children rescued in 2025, says NAPTIP, 16 January 2026
[48] USSD, 2025 Trafficking in Persons Report (Trafficking profile), 29 September 2025

sexually exploited female detainees in a Borno State military detention center.'[49]

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9.2 Traffickers' strategies

9.2.1 With reference to recruitment methods in West and North Africa in general, the 2025 ENACT report stated: '… [O]ffenders use fraudulent and deceptive schemes to recruit the victims both online and offline. The main reported methods include: fake advertisements for opportunities abroad, such as well-paid jobs, false immigration offers to Europe, and study opportunities … According to information provided by Austrian police, traffickers offer fraudulent job offers as nannies and receptionists in Austria or other parts of Europe …

'To lure the victims online, recruiters mainly use fake identities on mainstream social networks and messaging applications such as WhatsApp, Facebook, Telegram, Messenger, Snapchat, Tik Tok, Telegram or Instagram. OCGs in Africa use social media to improve their social engineering schemes: they study the profiles of potential victims to tailor their messages to recruit victims online.'[50]

9.2.2 The same ENACT report observed that online recruitment of victims has been increasing, adding: 'According to Europol, "most victims are identified and recruited via the Internet, particularly on social media platforms".'[51] Offline recruitment 'generally takes place through intermediaries … Nigerian women are also often recruited at markets or shops.'[52]

9.2.3 The 2024 Punch roles article reported: '… Throughout the entirety of the trafficking chain, spanning from the initial referrer to the Connection Man, Buyer, and ultimately the User, devious tactics are employed to keep the victims unaware of the imminent danger they are facing.'[53]

9.2.4 The 2024 UNODC global trafficking report stated: 'Working on or with family members is a tactical strategy used by traffickers who understand the key aspects of respecting and obeying elders in the Nigerian society, and use that to their advantage.'[54]

9.2.5 The USSD 2025 TiP report observed:

'Traffickers increasingly use social media to identify and recruit potential victims. Media and NGOs report unscrupulous actors, including Russian officials and illicit recruiters, fraudulently recruited women ages 18-22 from Africa – including Nigeria – … for vocational training programs and subsequently placed them in military drone production sites. Media report workers at these sites are subjected to hazardous conditions, surveillance, hour and wage violations, contract switching, and worker-paid recruitment fees, all of which are indicators of human trafficking.'[55]

[49] USSD, 2025 Trafficking in Persons Report (Trafficking profile), 29 September 2025
[50] ENACT, Trafficking in women in West and North Africa and towards … (page 24), 13 June 2025
[51] ENACT, Trafficking in women in West and North Africa and towards … (page 25), 13 June 2025
[52] ENACT, Trafficking in women in West and North Africa and towards … (page 25), 13 June 2025
[53] The Punch, Harrowing tales of survivors trapped in the web of trafficking, 24 July 2024
[54] UNODC, Global report on trafficking in persons 2024 (page 92), December 2024
[55] USSD, 2025 Trafficking in Persons Report (Trafficking profile), 29 September 2025

9.2.6 According to the 2025 ENACT report: ‘Sex trafficking Nigerian criminal confraternities [cults] such as the Black Axe, Supreme Viking Confraternity, Arobaga Vikings, the Maphite, and the Eiye syndicate are becoming more organized, violent, and sophisticated. They also collaborate with European mafia and OCGs and are diversifying their criminal activities while focusing less on human trafficking.’[56]

9.2.7 El País, a Madrid-based[57] media outlet owned by PRISA Media[58], published an article in Spanish on 29 July 2025 that has been translated for this note using an online translation tool. The article reported:

‘Human traffickers are rarely strangers who approach their victims and take them away by force. Fatima Waziri-Azi, an expert on human trafficking and former director general of the National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons (NAPTIP), says that traffickers often approach young women with seemingly legitimate, well-paid job offers such as domestic workers, models, caregivers, or hospitality workers. In some cases, they are even promised scholarships or vocational training opportunities in Europe, the Middle East or other African countries …

‘“Young women are often under enormous pressure to provide for their families or to escape an abusive environment. That pressure makes them more likely to take risks, especially when someone they trust offers them a way out. In the internet age in which we live, traffickers skillfully manipulate the stories found online, idealizing life abroad,” explains the expert.’[59]

9.2.8 For more information, see Profile of victims of trafficking.

9.2.9 In relation to baby factories, the 2025 EUAA report stated: ‘Victims often receive money or something else for giving birth to a child. In some cases, families facilitate the involvement of girls, while in other cases victims themselves engage voluntarily for financial reasons. Some victims of so-called “baby-factories” are recruited by traffickers through online platforms.’[60]

9.2.10 Regarding new trafficking types and methods, Sahara Reporters, ‘an online community of international reporters and social advocates’[61], in an article dated 24 July 2025, reported:

‘The Director-General [DG] of Nigeria’s National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons and other related offences (NAPTIP), Binta Adamu Bello, has raised the alarm over a series of emerging and disturbing trends in human trafficking in Nigeria and Ghana.

‘[Emerging patterns of exploitation] include organ harvesting, where victims, often lured with false promises, are trafficked for the illicit trade of human organs …

‘“Online sextortion and revenge porn, where youths are increasingly falling victim to digital exploitation, particularly in Nigeria and Ghana. Loan-for-sex trafficking schemes, where criminals now use fake online loan offers to trap women into prostitution in exchange for debt repayment. Fake job offers and

[56] ENACT, Trafficking in women in West and North Africa and towards … (page 16), 13 June 2025
[57] El País, EL PAÍS Corporate, no date
[58] PRISA, Media, no date
[59] El País, The brutality of trafficking women from Nigeria: "Almost every day, …", 29 July 2025
[60] EUAA, COI Report - Nigeria: Country Focus (page 33), 3 November 2025
[61] Sahara Reporters, Sahara Reporters, no date

scholarships, where traffickers pose as employers or scholarship agents to lure unsuspecting individuals abroad, only to exploit them. Recruitment for cybercrime …, where young people, especially in Nigeria and Ghana, are being trafficked into online scams … Recruitment as 'Marketing Agents', where some victims are deceived into working as agents for branded products but are later exploited. These criminal networks are driving victimisation using migration flows, digital platforms, legal and economic loopholes to facilitate cross-border trafficking at a massive scale," Bello said.'[62]

9.2.11 In an article dated 11 February 2026 (2026 Sahara Reporters article), Sahara Reporters stated that NAPTIP had repatriated 23 Nigerian youths from Thailand who had been recruited by organised trafficking syndicates 'in what authorities described as a growing and dangerous trend of trafficking for cyber-enabled crimes across Southeast Asia'[63]. The article added: 'According to NAPTIP, the trafficked youths were lured with promises of scholarships and lucrative employment opportunities abroad, only to be deployed into criminal networks specialising in romance scams, cryptocurrency fraud, and investment scams.'[64]

9.2.12 For information, see Means of control and coercion.

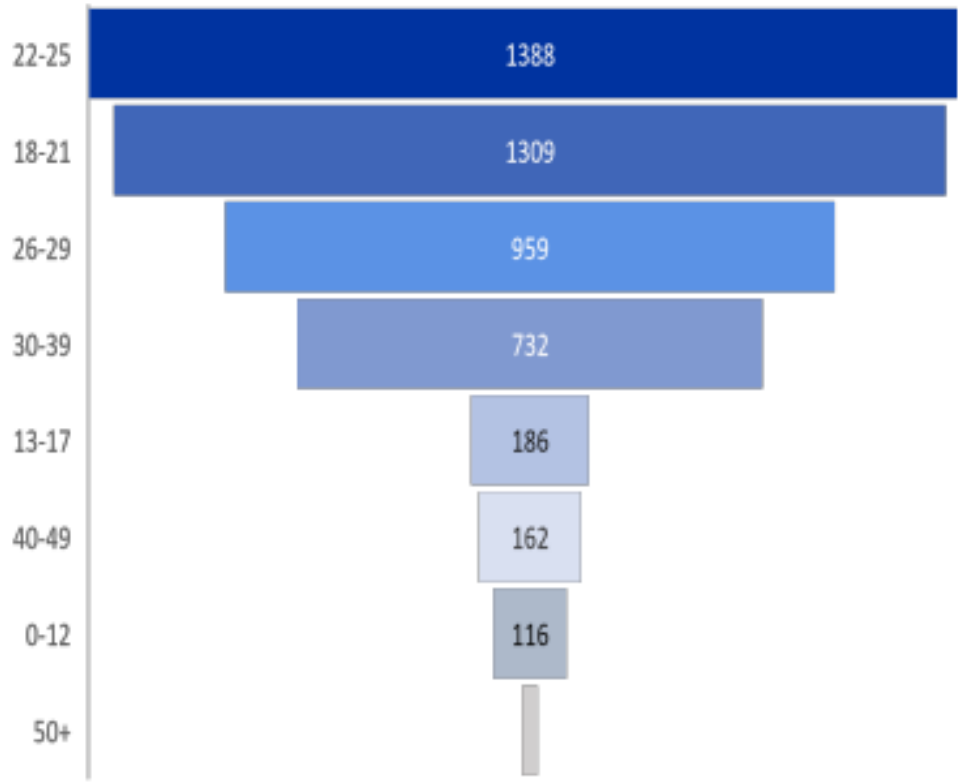
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9.3 Profile of victims of trafficking

9.3.1 Regarding domestic trafficking, the USSD 2025 TiP report stated: '… Nigerian traffickers commonly [recruit] victims from rural areas, for exploitation in sex trafficking and forced labor in cities.'[65]

9.3.2 Regarding Nigerian victims trafficked overseas, the 2024 IOM Nigeria report featured a ranked bar chart to show the distribution by age of combined male and female victims trafficked from Nigeria overseas and identified between 2017 and Q1 2024. The bar chart is reproduced below:

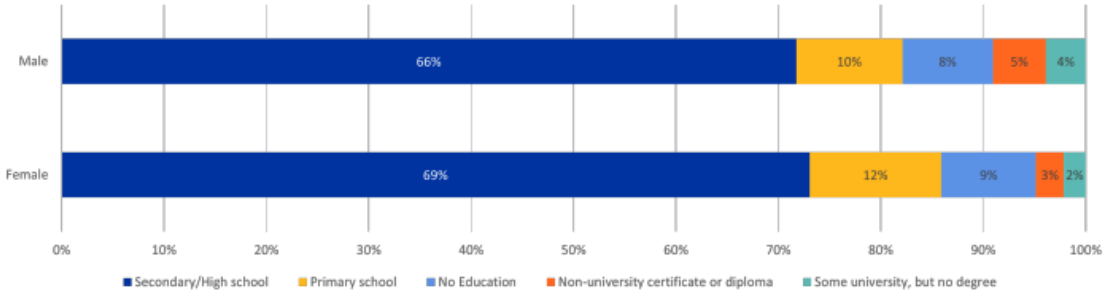
[62] Sahara Reporters, Anti-Trafficking Agency NAPTIP Raises Alarm Over Rising …, 24 July 2025
[63] Sahara Reporters, NAPTIP Rescues 23 Nigerian Youths Trafficked …, 11 February 2026
[64] Sahara Reporters, NAPTIP Rescues 23 Nigerian Youths Trafficked …, 11 February 2026
[65] USSD, 2025 Trafficking in Persons Report (Trafficking profile), 29 September 2025



66

9.3.3 The same IOM Nigeria report stated: 'The analysis of age distributions consistently reveals a prevalence of youth victims across all age groups of which most are females. Notably, a substantial majority of the identified victims fall within the demographic range of 18 to 39 years, encompassing nearly 90% of the total victims. Specifically, the data emphasizes the vulnerability of individuals aged between 18 and 25 to recruitment by traffickers, highlighting their increased susceptibility.'[67]

9.3.4 The 2024 IOM Nigeria report featured a stacked bar chart to show the distribution by educational level completed of victims of trafficking, disaggregated by sex, identified between 2017 and Q1 2024. The chart is reproduced below:



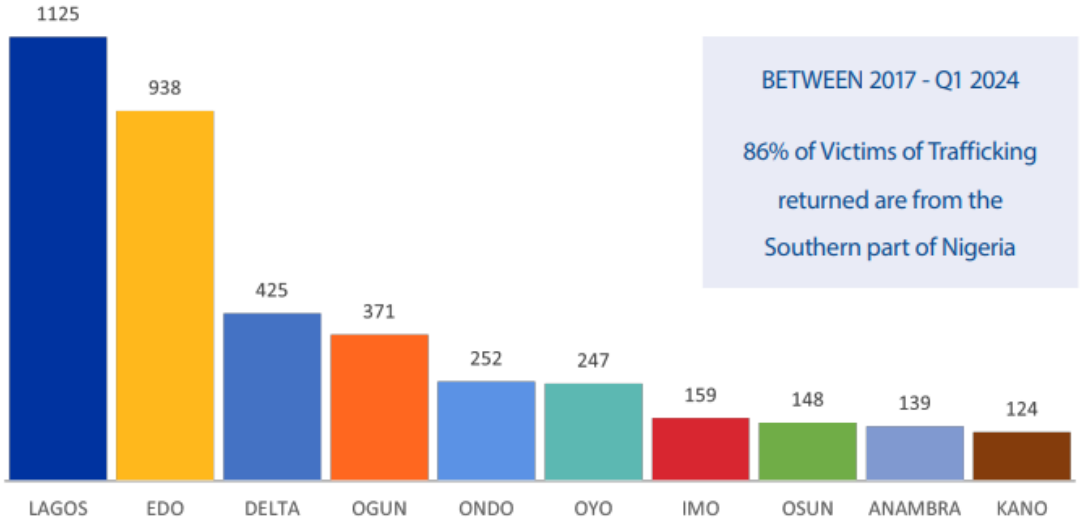
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9.3.5 Referring to victims of both sexes, the same IOM Nigeria report stated: 'The majority of victims have completed Secondary/High School education, followed by those who finished Primary School. A notable proportion of

[66] IOM Nigeria, Profile of Nigerian Victims of Human Trafficking … (page 5), updated 31 March 2024
[67] IOM Nigeria, Profile of Nigerian Victims of Human Trafficking … (page 5), updated 31 March 2024
[68] IOM Nigeria, Profile of Nigerian Victims of Human Trafficking … (page 5), updated 31 March 2024

victims have minimal or no formal education, indicating vulnerability among individuals with lower educational attainment.'[69]

9.3.6 The 2024 IOM Nigeria report also featured a bar chart to show the distribution of origins by state of victims of trafficking of both sexes in the same cohort. The chart, which covers the top 10 states, is reproduced below:



[70]

9.3.7 The same IOM Nigeria report observed in a sidebar that 86% of victims of trafficking returned were from the southern part of Nigeria. The report added:

'In several regions, notably Lagos and Edo, the number of female victims significantly outweighs that of male victims. Lagos emerges as the state with the highest total number of victims, with a striking predominance of females. Conversely, in states like Kano, there's a noticeable flip, showcasing more male victims than females, although the overall count remains lower compared to other states. These statistics underscore the prevalent vulnerability of females to trafficking across numerous regions …'[71]

9.3.8 Emmanuel Idemor Ukhami, an academic affiliated with the University of Abuja[72], Agaba Halidu, professor of international relations at the University of Abuja[73], and Lauretta Azegbeye Achudume, director of the Women of Like Minds Empowerment Initiative in Abuja[74], in a paper dated June 2024 (Ukhami and others 2024), based on various sources, observed:

'Apart from poverty, many of the victims of human trafficking abroad particularly women and girls are ignorant of the fate that awaits them in their country of destination. The situation is such that many of the women and girls had little or no education hence they are easily carried away by the picture of good lives painted by their sponsors … Researchers have found that inadequate legal knowledge and low levels of literacy tend to increase

[69] IOM Nigeria, Profile of Nigerian Victims of Human Trafficking … (page 5), updated 31 March 2024
[70] IOM Nigeria, Profile of Nigerian Victims of Human Trafficking … (page 6), updated 31 March 2024
[71] IOM Nigeria, Profile of Nigerian Victims of Human Trafficking … (page 6), updated 31 March 2024
[72] Ukhami, EI, The Role of the National Agency for the …, JOPD, 13 July 2024
[73] ResearchGate, Agaba HALIDU | Professor | PhD International Relations, no date
[74] Nigeria24, Women of Like Minds Empowerment Initiative - Company, directors …, no date

the vulnerability of individuals to sex trafficking …

'Women and girls, particularly those from marginalized communities and vulnerable backgrounds, are disproportionately affected by this demand [for cheap labour in the sex trade], with many coerced into prostitution or subjected to sexual slavery.'[75]

9.3.9 Folashade Akashoro, a project officer with an organisation based in Edo State that works to reduce the vulnerability of young women and girls to sex trafficking, in an article published on the website of BBC Media Action, the BBC's international charity[76], on 17 February 2025, stated: '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.'[77]

9.3.10 The 2025 ENACT report, citing information provided by the Austrian police, stated that in Austria, Nigerian victims of sex trafficking 'are usually the eldest in their family, aged between 18 and 25, and come from the southern Christian part of Nigeria'[78].

