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Nigeria: COI Compilation on Human Trafficking

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This report serves the specific purpose of collating legally relevant information on conditions in countries of origin pertinent to the assessment of claims for asylum. It is not intended to be a general report on human rights conditions. The report is prepared within a specified time frame on the basis of publicly available documents as well as information provided by experts. All sources are cited and fully referenced.

This report is not, and does not purport to be, either exhaustive with regard to conditions in the country surveyed, or conclusive as to the merits of any particular claim to refugee status or asylum. Every effort has been made to compile information from reliable sources; users should refer to the full text of documents cited and assess the credibility, relevance and timeliness of source material with reference to the specific research concerns arising from individual applications.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

- 1 Trafficking networks and mechanisms in Nigeria..... 3
 - 1.1 Structure and hierarchy of the trafficking networks..... 3
 - 1.2 Influence of trafficking networks on Nigerian authorities 10
 - 1.3 Role of churches..... 12
 - 1.4 Role of juju shrines..... 13
 - 1.5 Role of families/relatives 16
 - 1.6 Role of former victims becoming part of the network/exploiters 19
 - 1.7 Possible new forms of recruitment mechanisms (i.e. through social networks) 19
- 2 Victims of human trafficking..... 21
 - 2.1 Women 21
 - 2.2 Children 23
 - 2.3 Males trafficked 28
- 3 Situation of trafficking victims upon return to Nigeria 31
 - 3.1 Support and reintegration of trafficking victims 31
 - 3.1.1 Family reunification and support 34
 - 3.1.2 Discrimination and marginalisation..... 35
 - 3.1.3 Sexual and Gender Based Violence by actors other than traffickers 37
 - 3.1.4 Access to housing/shelters 38
 - 3.1.5 Access to employment and other means of livelihood 41
 - 3.1.6 Access to health care 42
- 4 Returns and re-trafficking..... 45
 - 4.1 Re-trafficking and re-migration of victims of trafficking..... 45
 - 4.2 Instances of victims of trafficking returned to Nigeria before having extinguished their “debt” towards traffickers 46
 - 4.3 Situation of victims of trafficking upon return 47
 - 4.3.1 Single mothers and their children born abroad (in Europe) 47
 - 4.3.2 Orphans / persons without family support..... 48
 - 4.3.3 HIV positive victims of trafficking 50
 - 4.3.4 Trafficking victims with physical disabilities..... 53
 - 4.3.5 Male victims of trafficking..... 54
 - 4.3.6 Already exploited in Nigeria before departing 54
- 5 Willingness and Ability of the state to provide protection to victims of trafficking and returnees..... 55
 - 5.1 Nigerian national and local protection mechanisms 55
 - 5.1.1 Relevant legislation 55
 - 5.1.2 Implementation of legal mechanisms in practice..... 58
 - 5.1.3 Instances of criminal prosecution of traffickers 61
- Sources 63

1 Trafficking networks and mechanisms in Nigeria

1.1 Structure and hierarchy of the trafficking networks

A report authored by counter trafficking expert Carrie Pemberton Ford and published by The Cambridge Centre for Applied Research in Human Trafficking (CCARHT) in June 2017 provides the following information on the organisational structure of Nigerian crime groups:

“Nigerian crime syndicates are well-organised and undertake penetration of the host country public sector structure, in order to prosecute fraud and effect criminalised control. According to Hellasfrappe, there are three kinds of Nigerian organisational structure: The first is the old-fashioned pyramid or hierarchy. There are major organizers, many of whom are in Lagos, and are linked with significant numbers of criminal operations elsewhere in the world. These are crime barons, often members of the elite and members of government, who benefit from activities that they coordinate or support. They are also among the beneficiaries of the proceeds of crime that come back to Nigeria. They protect those proceeds from seizure under Nigeria’s very poorly implemented money laundering laws. The second type of structure is the flexible network. Many Nigerian criminal organizations are relatively small, and they are based around bonds created by family membership, tribal affinity, or personal friendship. These groups operate within a larger network that resembles trade associations rather than traditional Mafia hierarchies. The fluid network provides support, structure and potential connections. The third type of group is the self-contained cell in which there are a few people with specific responsibilities and a clear cut division of labour. These cells are independent entities and take the initiative in generating and exploiting criminal opportunities.” (CCARHT, June 2017, pp. 47-48)

With regard to Nigerian sex trafficking networks the US Department of State (USDOS) in its country report on trafficking in persons published June 2017 notes:

“Nigerian sex traffickers operate in highly organized criminal webs throughout Europe, and many sex trafficking victims begin to work for their traffickers in exchange for leaving sex trafficking themselves. Nigerians are subjected to sex trafficking and forced labor in Finland. During the reporting period, Spanish and Moroccan officials dismantled a Nigerian-led criminal group that subjected at least 39 Nigerian women and girls to sex trafficking in southeastern Spain. Nigerians are increasingly exploited in Libya; lured by the promise of reaching Europe, traffickers keep victims in ‘control houses’ or ‘prostitution camps’ located on the outskirts of Tripoli and Misrata and subject them to sex trafficking and—to a lesser extent—domestic servitude until they can repay travel debts; before victims repay the debt, traffickers sell them again. During the reporting period, ISIS captured at least seven Nigerian women and girls in Libya and exploited them in sexual slavery; some of the victims had been transiting Libya en route to Europe.” (USDOS, 27 June 2017)

In a book on Human Trafficking and Prostitution Among Women and Girls of Edo State, author Mary Dorothy Ezeh mentions that human trafficking groups in Nigeria, especially in Edo State, run branches in various countries:

“The leaders of these crime groups have many wives and children in various transit and destination countries. The Madams or Masters have agents along the routes. These different organized groups constituted in Edo State by the traffickers have been in existence for a long period of time. They might come in different forms including loosely structured organizations with little in common other than the criminal undertaking. They can be highly structured hierarchical organizations based on ethnic affiliation. Let us consider the different names attributed to the organizers of this menace in the society and their mode of operation. Agent means recruiters, transporters, those who exercise control over trafficked persons; those who transfer and maintain trafficked persons in exploitative situations; those involved in related crimes; and those who profit either directly or indirectly from trafficking, its component acts and related offences. The agents negotiate with the trafficked persons or their relatives.” (Ezeh, 2017, section 3.4.)

The Conversation, a London-based independent, not-for-profit media outlet that uses content sourced from the academic and research community, in an article published in February 2017 refers to a “highly organised and wide web of criminal contacts throughout Europe” developed by Nigerian sex traffickers:

“Over the years this has grown as they have found new ways of overcoming logistical and law enforcement obstacles. Italy serves as the primary gateway for Nigerian migrants entering Europe. In 2016, almost 38,000 landed on Italian shores. Just under 10,000 were women. [...] The Nigerian criminal groups have proved to be very adaptable and to be able to quickly reconstitute themselves when put under legal pressure.” (The Conversation, 12 February 2017)

Europol, the law enforcement agency of the European Union, explains the following concerning crime groups from the West Africa region:

“For years, European police forces have been closely monitoring the trafficking of women from West Africa to the EU for sexual exploitation. Investigations show the existence of organised crime groups (OCGs) from West Africa highly networked which embrace exploiters, facilitators, trafficked women handed over to the forced prostitution market, money launderers, and persons involved in the forging of travel documents and Visas.” (Europol, 4 May 2016)

Charlotte Baarda from the Department of Sociology at the University of Oxford in her November 2015 publication notes with reference to information from 2003 that in terms of their flexibility human trafficking networks can be compared to drug trafficking rings. Baarda further explains:

“When parts of trafficking rings are successfully removed through police intervention, the remaining network can often be adjusted in order to continue business. The remaining actors are able to find new business opportunities through weak points in immigration procedures in other countries, or by exploiting other criminal connections (Kleemans and Van de Bunt, 2003).” (Baarda, November 2015, p. 3)

The Finnish Immigration Service in its report published March 2015 points out the varying type and size of Nigerian human trafficking networks:

“The type, the size and the organisation of Nigerian groups, organisations or networks exercising human trafficking vary amply. The size and degree of organisation of networks may be dependent upon the size of the operation and the number of women being trafficked, the financial strength of the groups and how well connected they are with officials. Some groups operate a loose network using mostly family members to recruit victims. Others are well structured; right from recruiting and travel agents to the law enforcement agencies, professional forgers, financiers and exploiters.” (Finnish Immigration Service, 24 March 2015, p. 4)

The USDOS in June 2017 indicates that some criminal gangs “might have had ties to so-called student cults” and “partner with organized crime networks to transport Nigerians to Europe for exploitation” (USDOS, 27 June 2017).

The report published by CCARHT mentions a Nigerian criminal network named Black Axe¹ operating in Palermo in Italy:

“In Palermo, the Black Axe – a Nigerian criminal network that has established itself in the former capital of Sicily and the centre of business activity for the Cosa Nostra, Sicily’s own Mafia – is involved in drug dealing, prostitution and the fraudulent transfer of money between Europe and Nigeria. The deputy prosecutor in Palermo, Leonardo Agueci, has noted that ‘Cosa Nostra tolerates the Nigerian Mafia in Palermo. Cosa Nostra allowed the Nigerians to organise a subordinate structure. They were tolerated as long as they didn’t come outside their perimeter’.” (CCARHT, June 2017, p. 48)

According to CCARHT the Black Axe has negotiated a deal with Sicily’s Mafia, the Cosa Nostra, and further notes:

“The Black Axe is considered a ruthless organisation which dominates its clientele through fear, intimidation, blackmail and Juju covenant rituals. This organisation has negotiated a deal with Cosa Nostra bosses in Sicily, buying the rights to operate in designated areas on the island.” (CCARHT, June 2017, p. 48)

A reportage by the US magazine The New Yorker published in April 2017 gives insights into the activities of Black Axe in Palermo:

“At street level, Ballarò [in Palermo] looks to be largely under the control of Nigerian gangs. The most powerful group, called Black Axe, has roots in Benin City and cells throughout Italy, and has carried out knife and machete attacks against other migrants. But, although

¹ For further information on the Black Axe confraternity please see the following document: IRB - Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada: Nigeria: The Black Axe confraternity, also known as the Neo-Black Movement of Africa, including their rituals, oaths of secrecy, and use of symbols or particular signs; whether they use force to recruit individuals (2009-November 2012) [NGA104208.E], 3 December 2012 (available at [ecoi.net](https://www.ecoi.net/local_link/234900/343779_en.html)) https://www.ecoi.net/local_link/234900/343779_en.html

the Nigerian gangs are armed and loosely organized, none of them ultimately work alone.”
(The New Yorker, 10 April 2017)

A November 2016 article published by the international news agency Reuters states that the leader of the Black Axe criminal organisation was sentenced to a 12 year jail term in Italy earlier that year after “a number of Nigerian men were brutally attacked in Palermo” (Reuters, 9 November 2016). The same article goes on to discuss the activities of crime groups in Italy:

“Nigerian crime gangs have proliferated in Italy, controlling an extensive network of prostitutes and ordering them ‘on demand’ from Nigeria, Italian police and prosecutors say. But now the Nigerian gangs, who have been active in Italy for more than a decade, are taking on increasingly violent tactics, including knife crime and even forging close relations with notorious mafia groups, the Cosa Nostra and the Camorra, law enforcement agencies in Italy say. The overlap with home-grown organised crime groups is troubling for police because the Italian mafia dominate the economies in their regions, often with the help of corrupt or complacent administrators, and they have spread their tentacles to northern Italy. At least 16 Nigerians have been arrested on trafficking offences since the start of 2016 in the Catania jurisdiction in Sicily, up from around 10 the previous year.” (Reuters, 9 November 2016)

The reportage by The New Yorker further mentions infiltration of Italian reception centers by Nigerian trafficking networks:

“Italian police wiretaps show that Nigerian trafficking networks have infiltrated reception centers, employing low-level staffers to monitor the girls and bribing corrupt officials to accelerate the paperwork. An anti-trafficking agent from the International Organization for Migration explained that, at centers like Palanebiolo, ‘the only thing the girl has to do is make a call and tell the madam she has arrived—which city, which camp. They know what to do, because they have their guys all over.’” (The New Yorker, 10 April 2017)

Reuters also mentions another Nigerian crime group called the Supreme Eiyé Confraternity or Air Lords² that controls much of the prostitution in Catalonia, Spain (Reuters, 9 November 2016). An article by the BBC from April 2016 indicates that the Supreme Eiyé Confraternity is “running an international sex-trafficking ring in Barcelona” and “traffics human beings and narcotics (cocaine and marijuana) and forges passports” (BBC News, 27 January 2016).