9.3.11 With reference to victims trafficked to Southeast Asia, the 2026 Sahara Reporters article stated:

'NAPTIP Director-General, Binta Adamu Bello, warned that traffickers have adopted a new strategy targeting "vibrant and intelligent" Nigerians, particularly those with computer and IT skills …

'"The trafficker goes after boys and girls who have one skill or the other, but preferably computer and IT skills, and those who do not drink alcohol or smoke," [Bello said].'[79]

9.3.12 Regarding reasons for embarking on migration, the 2024 IOM Nigeria report stated:

'When analyzing the reasons for embarking on the migratory journey, it is obvious that most reasons are due to economic instability. Based on the top reasons researched, 94% intended to migrate in search of better economic opportunities, 2% of the victims traveled in search of new job opportunities, 1% of the victims traveled for to escape bad family situations and 3% gave education and a host of other reasons as the factor. This include [sic] to reunite with family, adoption, escaping violence and insecurity, marriage, climate change and others who specify no specific motivation.'[80]

9.3.13 Similarly, Mitterand M. Okorie, a postdoctoral research fellow at Nelson Mandela University, South Africa[81], and Uchenna Okeja, a research professor at the same university[82], in a journal article dated 8 October 2024 (Okorie and Okeja 2024), stated: 'In the manifestation of trafficking in several parts of the world, including Nigeria, willing victims and sex workers

[75] Ukhami, EI, The Role of the National Agency for the … (page 182), JOPD, 13 July 2024
[76] BBC Media Action, Meet the BBC's international charity, no date
[77] Akashoro, F, BBC Media Action, Flipping the script on sex trafficking, 17 February 2025
[78] ENACT, Trafficking in women in West and North Africa and towards … (page 21), 13 June 2025
[79] Sahara Reporters, NAPTIP Rescues 23 Nigerian Youths Trafficked …, 11 February 2026
[80] IOM Nigeria, Profile of Nigerian Victims of Human Trafficking … (page 6), updated 31 March 2024
[81] Nelson Mandela University, Mitterand Okorie - Center for Philosophy in Africa, no date
[82] Nelson Mandela University, Uchenna Okeja - Center for Philosophy in Africa, no date

voluntarily enter channels of trafficking in search of social mobility.'[83]

9.3.14 In an observation not specific to women, the USSD 2025 TiP report stated: 'Poverty, lack of economic opportunity, and displacement caused by insecurity and extreme flooding increase Nigerians' vulnerability to trafficking.'[84]

9.3.15 The 2025 EUAA report observed: 'In some cases, Nigerian women victims of trafficking often do not see themselves as victims. Some actively seek out traffickers or are introduced by relatives or friends in pursuit of economic opportunity. Poverty, conflict, poor education, social pressure and cultural norms are key factors that make women vulnerable to traffickers.'[85]

9.3.16 The same EUAA report quoted the University of Amsterdam's Sarah Adeyinka as saying in an interview with the EUAA that victims trafficked to Italy are recruited 'often even without realising where they are going.'[86]

9.3.17 Letizia Mancini, a professor at the University of Milan, Italy, in an article dated 1 December 2025 (Mancini 2025), based on various sources, stated:

'Several studies … highlight how family networks not only influence women's decisions to migrate but also actively participate in shaping the trajectories that often lead to exploitation and human trafficking. In this context, migration is rarely an individual decision; rather, it constitutes a collective family project embedded within socio-economic hardship, gender hierarchies, and cultural expectations of filial duty. In many Nigerian households, particularly Edo State, sending a daughter abroad is perceived as an investment strategy and a potential means of collective social advancement. Despite the moral stigma attached to prostitution, families often prioritize the anticipated remittances and social prestige associated with migration.'[87] The paper explained that the notion of daughters migrating as a sacrifice to improve the household's economic situation 'is especially evident in the case of firstborn daughters, who are frequently expected to assume financial responsibility for their younger siblings and aging parents'[88].

9.3.18 Regarding 'money marriages', according to the USSD 2025 TiP report: 'In some states, families "sell" women and girls into forced marriages to older men to repay family debt in the traditional practice of "money marriages," increasing vulnerability to trafficking.'[89]

9.3.19 In relation to 'baby factories', the same USSD TiP report explained: '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.'[90]

9.3.20 The 2025 EU country report stated: 'Most of the victims of the so-called "baby-factories" are minors, teenage girls, unmarried young women. Poverty, ignorance, dysfunctional family structures, social stigma on childlessness, and weak law enforcement are identified among the root causes of this

[83] Okorie, MM, and Okeja, U, Prosecuting human … (page 6), TiOC, 8 October 2024
[84] USSD, 2025 Trafficking in Persons Report (Trafficking profile), 29 September 2025
[85] EUAA, COI Report - Nigeria: Country Focus (page 34), 3 November 2025
[86] EUAA, COI Report - Nigeria: Country Focus (page 32), 3 November 2025
[87] Mancini, L, Female Migration from Nigeria, Sex … (page 2115), OSLS, 1 December 2025
[88] Mancini, L, Female Migration from Nigeria, Sex … (page 2115), OSLS, 1 December 2025
[89] USSD, 2025 Trafficking in Persons Report (Trafficking profile), 29 September 2025
[90] USSD, 2025 Trafficking in Persons Report (Trafficking profile), 29 September 2025

phenomenon.'[91]

9.3.21 Regarding vulnerability among IDPs and refugees, the same USSD report also stated: 'There are more than 3.3 million IDPs in the country and more than 380,000 Nigerian refugees in neighboring countries; many of these IDPs and refugees are vulnerable to trafficking due to limited access to economic opportunities and basic services, including food assistance …'[92]

9.3.22 The same USSD report further explained: 'Directed by the governor, the Borno State government continued closing IDP camps and returning IDPs to communities that lacked basic services and were inaccessible to humanitarian actors due to government restrictions and insecurity; observers previously reported the camp closures resulted in an increase of human trafficking cases. Many IDPs who did not return to their communities lived in informal IDPs camps in Maiduguri, where they were vulnerable to human trafficking and other crimes. The state government also repatriated Nigerian refugees from Chad and returned them to insecure communities without providing adequate repatriation or reintegration support, increasing vulnerability to trafficking.'[93]

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9.4 Means of coercion and control

9.4.1 Europol, the EU's law enforcement agency[94], in a news bulletin on their website dated 26 January 2024, reported: 'To ensure … victims of human trafficking remain under their control, the kingpins [of Nigerian criminal networks] apply measures such as severe threats, the use of extreme violence or intimidation with obscure religious practices.'[95]

9.4.2 The 2024 IOM Nigeria report featured a table to show the means by which Nigerian male (M) and female (F) victims of trafficking overseas identified between 2017 and Q1 2024 were controlled. The table is reproduced below:

[91] EUAA, COI Report - Nigeria: Country Focus (page 33), 3 November 2025
[92] USSD, 2025 Trafficking in Persons Report (Trafficking profile), 29 September 2025
[93] USSD, 2025 Trafficking in Persons Report (Protection), 29 September 2025
[94] Europol, Europol – law enforcement cooperation, no date
[95] Europol, 15 arrested in intercontinental crackdown against Nigerian crime …, 26 January 2024

MEANS OF CONTROL	F	M	TOTAL
1. Physical Abuse	1178	206	1384
2. Deception	1074	111	1185
3. Psychological Abuse	985	147	1132
4. Threat	802	112	914
5. Withholding Wages	707	84	791
6. Excessive Hours	629	93	722
7. Denied Movement	646	75	721
8. Denied Food & Drink	533	79	612
9. Sexual Abuse	553	24	577
10. Limit Access to Finance	404	52	456
11. Denied Medical	379	71	450
12. Debt Bondage	347	44	391
13. Withholding Identity Docs	342	42	384
14. Denial Refuse Client	191	10	201
15. Denial Refuse Acts	142	16	158
16. Denial Condom	128	7	135
17. Threat Family	112	24	136
18. Threat Law	88	24	112
19. Manipulate Children	56	6	62
20. Drugs	55	6	61
21. Alcohol	44	5	49

[96]

9.4.3 Mancini 2025 reported: 'Trafficking networks frequently contact families in Nigeria to reinforce control through coercion, threats, or financial pressure.'[97]

9.4.4 The 2025 ENACT report stated: '… control can be exerted via blackmail (e.g. by threatening to share sexual material online). Technology also allows for real-time monitoring: movement of the victims can be restricted and/or controlled thanks to smartphone GPS devices, cameras and location-sharing applications …'[98]

9.4.5 The 2025 EUAA country report stated: '[T]raffickers have also become more sophisticated in their tactics, for instance, increasingly turning to 'sextortion'. Before a victim travels, traffickers often force them to strip naked, record videos and threaten to release footage to their family or the public if the agreed costs are not repaid, intensifying the victim's fear and control.'[99]

9.4.6 The 2026 Sahara Reporters article stated: '[Victims repatriated from Southeast Asia and rescued by NAPTIP] were allegedly monitored by armed enforcers described as "mafia guys", who tortured those who failed to meet daily fraud targets.' The article quoted NAPTIP Director-General Binta Adamu Bello as saying: 'While a few of them who refused to do the bidding of the traffickers are tortured inside a horror chamber called "the dark room,"

[96] IOM Nigeria, Profile of Nigerian Victims of Human Trafficking … (page 5), updated 31 March 2024
[97] Mancini, L, Female Migration from Nigeria, Sex … (page 2115), OSLS, 1 December 2025
[98] ENACT, Trafficking in women in West and North Africa and … (pages 26-27), 13 June 2025
[99] EUAA, COI Report - Nigeria: Country Focus (page 32), 3 November 2025

others had their organs harvested, especially the young ones with non-smoking history.'[100]

9.4.7 Regarding coercion through juju (black magic), the USSD 2025 TiP report stated: 'Before departure for work abroad, many Nigerian women participate in a traditional ceremony with a juju priest; some traffickers exploit this tradition as a coercion method and tell the women they must obey the traffickers or a curse will harm them, discouraging victims from seeking assistance or cooperating with law enforcement.'[101]

9.4.8 PM News, a Nigerian privately-owned newspaper[102], in an article dated 10 July 2024, reported:

'A human trafficking suspect, Juliet Ukhurebor, has narrated how she made her victims to take an oath before travelling out of the country in order to deter them from absconding or disobeying her instructions.

'The 42-year-old suspect was arrested by operatives of Edo State Taskforce on Human Trafficking …

'[Taskforce Secretary Pauline] Irusota stated that the prime suspect only revealed to the victims after the oath that they were heading to India for prostitution … "The prime suspect was arrested at her shrine, and a native pot containing concoctions was recovered …," she added.'[103]

9.4.9 The Organized Crime and Corruption Reporting Project is an Amsterdam-based non-profit investigative news organisation with staff in 6 continents[104]. In an article dated 7 May 2025, it reported that a Nigerian human trafficking kingpin previously convicted in his absence by a court in Belgium had been arrested in the Nigerian city of Benin. The article stated: '[Nigerian] Authorities said his network used "voodoo-based oaths" to coerce victims and trap them in fabricated debts ranging from 20,000 euros to 50,000 euros ($22,720 to $56,794) [£17,339.80 to 43,349.50[105]].'[106]

9.4.10 The 2025 ENACT report stated: 'About 90 per cent of the [Nigerian] girls trafficked to Europe are reportedly taken to shrines for "oaths of secrecy." Quoting information provided by the Austrian police, the report added that juju oaths include 'absolute obedience and reimbursement of the travel costs (approx. EUR 40,000 [£34,687.48[107]])'[108].

9.4.11 The 2025 ENACT report also stated:

'Some Nigerian traditional religious leaders, named Juju priests, are paid to perform ceremonies where the victim takes the oath to obey the traffickers, to repay fraudulent debt, and not to report to law enforcement. The ceremonies are usually performed in Nigeria, but also in Libya and Europe.

[100] Sahara Reporters, NAPTIP Rescues 23 Nigerian Youths Trafficked …, 11 February 2026
[101] USSD, 2025 Trafficking in Persons Report (Trafficking profile), 29 September 2025
[102] PM News, About Us, no date
[103] PM News, Human trafficking suspect who made victims take oath arrested, 10 July 2024
[104] OCCRP, Nigeria Nabs Trafficking, Robbery Syndicate Leaders, 7 May 2025
[105] Xe.com, Currency Converter, converted 6 March 2026
[106] OCCRP, Nigeria Nabs Trafficking, Robbery Syndicate Leaders, 7 May 2025
[107] Xe.com, Currency Converter, converted 6 March 2026
[108] ENACT, Trafficking in women in West and North Africa and … (pages 27-28), 13 June 2025

In some cases, the community religious leader is also in charge of contacting and threatening the victim.'[109]

9.4.12 Mancini 2025 stated:

'By subjecting women and girls to oath-taking rituals, traffickers secure obedience and ensure the continuity of their profits. Simultaneously, juju is sometimes presented as a form of spiritual protection for those undertaking dangerous migratory journeys, particularly across the desert or when facing immigration authorities. In this sense, juju becomes both a mechanism of coercion and a means of perceived empowerment within the trafficking process…

'This ritual process formalizes the pact between women seeking to migrate to Europe and the traffickers who finance their journeys. Under this arrangement, traffickers commit to covering all travel expenses. At the same time, the women pledge to repay the debt, show deference to the traffickers, and refrain from disclosing their identities to the police. The boundary between consent and coercion in these rituals is extremely thin and fragile …'[110]

9.4.13 Regarding an intervention by the Oba of Benin, the 2025 EUAA country report explained:

'In 2018, the Oba of Benin kingdom (Southern Nigeria), the traditional religious ruler who has moral authority over all juju priests in Edo State, cursed human trafficking, as well as all priests who perform oaths between traffickers and their victims, and nullified all previous juju oaths sworn by trafficking victims. As noted by scholar Dr Sarah Adeyinka in an interview with the EUAA, the Oba of Benin's declaration was 'remarkable' and had ripple effects both in Nigeria and abroad … [T]here were reports of trafficked women in Italy choosing to return to Nigeria, while within Nigeria some victims reportedly left their traffickers …

'Despite its initial impact, the influence of the Oba's declaration has diminished over time. Also, some traffickers who do not originate from Edo State believed the Oba of Benin's 2018 curse did not apply to them.'[111]

9.4.14 Referring to the aftermath of the Oba of Benin's intervention, Mancini 2025 stated: 'The force of the oath continues to bind hundreds of Nigerian women and girls. The persistence of juju-based control mechanisms underscores how deeply cultural and spiritual practices are woven into the fabric of trafficking operations, making them particularly challenging to dismantle through conventional law enforcement or social intervention alone.'[112]

9.4.15 For more information on juju oaths, see Reprisals.

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9.5 Trafficking routes and destinations

9.5.1 The 2025 ENACT report stated with reference to trafficking of West and North African victims generally:

[109] ENACT, Trafficking in women in West and North Africa and … (page 13), 13 June 2025
[110] Mancini, L, Female Migration from Nigeria, Sex … (pages 2118-2119), OSLS, 1 December 2025
[111] EUAA, COI Report - Nigeria: Country Focus (page 32), 3 November 2025
[112] Mancini, L, Female Migration from Nigeria, Sex … (page 2119), OSLS, 1 December 2025

'A general and underlying pattern organizes almost all displacement of women for sexual exploitation: traffickers, to maximize their illicit profits, move the victims mainly from rural and poor regions towards economic hubs with enough wealth and demand in sexual services. The economic hubs can be urban, mining, fishing, agriculture, or touristic zones, within the victims' countries, or neighboring countries in West or North Africa. Following this pattern, victims are also displaced beyond Africa, notably towards Europe and other destinations. Opportunistic traffickers also sexually exploit women migrants on their way towards Europe.'[113]

9.5.2 Regarding trafficking within Nigeria, the same report stated: '… [S]ex trafficking victims are … moved internally following a rural-to-urban pattern. Victims are displaced from the Eastern States to Edo State, and from Edo State to Osun and Oyo States. This internal trafficking has been described as a "tutorial on prostitution," before the victims can be moved abroad.'[114]

9.5.3 The 2024 IOM Nigeria report stated that victims of trafficking returned to Nigeria after being identified overseas between 2017 and Q1 2024 'originated from a broad spectrum of host or transit countries, spanning 37 different nations'[115]. It provided the following information on the top 10 host or transit countries, which it reported accounted for 4,660 returns, or 96% of the total:

Returns / Country	Male	Female	Total	Percentage of total returns
Libya	410	2,152	2,562	54%
Mali	33	1,169	1,202	25%
Niger	62	207	269	6%
Ghana	26	149	175	4%
Lebanon	8	112	120	3%
Ivory Coast	1	107	107	2%
Burkina Faso	4	83	87	2%
United Arab Emirates	1	70	71	2%
Morocco	11	55	66	1%
Chad	24	37	61	1%

[116]

The report did not explain why the total number of returnees from Ivory Coast provided in the data differed from the sum of the figures for male and female returnees from that country.

9.5.4 The 2024 IOM Nigeria report, referring to both male and female victims in the same 2017 to Q1 2024 cohort, stated: 'The top countries of exploitation

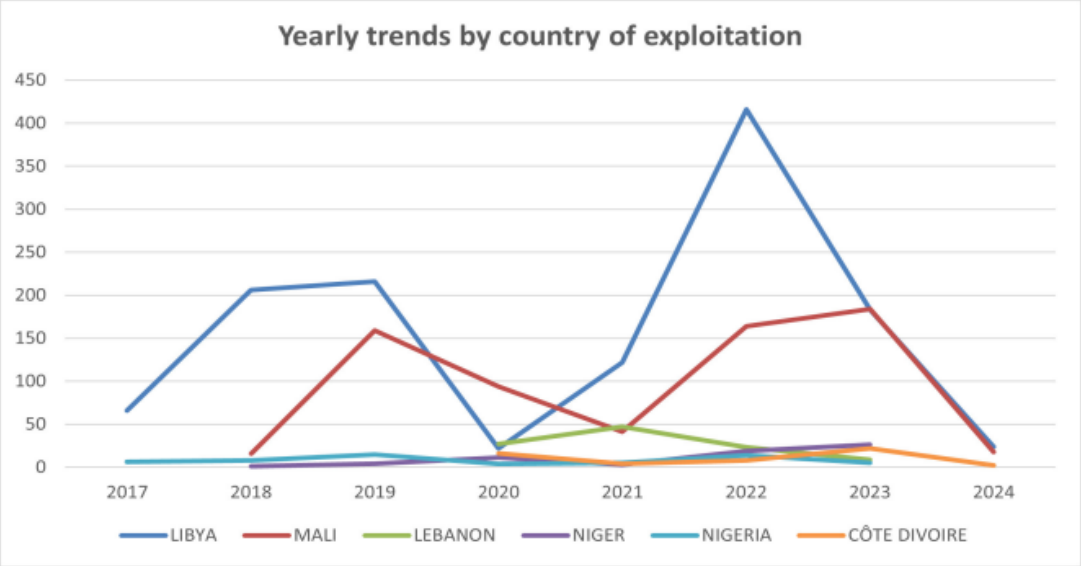
[113] ENACT, Trafficking in women in West and North Africa and towards … (page 17), 13 June 2025
[114] ENACT, Trafficking in women in West and North Africa and towards … (page 19), 13 June 2025
[115] IOM Nigeria, Profile of Nigerian Victims of Human Trafficking … (page 7), updated 31 March 2024
[116] IOM Nigeria, Profile of Nigerian Victims of Human Trafficking … (page 7), updated 31 March 2024

by Nigerian Victims of Trafficking (VoTs) reveals Libya as the predominant destination, accounting for approximately 53% of reported cases. Following Libya, Mali emerges as the second most prevalent country of exploitation, encompassing around 29% of the cases. Lebanon, Niger, Nigeria itself, and Côte d'Ivoire hold smaller but significant shares, ranging from 2.10% to 4.64%. This distribution underscores a concentration of exploitation cases in Libya and Mali … It also indicates complex trafficking networks spanning nations …'[117]

9.5.5 Regarding trends in exploitation countries over its reporting period, the same IOM Nigeria report stated:

'Libya consistently stands out as the primary country of exploitation over the years, with notable variations in victim counts. In contrast, Mali maintains a persistent but comparatively lower trend, showing fluctuating victim numbers annually. Lebanon presents an escalating trend in exploitation cases, indicating a growing concern from 2019 to Q1 2024….Several countries, including Nigeria, Côte d'Ivoire, Niger, Algeria, and Morocco, exhibit stable but concerning trends in exploitation cases. Despite lower victim numbers compared to Libya and Mali, their consistent presence signifies persistent exploitation concerns that necessitate sustained efforts for prevention and intervention. Some countries, such as Ghana, Chad, Burkina Faso, Iraq, Russian Federation, and the United Arab Emirates, show fluctuating patterns or sporadic instances of reported cases.'[118]

9.5.6 The same IOM Nigeria report showed yearly trends by country of exploitation for the top 6 such countries in a graph, which is reproduced below:



[119]

9.5.7 Referring to male and female victims, the 2024 IOM Nigeria report further stated:

'In analysing countries where forced labour is prevalent, Libya emerges as the primary country, showcasing a substantial 70% presence of forced labor activities. Lebanon and Mali follow with smaller yet significant percentages at

[117] IOM Nigeria, Profile of Nigerian Victims of Human Trafficking … (page 7), updated 31 March 2024
[118] IOM Nigeria, Profile of Nigerian Victims of Human Trafficking … (page 8), updated 31 March 2024
[119] IOM Nigeria, Profile of Nigerian Victims of Human Trafficking … (page 8), updated 31 March 2024

10% and 6%, respectively. Niger, Nigeria, Algeria, and Morocco exhibit comparatively lower but notable percentages …

'The predominant countries where victims were subjected to sex trade exploitation are Mali (55%), Libya (31%), Cote d'Ivoire (4.4%), Nigeria (2%), Ghana (2%), and Morocco (1%). These six countries collectively constitute 95% of the 21 countries where victims experienced sex trade exploitation.'[120]

9.5.8 The 2024 IOM Nigeria article reported that in 2023, the 2 most common destinations to which Nigerians were trafficked overseas were Europe and Libya[121].

9.5.9 Sabitiyu Abosede Lawal, senior lecturer in law at Lagos State University, and Abubakri Yekini, lecturer in law at the University of Manchester, in an article in the Turf Law Journal dated 2025, reported: 'Nigerians are trafficked to Europe, especially Italy and Russia, as well as the Middle East and North Africa for forced prostitution.'[122]

9.5.10 The 2025 ENACT report stated: 'West African victims identified in Europe mainly originate from Nigeria and transit via Niger, Libya, and Italy towards nearly all Western Europe countries. Another route towards Europe for Nigerian victims is via Niger, Algeria, and Morocco to the Spanish mainland. Transport also takes place by air from Nigeria, with unknown stopovers to Austria. Austrian police informed that Austria is a destination country as well as a transit country for predominantly Nigerian victims.'[123]

9.5.11 The same ENACT report identified the following types of economic hub or sector and their locations as places to which Nigerian victims of sex trafficking, among other nationalities, are transported in West and North Africa:

- mining centres in Senegal
- the tourism sector in Gambia, Guinea Bissau and Cape Verde
- agriculture and mining centres in Ivory Coast
- urban centres and mining and fishing sectors in Ghana
- urban centres in North Africa
- mining and urban centres in Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger[124]

9.5.12 According to the same ENACT report, 'Nigerian traffickers also transport Nigerian victims to Central and South African countries, as well as towards East Africa … Nigerian victims are also reportedly exploited in the UAE.'[125]

9.5.13 The USSD 2025 TiP report stated:

'Traffickers exploit Nigerian victims in sex trafficking and forced labor, primarily domestic servitude, throughout West and Central Africa and to a lesser extent, East and Southern Africa. Organized trafficking networks transport Nigerian women and girls to mining regions in Senegal, Mali,

[120] IOM Nigeria, Profile of Nigerian Victims of Human … (pages 9-10), updated 31 March 2024
[121] IOM Nigeria, Final Evaluation Workshops Shed Light on Increased …, 24 September 2024
[122] Lawal, SA, and Yekini, A, The Legal and … (page 2), Turf Law Journal, 18 February 2025
[123] ENACT, Trafficking in women in West and North Africa and towards … (page 21), 13 June 2025
[124] ENACT, Trafficking in women in West and North Africa and towards … (page 17), 13 June 2025
[125] ENACT, Trafficking in women in West and North Africa and towards … (page 21), 13 June 2025

Burkina Faso, and Cote d'Ivoire [Ivory Coast] for exploitation in sex trafficking … Traffickers exploit Nigerian victims in online scam operations in Ghana and in southeast Asia …

'Highly organized criminal groups, sometimes linked to Nigerian cult organizations or confraternities, fraudulently recruit and exploit Nigerian women and girls in sex trafficking in countries throughout Europe, including Italy, Spain, and the United Kingdom. Traffickers fraudulently recruit Nigerian victims for employment abroad and subsequently exploit them in domestic servitude and sex trafficking in the Middle East and Gulf states … Traffickers exploit undocumented migrants in forced labor and sex trafficking at multiple stages of their journey through North Africa to Europe, especially in Libya …

'In previous years, there were reports traffickers fraudulently recruited women and girls from IDP camps for employment in Europe and subsequently exploited them in sex trafficking in North Africa, the Gulf, and Europe.'[126]

Official – sensitive: Not for disclosure – Start of section

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Official – sensitive: Not for disclosure – End of section

9.5.14 The Daily Trust, a Nigerian privately-owned news outlet[127], in an article dated 11 February 2026, quoted a NAPTIP official as saying that 7 female victims rescued in Kano State 'were trafficked from the south of the country, with Kano being used as a transit point before onward movement to Baghdad in Iraq for labour exploitation'[128].

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10. Returns process and initial support

10.1 Number of returns

10.1.1 The 2024 IOM Nigeria report stated: 'Between 2017 and Q1 2024, IOM facilitated the voluntary return of 4,877 Victims of Trafficking (VOTs) holding Nigerian citizenship, among whom 616 (13%) were male and 4261 (87%) [were female].'[129]

10.1.2 The same IOM Nigeria report stated with reference to both male and female victims of trafficking that '… although Libya records the highest voluntary return of VOTs, … Mali has the highest number of child victims returned to Nigeria over the course of 7 years consistently outweigh[ing] that of adult victims'[130].

10.1.3 The 2024 Punch roles article reported:

'On June 14, the Nigerians in Diaspora Commission disclosed that it rescued 10 teenage girls who were trafficked to Ghana for prostitution and brought them back to Nigeria.

[126] USSD, 2025 Trafficking in Persons Report (Trafficking profile), 29 September 2025
[127] Daily Trust, About Us, no date
[128] Daily Trust, NAPTIP Rescues Iraq-bound Trafficking Victims In Kano, no date
[129] IOM Nigeria, Profile of Nigerian Victims of Human Trafficking … (page 4), updated 31 March 2024
[130] IOM Nigeria, Profile of Nigerian Victims of Human Trafficking … (page 5), updated 31 March 2024

'The Director of Media and Public Relations and Protocols of the Commission, Abdur-Rahman Balogun, during an interview with our correspondent on July 1 said, "Because of its vital role, concerned Nigerians invite us to help them out whenever there are Nigerians stranded or trafficked for shameful deals.

'"We involve our embassies or High Commissions and equally use the Nigerians Diaspora Organisation in that particular country to get us the necessary information and facilitate repatriation before handing them back to relevant agencies. We have rescued a lot of Nigerians, especially youths through that process."'[131]

10.1.4 The 2025 EUAA report stated with reference to male and female returnees in general: 'Since October 2022, IOM has supported the voluntary return of over 20 970 Nigerian migrants under the MPRR-SSA [Migrant Protection, Return and Reintegration Programme for Sub-Saharan Africa], primarily from Libya and Niger.'[132]

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10.2 Process of return and initial support

10.2.1 Citing the EUAA's July 2025 online interview with Sarah Adeyinka of the University of Amsterdam, the 2025 EUAA report stated: 'Individuals return to Nigeria through three main ways: forced return, self-funded or family-funded return, and assisted return through IOM's AVRR [Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration] programmes.'[133]

10.2.2 The USSD 2025 TiP report stated: 'NAPTIP's Protocol for Identification, Safe Return and Rehabilitation of Trafficked Persons provided formal procedures for authorities assisting victims exploited abroad upon identification and during and after repatriation.'[134]

10.2.3 Referring to Nigerian male and female victims of trafficking whose voluntary return to Nigeria was facilitated by the IOM between 2017 and Q1 2024, the 2024 IOM Nigeria report stated:

'Following their return, IOM, in collaboration with key governmental entities, civil society organizations, and non-governmental actors, facilitated their reception and support. Upon arrival, immediate assistance, including medical care for individuals with varying degrees of health conditions, and psychosocial counseling aimed at fostering emotional, social, and cognitive capacities necessary for reintegration into the community, were provided. Additionally, vulnerability screening was done during the analyzed period.'[135]

10.2.4 Ngozi L Uzomah, Ignatius I Madu, Chukwuedozie K Ajaero and Eberechukwu J Ezea, of the University of Nigeria, Nsukka, in Enugu State, wrote a working paper (Uzomah and others 2024), dated 28 November 2024, on Nigerian migrants, including victims of trafficking, returning from

[131] The Punch, Harrowing tales of survivors trapped in the web of trafficking, 24 July 2024
[132] EUAA, COI Report - Nigeria: Country Focus (page 32), 3 November 2025
[133] EUAA, COI Report - Nigeria: Country Focus (page 37), 3 November 2025
[134] USSD, 2025 Trafficking in Persons Report (Protection), 29 September 2025
[135] IOM Nigeria, Profile of Nigerian Victims of Human Trafficking … (page 4), updated 31 March 2024

North Africa, as part of the GAPs Horizon Europe project on migrant returns[136]. The paper, based on various sources, reported:

'During the early stage of their return at the airport, Nigerian government agencies await the migrants to welcome them as part of the return and reintegration process. The Nigeria Immigration Services takes care of their documentation, Ministry of Health screens them for 15 health-related issues, National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) provides logistic such as water and food. The National Commission for Migrants and Internally Displaced Persons (NCFRMI) is the government agency that coordinates all these activities that eventually should culminate to supporting the reintegration of the returnees …'[137]

10.2.5 In their undated 'Returning to Nigeria Information Leaflet' (undated IRARA leaflet), providing information for Nigerian nationals being returned to Nigeria, IRARA stated: 'IRARA provides reintegration services throughout Nigeria along with their partner Advocacy for Inclusion and Support Initiative (ADIS) …' under the UK Home Office Reintegration Programme[138]. In its 'Assistance on Arrival' section, the leaflet listed the following:

- 'Meet & Greet at the airport.
- Accommodation for up to five nights.
- Onward transportation to an address in-country.
- Care/hygiene packs.
- Covid-19 testing (if required).
- Cash assistance to meet immediate needs.'[139]

The support set out in the IRARA leaflet is not specific to victims of trafficking.

10.2.6 For information on shelters and longer-term reintegration assistance, see Shelters and assistance.

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11. Criminal prosecution of victims of trafficking

11.1.1 The USSD 2025 TiP report stated that although the law prohibited the penalisation of trafficking victims for association with non-state armed groups and other unlawful acts committed as a direct result of being trafficked,

'… observers reported the government arrested and, in some cases, inappropriately detained for prolonged periods women and children removed from or allegedly associated with Boko Haram and ISIS-West Africa (ISIS-WA), including trafficking victims. The government, in collaboration with an international organization, continued implementing a handover protocol on the transfer of children allegedly associated with non-state armed groups, and officials reported transferring at least 743 children to protection actors in 2024. However, the government continued detaining children whom authorities suspected of being associated with Boko Haram or ISIS-WA,

[136] GAPs, GAPs About: Decentring The Study Of Migrant Returns And Readmission …, no date
[137] Uzomah, NL, and others, Navigating the … (pages 14-15), GAPs, 28 November 2024
[138] IRARA, Reintegration Hub (Returning to Nigeria), March 2026
[139] IRARA, Reintegration Hub (Returning to Nigeria), March 2026

including potential trafficking victims …

'One NGO report highlighted two cases in which sharia courts fined girls who had escaped Boko Haram for refusing to return to their husbands to whom they had been forcibly married.'[140]

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12. Treatment by non-state actors after return

12.1 Reprisals

12.1.1 There was limited recent information on reprisals, in the sources consulted for this note (see Bibliography).

12.1.2 The Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA), in their 'General Country of Origin Information Report Nigeria', dated January 2023 (Dutch MoFA 2023 report), stated:

'All sources consulted stated that victims of human trafficking are at risk of reprisals. Possible reasons for this are that they have not yet paid off their debts, or in order to prevent the victim from assisting with the prosecution of traffickers and smugglers. According to a confidential source, human smuggling and trafficking networks from Nigeria, more than those from other countries, are closely interconnected from the start to the end of the route. The exploiter abroad is usually in contact, directly or indirectly, with the victim's family. This makes it more difficult for the victims to escape the smugglers and traffickers. In addition, human smugglers and traffickers are often powerful and wealthy people, sometimes even with political backing …

'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 …

'Most of the reprisals against trafficker victims were psychological and emotional in nature, through fear resulting from the juju oath and pressure from family members. Because it was not clear exactly what consequences would arise from breaking the oath, the victims and those around them attributed to it every misfortune that they experienced. In their eyes, these were therefore real, physical reprisals. The fear that resulted from a juju oath was generally very effective. Physical reprisals were therefore rarely necessary. Human traffickers sometimes used their connections to physically threaten and harass victims, for example in order to recover incriminating evidence or to prevent the victim from testifying. Cult members were also used for this purpose …'[141]

Official – sensitive: Not for disclosure – Start of section

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

Official – sensitive: Not for disclosure – End of section

12.1.3 The same Dutch MoFA report observed: 'According to confidential sources, protection against reprisals is inadequate, given that victims do not provide

[140] USSD, 2025 Trafficking in Persons Report (Protection), 29 September 2025
[141] MoFA, General Country of Origin Information Report Nigeria … (page 85), 31 January 2023

information to the authorities out of fear and the smugglers often have powerful connections and the means to bribe the authorities.'[142]

12.1.4 The Dutch MoFA published an explanatory note, dated 21 March 2024 (2024 Dutch MoFA note), which they explained was to supplement and clarify, but not replace, their 2023 report[143]. The note, based on various sources including consultations with 2 new anonymous sources, stated:

'According to various sources, victims of human trafficking faced reprisals or the threat of reprisals. In addition to reprisals from human traffickers and/or their accomplices, victims might also face reprisals from their own family members, friends or partners … There are no known studies on the extent to which reprisals take place. In many cases, victims did not communicate about reprisals (or the threat thereof) out of fear …

'Reprisals could result from situations in which human traffickers or others [sic] parties involved in human trafficking (e.g. family members, friends or partners) had invested resources in the victim's journey and deemed that the victim still owed them money. According to several confidential sources, the vast majority of the victims had high debts upon return. In this regard, a distinction could be drawn between victims who still owed money to human traffickers, and others who were in debt to friends and/or family. For example, there were cases in which relatives or acquaintances had advanced money for the journey, or had even been the ones who had made the deal with the human trafficker. There were also cases in which family and friends had been forced to pay ransom, thereby shifting the debt from the human traffickers to the family and friends. According to one confidential source, it was probably more common for human traffickers to invest in the journeys of women than it was for them to invest in the journeys of men. This was because women were expected to earn the money back for the human trafficker through prostitution. No research has been done on this, however, and there are no statistics available on it …

'One confidential source spoke of two scenarios regarding debt. In cases where the victim had been intercepted en route by the police or coastguard, human traffickers were often sympathetic to the victim's inability to pay the debt immediately. According to this source, however, in cases where victims had decided to flee and return home on their own, human traffickers or madams would do everything they could to recoup their investment. The source noted that "everything" could include physical abuse or murder. More commonly, however, victims were held captive by the police or third parties, acting at the behest of human traffickers, until their debts were paid in full …

'In addition to reprisals due to financial debts, confidential sources reported that human traffickers could also proceed with reprisals to prevent victims from reporting or otherwise cooperating with criminal proceedings against human traffickers, or out of revenge because victims had cooperated with prosecution.'[144]

12.1.5 The 2024 MoFA note also reported:

[142] MoFA, General Country of Origin Information Report Nigeria … (page 86), 31 January 2023
[143] MoFA, Explanatory note for the Country of Origin Information … (page 1), 21 March 2024
[144] MoFA, Explanatory note for the Country of Origin Information … (pages 2-3), 21 March 2024

'There were known cases of physical reprisals. According to confidential sources, physical reprisals at the behest of human traffickers occasionally occurred. These physical reprisals could range from kidnapping (for ransom) and drugging, to the assault and killing of victims or their loved ones. One confidential source provided the example of a victim of human trafficking who had returned to Nigeria from another country in the region. The victim had initially gone abroad with the cooperation of the father and an aunt, who hoped that she would earn money for the family. The victim's mother, who had not known about the agreement, was physically assaulted by the human trafficker for cooperating in the victim's return to Nigeria … [A confidential source] provided the example of a human trafficker who had been ordered by the court to pay hefty compensation to a victim. A week after the verdict, the victim was shot dead in the street. The source reported being aware of several similar cases.