In August 2017, the European Asylum Support Office (EASO) publishes a report of the practical cooperation meeting held in June 2017, at which Sine Plambech, an anthropologist from the Danish Institute for International Studies, mentions the following concerning people involved in trafficking:

² A query response by the Canadian IRB of April 2016 provides further details on the involvement of the Supreme Eiyé Confraternity in international sex trafficking: IRB - Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada: Nigeria: The Eiyé confraternity, including origin, purpose, structure, membership, recruitment methods, activities and areas of operation; state response (2014-March 2016) [NGA105490.E], 8 April 2016 (available at [ecoi.net](http://www.ecoi.net/local_link/333110/461331_en.html)) http://www.ecoi.net/local_link/333110/461331_en.html

“The traffickers, madams, sponsors, guides have many names but they are usually called madams by the Nigerian women. It is primarily a woman’s business. They are organising it and orchestrating it, and we also have madams in the red-light districts in the various European countries. They are also mostly from Edo state, with the same ethnic origin and same social network.” (EASO, August 2017, p. 51)

Plambech goes on to describe:

“As in many trafficking networks, we often pay much attention to the men as the perpetrator, the male traffickers, and they certainly exist, but as regards the Nigerian women, the modus operandi means that there are several people involved. Though there are also men involved, the primary group of recruiters are women that are already in Europe. These are the madams. Madams can be recruiters and madams at the same time. They would identify women in the area in the village that they think might be interested in going and then they would have someone else to help, which could be a man. These are increasingly men that have been deported from Europe and who now have migration skills to become involved in this.” (EASO, August 2017, p. 49)

Charlotte Baarda similarly mentions madams in her November 2015 report:

“In Nigerian networks, women control women (Siegel and de Blank, 2010). The demand for new victims ultimately comes from the ‘madams’, female pimps, who are former prostitutes. The ‘madam’ owns a girl until she has repaid her debt. She pays for the recruitment and transportation of the girl. The possibility of earning a good income as a ‘madam’ in the future may be one of the incentives for victims to comply in an exploitative situation. This results in a circle of victims turning into offenders.” (Baarda, November 2015, pp. 3-4)

Germany’s public international broadcaster Deutsche Welle (DW) writes with regard to madams:

“A Nigerian host in Italy is referred to as ‘Madam,’ she is at the top of a smaller trafficking network. The madam we found lived in a suburb of Florence and one victim made serious accusations against her: ‘She has been beating us and forced us into prostitution,’ the victim said.” (DW, 14 March 2016)

The January 2016 BBC article distinguishes between two ranks of madams when describing human trafficking to Spain:

“Lower-ranking madames prowl the streets - many on la Rambla, the main tourist strip in the centre of Barcelona - constantly texting and calling their girls to check on their whereabouts. Girls are told to earn about 500 euros (£370) a night to stay in the madame’s good books. [...]

Higher-ranking madames collect money from their subordinates to pass on to local SEC [Supreme Eiyé Confraternity] leaders known as ibakkas. Always men, the ibakkas run the whole operation. They facilitate payment through the hawala system - a form of money transfer based on trust and one that is difficult to trace. Ibakkas make sure that if any of

their girls step out of line, their families back home are threatened. Family members have been known to be abducted and 'disappeared' when girls refuse to pay their madames." (BBC News, 27 January 2016)

The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) mentions the following concerning the involvement of women in the trafficking process:

"From the limited information available, the global pattern of a prominent female role in the trafficking process seems to apply also in this region [Sub-Saharan Africa]. About half of the approximately 200 convicted traffickers whose gender was reported between 2012 and 2014 were females. Data from Nigeria was significant in this respect, given that this country convicted more traffickers than any other country in the region during the reporting period." (UNODC, 2016, p. 114)

In the August 2017 EASO report, Sine Plambech mentions with regard to smugglers:

"When I talk about smugglers I refer to the people who take them across the Sahara desert to Libya and across the Mediterranean. It is not the same as traffickers, madams and sponsors. That kind of smuggling where some people would be involved in the recruitment and in taking women across Nigeria and through Niger is what you can call an entrepreneurship of coincidence. While we often talk about it as very organised and involving a huge network of people, very often when we do these surveys and detailed ethnographic insights, we see that it is much more fragmented. It is often a person who is just around and he is the one who can participate in this, or it is a woman who can participate in that because she has some kinds of skills, maybe returnees vs the much-organised networks. We have both types." (EASO, August 2017, p. 51)

An article by DW published in March 2016 quotes a trafficker that agreed to be interviewed who describes himself as "simply a service provider":

"After long negotiations, a trafficker agreed to an interview with us. He called himself Steve and claimed he has already transported more than 100 Nigerians all the way to Libya. He wouldn't speak about the people behind his business. He said he was simply a service provider. 'The people here in Edo State are greedy. They are willing to do anything for a better life,' Steve said. For 600 euros (\$666) per person, Steve organizes the journey from Nigeria to Libya. 'Most people know how dangerous the journey is through the Sahara,' the human smuggler told us. Many people die very often along the way. 'That is the risk,' Steve said, who brings the migrants personally to Agadez in Niger. A colleague then takes over from there." (DW, 14 March 2016)

Ezeh in her 2017 book refers to a statement by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and mentions that traffickers ("agents") "sometimes do not perceive themselves as part of the trafficking network, even if they are, in fact an engine in the machinery of human trafficking":

"The agent could also be the link between the supply and the demand. On one hand, the agents supply the victims through recruitment, deception and transportation and an exploitation process. The agents provide easy access to the trafficked persons. They collaborate with transporters, receivers, pimps, brothel-keepers, corrupt border guards

and producers of false document. All the above mentioned persons benefit as the trafficked persons pass through their hands. The agents are sometimes part of the extended family. He/ she also has links with the nuclear family or is someone known within the local Community.” (Ezeh, 2017, section 3.4.)

Plambech further outlines the complexity regarding the differentiation between trafficker and victim of trafficking:

“The mix of who is the trafficker and who is the trafficked is becoming increasingly complex. I guess that those of you who are working on this recognise this complexity. For instance, I have had cases where women were asked to pay EUR 70,000 but then if they agreed to find and recruit five other women to bring along with them across the Sahara, they would come to Europe having to pay only EUR 30,000. You see how these market dynamics are very crucial to explore.” (EASO, August 2017, p. 49)

Sources mention various persons involved in trafficking, like men known as coyotes or trolleys, who pick up recruited girls in Lagos or northern Nigeria (BBC News, 27 January 2016) and guide men “who escort the women from Nigeria to Morocco or Libya via truck or van, train or on foot” (The Brownsville Herald, 10 September 2017). Ezeh further mentions the “black boy”, agents of the madam who “monitor the movements of the victims through mobile phones and sometimes patrol along the streets to ensure the victims do not report them to any authority” (Ezeh, 2017, section 4.4.2). Omoregie Pat Iziengbe from the Department of History at the University of Ibadan in a July 2017 paper however notes that “being called Black boy among Benin trafficked girls could be very derogative. It clearly refers to an African male dating trafficked girl/girls solely for financial gains”. Iziengbe in this regard further describes the phenomenon of “Purray boys” in her paper (Iziengbe, 26 July 2017, p. 6).

Temitope Obasaju Stephen, a criminologist at the University of East London, in 2013 mentions further actors involved in the human trafficking business, including sponsors (providing travel money), groomers (“Mama”, “Madam”), controllers (senior or ex-prostitutes monitoring new arrivals), crossers (arranging border crossing and temporary accommodation), the recruitment agency (middlemen who negotiate with the families), the family contact (collaborators in trading their wives and daughters into the sex trade industry), lawyers (who draft debt payment agreements), Voodoo priests (who administer the traditional oaths) and travel agencies (arrangement of travel documents) (Stephen, 22 May 2013, pp. 10-11).

Actors involved in the human trafficking business are also mentioned in a 2017 IOM report:

“Oga: It is the masculine equivalent of ‘madame’. [...] Boga: is a person, normally, a male, who accompanies. The boga is the one who accompanies one or more girls from Nigeria to Libya and is in permanent telephone contact with the madame/oga and traffickers in the criminal network. Boga is also the person who picks up and transports the newly arrived victim of trafficking from a ‘reception centre’ in Italy, to meet the designated/respective madame. Several boga travel from Nigeria to Europe for guarding the victims until they reach their destination and become exploited. [...] Connection man: travel organizer/smuggler. Generally referred to as the one who organizes trips from Nigeria to Italy through Libya. More ‘connection men’ can work together to transport a single victim,

for instance, one is in charge of the Nigeria leg and the other of the Libya leg of the journey.” (IOM, 2017, p. 7)

For further information on the structure and hierarchy of human trafficking groups please also see:

- EASO - European Asylum Support Office: Nigeria; Sex trafficking of women, October 2015 (available at ecoi.net), pp. 20-22
http://www.ecoi.net/file_upload/90_1445949766_2015-10-easo-nigeria-sex-trafficking.pdf
- Finnish Immigration Service: Human Trafficking of Nigerian Women to Europe, 24 March 2015, pp. 4-10
http://www.migri.fi/download/60332_Suuntaus_NigSuuntaus_HumanTraffickingfromNigeriaFINAL200415.pdf?5715f56266acd288
- UNODC - United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime: The role of organized crime in the smuggling of migrants from West Africa to the European Union, January 2011
https://www.unodc.org/documents/human-trafficking/Migrant-Smuggling/Report_SOM_West_Africa_EU.pdf

1.2 Influence of trafficking networks on Nigerian authorities

Transparency International, an international non-governmental organization which is based in Berlin, in September 2011 provides general information on corruption and human trafficking (not focussing on any particular country):

“Corruption is present at every stage of the trafficking process, beginning with a victim’s recruitment and transport through to their exploitation. Corruption can facilitate the transportation of victims within countries and across borders without detection or requests for paperwork. Once the victims reach their destination and the exploitation begins, traffickers rely on corruption to maintain their silence and avoid arrest. US government findings suggest that globally less than one in 10 traffickers are ever prosecuted.

Weak institutions offer weak protection. Pay-offs to police, courts and other public sector officials result in state institutions being willing to turn a blind eye to trafficking gangs or even to participate in them. Studies show that victims tend to come from countries where the public sector is perceived to be highly corrupt, as measured by our Corruption Perceptions Index.

The relatively low risk of getting caught is matched by the lure of large profits from selling the victims into prostitution, forced labour and other forms of abuse. The International Labour Organization estimates that about US \$32 billion in profits are made each year from the sexual or physical exploitation of trafficked victims, affecting men and boys as often as it does women and girls.

The mix of profit and impunity through easily ‘bought’ protection from law enforcers and politicians has created a ‘high reward/low risk’ scenario for human traffickers and their accomplices. Trafficking networks often overlap with organised crime networks. According

to the UN Office on Drugs and Crime, human trafficking brings organised crime groups their third largest source of profits, after drugs and arms.” (Transparency International, 1 September 2011)

The USDOS in June 2017 mentions in its Nigeria trafficking report the following concerning corruption and reports of official complicity in trafficking offenses:

“Corruption affected all levels of government and the security forces and there were reports of official complicity in trafficking offenses. The government took few steps to investigate or prosecute officials who committed violations, whether in the security forces or elsewhere in the government. In April 2016, an international organization reported that more than half of the areas surveyed to assess the treatment of IDPs in Maiduguri—including IDP camps, settlements, and host communities—reported instances in which camp authorities, including government officials and security forces, forced or coerced women to exchange sex acts for food or freedom to move in and out of IDP camps. A second NGO also reported sexual exploitation of IDPs by camp officials. In response to these allegations, the president instructed the inspector general to create a special panel to investigate cases of sexual exploitation reported by the second NGO, which resulted in the arrest of seven government officials and two CJTF members for alleged sexual misconduct towards IDPs, including sex trafficking. The investigations were ongoing at the end of the reporting period.” (USDOS, 27 June 2017)

The USDOS further notes that the government “maintained anti-trafficking law enforcement efforts, but there were increased reports of government complicity in human trafficking” (USDOS, 27 June 2017).

An article by Nigerian newspaper Vanguard published July 2017 quotes the Nigerian Deputy President of the Senate, Ike Ekweremadu, who said “that human trafficking syndicates were powerful and operated with the collaboration of corrupt persons in agencies entrusted with law enforcement and protection of persons across the world.” (Vanguard, 21 July 2017)

The International Movement against all forms of Racism and Discrimination (IMADR), an international non-profit, non-governmental human rights organization devoted to eliminating discrimination and racism, in October 2015 notes that corruption can facilitate trafficking and explains:

“A 2015 report by Human Rights Watch noted that ‘Endemic public sector corruption continued to undermine the enjoyment of social and economic rights in Nigeria.’ Corruption can facilitate trafficking, for instance it can ease the transportation of victims within countries and across borders without detection or requests for paperwork.” (IMADR, October 2015, p. 2)

“Secondly, the political system characterized by institutional weakness and fragility, has created fertile ground for organized criminal groups to thrive.” (IMADR, October 2015, p. 3)

The Africa Faith and Justice Network (AFJN), a Catholic advocacy group that strives to influence responsible US policy in Africa, in July 2017 also mentions the influence of corruption on trafficking:

“Globalization allows traffickers to set up complex routes and systems within and across borders. The presence of these complex channels creates a challenge because it is understood that prosecuting one trafficker may only minimally hinder the network of traffickers. Corruption prevents traffickers from being held accountable and can also prevent victims from seeking justice. In fact, when corruption is found within political institutions, the laws in place are not implemented to their full capacity, if at all. Also, corruption leads law enforcement to succumb to bribery or charge victims outrageous amounts of money in order to have access to justice. Furthermore, gender inequality in a society impacts all other factors.” (AFJN, 28 July 2017)

Temitope Obasaju Stephen in his report published May 2013 claims some consular officers and law enforcement agencies are involved in trafficking:

“Consular Officers in some Embassies and high commission are allegedly involved in this racket as they facilitate the provision of Entry Visa usually for a very big amount of money or sometimes free sex services in exchange for overlooking fraudulent documents and paper works.”

Law Enforcement Agencies like the immigration officers helps in clearance of fake travel documents and given safe passage in the airports and borders. The police officers also help in actual escort of people across borders.” (Stephen, 22 May 2013, pp. 11-12)

For further information on the involvement of national authorities in human trafficking from West Africa please also see:

- UNODC - United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime: The role of organized crime in the smuggling of migrants from West Africa to the European Union, January 2011, pp. 50-51 [https://www.unodc.org/documents/human-trafficking/Migrant-Smuggling/Report SOM West Africa EU.pdf](https://www.unodc.org/documents/human-trafficking/Migrant-Smuggling/Report_SOM_West_Africa_EU.pdf)

1.3 Role of churches

CCARHT in June 2017 quotes Eki Ogbeide, chairwoman of the Edo State Women’s Association, who is concerned that recruitment occurs within church fellowships:

“Meanwhile Eki Ogbeide, chairwoman of the Edo State Women’s Association, is clear about the need for work on prevention in terms of creating viable alternative futures for the communities most at risk for female international trafficking. It is estimated that well over 85% of international trafficking in females from Nigeria is still sourced from Edo and Delta States, although there is some evidence that recruitment is diversifying into other areas in Nigeria. Eki has concerns that some church fellowships might prefer to turn a blind eye to some of the trafficking networks and recruitment which is occurring within their fellowships and across their communities, ‘because money speaks, you know, it has the power to turn people’s cheeks, and not in a good way. It’s not all, no, I couldn’t and wouldn’t say all, but the temptation is there, particularly when you can just start up an

African independent church, like that, and then you need to have people tithing to pay you as their pastor. For some, there will be the temptation to simply look the other way and accept the tithe of the wealth that has been generated', she explained." (CCARHT, June 2017, p. 59)

The US television news channel CNN in a December 2017 article interviews a woman, who has been "trafficked into Europe for sexual exploitation". According to her "she was convinced to go by a man she met at church, who said he was an assistant pastor":

"She [the trafficking victim] says he told her he had a vision from God that she traveled overseas, that his sister in Russia could get a job in a hair salon. For added insurance, the man had given the items she left behind to a traditional priest. 'We always have had this belief that your future lies in the hand of God,' says Nwoha [a local NGO worker]. 'Religious leaders, both the traditional and the Christian, are capitalizing on this.' [...] Her [the trafficking victim's] former church admits her trafficker was a member of the congregation but denies that he was an assistant pastor." (CNN, 5 December 2017)

An article by the Nigerian newspaper Vanguard in June 2017 reports the arrest of pastor Endurance Ehioze, who is attached to a Pentecostal church in Benin, and his sister for allegedly being involved in trafficking girls to Russia (Vanguard, 30 June 2017).

In the August 2017 EASO report, Sine Plambech explains that although the involvement of churches in trafficking has not been part of her work she is sure the problem exists:

"The role of the churches... it is not something that I have worked a lot with. When the women return, that is a place they would go to seek answers in terms of why they were returned, why they failed in being in Europe and why the madam or the traffickers deceived them, they do seek different kinds of answers. I know that there have been several accusations, it has not been part of my work but I am sure it exists, where priests and pastors and also the shrines are involved in the trafficking industry. The juju priests are paid to make this kind of oaths. We cannot separate this from the political economy or trafficking as a job market. I know it is controversial but that is how it is: they earn a lot of money on making these oaths and the churches do as well." (EASO, August 2017, p. 57)

UNODC in its report published January 2011 also mentions incidents of church involvement:

"Sometimes local churches in Nigeria also administer rituals binding the women to the pimps and madams who will control their fate for the next few years. There are even cases of Christian pastors encouraging their own daughters to work in the sex trade in Europe. [Information gleaned from research in Edo State in late 2009.]" (UNODC, January 2011, p. 37)

1.4 Role of juju shrines

The USDOS in its country report on trafficking in persons published June 2017 provides information on the role of juju in trafficking:

"Before departure for work abroad, many Nigerian women participate in a traditional ceremony with a juju priest; some traffickers exploit this tradition and tell the women they

must obey every order or a curse will harm them, which prevents victims from seeking assistance or cooperating with law enforcement. Some victims' parents encourage them to obey their traffickers and endure exploitation to earn money." (USDOS, 27 June 2017)

CCARHT in June 2017 features a more detailed account of the role of juju:

"The role of Juju is complex and should be understood in the context of African traditional religion and not as some sort of exotic practice. A great deal of this ritual activity is about cementing a deal, sealing a contract. Western practitioners at all levels (from enforcement personnel through to those in NGO support houses), confronting this for the first time in psychological services or in the court room, are often challenged by Nigerian trafficking cases where the victims are controlled by such practices and withhold information, claim not to remember or return to their traffickers. There is a clear need to demystify what is in play.

Empirical data shows that while Juju can be used in the context of trafficking, it is traditional oath-taking that is dominant in the first instance. [...]

The traditional practices vary and may be specific to particular shrines. Researchers are also aware that these ceremonies are meant to be secret and undisclosed and, therefore, the reliability of data on how many victims of trafficking from Nigeria undergo these processes is presently not clear. It is probably safe to assume that there are more instances of this highly effective process than are currently being revealed within the Western enforcement context. [...]

The trafficked women report that these rituals may require them to give items of personal clothing or their blood, pubic hair or finger nails to the shrine 'priests'. [...]

These rituals can clearly be frightening for the young women, ensuring their silence and obedience. Some women refuse to discuss the rituals or make only oblique reference to them. [...]

In some accounts of these rituals, the amount of debt is agreed during or before the ritual is performed and the oath-taking ritual serves as a contract between the trafficker and the one being trafficked for the purpose of 'allegiance, secrecy, confidentiality and repayment of the cost of her journey' as well as other expenses incurred in the process, all of which are solely determined by the trafficker – who is usually the sponsor or recruiting Madame." (CCARHT, June 2017, pp. 62-64)

Plambech provides the following information on the role of juju in trafficking in the EASO report published August 2017:

"Many of the women would mention Ayelala if you asked specifically what kind of shrine they are devotees of. The reason why it is often mentioned is because we have Nigerian women who say that they do not dare to denounce their traffickers or madams because they fear juju and that before they left they swore an oath, in one of the shrines in Benin City, that they will not disclose any information about the madams. They promised to pay back the debt and they made this kind of agreements. It is important to say that many of

these women have made such agreements many times in their lives because of other things that are not connected to trafficking. It is a place where they would go to and they would also go to the church; it is combined.” (EASO, August 2017, p. 51)

The National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons (NAPTIP) of Nigeria in a Facebook post published in October 2017 describes the use of voodoo and oath-taking as follows:

“It is no secret that one of the control mechanisms employed by traffickers over their victims is the use of voodoo and oath-taking, usually at Ayelala shrines in Edo State. This voodoo is meant to instill fear into them and keep them loyal at all costs. In light of the above, NAPTIP Benin Zonal Command felt the need to sensitize the priests at the shrines, with the aim of enlisting their support to stop this menace. This effort is already yielding fruits as some of the chief priests have turned to anti human trafficking ambassadors.” (NAPTIP, 30 October 2017)

The New Yorker also mentions rituals performed by juju priests in Benin City that are used by traffickers to “guarantee the obedience of their victims”:

“In Benin City, important agreements are often sealed with an oath, administered by a juju priest. The legal system can be dodged or corrupted, the thinking goes, but there is no escaping the consequences of violating a promise made before the old gods. Many sex traffickers have used this tradition to guarantee the obedience of their victims. Madams in Italy have their surrogates in Nigeria take the girls to a local shrine, where the juju priest performs a bonding ritual, typically involving the girl’s fingernails, pubic hair, or blood, which the priest retains until she has repaid her debt to her trafficker.” (The New Yorker, 10 April 2017)

Public Radio International (PRI), a US-based media company producing and distributing programming to public radio stations, also describes juju oaths in an article published in May 2017:

“When a woman approached her, telling her she was beautiful and asking if she wanted to go to Europe, Peace agreed. She knew she’d have to work on the street, and she knew she would need to pay the woman 30,000 euros once she arrived in Europe. She completed what Nigerians call the ‘juju oath,’ an animist, spiritual contract in which the girl agrees to be brought to Europe, and binds herself to her debt with bits of her pubic hair and blood. The ritual is taken extremely seriously — and violation is considered justification for murder of a girl or her family.” (PRI, 18 May 2017)

The British daily newspaper The Guardian writes that “Nigerian trafficking gangs use a toxic mix of false promises of legitimate employment and traditional ‘juju’ ceremonies to recruit and gain psychological control over their victims. The women are led to believe that terrible things will happen to their families if they fail to honour their debts.” (The Guardian, 8 August 2016)

The Africa Faith and Justice Network (AFJN) writes that “[t]raffickers convince victims that voodoo rituals prohibit them from escaping and if the victim attempts to turn in the traffickers,

severe consequences will ensue” (AFJN, 28 July 2017), while the Irish internet publication The Journal in an article published in January 2017 mentions “some kind of ‘voodoo process’” performed in Nigeria by swearing an oath before a “native doctor” that involves the cutting of nails and pubic hair (The Journal, 18 January 2017).