'According to confidential sources, the risk of physical reprisals increased with the amount of financial debt. This could be because the human trafficker had invested more money in the victim's journey; because the victim had been unwilling or unable (e.g. due to illness) to carry out the work imposed; and/or because the victim had fled the human trafficker (in many cases, a madam) before the debt was paid off. According to the same sources, the risk also increased if the human trafficker was not a close connection to the victim.'[145]

12.1.6 Regarding non-physical reprisals, the same Dutch MoFA note stated:

'… [T]here were threats by human traffickers — even if they did not lead to physical violence — and pressure from the family to pay off debts, which were perceived as emotional reprisals. According to several sources, there was a great fear amongst victims of human trafficking concerning what could happen if they did not comply with the wishes of the human trafficker. It should be kept in mind that the victims had often already faced high levels of violence during their smuggling and exploitation. The threats were thus highly credible.'[146]

12.1.7 For more information on family pressure to repay debts, see Family/social attitudes and treatment.

12.1.8 The same Dutch MoFA note further reported:

'Confidential sources also spoke of spiritual attacks. This was in reference to misfortune, illness (physical or mental) and death experienced as a result of breaking the oath sworn by the victims prior to their journey. One confidential source provided the example of a victim who had recently returned to Nigeria from a country in the region, with assistance from an NGO. After returning, the victim fell ill and died … [S]ources indicated that the victims were convinced that such spiritual attacks were real. In some cases, the sources were also convinced of this. They said that the threat posed by such examples of spiritual attacks was often greater than that posed by physical attacks.'[147]

12.1.9 According to the 2024 Dutch MoFA note,

[145] MoFA, Explanatory note for the Country of Origin Information … (pages 3-4), 21 March 2024
[146] MoFA, Explanatory note for the Country of Origin Information … (page 4), 21 March 2024
[147] MoFA, Explanatory note for the Country of Origin Information … (page 4), 21 March 2024

'With regard to the duration of the reprisals or the threat thereof, sources indicated that they ended only when the human traffickers felt that their demands had been met, or when the victim managed to stay out of the hands of the human traffickers.

'According to confidential sources, victims tried to buy off reprisals whenever possible by entering into instalment agreements with the human trafficker. One source reported that the success of such attempts depended on the human trafficker, but if they did succeed, the repayment period was very short (no more than a few months). There were also instances in which human traffickers continued to threaten with reprisals after the debt had been paid off, in order to prevent victims from cooperating with the criminal prosecution of the human traffickers.

'Although the criminal prosecution and conviction of human traffickers could sometimes result in victims being further left alone, this was not always the case …

'… the prosecution and conviction of a human trafficker with the victim's help could actually serve to increase the risk of reprisals, as the convicted human trafficker might wish to seek revenge. As noted by this source, because convicted human traffickers were often required by the courts to pay financial compensation to their victims, it was also common for human traffickers to want to recover these costs from their victims as well. In addition, according to a confidential source, it was common for victims to fear reprisals even when human traffickers were in prison, as human traffickers rarely work alone.'[148]

12.1.10 For more information on compensation for victims, see Effectiveness of agencies and criminal justice system.

12.1.11 Regarding reprisals targeting third parties, the 2024 Dutch MoFA note reported:

'Victims of human trafficking were not the only targets of reprisals; family members, social workers and journalists could be targeted as well. One confidential source provided the example of a victim of human trafficking who had been freed in a European country and given protection there. In Nigeria, the victim's mother and brother were then assaulted. They moved five times and, each time they were found, pursued and threatened by the human traffickers, who asserted that they would not give up until the victim had paid off her debt.'[149]

12.1.12 The 2025 EUAA report stated '… [B]oth victims and their families often fear retaliation from traffickers. [IRARA Nigeria director] Roland Nwoha stated that "the fear of retaliation from traffickers is very real," especially for those who swore oaths of secrecy, through rituals performed by juju priests. …Traffickers often know where victims' families live, raising concerns for their safety. In addition, fear is compounded by a lack of trust in law enforcement.'[150]

12.1.13 For more information on:

[148] MoFA, Explanatory note for the Country of Origin Information … (page 5), 21 March 2024
[149] MoFA, Explanatory note for the Country of Origin Information … (page 6), 21 March 2024
[150] EUAA, COI Report - Nigeria: Country Focus (page 46), 3 November 2025

- juju oaths, see Means of coercion and control
- the criminal justice system, including victim-witness assistance, see Action to combat trafficking and the Country Policy and Information Note Nigeria: Actors of protection
- shelters for those fearing reprisals, see Shelters and assistance
- internal relocation for those fearing reprisals, see Internal relocation

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12.2 Family/social attitudes and treatment

12.2.1 The 2023 Dutch MoFA COI report 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. Nevertheless, victims of sexual exploitation who returned faced the stigma associated with sex work in all parts of Nigeria. It became more difficult for a woman to find a husband, while an unmarried woman has little value in society. The problems were exacerbated if the returning victim was pregnant or had had a child while away from Nigeria. A child was seen as proof of sex work and also meant an extra mouth to feed. Victims were sometimes rejected by their families.

'Victims who had managed to provide themselves and their families with a decent income experienced fewer problems from this stigma in the south, because the accumulated wealth gave their family more prestige within the wider community. For this reason, victims of sexual exploitation sometimes switched over to exploiting young women themselves.'[151]

12.2.2 According to the same Dutch MoFA COI report, 'If a victim was sought by the smugglers or traffickers, the fear of reprisals could be an additional reason for family members not to take her in.'[152]

12.2.3 The 2024 Dutch MoFA note stated: 'In some cases, family members themselves were involved [in pressure to pay off debts]. This could be because they had invested money in the journey at the outset; because they had been forced to pay ransom during the journey to free the victim; or because they had hoped to benefit from the income the victim of human trafficking would have generated. In such cases, the mental pressure on the victim to repay debts and generate an income was so great that life in the family circle became traumatising for the victims …'[153]

12.2.4 Samson Adewumi, a researcher at the University of Zululand, South Africa, in a paper dated June 2024, based on various sources including interviews with 20 'low- and middle-class' female returnees to Nigeria who had migrated for economic reasons[154], stated:

'Many migrant women returnees experience a lack of family support, financial insolvency, and unemployment. Respondents explained the challenge of family neglect and support, and how this has made life more

[151] MoFA, General Country of Origin Information Report Nigeria … (page 87), 31 January 2023
[152] MoFA, General Country of Origin Information Report Nigeria … (page 88), 31 January 2023
[153] MoFA, Explanatory note for the Country of Origin Information … (page 4), 21 March 2024
[154] Adewumi, S, Negotiating access and belonging: Recounting … (page 8), IRSSR, June 2024

difficult for them since their return … In a typical African setting such as Nigeria, there are a lot of expectations from people living overseas. Many family members have become contemptuous of anyone who lives overseas and could not meet up with this expectation … [M]any migrants, including women, go through a lot for survival while overseas and often fall short of these expectations.'[155]

The paper did not specify whether any respondents had been identified as victims of trafficking but reported that 'most' had experienced challenges overseas including sexual harassment and sexual assault, forced and inhumane labour practices, low wages and isolation[156].

12.2.5 Referring to returnee Nigerian migrants in general, Uzomah and others 2024 stated: 'Returnees often face stigma from their communities … Some female returnees mentioned being seen as having gone abroad for prostitution, which negatively impacts their access to the labour market and their chances of finding a spouse, as these issues heavily rely on social networks.'[157] The paper, based on secondary sources and fieldwork including a focus group discussion with men and women who returned to Nigeria during the 10 years to February 2024[158], did not specify the proportion of female returnees perceived as having been abroad for prostitution. It did not provide information on access to employment or marriageability for those returnees who were not regarded as having done so.

12.2.6 The IOM Regional Office for West and Central Africa, in an undated article on its website about female returnees to Nigeria, including victims of trafficking, reported: 'In Nigeria, returning with a child often results in family rejection.'[159]

12.2.7 The 2025 EUAA report stated:

'Returnees often face stigma from both family and the wider community, resulting in a hostile environment. In some cases, stigma is coupled with the financial burden of repaying debts, which can make safe resettlement in their home communities difficult or even impossible.

'Family attitudes towards returnees vary widely. Some welcome them with compassion and recognise them as victims of crime, particularly in more informed or urban settings. Others, however, reject or disown them to avoid communal shame, blaming them for leaving or for "bringing shame" through experiences of rape or sexual exploitation. In some cases, returnees are sent away to live elsewhere …'[160]

12.2.8 The 2025 EUAA report also stated:

''In the Nigerian socio-cultural context, high expectations are placed on individuals living abroad. When returnees, especially women, fail to meet these expectations, they may face resentment, alienation, and even rejection from their families. These culturally driven expectations place added

[155] Adewumi, S, Negotiating access and belonging: Recounting … (page 18), IRSSR, June 2024
[156] Adewumi, S, Negotiating access and belonging: Recounting … (page 15), IRSSR, June 2024
[157] Uzomah, NL and others, Navigating the Complexities … (page 15), GAPs, 28 November 2024
[158] Uzomah, NL and others, Navigating the Complexities … (page 6), GAPs, 28 November 2024
[159] IOM Regional Office for West and Central Africa, Nigerian Women Defying Stigma …, no date
[160] EUAA, COI Report - Nigeria: Country Focus (page 41), 3 November 2025

pressure on returnees, contributing to psychological trauma, hindering sense of belonging and their social reintegration.

'[S]ingle women who lack support network, including divorced women and victims of trafficking, are often perceived by society and even their families as 'morally questionable' or 'loose.' This perception leads to deep stigma and social exclusion.'[161]

12.2.9 Citing email correspondence between Morenike Omaiboje, director of Women's Consortium of Nigeria (WOCON), a Lagos-based NGO[162], and the EUAA concerning women victims of trafficking, the same EUAA report stated: 'Women face harsher stigma (especially around 'sexual shaming, marriageability, and respectability['']), which often manifests as social shaming, gossip, and moral judgment directed at survivors. Many returnees from abroad are labelled as sex workers, viewed as having brought dishonour to their families, and are culturally excluded from being considered suitable for marriage.'[163]

12.2.10 The same EUAA report further stated:

'Dr Adeyinka noted that "there is persistent and culturally embedded stigma surrounding sex in Nigerian society." The academic reported that many trafficked women she interviewed were raped, got pregnant and returned to Nigeria with a baby, but they could not disclose that the child was conceived through rape, as the stigma attached to it could ruin both their lives. Instead, "they must constantly lie, saying the father is in Libya or has left them." Many victims fear that sharing such experiences could later be used against them during conflicts or disputes. The same source added that "this complex situation, where families may depend on returnees for support while simultaneously stigmatising them, shows the contradictory social dynamics surrounding reintegration."

'Survivors must navigate both social rejection and strong cultural expectations around family loyalty. As explained by Dr Adeyinka, based on findings of her joint research study[164], even after being trafficked by their own parents, victims continued to send financial support to those same family members. "This reflects a deeply ingrained cultural obligation to honour and support family, regardless of past harm.' Even when returnees achieve financial success, the stigma may still persist. Individuals who return through forced means often come back empty-handed. In cases where families have taken loans to fund the migration or entered into financial agreements with traffickers, the return results in deeper economic hardship. The burden of repayment falls on the returnees, who are under pressure to find ways to repay debts, often without any resources or support. The Director at Women's Consortium of Nigeria (WOCON), Morenike Omaiboje, informed that they documented cases in which four families had confined their returning relatives – either siblings or children – upon their arrival. In three other instances, particularly involving siblings, returnees were

[161] EUAA, COI Report - Nigeria: Country Focus (pages 42, 49), 3 November 2025
[162] WOCON, Women's Consortium of Nigeria - committed to the enforcement …, no date
[163] EUAA, COI Report - Nigeria: Country Focus (page 42), 3 November 2025
[164] ChildMove Project, ChildMove Project - Ghent University, 2022

pressured to repay the money their relatives had contributed towards their initial departure.'[165]

12.2.11 Referring to the situation of children, the Finnish Immigration Service, in a report on a fact-finding mission to Nigeria in September 2025, cited an interview with a representative at the IRARA's Abuja office, noting:

'[R]eturn is particularly difficult for children, who are often born in Europe and experience difficulties adapting to Nigerian society. Often their situation was better in Europe even when they were born there as a result of their mother's exploitation. This leads to a vicious circle where many victims may want to return to Europe for the sake of their children, even if it means the risk of being trafficked again …'[166]

12.2.12 Regarding healthcare and psychological support for trafficking returnees, Sarah Adeyinka and Katie Kuschminder, head of the Climate and Migration Division at the United Nations University on Environment and Human Security in Bonn, Germany[167], published an article in the journal Migration Studies in September 2026, drawing on the 41 interviews conducted in Nigeria with female return migrants as part of the Reintegration project. The article stated:

'[G]ender violence manifests through medical neglect that treats women's trafficking-related health conditions as shameful secrets rather than legitimate medical needs requiring specialized care. The silence around reproductive health issues demonstrates how rehabilitation services reproduce patriarchal taboos that render women's sexual and reproductive trauma invisible, perpetuating rather than resolving the gendered dimensions of trafficking harm.

'[P]articipants described the complete absence of trauma-informed health and psychological care, despite clear and ongoing consequences of sexual exploitation, detention, and violence. Many suffered from untreated Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs), reproductive injuries, and mental health struggles.'[168]

12.2.13 For more information on social stigma, see Effectiveness of agencies and criminal justice system. For information on internal relocation to escape stigma, see Internal relocation.

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12.3 Re-trafficking

12.3.1 The 2023 Dutch MoFA report stated:

'Those who returned before paying off their debts were not automatically at risk of renewed smuggling and exploitation, but it was often the case that the original reasons for leaving had not changed. Psychological pressure was also used to persuade the victim to undergo smuggling and exploitation again if, in the eyes of the traffickers, the debt had not been fully paid off. In the case of unpaid debts, the pressure became even greater, especially if

[165] EUAA, COI Report - Nigeria: Country Focus (pages 42-43), 3 November 2025
[166] FIS, Fact-finding mission to Nigeria September 2025 (page 26), 26 February 2026
[167] ORCID, Katie Kuschminder, no date
[168] Adeyinka, S, and Kuschminder, K, When return becomes … (Discussion), MS, September 2026

the family was not prepared to take the victim back. An understanding family and new opportunities to generate an income could reduce the risk.'[169]

12.3.2 According to the same Dutch MoFA report, 'Women whose family relationships had permanently broken down were generally very vulnerable. There are few opportunities to earn money in Nigeria, especially for young women from poor families. Someone who does not bring in their own income is seen as an extra burden. This meant that these women were not always able to turn to friends. There were shelters where they could be taken in, but their capacity was insufficient. This increased the risk of a young woman falling into the hands of traffickers again.'[170]

12.3.3 For information on shelters, see Shelters and assistance.

12.3.4 The 2025 EUAA report stated:

'Nigeria does not have a centralised system that monitors long-term reintegration or provides ongoing follow-up for victims of trafficking. As such, there is no consistent way to track reintegration outcomes nationwide and understand how these might impact re-trafficking.