Baarda in November 2015 writes that voodoo distinguishes the Nigerian human trafficking streams from those in other regions:

“For example, in Eastern European rings, direct monitoring is often necessary: ‘loverboys’ bring women to Western Europe and exploit them under the threat of violence in case of defiance (Kleemans and Smit, 2014: 6). In contrast, Nigerian networks can exercise remote control. Recruited women are made to go through elaborate voodoo rituals in Nigeria to enforce a contract, which dictates that they will repay their enormous debt. The terror-inducing rituals lead to a situation where the women will not run away when travelling on their own, out of fear for themselves or their family being hurt by voodoo. Often, the women cooperate in the rituals voluntarily, albeit under deceptive promises: they may not be aware of the height of the debt and the exploitative circumstances in which they will have to work in Europe (Kleemans, 2011).” (Baarda, November 2015, p. 5)

Europol also mentions the use of voodoo rituals commonly practised in West Africa:

“After being recruited in their home countries, the victims are trafficked to Europe and sent to work in brothels or in the street with forged identity documents. The continuous shifting of exploited victims within the EU is commonly noticed. Traffickers use voodoo rituals, which are commonly practised in West Africa, as an effective mean of exerting pressure on their victims, to intimidate them, and ensure obedience; this practice enables the perpetrators to make the exploited women paying off their debts (which can be up to 60.000 Euros) incurred as a result of their trafficking to Europe. In this context, increased police checks continue to play an important role in the identification of victims of human trafficking and the associated shedding of light on previously undetected crime.” (Europol, 4 May 2016)

1.5 Role of families/relatives

In the August 2017 EASO report Sine Plambech, the anthropologist from the Danish Institute for International Studies, notes with regard to the role of families:

“With regards to family involvement, it is very mixed. The idea that families are selling their daughters, I have heard that, but it is much more complex in the sense that women feel pressured to be involved in it, but it is not necessarily selling [them] and she feels she is the only one that the family hope will be able to take on this journey and manage to get to Europe. The families are involved, but there are also quite a lot of cases where the family is not involved at all, in particular among the young women who are not leaving children behind in Edo State that their mothers would have to take care of so that she would have to say, I am leaving my children here and I am leaving the country... the young women would often not say anything, they hope to call later when they arrive in Libya or Italy and say, I am here now. They know that their parents would prevent them from travelling, as

they know it is dangerous. Therefore, it is both, both pushing but also preventing.” (EASO, August 2017, p. 56)

The AFJN in July 2017 also indicates that there are “cases where parents knowingly send their children abroad because they have heard of the fortunes available in Europe and hope for a better life for their kids”. The parents, however, “are less likely to be fully aware of the true intentions of the traffickers, who they see in some cases as persons giving a rare opportunity to their children.” (AFJN, 28 July 2017)

The Brownsville Herald, a newspaper based in Brownsville, Texas, in September 2017 quotes Inmaculada Antolinez Dominguez from Pablo de Olavide University in Seville, Spain, who has researched Nigerian sex trafficking:

“The reality of the network is that it’s not composed only of traffickers who are bad people, Dominguez said. Family members or someone close to the family are often involved, she said. Young Nigerian women are often encouraged to make the trip to establish a toehold in Europe for their families and community members to escape dangerous, poverty-stricken conditions at home, Dominguez said.” (The Brownsville Herald, 10 September 2017)

The London-based media outlet The Conversation describes the role of families in an article published in February 2017:

“Family pressure is often the deciding factor in their leaving home. The struggle to make ends meet often leads families to view sending young women off to Europe as an investment, leading to future income for the household. Thus family members are involved in the recruiting phase of trafficking. Women migrants – unlike their male counterparts – don’t have to finance their own trips to Europe. They are sponsored by their future ‘employers’ and once in Europe are forced to work until they repay the debt incurred for passage. This can take years as the inflated sums can amount to as much as €60,000. This indebtedness also means that women are less likely to report their situation to the police. Extended family members often mislead women into believing that their migration process will be different as their contact in Italy is a trusted one. Unlike the Western ‘extended family’, Nigerian families are tightly knit through ancestral ties. This makes the closeness of the biological connection irrelevant in determining the importance of the relationship. This creates a very profound sense of moral and financial obligation among family members, a factor which has great importance in the dynamics of sex trafficking. In Nigerian families, for instance, the wealthier family members are both expected and feel obligated to provide financially for those who struggle. Nigerian ‘madams’ use this to their advantage. For example they allow women to keep a small sum of money to send back home occasionally. These remittances become a double-edged sword. They provide a financial incentive to the family in Nigeria to do whatever they can to discourage the women from escaping. As long as the woman keeps sending money home, neither the community nor the family is likely to question the source of her income. Being unable to find success abroad and to live up to her financial responsibility to her family would be

perceived as a failure and the source of significant shame and dishonour on a personal, family and community level.” (The Conversation, 12 February 2017)

The involvement of the families in trafficking is also mentioned in an article published by The New Yorker:

“Many of the original traffickers came from Upper Sakpoba Road, in one of the city’s [Benin City] poorest neighborhoods, where children hawk yams and sex workers earn less than two dollars per client. Nuns working for an organization called the Committee for the Support and Dignity of Women travel to local schools and markets, explaining to girls the brutality of the industry. But a nun told me that women in the market on Upper Sakpoba Road warn them off. ‘Many of them say we should not stop this trafficking, because their daughters are making money,’ she said. ‘The families are involved. Everybody is involved.’” (The New Yorker, 10 April 2017)

IOM in a 2017 report notes an “active involvement of families, which select a daughter to send to Europe in order to improve the family’s conditions” and goes on to describe:

“Families often choose daughters that can be ‘sacrificed’, for example, because they are suffering from disabilities, cognitive delays, as well as physical or psychological problems.” (IOM, 2017, p. 26)

The Nigerian newspaper Premium Times in June 2016 cites an official of the responsible authority NAPTIP regarding the role of families in trafficking:

“The Commandant of the Kano Zone of National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons and Related Matters, Shehu Umar, has said that about 70 percent of freed female victims of forced labour or trafficking were discovered to have been taken away with the consent of their parents. [...] Mr. Umar said following the shocking finding that parents connived with traffickers, the job of the NAPTIP officials had been expanded to include the enlightenment and education of parents on the dangers of their action. He explained that due to the rigorous enlightenment campaign the agency had recorded some successes in reducing the conspiracy by parents to send away their children.” (Premium Times, 23 June 2016)

An article by Vanguard newspaper cites a female pastor with experience with victims of child trafficking within and outside Nigeria as saying that “most mothers encouraged their daughters to engage in prostitution even in Nigeria” and that “trafficking has grown into a big business controlled by a cartel around the world.” (Vanguard, 21 February 2016)

The BBC writes that some parents “approach recruiters on behalf of their children” although they are aware “they will be working as a prostitute in Europe” (BBC News, 27 January 2016). CCARHT in June 2017 mentions the possible involvement of family members in the traditional oath-taking in the recruitment process of human trafficking (CCARHT, June 2017, p. 62).

1.6 Role of former victims becoming part of the network/exploiters

Reuters writes in an article published in November 2016 that according to prosecutors “Nigerian prostitutes frequently end up working as recruiters or ‘madams’ for new arrivals from Africa” and also help “driving trafficking victims to the cities where they become prostitutes” (Reuters, 9 November 2016). PRI describes “Madams” as “older Nigerian women, sometimes former prostitutes themselves, who have climbed the organizational ranks”. (PRI, 18 May 2017)

An article by Voice of America (VOA) on trafficking of Nigerian women to Europe published in June 2017 quotes a Belgian police commissioner, who says that “most Nigerian illegal prostitutes end up trafficking and exploiting other girls once they have paid off their debt, meaning they will no longer be seen as a victim”. The commissioner further states:

“‘They know very well what they have suffered in the past, and of course at a certain moment they decide to transform themselves to a madam too, because of the money of course,’ he [Police commissioner Franz Vandelook] said. ‘And they need money to feed the family who is still in Nigeria. So I can understand the situation, but in our society, in our European society, we cannot accept the situation.’” (VOA, 29 June 2017)

Sine Plambech describes the often complex relationship between women and their traffickers:

“Often the women would not denounce their traffickers or the madams for multiple reasons. We are often told that it is because they are so afraid of the madams and the traffickers, which is also true and they have good reasons to be afraid of them, but it is also because we have to understand this complex double figure of the madam, which on one hand is the one that exploits them severely, on the other hand we see cases where it is a little bit more complex where they are actually travelling around Europe with their madam, because she used to be in that situation herself and now she is high up in the hierarchy. She is still earning money on the newcomer but the relationship is quite complex. We also see Romanian women who often have boyfriend/girlfriend relationship with the one we would consider a trafficker. These relationships can be quite complex.” (EASO, August 2017, p. 51)

For further information on madams please [see section 1.1](#) on the structure and hierarchy of trafficking networks.

1.7 Possible new forms of recruitment mechanisms (i.e. through social networks)

No information concerning the use of social media by traffickers especially in Nigeria could be found. The following information refers to the use of online technologies by traffickers in general:

A report written by Mark Latonero, the research director at the University of Southern California (USC) Annenberg Center on Communication Leadership & Policy, provides the following overview on the use of online technologies for sex and labour trafficking:

“While traditional channels of trafficking remain in place, online technologies give traffickers the unprecedented ability to exploit a greater number of victims and advertise their services across geographic boundaries. Yet the extent to which online technologies

are used in both sex and labor trafficking is unclear, and the current approach to the question is lacking. [...] Social networks and online classified sites are being used by traffickers to market, recruit, sell, and exploit for criminal purposes. Many of these sites are explicit in nature and some are underground.” (Latonero, September 2011, p. iv)

Also a November 2015 article by Venturebeat, a technology website headquartered in San Francisco, states that “traffickers worldwide are increasingly using social media to contact vulnerable teenagers and sell them into sex work, quick to adopt the latest online platforms popular with teenagers that has created new challenges for law enforcement agencies”. The article adds that according to Europol “social media and other online technology have not only taken the recruitment and selling process off the streets but also allow traffickers to control victims using remote surveillance.” (Venturebeat, 15 November 2015)

The High school newspaper M-A Chronicle in April 2017 also mentions the use of social media in human trafficking:

“Instagram, Snapchat, Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, Flickr, Pinterest, Tumblr, Tinder. These are but a few examples among thousands of social media applications that fill smartphones, laptops, and computers across the globe. [...] While this new method of communication allows the world to grow closer through shared experiences, social media brings with it several concerns that were previously non-issues. [...] Chief among these is the surprisingly prevalent and deeply disturbing issue of human trafficking.

Human trafficking is defined as the action of illegally transporting people from one country or area to another, typically for the purposes of forced labor or commercial sexual exploitation. This is not a new issue nor is it one that is likely to subside in the near future, but the truth is that thousands of active social media accounts have created a place for human trafficking to evolve and become even more dangerous.” (M-A Chronicle, 2 April 2017)

2 Victims of human trafficking

The US Department of State (USDOS) in its country report on Trafficking in Persons published June 2017 provides the following overview on human trafficking:

“Nigerian traffickers take women and children to other West and Central African countries - including Mali, Cote d’Ivoire, and Cabo Verde - as well as to South Africa, where they are exploited in forced labor and sex trafficking. Nigerian women and children are recruited and transported to destinations in North Africa, the Middle East, and Central Asia, and held captive in the commercial sex industry or forced labor, including forced begging in Morocco. West African children are subjected to forced labor in Nigeria, including in granite and gold mines. Women from West African countries transit Nigeria en route to Europe and the Middle East, where they are subjected to forced prostitution. Nigeria’s ports and waterways around Calabar are transit points for West African children subjected to forced labor in Cameroon, Equatorial Guinea, and Gabon.” (USDOS, 27 June 2017)

Dagaci Aliyu Manbe from the Department of Sociology at the University of Abuja in June 2016 further explains:

“Nigerian women and children are trafficked both internally and externally for sex. In the last decade, thousands of women and young girls were trafficked into the sex industry, especially into Europe, so that many people in Nigeria came to equate trafficking with prostitution alone and not with other forms of labor. Traffickers recruit girls from countryside markets, salons and other public places.” (Manbe, June 2016, p. 24)

Ifeyinwa Mbakogu in a report published in September 2016 by the South Korean Yonsei Journal of International Studies notes the following:

“In the late 1990s, human trafficking in Nigeria was associated with the trafficking of women and girls from Edo state for prostitution in Italy and other European countries. Recent trafficking literature shows that Nigerian women and children are likely to be trafficked for purposes other than prostitution. Women and children are liable to be trafficked for domestic servitude, forced labor, hawking, organ harvesting, early or forced marriage, and other exploitative practices.” (Mbakogu, September 2016)

2.1 Women

The UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) in July 2017 states that Nigeria “remains a source, transit and destination country for trafficking in persons, in particular women and girls, for purposes of sexual and labour exploitation”, with “internally displaced women and girls as well as women living in poverty” being vulnerable to trafficking (CEDAW, 24 July 2017, p. 9). The USDOS mentions that Nigerian women and girls “are victims of domestic servitude and sex trafficking” and further notes:

“Authorities identified Nigerian trafficking victims - often exploited by Nigerian traffickers - in more than 29 countries during the reporting period. Officials report an increase in Nigerian women and girls subjected to sex trafficking within Nigeria and throughout Europe, including in Italy, Austria, and Russia; an international organization estimated 80

percent of all female Nigerian migrants in Italy are or will become sex trafficking victims.” (USDOS, 27 June 2017)

The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) in its Global Report on Trafficking in Persons 2016 indicates that concerning “adult victims, trafficking of women is more prevalent than trafficking of men” and goes on to report:

“Women victims are mostly detected in Nigeria and Uganda, while at the regional level, they accounted for 27 per cent of victims in the year 2014 (or most recent). Trafficking of men is limited compared to trafficking in children and women.” (UNODC, 2016, p. 112)

The International Movement against all forms of Racism and Discrimination (IMADR) points out that “[w]omen and young girls, owing to the feminization of poverty and discriminatory cultural practices, are even more exposed to the tactics of traffickers”. (IMADR, October 2015, pp. 2-3)

The Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF) and other organisations note the following in a joint report to the CEDAW Committee:

“Cases of trafficking, abduction, and forced marriages of women and girls are so common that they are no longer newsworthy. Women are consistently being objectified and this is linked to cultural and religious practices that demand the subjugation and submission of women to men.” (WILPF, June 2017, p. 8)

In August 2016 an article by The Guardian provides the following overview on sex trafficking of women between Nigeria and Italy:

“For nearly three decades, a thriving sex-trafficking industry has been operating between Nigeria and Italy. Many experts believe the trade in women started in the 1980s when Nigerians travelling to Italy on work visas to pick tomatoes realised that selling sex was far easier and more profitable than harvesting fruits or vegetables. Since then an estimated 30,000 Nigerian women have been trafficked from their home country into prostitution, finding themselves on street corners and brothels in Italy and other European states. More than 85% of these women have come from Nigeria’s Edo state in the south of the country, where traffickers have historically exploited chronic poverty, discrimination, a failing education system and lack of opportunities for young women to sell false promises of prosperity in Europe.” (The Guardian, 7 August 2016)

In an article published January 2017 The Guardian refers to statistics by the International Organization for Migration (IOM) indicating a doubling of the number of Nigerian women who travel by boat from Libya to Italy in 2016. The article further notes:

“The IOM believes approximately 80% of the 11,009 Nigerian women registered at landing points in Sicily in 2016 were trafficked, and will go on to live a life of forced prostitution in Italy and other countries in Europe. The figure is almost double that of 2015, when 5,600 women were registered by the IOM. The 2016 figures represent an almost eightfold increase from 2014, when 1,450 Nigerian women were registered at landing points in Sicily.” (The Guardian, 12 January 2017)

2.2 Children

IMADR in October 2015 mentions that “Nigerian women and girl victims of trafficking are mainly recruited for domestic servitude and sex trafficking while boys are generally forced to work on plantations or in commercial farming, construction, quarries and mines, or engage in petty crimes and the drug trade”. According to IMADR, “Nigerian victims are taken to other West and Central African countries (Côte d’Ivoire, Mali, Benin, Equatorial Guinea, Cameroon, Gabon and Guinea), as well as to South Africa.” (IMADR, October 2015, p. 1)

The United States Department of Labor (USDOL) notes that Nigerian girls “are trafficked to North Africa and Europe for forced labor and commercial sexual exploitation. In 2016, there was an increase in child trafficking for sexual exploitation, particularly to Europe.” (USDOL, 30 September 2017, p. 2)

A report published by the International Organization for Migration (IOM) in 2017 gives the following insight on the situation of Nigerian minors and adolescents arriving in Italy:

“As mentioned above, in 2016 most migrants arriving in Italy by sea were from Nigeria, with a particular increase of women and unaccompanied children (respectively 11,009 and 3,040 in 2016, compared to about 5,000 women and 900 unaccompanied children in 2015). [...] Considering the exponential increase in women and children of Nigerian nationality who characterized the flows of 2016, it is clear that the number of potential victims of this transnational crime has more than doubled compared to last year.” (IOM, 2017, p. 9)

“In particular, it is important to point out the significant and worrying increase in adolescent victims of trafficking. IOM also considers that many young Nigerians, although declaring themselves adults, are actually children or adolescents who comply with traffickers’ instructions by falsely declaring themselves older so to avoid the child protection pathway, which might become an obstacle for traffickers. As a result, girls are transferred to adult facilities, where it will be easier to contact their traffickers who will pick them up without any difficulties.” (IOM, 2017, p. 10)

“Minors find themselves in terrible situations, especially the youngest ones among them, because even though they are aware that they will be forced into prostitution, they usually do not even know what prostitution is, or have a vague and incorrect idea of it. In this regard, many minors explain that prostitution means to become engaged to white men, who, in their imagination, are generally very rich and will be able to help them repay any debt incurred for the journey to Europe. In some cases, they think that prostitution entails working at nightclubs as dancers.” (IOM, 2017, p. 24)

Save the Children Italia Onlus, an NGO promoting children’s rights, mentions the following in a September 2016 report:

“The number of girls and young women at high risk of exploitation arriving in Italy is constantly increasing: in the first six months of 2016, 3,529 Nigerian women, all of them very young, and 814 unaccompanied Nigerian children, with a significant presence of

young girls, arrived on our coast. This clearly shows a growing trend of Nigerian girl arrivals in our country, which reached 300 per cent between 2014 and 2015. Most of them are adolescents aged 15-17 years, with an increasing number of 13-year-old girls. [...] Trafficked victims are forced into prostitution in order to pay the debt to the exploiter, but the amount increases yet further because girls are compelled to pay a rent both for their housing and for the street location where they are forced to work. The latter costs around 100 and 250 euros per month. Moreover, exploiters set up their own sanction mechanism, by 'fining' girls when they break their rules, thereby increasing the debt. Therefore, girls are forced into prostitution, at very low prices, and to even accept unprotected sexual activity in order to earn more, with the consequence that they often have to resort to the voluntary termination of a pregnancy, often illegally, and to risk sexually transmitted diseases. In order to endure this life, many young girls start using narcotics and psychotropic substances, induced by their traffickers." (Save the Children Italia Onlus, September 2016, p. 7)

In its country report on human rights practices, the USDOS points out that sexual exploitation of children "remained a significant problem. Children were trafficked for sex, both within the country and to other countries" (USDOS, 3 March 2017, Section 6). In its trafficking report, the USDOS notes that "boys are victims of forced and bonded labor in street vending, domestic service, mining, stone quarrying, agriculture, textile manufacturing, and begging. Many of the more than 9.5 million young boys studying in Quranic schools, commonly known as Almajiri, are subjected to forced begging." (USDOS, 27 June 2017)

Muhammed Tawfiq Ladan, from the Department of Public Law at Ahmadu Bello University in Zaria, Nigeria, in December 2015 mentions that "[b]oys are mostly trafficked from the south eastern part: Imo, Abia and Akwa-Ibom States into Gabon, Equatorial Guinea and Congo, while those from Kwara move to Togo and as far as Mali to work on the plantations." (Ladan, December 2015, p. 8)

The USDOL further writes that children "as young as age 8 are recruited, and sometimes forced, to participate in armed conflict with various groups, including ethnic militia organizations, criminal gangs, extremist groups, and partisan political organizations, such as party youth wings." (USDOL, 30 September 2017, p. 2)

In its country report on human rights practices the USDOS mentions "baby factories", where children are sold:

"So-called baby factories continued to operate, often disguised as orphanages, religious or rehabilitation centers, hospitals, or maternity homes. They offered for sale the newborns of pregnant women - mostly unmarried girls - often held against their will and raped. The persons running the factories sold the children for various purposes, including adoption, child labor, prostitution, or sacrificial rituals, with the boys' fetching higher prices. In August police in Aba, Abia State, rescued five pregnant women from a house, alleging its owners were engaged in child trafficking. In October police in Asaba, Delta State, rescued seven pregnant women ranging in age from 18 to 20 years, alleging the proprietor and his wife sold the children upon delivery." (USDOS, 3 March 2017, Section 6)

In its trafficking report published in June 2017 the USDOS also mentions “baby factories”:

“Traffickers operate ‘baby factories’ - often disguised as orphanages, maternity homes, or religious centers - where women are held against their will, raped, and forced to carry and deliver a child. The children are then sold, sometimes with the intent to exploit them in forced labor and sex trafficking.” (USDOS, 27 June 2017)

Dauda Salihu and Muhammad Chutiyami of the Department of Nursing Services at the Yobe State Hospitals Management Board in Damaturu in 2016 provide the following explanation of the phenomenon of “baby factories”:

“Baby factory is a new phenomenon in Nigerian society; it was described in the literature for the first time in 2006 (Makinde, 2015; Omeire et al., 2015). The system promotes child trafficking, creates room for exploiting young girls with undesirable conception. It is worthy of note that despite the widely publicized awareness campaigns, this ugly trend is on the increase (Makinde, 2015; Makinde et al., 2015). Makinde et al. (2015, p. 1) ‘defined baby factories as buildings, hospitals or orphanages to places for young girls and women to give birth to children for sale in the black market, often to infertile couples, or into trafficking rings’. This new form of abuse operates in a shadow simply because of the stigma attached to undesirable conception by teenagers, and poor economic status poses them to offer themselves for little financial gain (Makinde et al., 2015) and societal expectation on couples to have children (Omeire et al., 2015). It has about 3-4 actors namely; their landlord, the girls, the buyers and men who impregnate them (Omeire et al., 2015).” (Salihu/Chutiyami, 2016, pp. 32-33)

An article published in October 2017 by the Nigerian daily newspaper The Guardian reports on the alleged sale of children in fake orphanages in Delta State:

“About 86,000 fake orphanages are reportedly operating within the 25 local government areas of Delta State, The Guardian has gathered. [...] It was gathered that the illegal orphanages operated by faceless groups are registered with fake company names without signboards. In Asaba, Ibusa, Ughelli, Sapele, Okpanam, Issele-Uku, and Ogwashi-Uku communities, tales of human trafficking and alleged sale of babies by the operators are rife. [...] ‘We have recorded cases of some of these orphanages operating under poor condition. Under such disguise, the operators sell babies to unsuspecting buyers. We have arrested several persons in connection with the act, and we are ready to shut down many of the orphanages,’ he [the Commissioner of Police in Delta State, Mr. Zanna Ibrahim] said.” (The Guardian (Nigeria), 23 October 2017)

Freedom House, a US-based NGO which conducts research and advocacy on democracy, political freedom, and human rights, in January 2017 mentions the involvement of the militant group Boko Haram in human trafficking:

“Nigerian organized crime groups are heavily involved in human trafficking. Boko Haram has subjected children to forced labor and sex slavery. Both Boko Haram and a civilian vigilante group that opposes the militants have forcibly recruited child soldiers, according to the U.S. State Department. Meanwhile, as of year’s end, several of Nigeria’s states had

not implemented the 2003 Child Rights Act, which protects children from discrimination based on sex, ethnicity, and other factors.” (Freedom House, January 2017, Section G)

The USDOL similarly mentions that “Boko Haram forcibly recruited and used child soldiers”:

“Reports indicate that children were recruited to participate in combat operations and act as spies, porters, and cooks. There was an increase in the use of young girls to carry out suicide bombings. The terrorist group also subjected girls to forced labor and sexual servitude. Limited research found that the Nigerian military used children rescued or arrested during Boko Haram military operations for domestic work, to carry loads, and to act as messengers and guards. The Nigerian military also conducted on-the-ground coordination with elements of the Borno state government-funded Civilian Joint Task Force (CJTF), a non-state self-defense militia involved in fighting Boko Haram. Research found that the CJTF continued to recruit and use children, possibly by force, to supervise checkpoints, conduct patrols, spy, and apprehend suspected insurgents. The Government of Nigeria has officially prohibited the recruitment and use of child soldiers.” (USDOL, 30 September 2017, p. 2)

A report by the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) on Boko Haram and effects of the conflict on children published in August 2016 mentions that children who flee violence in the Lake Chad region “face multiple protection risks, from violence and exploitation, to detention, trafficking and separation from their families” (UNICEF, August 2016, p. 5).