'Sources indicated that for most returnees, lack of adequate reintegration measures, economic hardship and social stigma are the primary factors contributing to vulnerability to re-trafficking. In fact, returnees often find themselves back to the same conditions of poverty, deprivation, and conflict they initially sought to escape, which make them vulnerable to re-exploitation.

'According to Roland Nwoha, Country Director at IRARA Nigeria, "it's very common that returnees want to go back and very common that many of them are being re-trafficked." The source said that the constant economic, emotional, and social pressure compounded with lack of support from family or community, and persistent stigma, often pushes returnees to consider re-migrating. Some try to leave on their own, while others reconnect with Madams. "When they look back at the life they had in Europe – even if they were undocumented and lacked the freedom they desired – they still had access to decent shelter, regular meals, and sometimes stipends to support themselves and their children. For many, even living under those conditions feels more manageable than returning home to face daily struggles.' Those who return with children – the source added – face additional pressure, struggling to provide education, nutrition, and care while also trying to survive themselves. Nwoha informed that many returnees usually start out hopeful upon coming back, but once they are confronted with the realities – often within the first year – they feel overwhelmed, and many end up wanting to leave again. "We have seen this happen with quite a number of returnees."

'WOCON reported documenting over 100 cases of victims being re-trafficked after their return within the past five years. In some cases, women openly confess to the NGO their intention to leave again, while others ask to no longer be contacted….

[169] MoFA, General Country of Origin Information Report Nigeria … (page 85), 31 January 2023
[170] MoFA, General Country of Origin Information Report Nigeria … (page 88), 31 January 2023

'Out of the 69 returnees interviewed by Dr Adeyinka in 2024 for her research study[171] [part of a 2021 to 2026 study on reintegration governance funded by the European Research Council and hosted by the University of Amsterdam[172]], five had returned to Libya by 2025. When the academic met some of those still in Nigeria in April 2025, several mentioned they were considering going back, despite not wanting to, as they felt that returning offered at least some income to support their families. For most, the decision was not solely about themselves, but about providing for children, elderly parents, or other dependents. The same source stated to be aware of specific cases where traffickers contacted returned victims requesting them to provide a certain number of girls in exchange for payment for each girl 'sent their way' and adding that if the person wished to return abroad, they could facilitate that as well.

'There are also returnees who feel strongly they would never want to go back…many in this group managed to save some money, secure decent accommodation, and return with some stability. For them, the reintegration package served more as a supplement to what they had already prepared. This group tends to include more older returnees. In contrast, younger returnees are often more desperate to go back, feeling restless and disillusioned with life at home.'[173]

12.3.5 Mancini 2025 stated: 'For many Nigerian women, the intersection of poverty, ethnicity, and gender contributes to directing economically disadvantaged girls and women toward prostitution. It represents the principal factor that complicates their exit from such a condition.'[174]

12.3.6 Referring to returnee victims of trafficking who erroneously believe support is not available to them, such as those who return through their own or family means or those who are forcibly returned, the 2025 EUAA report stated: 'Dr Adeyinka noted how, in such cases, the risk of re-trafficking increases, as traffickers may approach returnees offering help to return abroad. "This creates a cycle of vulnerability and allows human trafficking to continue and thrive."'[175]

12.3.7 For information on support, including for those who are forcibly returned or do not return through an assisted programme, see Process of return and initial support.

12.3.8 Regarding juju oaths, Mancini 2025 stated 'European institutions assisting these young women testify that belief in juju continues even after their inclusion in aid programs. This persistent belief sometimes pushes victims to voluntarily return to exploitation networks to escape the fear of betrayal and spiritual punishment. Many do not see themselves as victims but as guilty parties who have broken their word, adding another layer of psychological complexity to their exploitation.'[176]

12.3.9 For more information on juju oaths, see Means of control and coercion.

[171] Reintegrate, Nigeria Policy Brief (Nigeria), June 2025
[172] Reintegrate, About, no date
[173] EUAA, COI Report - Nigeria: Country Focus (page 44), 3 November 2025
[174] Mancini, L, OSLS, Female Migration from Nigeria, Sex … (page 2107), 1 December 2025
[175] EUAA, COI Report - Nigeria: Country Focus (page 38), 3 November 2025
[176] Mancini, L, OSLS, Female Migration from Nigeria, Sex … (page 2119), 1 December 2025

12.3.10 In relation to women and girls forcibly married to members of non-state armed groups in the North East, the USSD 2025 TiP report stated that a programme under which Borno State authorities returned some girls and young women and their children to their fighter husbands 'increas[ed] the likelihood of re-trafficking.'[177] However, the report did not specify the number of individuals affected, the proportion of programme beneficiaries concerned, or whether any cases of re-trafficking subsequently occurred. As such, the scale of the issue and the extent to which it reflects the experiences of women and girls formerly associated with non-state armed groups more broadly is unclear.

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13. Action to combat trafficking

13.1 International assessments of the government's anti-trafficking response

13.1.1 The USSD 2025 TiP report stated:

'The Government of Nigeria does not fully meet the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking [under section 108 of the US Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000 (TVPA) – the minimum standards are generally consistent with the UN Palermo Protocol] but is making significant efforts to do so. The government demonstrated overall increasing efforts compared with the previous reporting period [2024][178]; therefore, Nigeria remained on 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 standards'[179]].

13.1.2 The same USSD 2025 TiP report also stated:

'[T]he government did not meet the minimum standards in several key areas. Efforts to identify and protect trafficking victims among vulnerable populations – especially women and children allegedly associated with non-state armed groups, IDPs, and children exploited in begging and domestic work – were inadequate. Due to insufficient screening efforts, the federal and Borno State governments did not take effective measures to prevent the re-victimization or inappropriate penalization of potential victims solely for unlawful acts committed as a direct result of being trafficked, including among women and girls allegedly associated with Boko Haram. In some cases, authorities detained or returned victims to their Boko Haram husbands and traffickers. Corruption involving trafficking crimes, including among law enforcement officials and the judiciary, remained significant concerns and contributed to impunity for traffickers.'[180]

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13.2 Prevention

13.2.1 The USSD 2025 TiP report stated: 'The government … allocated 58.8 million naira ($38,180) [£31,805.35[181]] for prevention activities, including the NAP's [National Action Plan on Human Trafficking in Nigeria 2022-2026]

[177] USSD, 2025 Trafficking in Persons Report (Protection), 29 September 2025
[178] USSD, Nigeria - United States Department of State, 24 June 2024
[179] USSD, 2025 Trafficking in Persons Report, (A Guide to the Tiers), 29 September 2025
[180] USSD, 2025 Trafficking in Persons Report, 29 September 2025
[181] Xe.com, Currency Converter, accessed 13 February 2026

implementation. This compared with allocating 47.8 million naira ($31,040) [£25,855.37[182]] for prevention activities the previous year.'[183]

13.2.2 For more information on the NAP, see Law and policy measures, below.

13.2.3 The same USSD TiP report stated:

'NAPTIP continued conducting national and state-level awareness raising campaigns, including in town meetings, schools, market places, religious centers, and airports, and it had a dedicated public outreach department to coordinate public awareness efforts. It also conducted a monthly social media program to discuss trafficking topics with targeted audiences. Awareness campaigns were conducted in all three major Nigerian languages and used print, electronic, and social media. Some policy documents were available in braille. The government had all campaign materials reviewed by trafficking experts, including survivors, and it employed survivors in key anti-trafficking positions. However, stakeholders noted these campaigns did not reach rural communities, and internal trafficking, especially child domestic servitude and forced begging, was often misperceived as a cultural practice rather than a trafficking crime.'[184]

13.2.4 Regarding the effectiveness of prevention measures, the 2025 EUAA report stated:

'As noted by the director at IRARA Nigeria, Roland Nwoha, the government, with international support, has made efforts to raise awareness about the dangers of irregular migration and trafficking. However, the approach remains largely ineffective, as many actors still rely on outdated, top-down methods developed without meaningful community input, resulting in limited local relevance and ownership. In Edo State, especially, the economy heavily relies on remittances, including money sent by trafficking victims, often earned through exploitation and invested locally. "This economic dependence makes it difficult to convince those benefiting, directly or indirectly, that trafficking is wrong and must stop."'[185]

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13.3 Legal and policy measures

13.3.1 The Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria 1999, as amended, provides for protection against slavery and forced labour, exploitation and deprivation of liberty[186].

13.3.2 The 2025 EUAA country report stated:

'Nigeria ratified the UN Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children in 2001. The country also ratified several UN conventions on elimination of forced labour, such as the International Labour Organisation (ILO) Forced Labour Convention, 1930 (No.29) and the ILO Abolition of Forced Labour Convention, 1957 (No.105). In 2003, Nigeria enacted its first anti-trafficking legislation with the passage of the Trafficking in Persons (Prohibition) Law Enforcement and

[182] Xe.com, Currency Converter, accessed 13 February 2026
[183] USSD, 2025 Trafficking in Persons Report (Prevention), 29 September 2025
[184] USSD, 2025 Trafficking in Persons Report (Prevention), 29 September 2025
[185] EUAA, COI Report - Nigeria: Country Focus (page 46), 3 November 2025
[186] PLAC, The Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria … (sections 17 and 34), 27 May 2020

Administration Act, which was later amended in 2015. The Act also established the National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons (NAPTIP) to enforce the law and coordinate efforts to combat human trafficking and related offences. The current legislation covers all forms of trafficking indicated in the UN Trafficking in Persons Protocol.'[187]

13.3.3 The joint report by the Financial Intelligence Unit (NFIU) [the central body that receives, analyses and disseminates financial intelligence to competent authorities[188]] and the National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons (NAPTIP) in their April 2025 report on Money Laundering Typology Through Human Trafficking and Migrant Smuggling in Nigeria (NFIU 2025 report) outlined Nigeria's legal framework for addressing trafficking in persons, migrant smuggling and related offences, identifying the following key instruments:

- 'Trafficking in Persons (Prohibition) Enforcement and Administration Act, 2015: Nigeria's primary anti-trafficking law. Key provisions include:
- 'Defines and criminalizes trafficking in persons, including forced labour, sexual exploitation, child trafficking, and organ harvesting.
- 'Establishes penalties ranging from fines to life imprisonment, depending on the severity of the offense.
- 'Provides for victim protection, rehabilitation, and reintegration.
- 'Empowers the National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons (NAPTIP) to investigate, prosecute, prevent and partner with other relevant agencies in the fight against trafficking in persons.
- 'Trafficking in Persons (Control of Activities of Organizations and Centers) Regulations, 2019 confers on the Agency the power to issue clearance certificate to all travel agents or tour operators and intending travelers for the purpose of:
- 'Educational Excursions
- 'Recruitment for Labour
- 'Sporting activities
- 'Cultural, music excursions or competition
- 'All organizations, shelters and homes offering services for the purpose of rehabilitation of trafficked persons.
- 'Immigration Act, 2015: Regulates migration and addresses migrant smuggling. Key provisions include:
- 'Criminalizes migrant smuggling and other immigration offenses.
- 'Provides penalties for smugglers, including fines and imprisonment.
- 'Grants powers to immigration authorities to intercept and investigate smuggling activities.

[187] EUAA, COI Report - Nigeria: Country Focus (pages 26-27), 3 November 2025
[188] NFIU, About Us - Nigerian Financial Intelligence Unit, (About us), no date

- ‘Child Rights Act, 2003: Protects children from exploitation and abuse, including trafficking. The Act prohibits child labour, child trafficking, and establishes penalties for violators and other forms of exploitation.
- ‘Penal Code and Criminal Code: The Penal Code applies in northern Nigeria (primarily Sharia law-compliant states), while the Criminal Code applies in southern Nigeria. Both codes criminalize human trafficking-related offenses, including forced labour, abduction, and sexual exploitation.
- ‘Money Laundering (Prohibition and Prevention) Act, 2022: This Act criminalizes the laundering of proceeds from crimes, including trafficking in persons, smuggling of migrants, sexual exploitation.’[189]
- The NFIU 2025 report noted that these instruments collectively form the principal legal framework for preventing, investigating and prosecuting trafficking in persons, migrant smuggling and related offences in Nigeria[190].

13.3.4 The USSD 2025 TiP report 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 ($160) [£135.13[191]] for both sex and labor trafficking; the minimum penalty for sex trafficking involving a child was seven years’ imprisonment and a fine of one million naira ($650) [£540[192]]. These penalties were sufficiently stringent and, with regard to sex trafficking, commensurate with those prescribed for other grave crimes, such as kidnapping.’[193]

13.3.5 The same USSD report also stated: ‘The anti-trafficking law prohibited the penalization of trafficking victims solely for unlawful acts committed as a direct result of being trafficked, including association with non-state armed groups.’[194]

13.3.6 According to the same USSD report, ‘The 2015 anti-trafficking law established the victims’ trust fund, financed primarily through confiscated assets of convicted traffickers … The anti-trafficking law provided for victim restitution … Victims could file civil suits against traffickers …’[195]

13.3.7 For more information on legal provisions relating to trafficking, see Amune, M, Control and Regulation of Human Trafficking in Nigeria: A Legal Framework Analysis, 13 January 2025[196]. For information on the application of the law, see Effectiveness of agencies and judicial system.

13.3.8 NAPTIP, in their National Policy on Protection and Assistance to Trafficked Persons in Nigeria, dated 2022, stated that the policy ‘adopts a holistic approach in the protection and assistance to TPs [trafficked persons]

[189] NFIU, Money Laundering … (Legal and institutional framework in Nigeria), April 2025
[190] NFIU, Money Laundering … (Legal and institutional framework in Nigeria), April 2025
[191] Xe.com, Currency Converter, accessed 12 February 2026
[192] Xe.com, Currency Converter, accessed 12 February 2026
[193] USSD, 2025 Trafficking in Persons Report (Prosecution), 29 September 2025
[194] USSD, 2025 Trafficking in Persons Report (Prosecution), 29 September 2025
[195] USSD, 2025 Trafficking in Persons Report (Protection), 29 September 2025
[196] Amune, MS, View of Control and Regulation of Human …, EAJLE, 13 January 2025

through rehabilitation programmes that provide appropriate and relevant services that will empower them for effective reintegration into the society'[197]. An entry on the NAPTIP website, dated 9 May 2022, provided the full text of the NAP[198].

13.3.9 Additionally, the USSD 2025 TiP report stated: 'The National Policy for Protection and Assistance to Victims of Trafficking provided victim protection and care guidelines; the government also had a disability inclusion plan to better serve victims living with disabilities.'[199]

13.3.10 The 2026 Nation article quoted a statement issued by NAPTIP Director General Binta Bello as saying in relation to measures planned for 2026:

'We have deliberately scaled up our operations to address the evolving challenges and trends. Specifically, we shall increase our collaboration and cooperation with other sister Law Enforcement Agencies, Development Partners, Civil Society Organizations, and other categories of Stakeholders.

'We shall also increase synergy with actors within the three levels of Government, as well as other non-State Actors, including the Association of Local Government of Nigeria (ALGON), to enhance grassroots surveillance and detection of human trafficking. We shall also seek improved relationships and support from the Legislative arm through the National and State Assemblies, the Executive through the State Governors and their spouses, and the Judiciary …'[200]

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13.4 Victim identification and the National Referral Mechanism (NRM)

13.4.1 The USSD 2025 TiP report stated:

'The government maintained SOPs [standard operating procedures] on victim identification and protection for front-line officials. The [National Referral Mechanism] NRM provided formal guidelines for law enforcement, immigration officials, and service providers to refer victims to care, including victims with disabilities and in conflict situations … The government worked in partnership with the Network of Civil Society Organizations Against Child Trafficking, Abuse and Labor to ensure appropriate referral of victims …'[201]

13.4.2 For information on guidelines set out by the National Policy for Protection and Assistance to Victims of Trafficking, see Law and policy measures.