In its national human development report on Nigeria published December 2015 the UNDP mentions cases of rape and child trafficking in IDP camps:

“Displacement exacerbates poor living conditions and compromises quality of life to a large extent. Income earning capacities are cut short for the working group, while vulnerable groups such as children and elderly are denied adequate nutrition. There have also been cases of rape and child trafficking in several internal displacement camps. These conditions represent a sharp contrast to decent living standards which represent a dimension of human development. Sanitary conditions are known to be poor in many displacement camps. For those who do not choose displacement camps as an option, displacement may lead to outright homelessness. Whichever way it goes, displaced persons are exposed to much more vulnerable conditions than what prevailed before the events which led to displacements.” (UNDP, December 2015, p. 85)

A report published by the UN Human Rights Council (HRC) in June 2016 summarises the findings of the joint visit to Nigeria (from 18 to 22 January 2016) of the Special Rapporteurs on the right of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health, Dainius Puras, on the sale of children, child pornography and child prostitution, Maud de Boer-Buquicchio, and on contemporary forms of slavery, including its causes and consequences, Urmila Bhoola. Referring to the issue of child trafficking the report notes:

“While the report of the ad hoc national fact-finding committee established following allegations of rape and child trafficking in camps for internally displaced persons in the north-east found no evidence of child trafficking, adolescent girls have been reported to

engage in survival sex to meet their basic needs and support their families. The fact-finding committee also identified risk factors for human trafficking and other forms of exploitation as children go out of the camps unaccompanied to ‘hawk, beg, fetch firewood or engage in menial labour to earn a living...some also go out at night to socialize...or some are expelled from the camps after having committed offences’.” (HRC, 15 June 2016, pp. 15-16)

In June 2017 the USDOS however mentions incidents of sex trafficking in IDP camps in Maiduguri and in Adamawa, Borno, and Yobe states:

“[...]; in July 2016, an NGO reported camp leaders, policemen, soldiers, and vigilante groups exploited 37 women and children in sex trafficking among seven IDP camps in Maiduguri. In July 2016, a Nigerian research organization surveyed 400 IDPs in Adamawa, Borno, and Yobe states, and 66 percent said camp officials sexually abused women and girls, some of which constitutes sex trafficking. Various NGOs and news outlets continued to report that children in IDP camps are victims of labor and sex trafficking, and some alleged government officials managing the camps are complicit in these activities.” (USDOS, 27 June 2017)

The Fund for Peace (FFP), an independent, nonpartisan, non-profit research and educational organisation that works to prevent violent conflict and promote sustainable security, in February 2016 describes “a rise in human trafficking, especially of young women and children from the conflict-affected areas in the north”. (FFP, 22 February 2016, p. 7)

Dagaci Aliyu Manbe from the University of Abuja in June 2016 mentions “a form of trafficking” that involves “the luring of young children to Saudi Arabia”:

“A form of trafficking currently under investigation takes place in the northern part of Nigeria and involves the luring of young children to Saudi Arabia to be killed for blood money known as ‘diya’. The method is quite simple: the trafficker, often female, takes a child trafficked to Saudi Arabia to go shopping; when she spots an affluent Arab’s car, she pushes the child in the path of the car to get run over and possibly killed. There are two types of penalties for anyone who kills another human being in Saudi Arabia. The first is the death penalty; the second is the offering compensation to the relatives of the dead victim, if the relatives accept (‘diya’).” (Manbe, June 2016, p. 25)

Various media reports mention incidents of child trafficking, for example the arrest of a woman “in connection with alleged trafficking of 21 children” in Kaduna state (Daily Trust, 9 November 2017); the interception by officials of the Federal Road Safety Corps in Kaduna state of a vehicle “filled with 44 minors and two adults who were suspected to be child traffickers” (Daily Trust, 17 August 2017); the arrest of “a four-member child trafficking syndicate including a pastor and a 62-year-old man” in Anambra (Daily Trust, 11 July 2017); the arrest of a 45-year-old woman for “her alleged involvement in the trafficking of young girls from Benin to Europe” in Benin (Premium Times, 21 June 2017). Another incident reported was the imprisonment of a 50-year old woman and four others “by a Katsina magistrates’ court over alleged kidnapping of an eight-year-old boy.” The imprisoned were charged “of kidnapping, criminal conspiracy and child trafficking.” (Daily Trust, 16 June 2017). In June 2017, the rescue of 134 victims of child

trafficking between January and May 2017 in Oyo state and the arrest of “38 traffickers and 107 end users” during this period were reported (Premium Times, 13 June 2017).

2.3 Males trafficked

EASO in its Nigeria Country Focus from June 2017 mentions the following concerning males:

“There is no public source material available reporting that the Nigerian networks of ‘sponsors’ and ‘madams’ which facilitate migration for women also offer such possibilities for men, or that these networks in Europe organise men working in prostitution. No source consulted by Landinfo on four fact-finding missions to Nigeria has heard of this phenomenon either. However, several of the oral sources of Landinfo and OFPRA have pointed out that there are men working in prostitution in Nigeria.” (EASO, June 2017, p. 45)

UNODC in its above mentioned 2016 report notes:

“For adult victims, trafficking of women is more prevalent than trafficking of men. Women victims are mostly detected in Nigeria and Uganda, while at the regional level, they accounted for 27 per cent of victims in the year 2014 (or most recent). Trafficking of men is limited compared to trafficking in children and women.” (UNODC, 2016, p. 112)

Dagaci Aliyu Manbe from the University of Abuja mentions the following concerning the situation of men:

“The majority of dry season migrants who fall prey to traffickers are unskilled males. They often migrate to work on plantations in Côte d’Ivoire, the Republic of Cameroon, and Gabon. When they end up in the cities, most of the unskilled migrants find work as security guards or watchmen of workplaces and the homes of the affluent. Due to poor wages and exploitative contracts, these migrants often end up in perpetual bondage, unable to return home.” (Manbe, June 2016, p. 27)

An article by Germany’s public international broadcaster Deutsche Welle (DW) published in October 2017 mentions a “trafficking arrangement” affecting men going to Benue state for work:

“When people here in Benue refer to ‘Yorubaland,’ they refer to the southwest. For decades, people have been flocking to the region for work. In the 1980s, farmers came to Benue and negotiated wages that were actually paid after the work was done. [...] What was once merely an offer people could decide on has now turned into something else entirely, says Valentine Kwaghchimin, who works for Caritas in the provincial capital Makurdi. He’s collected data in the past year and says the voluntary approach is no longer. ‘The process of moving them to those locations is purely a trafficking arrangement,’ he says, adding that conditions there translated to modern slavery. [...] Workers were denied basic rights, according to Kwaghchimin’s research. They are trapped on farms and are only allowed to leave when being supervised. They are not allowed to keep their cell phones. They sleep on the floor in crowded rooms. Often, they don’t have access to toilets. [...] ‘The figures depend a bit on how many workers are needed at the moment. Especially young men are at risk; those who have no one to pay for their schooling,’ he says. While girls are lured with the promise of a good education, boys are promised good wages - about 30,000

to 40,000 Naira (70 to 93 euros; \$81 to 108). The minimum wage in Nigeria is 18,000 Naira. [...] But most of them will never see that kind of money. [...] The National Agency for Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons (NAPTIP) has become aware of the system that's organized just like international human trafficking and forced prostitution." (DW, 30 October 2017)

Precious O. Diagboya, from the Department of Philosophy at the University of Ibadan notes the following on internal trafficking³ of males for sexual exploitation in a paper published in July 2017 by the Institute of African Studies (IFRA):

"Male Sex Workers (MSWs) form a significant population of the Abuja sex market and there is the possibility that members of this sub-population could be easy victims of internal trafficking for sexual exploitation (since they are highly mobile and prone to migration). This sub-population is a highly sensitive and stigmatized group, especially after the ban on the gay orientation in January 2014 by the Federal Government of Nigeria." (Diagboya, 29 July 2017, p. 4)

The paper is based on in-depth interviews with about 40 members of the gay community between 19 and 38 years of age from Benue, Kaduna, Imo, Anambra, Enugu, Abia, Edo, Port Harcourt, Delta and Ondo states. Diagboya mentions that "12% of respondents could be viewed as victims because their original intention of coming to Abuja was not to do transactional sex" and further notes:

"Like other victims (women and children) most adult male victims of trafficking for sexual exploitation could not be said to be under complete coercion. Rather, they fell into other forms of deceptions. Deception occurs when individuals who have been promised jobs in a legitimate economy, or are told half truths... only to find themselves 'forced' or cajoled into sexual slavery." (Diagboya, 29 July 2017, p. 9)

"The ban, secrecy and stigma associated with the gay orientation have made it difficult for victims to seek help from non-governmental organisations and anti-trafficking agencies rendering help to victims of trafficking. This is probably one reason why anti-trafficking organizations do not have adult male victims of trafficking for sexual exploitation in their shelters." (Diagboya, 29 July 2017, p. 14)

The USDOS reports in the Introduction to its Trafficking in Persons report 2017 that according to global statistics "men and boys represent nearly half of the total number of human trafficking victims; yet the identification and proper care of male victims remains an enormous challenge to governments and care providers around the world". The report further notes:

³ Diagboya mentions that while conducting field work in Abuja "it was discovered that using the term 'trafficking' among members of the target group was demeaning; considering the sensitivity and stigmatization associated with the gay orientation. As a result, the term trafficking was tentatively replaced with 'Migration' in order to be able to open up conversation with members of the target population." (Diagboya, 29 July 2017, p. 6)

“Too often, men and boys go unidentified and remain in perilous situations, deprived of their freedom. When they do escape their trafficking situations, they are likely to be neglected by governments and service providers whose programs were established to shelter and assist women and girls. Instead of being treated as exploited individuals, they are at greater risk of being penalized or fined for offenses, such as crossing a border illegally, or of facing charges and imprisonment for crimes committed as a result of being subjected to trafficking. [...] In addition, authorities, such as immigration officers, labor inspectors, and police, often do not recognize male victims due to biases or the tendency to perceive males as less vulnerable to human trafficking or erroneously view human trafficking as exclusively the sex trafficking of girls and women. Most programs established to assist trafficking victims do not focus on meeting male survivors’ needs. In many countries, even when authorities identify a male trafficking victim, there are few anti-trafficking programs able to provide men or boys specialized assistance, especially safe housing.” (USDOS, June 2017, p. 22)

Details on human trafficking and exploitation of Nigerian migrants travelling towards Europe, including males, can be found on pages 3-6 in the following report:

- IOM – International Organization for Migration: Flow Monitoring Surveys: the human trafficking and other exploitative practises indication survey; analysis on migrants and refugees from Nigeria travelling along the central Mediterranean route, September 2017 http://migration.iom.int/docs/Analysis_Flow_Monitoring_and_Human_Trafficking_Surveys_in_the_Mediterranean_and_Beyond_Nigerian_nationals.pdf

3 Situation of trafficking victims upon return to Nigeria

3.1 Support and reintegration of trafficking victims

The Nigerian National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons (NAPTIP) in August 2017 mentions a planned collaboration with the National Commission for Refugees, Migrants and Internally Displaced Persons (NCFRMI) and the Office of the Senior Special Assistant to the President on Foreign Affairs and the Diaspora to further the protection and care of victims of human trafficking who are under the care of NAPTIP:

“In line with Inter-Agency liaison and cooperation, the National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons (NAPTIP), the National Commission for Refugees, Migrants and Internally Displaced Persons (NCFRMI) and the Office of the Senior Special Assistant to the President on Foreign Affairs and the Diaspora are to cooperate to ensure better protection for victims of human trafficking in Nigeria. This was the crux of the visit to the Lagos Zonal Command of NAPTIP on Tuesday by the Honourable Federal Commissioner of NCFRMI; Mrs. Sadiya Umar Farouq and the Senior Special Assistant to the President, Hon. Abike Dabiri-Erewa. They pledged to collaborate with the Agency to further the protection and care of victims of human trafficking who are under the care of the agency. The visit was necessitated by the recent rescue and deportation of Nigerian citizens from Libya, Mali, Italy and Russia, some of whom were profiled and identified as victims of human trafficking and are presently in the care of the Agency’s Lagos Zonal Command. They also wanted to assess the situation on ground with the aim of ensuring that the rescued/returned victims were being cared for by the Agency.” (NAPTIP, 5 August 2017)

According to its website the NCFRMI is mandated to coordinate the national action for the protection and assistance of refugees, asylum seekers, returnees, stateless persons, internally displaced persons and migrants (NCFRMI, undated (a)). The NCFRMI notes with regard to the Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration (AVRR) Programme:

“The Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration (AVRR) Programme has been in place in Nigeria since 2002 and seeks to, among other things, offer migrants (regular or irregular) who seek, or need, to return home but lack the means to do so, a viable and safe solution to their plight. The Programme has facilitated the return and reintegration of more than 3,000 returnees including irregular and stranded migrants, labor migrants, Survivors of Trafficking (SoTs), unaccompanied and separated minors from more than 20 countries in Europe, the Middle East and North Africa.