13.4.3 The USSD 2025 TiP report stated that in addition to victims identified by the government, 163 were identified by non-governmental organisations (NGOs) during the reporting period[202]. The same USSD report also stated: 'The government identified and referred more trafficking victims to services and increased funding for victim protection and prevention efforts. The government continued robust awareness-raising efforts, and it partnered with an international organization to publish two comprehensive surveys on child

[197] NAPTIP, National Policy on Protection and Assistance (section 1.6), 2022
[198] NAPTIP, NAPTIP National Action Plan on Human Trafficking in Nigeria: 2022 – 2026, 9 May 2022
[199] USSD, 2025 Trafficking in Persons Report (Protection), 29 September 2025
[200] The Nation, 93 traffickers jailed, 120 children rescued in 2025, says NAPTIP, 16 January 2026
[201] USSD, 2025 Trafficking in Persons Report (Protection), 29 September 2025
[202] USSD, 2025 Trafficking in Persons Report (Protection), 29 September 2025

and forced labor.'[203]

13.4.4 According to the same USSD report,

'NAPTIP continued to partner with an international organization and a foreign donor to implement a screening and sensitization campaign to identify sex trafficking victims in IDP camps. Additionally, NAPTIP officials coordinated with the Ministry of Defense's zonal commanders on protection issues pertaining to IDP camps by funding social workers and raising awareness of the crime among camp residents. The government reported identifying seven potential trafficking victims in IDP camps compared with nine potential victims identified in the previous reporting period.'[204]

13.4.5 For more information on:

- identification of Nigerian victims of trafficking overseas, see Trafficking from Nigeria
- the effectiveness of victim identification, including the screening of female trafficking victims allegedly associated with Boko Haram, see Effectiveness of agencies and judicial system

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13.5 Enforcement agencies and activities

13.5.1 An undated entry on the NAPTIP website stated of NAPTIP: 'The Agency is the Federal Government of Nigeria's response to addressing the scourge of trafficking in persons. It is a fulfillment of the country's international obligation under the Trafficking in Persons Protocol to prevent, suppress and punish trafficking in persons, especially women and children, supplementing the United Nations Transnational Organized Crime Convention (UNTOC)…'[205]

13.5.2 Regarding the government's efforts to combat trafficking, the USSD 2025 TiP report noted: '[t]hese efforts included investigating and prosecuting more trafficking crimes and convicting more traffickers...'[206]

13.5.3 The 2024 Dutch MoFA note reported: 'In addition to countering human trafficking, the role of this agency included providing protection against the threat of reprisals by human traffickers, regardless of how long after the return such threats manifested themselves. As stated in the [2023 Dutch MoFA report], despite its best efforts, the NAPTIP had insufficient resources and capacity to meet the demand.'[207]

13.5.4 The same Dutch MoFA note stated that according to an anonymous source, 'Nigerian authorities displayed serious commitment to countering human trafficking and the possibility of reprisals by human traffickers. Yet another source nevertheless stated that many victims of human trafficking remained unprotected despite the existence of [the protection provided by NAPTIP, and government and NGO shelter capacity]'[208].

13.5.5 Ukhami and others 2024 observed: '[NAPTIP's] efforts encompass

[203] USSD, 2025 Trafficking in Persons Report (Protection), 29 September 2025
[204] USSD, 2025 Trafficking in Persons Report (Protection), 29 September 2025
[205] NAPTIP, About Us, no date
[206] USSD, 2025 Trafficking in Persons Report (Nigeria, tier 2), 29 September 2025
[207] MoFA, Explanatory note for the Country of Origin Information … (page 6), 21 March 2024
[208] MoFA, Explanatory note for the Country of Origin Information … (page 6), 21 March 2024

prevention, protection, prosecution, and partnership. Through extensive awareness campaigns and community engagement, it educates the public, empowering individuals to recognize and report trafficking. The agency provides vital support to victims, offering shelter, legal aid, healthcare, and rehabilitation services. NAPTIP collaborates closely with law enforcement to apprehend traffickers and advocates for stronger legislation. Furthermore, it fosters alliances with both domestic and international stakeholders to amplify its impact.'[209]

13.5.6 Majebi Samuel Amune of Joseph Ayo Babalola University in Osun State, in a paper dated 13 January 2025 (Amune 2025), stated: 'NAPTIP officials are not present at the entry points in Nigeria, that is, airports, sea ports and land border posts and as such cannot apprehend traffickers at the point of exit or entry…'[210]

13.5.7 The International Centre for Investigative Reporting, a Nigerian non-profit news agency[211], in an article dated 1 October 2025, reported that following a tip-off, NAPTIP had arrested 5 suspected traffickers in a special operation at Nnamdi Azikiwe International Airport in Abuja with the support of the Airport Authorities, Department of State Service operatives, airport security personnel, immigration officers and airline operators[212]. It quoted NAPTIP Director General Binta Adamu Bello as saying that NAPTIP had 'decided to shift attention to this airport. We will sustain this raid until [traffickers] stop this unpatriotic and illicit trade in human beings.'[213]

13.5.8 There was no other information in the sources consulted for this note (see Bibliography) to suggest that NAPTIP maintains a permanent, continuously staffed presence at airports or seaports.

13.5.9 The USSD 2025 TiP report observed that 'NAPTIP continued to lead the federal government's efforts to combat trafficking'[214], and stated: 'NAPTIP investigators and prosecutors in 10 zonal command offices, including its Abuja headquarters, were responsible for investigating and prosecuting trafficking cases. Each NAPTIP zonal office had one prosecutor assigned to six or seven states. The High Courts had jurisdiction over trafficking cases …'[215]

13.5.10 The same USSD report observed: 'NAPTIP also maintained a Cybercrime Response Team and a Joint Task Force on Cybercrimes with the Ministry of Justice (MOJ), Economic and Financial Crimes Commission, and the National Police Force Cyber Crime Center.'[216]

13.5.11 The same USSD report also stated: 'Anti-trafficking task forces in 23 states coordinated local anti-trafficking efforts in collaboration with NATPTIP [sic]. The government's national, 24-hour anti-trafficking hotline received more than 100 calls and referred 66 potential victims to services.'[217]

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[209] Ukhami, EI, The Role of the National Agency for the … (page 174), JOPD, 13 July 2024
[210] Amune, MS, View of Control and Regulation of Human … (pages 31-32), EAJLE, 13 January 2025
[211] ICIR, About Us, no date
[212] ICIR, NAPTIP arrests five suspected traffickers at Abuja airport, 1 October 2025
[213] ICIR, NAPTIP arrests five suspected traffickers at Abuja airport, 1 October 2025
[214] USSD, 2025 Trafficking in Persons Report (Prevention), 29 September 2025
[215] USSD, 2025 Trafficking in Persons Report (Prosecution), 29 September 2025
[216] USSD, 2025 Trafficking in Persons Report (Prosecution), 29 September 2025
[217] USSD, 2025 Trafficking in Persons Report (Prevention), 29 September 2025

13.5.12 According to the same USSD report, 'NIS [National Immigration Service] officers screened departing and returning labor migrants at the airport for trafficking indicators, and the agency worked closely with NAPTIP and an international organization when it identified cases.'[218] It also reported: 'The Ministry of Labor and Employment (MOL) provided specialized training on child labor and human trafficking to all labor inspectors, and it had dedicated child labor and trafficking units; inspectors referred potential trafficking cases to NAPTIP.'[219]

13.5.13 Regarding the military, the Hope Newspaper, a publication owned by the government of Osun State[220], in an article dated 27 February 2025 stated: 'The Nigerian Army has reaffirmed its commitment to tackling human trafficking and enhancing security in Taraba State through strategic collaboration with the National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons (NAPTIP).'[221] The article reported that at a meeting between an army brigade commander and the head of NAPTIP's Taraba State Command, 'The Brigade Commander further pledged military assistance in joint operations and intelligence gathering to bolster security efforts [and] … both parties reaffirmed their commitment to sustained collaboration, intelligence sharing, and public sensitisation to curb human trafficking and related crimes in Taraba State.'[222]

13.5.14 The Punch, in an article dated 15 February 2026, reported: '… [O]n February 2, 2026, NAPTIP raided a popular hotel near the 33 area of Onitsha, Anambra State, with military support. The operation result in the rescue of 17 victims and the arrest of four suspected traffickers, as well as two suspects allegedly involved in selling and buying babies within the South-East region.'[223] The article did not provide information on the nature of the military support.

13.5.15 The BFA 2026 report noted: 'Task forces have been set up in nine states – including Edo – to combat human trafficking. NAPTIP also acts as an investigative authority, among other things. So far, NAPTIP has succeeded in convicting more than 400 perpetrators of human trafficking in recent years. In addition, the authority has rescued more than 17,000 victims.'[224]

13.5.16 For general information on the roles and responsibilities of the military and other security forces, see the Country Policy and Information Note Nigeria: Actors of Protection.

13.5.17 Regarding enforcement at the state level, 2025 EUAA report observed: '[Sarah Adeyinka of the University of Amsterdam] added that representatives of the Lagos State Neighbourhood [Safety] Agency (LSNA) reported frequent interception of trafficking cases at the Nigeria-Benin border.'[225]

13.5.18 For more information on:

[218] USSD, 2025 Trafficking in Persons Report (Protection), 29 September 2025
[219] USSD, 2025 Trafficking in Persons Report (Prevention), 29 September 2025
[220] The Hope Newspaper, Nigerian Army, NAPTIP deepen collaboration …, 27 February 2025
[221] The Hope Newspaper, About Us, no date
[222] The Hope Newspaper, Nigerian Army, NAPTIP deepen collaboration …, 27 February 2025
[223] The Punch, NAPTIP rescues over 100 trafficked victims in Nigeria, 15 February 2026
[224] BFA, BFA State Documentation (Austrian Federal … (Human trafficking), 30 July 2026
[225] EUAA, COI Report - Nigeria: Country Focus (page 39), 3 November 2025

- arrests, see Investigations, arrests, prosecutions and convictions
- the roles and responsibilities of the military and other security forces, see the Country Policy and Information Note Nigeria: Actors of Protection

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13.6 International cooperation

13.6.1 Ukhami and others 2024 observed:

'International cooperation is a critical aspect of NAPTIP's efforts to prevent human trafficking in Nigeria, as trafficking networks often operate across borders....

'NAPTIP participates actively in regional and international initiatives aimed at strengthening anti-trafficking efforts. The agency engages with regional bodies such as the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the African Union (AU) to develop common strategies, protocols, and action plans to combat trafficking in the West African region and beyond. …Furthermore, NAPTIP collaborates with international organizations and non-governmental partners to enhance its operational capacity and effectiveness. The agency receives technical assistance, training, and financial support from organizations such as the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), the International Organization for Migration (IOM), and various non-governmental organizations working to combat human trafficking …'[226]

13.6.2 Ukhami and others 2024 also observed that NAPTIP's international partnerships 'enable NAPTIP to strengthen its institutional capacity, improve its service delivery to trafficking victims, and implement best practices in preventing and prosecuting trafficking …'[227]

13.6.3 Okorie and Okeja 2024 stated: '… [O]nly NAPTIP is empowered to collaborate with anti-trafficking agencies from other countries in tracking or co-investigating international trafficking syndicates, as well as facilitating the extradition of suspects or receiving them back home for trial.'[228]

13.6.4 The USSD 2025 TiP report stated:

'The government had extensive law enforcement partnerships with foreign counterparts in African and European countries, including through INTERPOL, mutual legal assistance requests, MOUs [memoranda of understanding], and bilateral agreements to investigate and prevent human trafficking. The Nigerian-UK Joint Border Task Force carried out international operations focused on disrupting, identifying, apprehending, and prosecuting members of organized crime groups within Nigeria and abroad, including for trafficking crimes.'[229]

13.6.5 The 2025 EUAA report stated: 'A senior representative at NCFRMI told the EUAA that Nigeria takes the issue of human trafficking 'very seriously', with efforts undertaken to link international partners with national agencies and avoid a fragmented response … In its first mutual legal assistance case with

[226] Ukhami, EI, The Role of the National Agency for the … (pages 187-188), JOPD, 13 July 2024
[227] Ukhami, EI, The Role of the National Agency for the … (page 188), JOPD, 13 July 2024
[228] Okorie, MM, and Okeja, U, Prosecuting human … (pages 7-8), TiOC, 8 October 2024
[229] USSD, 2025 Trafficking in Persons Report (Prosecution), 29 September 2025

a foreign government, Nigeria collaborated with Belgian authorities to prosecute a trafficker, who was sentenced to 12 years' imprisonment and fined for recruiting and exploiting Nigerian victims in Belgium.'[230]

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13.7 Investigations, arrests, prosecutions and convictions

13.7.1 NAPTIP publishes official statistics on its anti-trafficking activities, including investigations, prosecutions and convictions. However, the latest annual report located by CPIT covered January 2022 to December 2023[231]. Consequently, this section includes more recent information from other sources, including reports citing NAPTIP data and statements by NAPTIP officials, where these provided information beyond the period covered by the annual report.

13.7.2 The USSD 2025 TiP report stated:

'The government reported initiating investigations of 744 cases (293 sex trafficking cases, 203 labor trafficking cases, and 248 cases of unspecified forms of trafficking), compared with 698 investigations in 2023. The government initiated prosecutions of 71 alleged traffickers (33 for sex trafficking, six for labor trafficking, and 32 for unspecified forms of trafficking), and courts convicted 49 traffickers (32 for sex trafficking, five for labor trafficking, and 12 for unspecified forms of trafficking) under the 2015 TIPLEAA. This compared with initiating prosecutions of 48 alleged traffickers and convicting 24 traffickers in 2023. Unlike previous years, the government reported comprehensive sentencing data. Courts issued sentences ranging from one to 15 year's imprisonment. Government data may have included crimes outside the international definition of trafficking.'[232]

13.7.3 Data reported in successive USSD TiP reports [USSD 2020[233], 2021[234], 2022[235], 2023[236], 2024[237]] indicate that investigations, prosecutions and convictions have fluctuated over time. Taken together, the table below does not demonstrate a consistent upward trend across all 3 enforcement indicators. The number of investigations increased between 2020 and 2022, fell in 2023 and rose slightly in 2024, although it remained below the levels recorded in 2021 and 2022. Prosecutions and convictions increased between 2023 and 2024. However, the available data does not establish the reasons for these changes. They may reflect variations in reporting, referrals, investigative activity or institutional capacity and do not, by themselves, demonstrate either an increase in the prevalence of trafficking or improved enforcement effectiveness.

Year covered	Investigations
2020	409

[230] EUAA, COI Report - Nigeria: Country Focus (page 46), 3 November 2025
[231] NAPTIP, NAPTIP 2022-2023 Annual Report – NAPTIP, 31 October 2025
[232] USSD, Nigeria - United States Department of State, (Prosecution), 29 September 2025
[233] USSD, Nigeria - United States Department of State, 25 June 2020
[234] USSD, Nigeria - United States Department of State, 1 July 2021
[235] USSD, Nigeria - United States Department of State, 28 July 2022
[236] USSD, Nigeria - United States Department of State, 15 June 2023
[237] USSD, Nigeria - United States Department of State, 24 June 2024

2021	852
2022	1,242
2023	698
2024	744

13.7.4 The Punch, in an article dated 23 December 2024 (2024 Punch reunifications article), citing a NAPTIP report released in November 2024, stated:

'From January 2022 to August 2024, NAPTIP secured 190 convictions for human trafficking, accounting for 27.94% of all such convictions achieved by the agency in its 21-year history. During the same period, it also recorded 20 convictions for rape and domestic violence, representing 74.07% of all such convictions [secured by NAPTIP] since 2015.

'These convictions include high-profile cases, such as life imprisonment sentences for three offenders convicted of rape. Seven offenders received prison terms of 10 years or more …

'For offences carrying lighter sentences, 12 offenders were sentenced to terms between one and four years, often accompanied by fines or compensation. Fines alone … were imposed in some cases.'[238]

13.7.5 The same Punch article also reported: 'The agency stated that it reunited 1,198 victims of trafficking [with their families] across its offices nationwide from September 2023 to September 2024, with most of these reunifications taking place in 2024.'[239]

13.7.6 The state-owned[240] News Agency of Nigeria, in an article published on the website of Nigerian privately-owned news outlet[241] the Premium Times on 9 January 2025, quoted NAPTIP's Kano zonal commander as reporting that the Kano zonal command had apprehended 22 alleged human traffickers in 2024[242]. It also quoted him as saying that the command had secured 15 convictions 'for various offences', but did not state how many, if any, of the convictions were specifically for human trafficking[243].

13.7.7 The Daily Post, a Nigerian privately-owned newspaper[244], in an article dated 16 January 2025, stated:

'The Maiduguri zonal command of the National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons (NAPTIP) reports that it saved 253 victims of human trafficking and associated crimes in 2024.

'The Zonal Commander, Mohammed Barde, revealed that among the 253 victims, 163 were minors aged 0-17 years, including 105 females and 58 males, while the other 90 consisted [of] adult men and women.

[238] The Punch, 1200 trafficking victims reunited with families in one year …, 23 December 2024
[239] The Punch, 1200 trafficking victims reunited with families in one year …, 23 December 2024
[240] NAN, About Us, 28 January 2022
[241] Premium Times, About Us, no date
[242] Premium Times, Kano: NAPTIP rescues 285 victims, arrests 22 human …, 9 January 2025
[243] Premium Times, Kano: NAPTIP rescues 285 victims, arrests 22 human …, 9 January 2025
[244] Daily Post, About Us, no date

"Besides rescuing victims, the command obtained nine convictions for different offenses in 2024."'[245]

13.7.8 The 2025 EUAA report stated: 'Various raids were conducted during 2024 and 2025, uncovering so-called 'baby factories' and trafficking syndicates across the country.'[246]

13.7.9 The 2026 Nation article reported:

'The Director General of … NAPTIP …, Binta Bello, has disclosed that the Agency secured the conviction of 93 human traffickers and rescued 120 trafficked children in 2025.

'She also revealed that the agency intercepted over 2500 potential victims of human trafficking who were deceived, recruited, and trafficked for various forms of exploitation within and outside Nigeria.'[247]

13.7.10 PM News, a Nigerian privately-owned news outlet[248], in an article dated 22 January 2026, quoted NAPTIP as saying that it rescued 68 victims and apprehended 62 suspected human traffickers in Akwa Ibom State in 2025. It quoted the zonal commander for Uyo, Akwa Ibom State, as reporting that the command secured 2 convictions during the year, while 22 other cases were at different stages of prosecution[249].

13.7.11 For more information on arrests, see Enforcement agencies and activities.

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13.8 Effectiveness of agencies and the criminal justice system

13.8.1 For information on the general effectiveness of law enforcement and the criminal justice system, see the Country Policy and Information Note Nigeria: Actors of protection.

13.8.2 The 2024 Dutch MoFA note stated:

'The authorities generally encouraged victims to file reports, so that investigations could be conducted and human-trafficking suspects could be prosecuted … As reported by another source, convicted human traffickers were sometimes required to sign a statement accepting that they would be held responsible if anything were to happen to the victim.

'One source pointed out that many victims of human trafficking did not have enough confidence in the authorities to cooperate with or call on agencies and sub-state task forces. According to this source, it was common for human-trafficking suspects — in many cases rich and powerful people — to use corruption and connections to commute their prosecution or sentencing. The source noted that there was a fear amongst victims that cooperating with the authorities would allow human traffickers to discover their identity. This would purportedly further increase the risk of reprisals.'[250]

13.8.3 For more information on reprisals, see Reprisals.

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[245] Daily Post, NAPTIP rescues 253 victims, obtained 9 convictions in 2024, 16 January 2025
[246] EUAA, COI Report - Nigeria: Country Focus (page 34), 3 November 2025
[247] The Nation, 93 traffickers jailed, 120 children rescued in 2025, says NAPTIP, 16 January 2026
[248] PM News, About Us, no date
[249] PM News, NAPTIP rescues 68 victims, apprehends 62 human trafficking …, 22 January 2026
[250] MoFA, Explanatory note for the Country of Origin Information … (pages 6-7), 21 March 2024

13.8.4 The 2024 Dutch MoFA note also reported:

'In some cases, representatives of the authorities (e.g. staff from the NAPTIP, camps for displaced persons and security forces) engaged in corruption, thereby passing information along to human traffickers for money. Authorities sometimes took action against this. In June 2023, five NAPTIP staff members, including a deputy director, were discharged for misconduct (e.g. leaking information). Two others were demoted for taking bribes from trafficking suspects. It is not clear whether these individuals were also criminally prosecuted.'[251]

13.8.5 Ukhami and others 2024 observed: 'One challenge [in combatting human trafficking] is the lengthy and complex legal procedures involved in prosecuting trafficking cases. Corruption and lack of accountability within the legal and judicial systems further undermine anti-trafficking efforts. Traffickers may exploit weaknesses in the legal system, such as bribery, collusions, or intimidation of officials, to evade prosecution and continue their criminal activities …'[252]

13.8.6 Amune 2025 reported: '… NAPTIP and … other relevant law enforcement agencies are unable to effectively enforce anti-trafficking laws and monitor trafficking in persons in Nigeria due to gross underfunding … With regards to the other law enforcement agencies [besides NAPTIP], the common challenges are inadequate funding, and lack of expertise in monitoring and investigating trafficking in persons and also in the treatment of victims.'[253]

13.8.7 The USSD 2025 TiP report stated: '… [O]bservers reported NAPTIP lacked sufficient resources to fully execute its broad mandate. The anti-trafficking law called for a NAPTIP board, including two civil society representatives; however, the government has never appointed a board.'[254]

13.8.8 The USSD 2025 TiP report stated:

'Corruption and official complicity in trafficking crimes, including among designated officials with responsibilities to combat human trafficking, remained significant concerns, inhibiting law enforcement action and perpetuating impunity for trafficking crimes. The government initiated prosecution of one National Immigration Services (NIS) official for sex trafficking crimes, compared with prosecuting and convicting three complicit officials during the previous year [2024][255]. Prosecutions of one Civilian Joint Task Force member for alleged sex trafficking remained pending. During the previous reporting period, NAPTIP fired five staff members, including a deputy director, and demoted three staff members for complicity in trafficking crimes, including soliciting bribes and leaking confidential information to trafficking suspects; however, the government did not report initiating any prosecutions of the officials. Observers reported some law enforcement, military, and other government officials reportedly committed trafficking crimes, accepted bribes to facilitate trafficking, or obstructed justice by interfering with investigations. Endemic judicial corruption impeded prosecutions and convictions of most crimes, including human trafficking.

[251] MoFA, Explanatory note for the Country of Origin Information … (page 7), 21 March 2024
[252] Ukhami, EI, The Role of the National Agency for the … (page 189), JOPD, 13 July 2024
[253] Amune, MS, View of Control and Regulation of Human … (pages 31-32), EAJLE, 13 January 2025
[254] USSD, 2025 Trafficking in Persons Report (Prevention), 29 September 2025
[255] USSD, Nigeria - United States Department of State, (protection), 4 June 2024

Observers previously reported some security officers sexually abused and exploited IDPs, including children, in and around Maiduguri (the Borno State capital).'[256]

13.8.9 The same USSD report also stated: 'The government provided victim-witnesses assistance, including security, victim advocates, temporary immigration relief, and travel and lodging.'[257]

13.8.10 The USSD 2025 TiP report did not state how many victims, if any, received such services. However, the USSD 2023 TiP report, dated 15 June 2023, stated that the government reported 60 victims had participated in criminal justice proceedings and received services. The USSD 2024 TiP report, dated 24 June 2024, observed that the government reported 40 victims had done so[258].

13.8.11 The USSD 2025 TiP report further stated:

'[The government] also provided victims a six-week recovery and reflection period to decide whether to cooperate with law enforcement proceedings. Victims were able to testify in the judges' private chambers to protect their privacy and safety, and courts sometimes used video testimony. NAPTIP, in collaboration with an international organization, the MOJ, and NGOs, ran legal hubs in Edo, Delta, and Lagos states, intended to improve victims' access to justice through legal aid counseling and representation in court … [T]he government did not report utilizing the [victim trust] fund to support victims, and observers reported it was not operational. [C]ourts awarded [victim] restitution in two cases … [T]he government did not report whether any victims [filed civil suits against their traffickers].'[259]

13.8.12 For more information on the victim trust fund, victim restitution and civil suits, see Law and policy measures.

13.8.13 According to the USSD 2025 TiP report, although the High Courts had jurisdiction over trafficking cases, 'in practice, cases were sometimes tried in state courts, which heard lower-level or misdemeanor crimes. Local judges did not have the same standardized training requirements as federal and state judges, which contributed to corruption and misapplication of the law. Illegal activities of non-state armed groups hindered law enforcement efforts, especially in northern Nigeria.'[260]

13.8.14 The same USSD report further stated:

'The government, in collaboration with foreign donors and civil society, provided anti-trafficking training to law enforcement officials, security forces, and service providers. Observers reported law enforcement investigators required additional resources and training on investigative techniques, cybercrime, and financial crimes. The government did not report holding any anti-trafficking trainings for prosecutors or judges, and observers reported a lack of judicial training and awareness of the anti-trafficking law impeded prosecutions. NAPTIP's Judicial Research Center in Abuja provided NAPTIP

[256] USSD, 2025 Trafficking in Persons Report (Prosecution), 29 September 2025
[257] USSD, 2025 Trafficking in Persons Report (Protection), 29 September 2025
[258] USSD, 2024 Trafficking in Persons Report (Protection), 4 June 2024
[259] USSD, 2025 Trafficking in Persons Report (Protection), 29 September 2025
[260] USSD, 2025 Trafficking in Persons Report (Prosecution), 29 September 2025

officers access to resources to strengthen trafficking cases and support prosecution efforts.'[261]

13.8.15 According to the same USSD report, '… [B]oth informal and registered recruitment agents continued fraudulently recruiting and exploiting victims; despite reporting that such practices remained prevalent, officials did not report initiating any investigations into fraudulent recruitment or revoking any licenses for exploitative recruitment practices.'[262]

13.8.16 The 2025 EUAA report stated: 'According to [IRARA director] Roland Nwoha, NAPTIP tends to operate more reactively than proactively, often waiting for complaints before acting. Its effectiveness is further constrained by inadequate funding … Sources also indicated that corruption has hindered investigations and prosecutions of traffickers. [WOCON director Morenike Omaiboje] noted that court proceedings are often slow, with few successful prosecutions. Access to justice and convictions remain major challenges, largely due to poor implementation and corruption, despite existing legal structures and a trained judiciary …

'[Sarah Adeyinka of the University of Amsterdam] explained that many victims are discouraged from reporting trafficking or engaging with law enforcement due to both practical and systemic challenges. The process is often perceived as overly complicated and inaccessible. "Victims are frequently sent from one office to another, with no clear guidance. For instance, they may be told that their case does not qualify as trafficking, or they are redirected repeatedly without receiving support." This endless referral cycle leads many to abandon the process altogether … [The WOCON director noted that] There is also a "widespread, though not always accurate, perception" that law enforcement will not act, with many victims believing police are corrupt and traffickers can buy influence. As a result, victims rarely report directly and typically engage the justice system through NGOs or NAPTIP, who often act on their behalf.'[263]

13.8.17 Regarding attitudes and perceptions that discourage recourse to the criminal justice system, Ukhama and others 2024 stated: '… [V]ictims of trafficking may face obstacles in accessing justice, including discrimination, stigma, and lack of awareness about their rights and legal remedies.'[264]

13.8.18 Okorie and Okeja 2024 reported: 'Since international trafficking, which is mostly concentrated around Edo State, has helped many families escape extreme poverty, trafficking facilitation is rarely conceptualised as a matter of coercion and criminality within that specific community context … [E]thnographic studies conducted in Edo State, Nigeria, raise interesting questions on how trafficking is perceived, not as a crime, but as a socially-acceptable venture with strong potentials for escaping poverty.'[265]

13.8.19 The same EUAA report also stated: 'Particularly in Edo State, trafficking victims are often familiar with their traffickers, who may be part of the larger community where remittances continue to sustain families. In this context, victim-witnessing remains a significant challenge for Nigeria's criminal justice

[261] USSD, 2025 Trafficking in Persons Report (Prosecution), 29 September 2025
[262] USSD, 2025 Trafficking in Persons Report (Prevention), 29 September 2025
[263] EUAA, COI Report - Nigeria: Country Focus (page 45), 3 November 2025
[264] Ukhami, EI, The Role of the National Agency for the … (page 189), JOPD, 13 July 2024
[265] Okorie, MM, and Okeja, U, Prosecuting human … (page 12), TiOC, 8 October 2024

system, as victims often perceive their exploiters as closely tied to their material wellbeing.'[266]

13.8.20 For more information on social stigma, see Family/social attitudes and treatment. For information on reluctance to engage with the criminal justice system because of fear of reprisals, see Reprisals.

13.8.21 In relation to the adoption of technology in law enforcement, the Fundación para la Internacionalización de las Administraciones Públicas (Foundation for the Internationalisation of Public Administrations, FIAP), a Spanish public-sector foundation[267], in an English-language entry on their website dated 26 December 2023, reported:

'The National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons, the Nigeria Immigration Service and Nigeria Police Force joined forces to unveil the Common Investigative Database (CID) in Abuja. This state-of-the-art technology tool marks a significant milestone in enhancing collaboration among key law enforcement agencies to address the critical issues of human trafficking and smuggling of migrants …

'… [L]aw enforcement agencies will work together, pooling their resources and expertise to gather, analyze, and share crucial intelligence information. This coordinated approach will not only streamline investigative efforts but will also facilitate a more efficient and targeted response to combat these grave offenses.'[268]

13.8.22 With regard to the effectiveness of victim identification, the USSD 2025 TiP report stated: 'The government continued training front-line officials on the [victim identification and protection] SOPs and NRM. However, observers reported many front-line officials, including law enforcement and security officials, lacked training to appropriately screen vulnerable populations for trafficking indicators.'[269]

13.8.23 The BFA 2026 report stated: 'NAPTIP can be seen as an effective institution – compared to Nigeria – and cooperates with several EU member states on reintegration. In NAPTIP success reports, the number of victims of human trafficking freed during rescue operations or the number of persons convicted of human trafficking is mentioned with a certain regularity.'[270]

13.8.24 The 2025 EUAA report stated:

'According to Dr Adeyinka, despite ongoing efforts, gaps in victim identification persist. In some cases, even victims of trafficking returning to Nigeria through the IOM's AVRR programme are not identified as victims upon arrival at the airport - and as a result, they receive no support at all. For her Reintegrate Study, Dr Adeyinka interviewed 69 returnees; 41 were victims of trafficking, but only four had been recognised by NAPTIP …'[271] The report stated that according to Dr Adeyinka, the remaining victims, many of whom returned through the IOM scheme, arrived at the airport without being identified[272]. For information on the Reintegrate Study, see Re-

[266] EUAA, COI Report - Nigeria: Country Focus (page 46), 3 November 2025
[267] FIAP, About, no date
[268] FIAP, A database to investigate human trafficking in Nigeria, 26 December 2023
[269] USSD, 2025 Trafficking in Persons Report (Protection), 29 September 2025
[270] BFA, BFA State Documentation (Austrian Federal … (Human trafficking), 30 July 2026
[271] EUAA, COI Report - Nigeria: Country Focus (page 38), 3 November 2025
[272] EUAA, COI Report - Nigeria: Country Focus (page 38), 3 November 2025

trafficking.

13.8.25 In relation to border security and monitoring, the DFAT 2026 Nigeria report noted: 'In country sources said Nigeria's borders were porous and largely unmonitored, enabling human trafficking networks to operate with relative freedom.'[273]

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14. Shelters and assistance

14.1 Reintegration framework and access to services

14.1.1 The 2024 Dutch MoFA note stated with reference to shelter for victims of trafficking: 'According to one source, cooperation between NGOs, government organisations (e.g. NAPTIP) and state-level task forces, as well as with international organisations (e.g. UNODC and IOM) were developing in a positive direction.'[274]

14.1.2 The 2025 EUAA country report stated:

'Multiple actors – including government bodies, international organisations, and NGOs – are involved in the reintegration governance of Nigerian returnees. In 2019, the Nigerian government led the development of the Guidelines for Facilitating the Safe, Dignified and Voluntary Return, Readmission and Reintegration of Migrants in Nigeria Standard Operating Procedures (SOP), which entered implementation in 2020. The National Commission for Refugees, Migrants, and Internally Displaced Persons (NCFRMI) is the designated agency responsible for coordinating reintegration efforts and for the implementation of the SOP. The SOP contains guidance for reintegration processes, in alignment with international legal standards, and is intended to enhance coordination among stakeholders involved in the reintegration of returnees. These stakeholders include the Nigeria Immigration Service, which is tasked with documenting and processing returnees; the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, whose diplomatic missions support the return of stranded migrants; and NAPTIP, which delivers rehabilitation support to returned victims of trafficking. NAPTIP also engages with regional and local authorities, international organisations, and community-based organisations in the implementation of the SOP. At the regional level, the Edo State Task Force Against Human Trafficking (ETAHT) – which became the Edo State Migration Agency (EDMA) in 2024 – has played a leading role in reintegration governance. Also, the Nigerian government collaborates with the Network of Civil Society Organisations Against Child Trafficking, Abuse and Labour (NACTAL) to ensure referral of victims.'[275]

14.1.3 According to the same 2025 EUAA report:

'As explained by Dr Sarah Adeyinka [in an online interview with the EUAA in July 2025], in most cases, the modality of return determines the type of support that returned victims receive. This is largely because, in the case of EU-funded reintegration schemes, the available support and eligibility criteria are set by the donor … When people return through the AVRR, there is

[273] DFAT, Country Information Reports (Nigeria) (Treatment of returnees), 9 June 2026
[274] MoFA, Explanatory note for the Country of Origin Information … (page 7), 21 March 2024
[275] EUAA, COI Report - Nigeria: Country Focus (pages 36-37), 3 November 2025

usually some form of reintegration support and assistance. This also means that returnees are officially registered, and both NCFRMI [National Commission for Refugees, Migrants, and Internally Displaced Persons] and NAPTIP are informed. When people return spontaneously, using their own or their family's money, they often come back through the same migration routes they used when leaving. In these cases, neither NAPTIP nor NCFRMI are aware that they are back in the country (or even left). As a result, 'many victims of trafficking return completely under the radar.'"[276]

14.1.4 Citing email correspondence with WOCON director Morenike Omaiboje, the same EUAA report stated: 'Access to reintegration services for returnees is typically facilitated through various pathways. These include automatic referrals, when individuals are identified as survivors at border entry points; self-referral, when returnees independently seek assistance from NGOs, the Ministry of Women Affairs, or NAPTIP offices; community or family reporting, when relatives or community members alert NAPTIP; and referrals through IOM's AVRR programmes.'[277]

14.1.5 The 2025 EUAA report further stated:

''Victims who return through their own or family means may seek support from organisations but are often told they cannot be assisted because they did not return through an assisted programme. Reintegration assistance provided by the Federal Government through the [National Commission for Migrants and Internally Displaced Persons] NCFRMI is accessible to all returnees but remains very limited due to inadequate funding. Also, while NCFRMI, some churches, and NGOs – such as Media Coalition & Awareness to Halt Trafficking (MeCAHT) – offer help regardless of return modality, most returnees are unaware of this. After being turned away a few times, they assume no support is available. The same applies to those forcibly returned.'[278]

14.1.6 For more information on assistance provided by religious organisations and NGOs including MeCAHT, see Non-governmental and religious organisations.