The AVRR Programme involves standard interventions throughout the return migration cycle: First, in the host country, through, amongst other things, securing travel documents for migrants, counseling on the environment for return and reintegration in the country of origin - including provision of relevant return information from Nigeria, and medical evaluations; Second, in transit, through coordination with airport officials, escort and medical services; and Third, in the country of origin, through, amongst other things, assistance through immigration, reception assistance, and the payment of reintegration assistance in installments and provision of business trainings. Reintegration assistance has been a core component of AVRR in Nigeria and eligibility claims vary from USD 650 – USD

7000 per beneficiary. Individual reintegration is closely monitored by IOM Nigeria staff. The package is designed to assist smooth assimilation of the returnees into the society and is adapted to individual needs of the returnees.

A major challenge to implementing the AVRR programme is the absence of a structure; a framework that takes into account the cross-cutting nature of migration and its impact on social configuration; that guarantees the humane and orderly treatment of Nigeria citizens upon their return. In Nigeria today, the AVRR programme is conducted under an ad hoc arrangement and this may not be sustainable” (NCFRMI, undated (b))

A November 2017 article by Sahara Reporters, an online news agency based in New York City, reports that according to NCFRMI “a total of 3,480 young Nigerians, mostly girls, was deported from Libya in the last 10 months” and further notes:

“The NCFRMI South-West Zonal Director, Mrs. Magret Ukegbu, told the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) in Lagos on Tuesday that the deportees were received from Feb. 1 to Nov. 6. She said that the commission was working to ensure durable integration of the deportees into the Nigerian society. ‘The commission believes that it is not enough to receive these young Nigerians; it is important that they are urgently given the needed mentoring, training and rehabilitation.’ ‘My federal commissioner is really working at ensuring that durable solutions are sustained,’ she said.” (Sahara Reporters, 7 November 2017)

The Eagle Online, a Nigerian online news portal, in November 2017 mentions the following regarding the return of Nigerians assisted by the International Organisation for Migration:

“No fewer than 12,000 young Nigerians are in prisons or stranded in different parts of North African country, Libya. The National Commission for Refugees, Migrants and Internally Displaced Persons has confirmed and said that 3,887 have been deported since February this year. Eight days after 149 Nigerians voluntarily returned from Libya, another batch of 258 were received in Lagos on Tuesday night. They were deported from the North African country where they had been stranded enroute Europe. [...]

The returnees, who were assisted back to Nigeria by the International Organisation for Migration, comprised of 238 female adults, seven teenage girls and one infant, while the male were seven adults, two teenage boys and three baby boys.” (The Eagle Online, 15 November 2017)

A September 2016 article by the Vanguard mentions the “Victims of Trafficking Trust Fund, where assets and proceeds seized from convicted traffickers would be kept for victims’ rehabilitation” established by the Federal Government (Vanguard, 6 September 2016).

The news agency Associated Press (AP) in October 2015 quotes the EU Anti-Trafficking Coordinator, Myria Vassiliadou, on challenges regarding the return of trafficking victims:

“‘Nigeria figures as one of our top priority countries of origin,’ Myria Vassiliadou, the EU Anti-Trafficking Coordinator, told The Associated Press. To stop the exploitation cycle, reintegration assistance is as important as working to discourage Nigerians from initially being sent overseas to work as prostitutes, she stressed. ‘People leave as vulnerable people

and come back as vulnerable people,' said Vassiliadou. 'What stands between them being trafficked again is reintegration support.' As many as six out of 10 trafficked women in European capitals are Nigerian, estimates Nigeria's National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons. The agency says it has rescued 8,006 people since it started in 2003. Support for survivors when they return voluntarily or are deported back is crucial. Many face stigma and even rejection by their families and finding work and housing is a challenge, according to experts." (AP, 24 October 2015)

The Nigerian newspaper The Daily Post in a November 2017 article writes that the governor of Edo State "has called for support to reintegrate victims of human trafficking into the society" and gives an overview on the structures to receive and re-integrate victims of human trafficking in the state:

"According to him, those who returned recently were subsequently enrolled in capacity development programmes and placed on a stipend for three months. 'We acknowledge the fact that they are victims, and in many instances, they are entangled in human trafficking due to no fault of theirs. We are extending an open hand to them, and assuring them of support when they return,' the governor pledged. He said the state government has built formidable structures and systems to receive and re-integrate victims of human trafficking and illegal migration who are indigenes of the state. He added that a task-force has been set up to oversee the process of rehabilitating and assimilating returnees, while a bill has been forwarded to the Edo State House of Assembly for the enactment of a law to strengthen the fight against human trafficking in the state." (Daily Post, 22 November 2017)

The daily Lagos newspaper PM News in an August 2017 article reports on a partnership between the Tony Elumelu Foundation and NAPTIP for the fight against human trafficking in Nigeria and quotes statements made by the Director-General of NAPTIP, Julie Okah-Donli, at a visit to Tony Elumelu in Lagos:

"Many victims [of human trafficking] are on standby, waiting for rehabilitation packages to be fully reintegrated into society. We are therefore constrained to run to you for support. 'We need provision of financial and logistics support including operational vehicles and work tools, sponsorship of some of the agency's projects and programmes. 'We need to refurbish and rehabilitate our existing shelters, periodic provision of food, clothing and medical consumables and shelter to help victims. 'We need assistance in the development of standard skills' acquisition centres in some strategic locations in Nigeria for training of vulnerable and indigent persons, as well as rescued victims. 'We also need education empowerment for victims, capacity development for personnel of the agency, sponsorship of awareness campaigns on the problem through various platforms including the media,' she told Elumelu." (PM News, 10 August 2017)

The Nigerian newspaper Peoples Daily in a November 2017 article reports that the Director General of NAPTIP, Julie Okah-Donli, "decried the monumental challenges confronting the agency in efforts to fulfill its statutory mandate due to poor and irregular funding" and mentions further demands of Okah-Donli:

“She called for the intervention of the National Assembly in enhancing the capacity of the Agency to better actualize its mandate through favourable budgetary provision and acquisition of a permanent office for the Agency in the Federal Capital Territory (FCT). She also urged State Governments to provide adequate structures for the rescue and rehabilitation of the victims of human trafficking in their States.” (Peoples Daily, 20 November 2017)

3.1.1 Family reunification and support

A 2015 report by Women’s Link Worldwide, an international organisation promoting the human rights of women and girls, on trafficking of Nigerian women and girls gives insights into attitudes held by family members of trafficking victims:

“There is an obligation to provide financial support to the family, meaning the extended family, so trafficking victims often have no power or control over their own lives and choices, they explained. According to UNODC [United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime] staff members, in many cases families do not want their children to return because they have spent a lot of money to send them abroad. Although their objective is also working with families to achieve reintegration into the community for returned victims, they acknowledge that in these cases mediation is not the best option.” (Women’s Link Worldwide, 2015, p. 64)

Women’s Link Worldwide also mentions that “[p]roviding protection and assistance for minor trafficking victims is a challenge for the country”:

“Nigeria has no state child protection service (for minors under 18) capable of taking in children and ensuring their safety and best interests when the family is not an appropriate environment for them.” (Women’s Link Worldwide, 2015, p. 67)

The United States Department of Labor (USDOL) notes in its September 2017 report that NAPTIP shelters also provide “family reunification” (USDOL, 30 September 2017, p. 6).

The Conversation, an independent, not-for-profit media outlet that uses content sourced from the academic and research community, in an article published in February 2017 reports that “projects to reintegrate the women back into their societies are often focused mainly on the re-empowerment of victims through either work training or access to micro credit grants for business start-ups. Too often little or no attention is given to the reintegration of the women in their families.” (The Conversation, 12 February 2017)

The Finnish Immigration Service in its report published March 2015 notes the importance of social support networks:

“A concern for victims with regard to returning to Nigeria is lack of social support networks; the longer the victim has lived in Europe, the likelier this is. Even if the returnees had a family, not everyone wants to stay with them in a village after living for a long time in Europe. Nevertheless, many feel that it is impossible to succeed in Nigeria without a family and believe that ‘in Nigeria, you are nothing without your family’. Non-governmental organisations and the assistance offered by them are no substitute for social networks and

the organisations cannot look after the returned victims forever. For many, the only option to earn a living, after the assistance provided by the organisations, would be prostitution.” (Finnish Immigration Service, 24 March 2015, p. 27)

3.1.2 *Discrimination and marginalisation*

Social stigma of victims of trafficking

In a book on Human Trafficking and Prostitution among Women and Girls of Edo State, author Mary Dorothy Ezeh gives an overview on the situation of human trafficking victims when returning home:

“The victims of human trafficking encounter considerable obstacles when they return home. On their arrival at the Airport they are seen as undignified persons. People isolate themselves from them. They receive lots of discrimination and ostracization because of their involvement in prostitution. Some of the victims on reaching their families, their family members humiliate them because they returned without fulfilling the expectation of the family and without money. Despite the stigma on the victim, they are ashamed of themselves. Some of the victims suffer from psychological disorder which hinders them from communicating and trusting other people.” (Ezeh, 2017, section 5.6.1.)

“Victims of human trafficking are generally the most vulnerable in the community. On returning home the victims face considerable obstacles and discrimination based on their involvement in prostitution. The majority face the shame and humiliation of returning penniless despite the hope of coming back with provision of their families. Sometimes community attitudes towards the victims prevent them from being accepted by their families and communities on their return home.” (Ezeh, 2017, Section 5.6.3.)