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14.2 Availability and effectiveness of re-integration support

14.2.1 Uzomah and others 2024, referring to Nigerian returnee migrants including victims of trafficking, stated: '… Reintegration support may include access to housing, healthcare, education, vocational training, and livelihood assistance programmes … Despite the support, returnees face difficulties reintegrating into their communities, including social stigma, loss of livelihood, and lack of access to essential services and support. The systems and procedures in place in Nigeria are inefficient. The expectations of returnees regarding vocational skills and education are typically unmet, and their hopes for empowerment are dashed after spending several months in shelters due to a lack of resources for their reintegration process. International partners and NGOs implementing the AVRR [Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration] programs often lack sufficient resources and capacity to aid in

[276] EUAA, COI Report - Nigeria: Country Focus (pages 37-38), 3 November 2025
[277] EUAA, COI Report - Nigeria: Country Focus (page 38), 3 November 2025
[278] EUAA, COI Report - Nigeria: Country Focus (page 38), 3 November 2025

the economic reintegration of returnees. This can lead to further economic and social marginalisation, contributing to the cycle of irregular migration.'[279]

14.2.2 The USSD 2025 TiP report stated: 'The government and partner NGOs provided services to all identified victims.'[280] It also noted: 'The quantity and quality of shelter services, especially for men, were insufficient.'[281]

14.2.3 Additionally, the 2025 EUAA report observed:

'Lack of funding, including for NAPTIP shelters, affects the ability of these shelters to operate effectively. Roland Nwoha, director at IRARA Nigeria, noted that some shelters remain unused. Despite ongoing efforts by the operators to improve them – the source added - many of these shelters were not originally designed for trafficking victims and lack appropriate facilities, such as childcare, maternal care, or psychological support. Stigma also plays a role, as staying in a shelter can label individuals as trafficking victims. Additionally, strict rules, such as restricted movement and no visitors, discourage use, especially for returnees who experienced similar confinement abroad.'[282]

14.2.4 For information on vulnerability to re-trafficking in cases of spontaneous or forcible return, see Re-trafficking.

14.2.5 Regarding the effectiveness of reintegration training programmes and psychosocial support, the 2025 EUAA report, referring to the EUAA's online interview with Sarah Adeyinka of the University of Amsterdam, stated:

'As noted by Dr Adeyinka, while the training [provided by NGOs and international organisations] is a very good initiative, the financial barriers remain a major challenge. Participants often cannot afford transport or food during multi-week programmes, especially when reimbursements are delayed. NAPTIP provides live-in training options for individuals residing in its shelters, arranging transportation to and from the training location, while some NGOs provide daily allowances. However, most victims still face cost-related obstacles. The same source added that "even when reintegration support is provided, it can come with its own complications." For instance, a returnee might be helped by an EU-funded IOM programme or NCFRMI to set up a business, but instead of using the proceeds for themselves, some are forced to give the money to traffickers to finally be free of their debt. So, they are left with nothing, forced to start from scratch again.

'Limited availability of psychosocial and social support services in Nigeria poses a major challenge, especially given the severity of the psychosocial impact many victims have experienced. Psycho-social support training is often not covered by reintegration programmes, 'reinforcing perceptions that it is less important than economic assistance.'"[283]

14.2.6 Citing email correspondence with WOCON director Morenike Omaiboje, the same EUAA report stated: 'Some shelters have staff trained in psychological first aid and trauma counselling; however, Nigeria's mental health system remains under-resourced. Training on disability inclusion varies across

[279] Uzomah, NL and others, Navigating the Complexities … (page 15), GAPs, 28 November 2024
[280] USSD, 2025 Trafficking in Persons Report (Protection), 29 September 2025
[281] USSD, 2025 Trafficking in Persons Report (Nigeria (Tier 2)), 29 September 2025
[282] EUAA, COI Report - Nigeria: Country Focus (page 40), 3 November 2025
[283] EUAA, COI Report - Nigeria: Country Focus (page 41), 3 November 2025

regions and NGOs, while access to specialised services - such as those for individuals with intellectual disabilities - is still relatively limited.'[284]

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14.3 Federal and state government support

14.3.1 The USSD 2025 TiP report stated:

'NAPTIP operated 14 shelters across its 10 zonal commands, which provided services to 2,058 victims, primarily women and children. There was only one dedicated NGO shelter for adult male victims; as a result, NAPTIP shelters sometimes accommodated men. The government provided legal, medical, psycho-social, family reunification, and vocational services to victims in its shelters … Due to security concerns, NAPTIP typically placed victims choosing to participate in law enforcement proceeding[s] against traffickers in its shelters for up to six weeks to conduct an initial investigation before referring them to partner NGO shelters for services; victims who did not face safety concerns could be placed directly with NGO shelters. NAPTIP's shelters did not permit shelter residents freedom of movement, including for children to continue attending school; however, the shelters provided basic education services. Observers reported NAPTIP shelters lacked adequate resources, and its closed shelter policy, while intended to ensure victims' safety, limited the assistance available; additionally, observers reported the shelters lacked sufficient victim-centered, trauma-informed approaches to care. Additionally, NAPTIP sometimes detained suspects in the same compound as its shelters due to lack of space; as a result, victims and traffickers were sometimes brought together. Officials referred victims who did not wish to participate in law enforcement proceedings directly to Ministry of Women-operated shelters for domestic violence victims or NGO partner shelters for services. Additional government and NGO shelters provided services, including long-term shelter, to child victims; authorities sometimes placed child trafficking victims in foster homes. Observers reported a lack of adequate reintegration support increased victims' vulnerability to re-trafficking. NAPTIP continued implementing minimum standards and guidelines for service providers rendering assistance to trafficking victims, which included licensing and reporting requirements.

'Borno State authorities provided demobilization and reintegration services to combatants formerly associated with ISIS West Africa and Boko Haram who turned themselves in; although officials separated unaccompanied children, they returned some girls and young women who had been forcibly married to fighters, including trafficking victims, and their children to their husbands in the centers … Civil society reported the government did not screen [women and girls allegedly associated with Boko Haram] for indicators of human trafficking, nor did they provide them with psycho-social support before being questioned by security officers. Observers reported the government sometimes used the girls, including trafficking victims, as a bargaining chip in convincing Boko Haram fighters to surrender in exchange for remaining with their wives.'[285]

[284] EUAA, COI Report - Nigeria: Country Focus (page 41), 3 November 2025
[285] USSD, Nigeria - United States Department of State (Protection), 29 September 2025

14.3.2 NAPTIP, in their 'Three Years Performance Overview', dated 4 November 2024, reported that NAPTIP operates 14 shelters across Nigeria, in the Federal Capital Territory (FCT, where Abuja is located), Lagos, Benin, Enugu, Sokoto, Uyo, Kano, Maiduguri, Osogbo, Ekiti, Yobe, Makurdi, Katsina and Ondo[286]

14.3.3 The 2025 EUAA report stated: 'Besides NAPTIP shelters, there are other state-run shelters, including in Lagos State and in Benin City (Edo State).'[287]

14.3.4 Citing the EUAA's online interview with Sarah Adeyinka of the University of Amsterdam, the 2025 EUAA report stated: 'Usually, people may stay longer than six weeks [in NAPTIP shelters], if they are under protection, or cooperate with NAPTIP to prosecute their traffickers. As noted by Dr. Adeyinka, the number of trafficking victims exceeds the available shelter capacity. As a result, NAPTIP is struggling to accommodate everyone in need.'[288]

14.3.5 Regarding assistance at the state-government level, the New Telegraph, a Nigerian privately-owned newspaper[289], in an article dated 4 August 2025, quoted the Director-General of the Edo State Migration Agency as saying that one of the agency's main policy frameworks, which follows a 'Return, Readmission and Reintegration' model, 'is designed to assist returning migrants with psychosocial support, vocational training, startup funding, and reintegration measures intended to support sustainable livelihoods within the state.'[290] The article added: 'He maintained that the Agency collaborates with various groups, including religious organisations, traditional institutions, civil society bodies, and international partners.'[291]

14.3.6 The 2025 EUAA report stated: 'In Lagos State, there are also IOM and Lagos State-run 'transit' shelters, where individuals may stay for a certain period - depending on how long the evacuation process takes and when they plan to travel back to their state of origin.'[292]

14.3.7 Regarding Boko Haram, the USSD 2025 TiP report stated: 'Observers reported there was no formal reintegration program for girls and women allegedly associated with Boko Haram, including trafficking victims.'[293]. Civil society reported the government did not screen these women and girls for indicators of human trafficking, nor did they provide them with psycho-social support before being questioned by security officers. Observers reported the government sometimes used the girls, including trafficking victims, as a bargaining chip in convincing Boko Haram fighters to surrender in exchange for remaining with their wives.'[294]

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[286] NAPTIP, Three Years Performance Overview. Prof Fatima Waziri-Azi, 4 November 2024
[287] EUAA, COI Report - Nigeria: Country Focus (page 39), 3 November 2025
[288] EUAA, COI Report - Nigeria: Country Focus (page 39), 3 November 2025
[289] The Punch, Ex-Commissioner Backs Oji Uzor Kalu for 2027 Senate Re-elect, 31 July 2025
[290] New Telegraph, Edo Govt Intensifies Efforts To Curb Irregular …, 4 August 2025
[291] New Telegraph, Edo Govt Intensifies Efforts To Curb Irregular …, 4 August 2025
[292] EUAA, COI Report - Nigeria: Country Focus (page 39), 3 November 2025
[293] USSD, 2025 Trafficking in Persons Report (Protection), 29 September 2025
[294] USSD, 2025 Trafficking in Persons Report (Protection), 29 September 2025

14.4 International Organisation for Migration (IOM)

14.4.1 Uzomah and others 2024 reported: 'IOM is on the ground to facilitate all the [reintegration] activities in terms of technical and financial support.'[295]

14.4.2 The 2025 EUAA report stated: 'As part of the Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration (AVRR) programme, IOM provides support to Nigerian returnees, including returned victims of trafficking. Since 2016, IOM has implemented the EU-IOM Joint initiative for Migrant Protection, Return and Reintegration Programme for Sub-Saharan Africa (MPRR-SSA) funded by the European Union (EU) …'[296]

14.4.3 The same EUAA report stated: 'IOM … runs the Enhanced Reintegration Support for Survivors of Trafficking (ERS) project in Nigeria aiming at equipping survivors with business development skills, also offering them small business grants.'[297]

14.4.4 The 2024 IOM Nigeria report stated that out of 4,261 female victims of trafficking identified overseas between 2017 and Q1 2024, 2,675, or 63%, were classified as having completed reintegration into society, 1,492, or 35%, were in the process of reintegration and 94, or 2%, were classified as 'reintegration deactivated'[298]. The report did not provide further information on these categories.

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14.5 Non-governmental and religious organisations

14.5.1 The 2024 Dutch MoFA note reported:

'Some NGOs offered shelter, but contrary to what was stated by sources at the time of the [2023 Dutch MoFA report], the sources consulted between January and March 2024 for this Explanatory note stated that these shelters were always 'open'. In other words, they were not closed to contact with the outside world, as was the case at NAPTIP shelters. The NGOs were therefore unable to provide protection against reprisals by human traffickers. For this reason, victims who feared physical reprisals were usually referred to the NAPTIP by NGOs. Although shelter was generally temporary, one source noted that it could be extended in case of emergency (e.g. risk of reprisals and vulnerability of the victim) … [One source] provided several examples of people who had found shelter elsewhere with the help of NGOs. In the past, there were also programmes that provided financial support to help these victims go back to school or start a business. These programmes, however, no longer exist.'[299]

14.5.2 The 2025 EUAA report stated: 'Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) have been critical partners in addressing and managing return migration in Nigeria. In Edo State, several NGOs operate as a network of CSOs to provide psycho-social support to victims of trafficking, legal assistance and counselling, advocacy, case reporting to the authorities, and community

[295] Uzomah, NL and others, Navigating the Complexities … (page 15), GAPs, 28 November 2024
[296] EUAA, COI Report - Nigeria: Country Focus (page 37), 3 November 2025
[297] EUAA, COI Report - Nigeria: Country Focus (page 37), 3 November 2025
[298] IOM Nigeria, Profile of Nigerian Victims of Human … (page 12), updated 31 March 2024
[299] MoFA, Explanatory note for the Country of Origin Information … (page 8), 21 March 2024

sensitisation. Religious organisations also provide counselling and shelter services to trafficking victims for reintegration purposes.'[300]

14.5.3 The Reintegrate project, in a 2025 policy brief based on the Reintegrate Study, stated: 'MeCAHT is an NGO that focuses on the rehabilitation of victims of human trafficking, many of whom are return migrants. They provide accommodation, psychosocial support, healthcare, education in the form of vocational training or formal education, and business support.'[301]

14.5.4 For more information on:

- the Reintegrate project, see Effectiveness of agencies and judicial system
- MeCAHT, see Reintegration framework and access to services

14.5.5 Other NGOs and religious organisations providing assistance to victims of trafficking include the following (the list is not exhaustive):

- Women Trafficking and Child labour Eradication Foundation (WOTCLEF), an Abuja-based NGO that 'offers assistance to young women, boys and girls who are victims of external and internal trafficking …'[302]
- Committee for the Support of the Dignity of Women (COSUDOW), which provides shelter, counselling and vocational training to victims of trafficking and was established by the Nigeria Conference of Women Religious (NCWR)[303], a Roman Catholic organisation[304]
- Devatop Centre for Africa Development, which provides psychosocial support, vocational training and business start-up kits to victims of trafficking[305]
- WOCON, which 'provid[es] support to women survivors of violence and trafficking, including returnees'[306]

14.5.6 For more information on WOCON, see Overview.

14.5.7 The March 2026 IRARA leaflet stated that the NGO IRARA provided the following support, with funding from the UK Government, to Nigerian nationals being returned to Nigeria from the UK in general:

- 'Assistance with tracing and reuniting with family.
- 'Support with in-country documentation.
- 'Signposting to local services.
- 'Support with accessing local health services.
- 'Mental wellbeing and counselling (if required) …
- 'Support with accessing the job market.

[300] EUAA, COI Report - Nigeria: Country Focus (page 32), 3 November 2025
[301] Reintegrate, Nigeria Policy Brief (pages 4-5), June 2025
[302] WOTCLEF, Home, no date
[303] Vatican News, Nigerian Catholic women religious prevent trafficking, protect victims, October 2023
[304] NCWR, Nigeria Conference of Women Religious –unity for Love and Service, no date
[305] Devatop, Annual Report 2024 (section 1), 2024
[306] EUAA, COI Report - Nigeria: Country Focus (footnote 255, page 42), 3 November 2025

- ‘Support with setting up a business.
- ‘Support with accessing vocational training or further education.
- ‘Access to an Education and Entrepreneurship Fund.
- ‘Assistance with legal migration opportunities.’[307]

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15. Internal relocation

15.1.1 There was limited information on internal relocation specific to victims of trafficking, in the sources consulted for this note (see Bibliography). For general information on internal relocation, see the Country Policy and Information Note Nigeria: Internal relocation. For information on shelters in specific locations, see Shelters and assistance.

15.1.2 The 2023 Dutch MoFA COI report, citing confidential sources, stated: ‘A woman could escape stigma by settling in a place where no one knew about her past. However, this was not possible without some form of social safety net. She would initially depend on relatives or friends if they were willing to help her. This was less likely to be the case if she was pregnant or had a child.’[308]

15.1.3 For information on stigma, see Family/social attitudes and treatment.

15.1.4 The 2024 Dutch MoFA note reported: ‘According to one confidential source, it was also common for authorities to advise victims of human trafficking who were facing death threats to relocate elsewhere in Nigeria.’[309]

15.1.5 The same Dutch MoFA note also stated:

‘According to confidential sources, many victims of human trafficking who faced reprisals (or the fear thereof) chose to resettle (or be resettled) elsewhere in Nigeria, within a completely unfamiliar environment. According to a confidential source, this was rarely with relatives, especially if family members had been involved in agreements with the human traffickers and were debtors. By staying with relatives, victims could be traced relatively quickly …

‘To resettle far from family and friends, victims often depended on financial support to go back to school or set up a small business. One confidential source spoke of programmes that had made this possible in the past, but that no longer existed. For this reason, victims of human trafficking who wanted to resettle elsewhere often relied on networks of returned migrants and NGOs to find opportunities to build a new life. The funds available for this purpose were nevertheless limited.’[310]

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[307] IRARA, Reintegration Hub (Returning to Nigeria), no date
[308] MoFA, General Country of Origin Information Report Nigeria … (page 87), 31 January 2023
[309] MoFA, Explanatory note for the Country of Origin Information … (page 6), 21 March 2024
[310] MoFA, Explanatory note for the Country of Origin Information … (page 8), 21 March 2024

Terms of Reference

The 'Terms of Reference' (ToR) provides a broad outline of the issues relevant to the scope of this note and forms the basis for the country information.

The following topics were identified prior to drafting as relevant and on which research was undertaken:

- Law on trafficking – women
- Trafficking – women, children
    - prevalence and nature
    - risk factors
    - forms of trafficking
- Action by the state
    - government action to address trafficking
    - 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

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Version control and feedback

Clearance

Below is information on when this note was cleared:

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- valid from **9 November 2026**

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

Official – sensitive: Not for disclosure – End of section

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Changes from last version of this note

Updated COI and assessment

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Independent Advisory Group on Country Information
Independent Chief Inspector of Borders and Immigration
8th Floor
10 South Colonnade
London
E14 4PU
Email: chiefinspector@icibi.gov.uk

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