Women’s Link Worldwide in 2015 writes that “prostitution and promiscuity on the part of women is disapproved of and severely punished in Edo society, as is the case in almost all societies”. Therefore, women and girls returning to Nigeria from Europe often face the assumption by society that they were working in prostitution and “are rejected by society as a whole”. This rejection and the “lack of protection and options for reintegration [...] places many women and girls at risk for re-trafficking.” (Women’s Link Worldwide, 2015, p. 68)

Women’s Link Worldwide goes on to describe the stigmatisation of trafficking victims:

“The stigma associated with human trafficking, which often affects a victim’s ability to reintegrate into her former community or family, is a frequent contributing factor in the re-trafficking of victims, particularly victims of sexual trafficking. Victims ‘are stigmatized in their host communities as vectors of deadly sexually transmitted diseases contracted abroad.’ This hostile reception, which may come from family, friends, community members, and society in general, heightens the victim’s vulnerability to re-trafficking. UNODC confirmed that NAPTIP does not have appropriate facilities for reintegration of victims after rehabilitation and that this lack of resources places victims at risk for stigmatization. When a person is known to have been a trafficking victim, particularly if she is a woman, society associates her with sexual exploitation and AIDS. The stigma is greater

still in cases in which victims have in fact contracted HIV, as they are rejected by their own families.” (Women’s Link Worldwide, 2015, p. 69)

With regard to stigmatisation of returned sex trafficking victims, anthropologist Sine Plambech from the Danish Institute for International Studies is quoted in the August 2017 EASO report:

“Many of them sometimes mentioned feeling that it is more stigmatising to be returned and deported than to be one who has worked in the sex industry, because you are a failed migrant and they have to live with that stigma as well. It’s a double stigma. Some of the women mentioned that the kind of livelihood opportunities that they feel are available to them because of this stigma are things like selling water at the market or walking around selling water or small snacks, because they do not have to interact so much with their clients. Whereas opening a business where you are located in a specific place makes you much vulnerable to accusations: ‘Oh, you are a former prostitute. You are a deportee...’. They are also thinking about how to place themselves in a way where their livelihood can continue even though they would suffer from the stigma. We have to pay attention to the relationship between stigma and real livelihood opportunities when women are returned, because some of the women have faced a lot of judgements and accusations of being involved in sex [industry]. People would say, ‘Do not go to that room. She is one of the cheap ladies’, or other kind of things which really damage their livelihood opportunities. We cannot ignore that.” (EASO, August 2017, p. 56)

In an August 2015 article published by Open Democracy, Sine Plambech writes that women who have been returned “live and work on the outskirts where rents are lower. These are dangerous areas with few paved roads and even less streetlights, and many women cannot even afford lockable doors.” The article further describes:

“As the experiences of these women make clear, violence, vulnerability and victimhood are not exclusively connected to sex work and migration abroad but are part of everyday life ‘at home’ in Benin City. They are regular and expected occurrences that transpired outside the state of indenture. This truth too often remains hidden because the focus on the perceived violence of trafficking ‘renders other forms of violence invisible or normal’, in the words of Baye and Heumann, and excludes both ‘victims’ and ‘criminals’ from protection. Moreover, this focus obscures the violence perpetrated by actors other than the individuals who facilitated or caused their migration. Thus, when I asked the women to compare Europe to Nigeria, many told me that it was safer to sell sex on the streets of Rome or Hamburg than to run a food stall in Benin City, even though many experienced intense violence in Europe as well.” (Open Democracy, 12 August 2015)

Marriage/remarriage

Women’s Link Worldwide in 2015 mentions that “there is an assumption in society that any single woman who has traveled to Europe is a prostitute” and that it is seen as undesirable to have a relationship with or marry a woman who has worked in prostitution or who was a trafficking victim. (Women’s Link Worldwide, 2015, p. 69)

No further information concerning marriage or remarriage of former trafficking victims could be found.

Discrimination against individuals subjected to juju/voodoo rituals

Ana Dols García in an October 2013 UNHCR research paper provides the following overview on the importance of voodoo in West Africa:

“Voodoo plays an important role in enslaving African women and girls (at least West African women and girls), without making a distinction between all the supernatural forces involved in sex trafficking. First of all it is important to differentiate between voodoo and ritual oaths. As Victoria Nwogu, Programme Specialist with UNIFEM/Nigeria, explains: ‘Voodoo is a religion (which includes ritual oaths in its practices), while a ritual oath is a seal placed on an agreement through rituals binding both parties to the terms of the agreement on pain of supernatural retaliation.’ Voodoo is a religion based on the existence of an invisible world interconnected to the visible world. It originated in West Africa, where voodoo beliefs are still widespread, mainly in Nigeria, Benin, Togo and Ghana. Rituals oaths are a practice derived from this religion. These oaths seal the pact between women who want to move to Europe and traffickers. [...]

All the misfortunes or problems that may happen to the victim after breaking the ritual oath will be linked to this rupture. [...] It is important to note that breaking the pact is considered to lead to psychic and mental harm to the women concerned, but it is also an act of dishonor to their community, as the oath ties them not only to voodoo gods but also to the local community.” (García, October 2013, p. 7)

An article published by the international news agency Reuters in November 2016 mentions that “many Nigerian parents become complicit” in trafficking and insist that “their daughters obey their traffickers” because they fear the juju spell may be turned on them (Reuters, 8 November 2016).

The British daily The Guardian writes that trafficking victims “have been forced to undergo ritual ‘juju’ ceremonies where they have been told terrible things will happen to them and their families if they don’t repay what they owe” (The Guardian, 7 August 2016). Similarly, Baarda mentions that the “terror-inducing rituals lead to a situation where the women will not run away when travelling on their own, out of fear for themselves or their family being hurt by voodoo” (Baarda, November 2015, p. 5). In September 2016 The Guardian further notes that the juju rituals “make it clear that failure to pay off those debts will result in terrible things happening to the woman and her family”. According to the anti-trafficking NGO Piam Onlus “[u]sing these very old belief systems passed down through generations is a psychological form of control that is much stronger than any violence that can be done to them” (The Guardian, 3 September 2017).

3.1.3 Sexual and Gender Based Violence by actors other than traffickers

Plambech mentions that all the women she has followed “have experienced severe forms of violence upon their return to Nigeria” and adds that the violence “was not necessarily from the

traffickers; it was from being vulnerable because of all the things that they had experienced while they were in Europe and that they had to recover from". Despite having some assistance from NGOs, they still "had to recover from all these traumatic experiences." (EASO, August 2017, p. 54)

No further information concerning sexual and gender based violence by actors other than traffickers could be found. The following information refers to legislation on violence against women and children.

The USDOS in March 2017 reports that there is "no comprehensive law for combatting violence against women" and goes on to describe:

"As a result, victims and survivors had little or no recourse to justice. While some, mostly southern, states enacted laws prohibiting some forms of gender violence or seeking to safeguard certain rights, a majority of states did not have such legislation. The Violence against Persons Prohibition (VAPP) Act addresses sexual violence, physical violence, psychological violence, harmful traditional practices, and socioeconomic violence. [...] Victims and survivors of violence are entitled to comprehensive medical, psychological, social, and legal assistance by accredited service providers and government agencies, with their identities protected during court cases. Until adoption by the states, however, the provisions of the VAPP Act are only applicable to the FCT [Federal Capital Territory]. [...] Notwithstanding these federal provisions, only the states of Cross River, Ebonyi, Jigawa, and Lagos had enacted domestic violence laws. Domestic violence remained widespread, and many considered it socially acceptable. [...] Police often refused to intervene in domestic disputes or blamed the victim for provoking the abuse. In rural areas courts and police were reluctant to intervene to protect women who formally accused their husbands of abuse if the level of alleged abuse did not exceed local customary norms." (USDOS, 3 March 2017, Section 6)

The USDOS further mentions that "[c]hild abuse remained common throughout the country, but the government took no significant measures to combat it":

"Findings from the Nigeria Violence Against Children Survey released in 2015 revealed approximately six of every 10 children under age 18 experienced some form of physical, emotional, or sexual violence during childhood. One in two children experienced physical violence, one in four girls and one in 10 boys experienced sexual violence, and one in six girls and one in five boys experienced emotional violence. [...] The 2003 Child Rights Act prohibits child prostitution and sexual intercourse with a child, providing penalties of up to seven years' and life imprisonment, respectively, for any adults involved. Two-thirds of the states adopted the act. While the majority of them retained the act's definition of a child as a person under 18, some lowered the minimum age to accommodate local betrothal and marriage practices." (USDOS, 3 March 2017, Section 6)

3.1.4 Access to housing/shelters

CEDAW in its July 2017 concluding observations on the combined seventh and eighth periodic reports of Nigeria mentions that there were "only 8 shelters for victims of trafficking" across

Nigeria (CEDAW, 24 July 2017, p. 9). The Government of Nigeria in its October 2015 state party report to CEDAW mentions there are “eight shelters across the country mainly for rescued victims of trafficking” (Government of Nigeria, 8 October 2015, p. 18). The shelters are operated by NAPTIP and are located in Abuja, Lagos, Benin, Uyo, Enugu, Kano, Sokoto and Maiduguri. According to the report, another shelter, Rehoboth Homes, operated by Women of Global Impact of The Redeemed Evangelical Mission (TREM), is available for women “who have been trafficked, and who are deported or repatriated into the country” (Government of Nigeria, 8 October 2015, p. 17). The USDOS in June 2017 however mentions that “NAPTIP continued to operate nine shelters specifically for trafficking victims, with a total capacity of 313 people.” The shelters “were also available to Nigerian trafficking victims exploited abroad upon repatriation, but it was unclear if authorities referred any such victims to these shelters”. The USDOS further notes that “[a]dditional shelters existed and provided services to vulnerable children and victims of crime, including trafficking, although it is unclear if any trafficking victims received those other services” between April 2016 and March 2017 (USDOS, 27 June 2017).

On its website NAPTIP notes with regard to transit shelters for trafficking victims:

“At present there are 9 Zonal Commands located in Lagos, Benin, Enugu, Uyo, Sokoto, Kano, Maiduguri, Osogbo and Makurdi. The Agency also has a liaison office in Port-Harcourt. The Headquarters in Abuja and All the Zonal Commands have transit shelters which were created to cater to the physical and psychological well-being of victims of trafficking.” (NAPTIP, undated (a))

The British newspaper The Independent in a September 2017 article describes a safe house run by NAPTIP in Lagos:

“It’s an anonymous building surrounded by a high fence, at the end of a dirt track, on the outskirts of Lagos. The exact location is a secret, and Sarah isn’t her real name. When trafficked men and women are picked up and identified - whether in Benin, Niger, Libya or, as in Sarah’s case, on the sea - they are returned and kept here while the Naptip counsellors help to prepare them to re-enter. There are around 60 men and women in this poorly appointed facility.” (The Independent, 29 September 2017)

A February 2017 article by Global Sisters Report, a project of American Roman Catholic newspaper National Catholic Reporter, mentions a safe house in Lagos called Bakhita Villa where victims of human trafficking receive assistance and rehabilitation services:

“In 2016, sisters at Bakhita Villa, a safe house in Lagos, Nigeria, helped rescue and rehabilitate nine victims of human trafficking. There, men and women receive counseling, take computer classes, and build skills they need for their new lives. Currently, only women live in Bakhita Villa, but St. Louis Sr. Patricia Ebegebulem, director of the safe house, said they are praying and planning for an expansion to also house male victims. [...] There is so much you would like to do, but you are constrained because of funds. Many who know our work often bring to us young women who are internally trafficked and who want to be rescued and reintegrated. Very often, we do not have the funds to assist them.” (Global Sisters Report, 9 February 2017)

In an October 2015 article Associated Press (AP) also mentions Bakhita Villa, a shelter in Lagos, run by a Roman Catholic nun named Patricia Ebegbulem (AP, 24 October 2015).

Another article by Global Sisters Report published April 2015 also mentions shelters in Benin City and Lagos:

“With the shelter built by the Episcopal Conference of Italian Catholic Bishops in Benin City and the house acquired in Lagos, both managed by sisters, the sisters are able to provide a welcoming home, rehabilitation and a skill training center for international trafficked victims.”(Global Sisters Report, 15 April 2015)

The USDOS notes in its June 2017 trafficking report with regard to duration of care in shelters:

“NAPTIP shelters offered short-term care, generally limiting victims’ stays to six weeks, although victims could extend their stays under special circumstances; both men and women received specialized care. If victims needed longer-term care, NAPTIP collaborated with two shelters operated by the Ministry of Women’s Affairs and NGO-run shelters.” (USDOS, 27 June 2017)

Women’s Link Worldwide in 2015 mentions that “[s]ome sources indicated that the maximum length of stay in NAPTIP shelters is six weeks, while others said that it ranges from two to six weeks.” The report adds:

“Several interviewees described situations in which exceptions may be granted and the stay may be extended, such as when a victim’s testimony is necessary for NAPTIP’s criminal investigations and the cooperating victim may have a greater need for protection. Exceptions may also be made if the victim has serious family problems, though the amount of time their stay may be extended is not specified in these cases. If a victim does not want to return to her family or is unable to do so, NAPTIP may refer her to a local organization such as COSUDOW (Committee for the Support of the Dignity of Women) in Benin City, which also has a shelter. However, several interviewees noted that this NGO and others like it lack the resources necessary to adequately accommodate victims. The embassy of a European country in Abuja confirmed claims by an IOM official that the only victims who remain in shelters for over two weeks are those whose cases are under investigation by NAPTIP and who have testified.” (Women’s Link Worldwide, 2015, pp. 62-63)

The Women’s Link Worldwide report further quotes the organisation Women’s Consortium of Nigeria (WOCON) which stated that “when the six-week maximum stay in the NAPTIP shelter is up and victims do not wish to return home, ‘they are out on the street again.’”:

“They added that lodging is the most challenging issue for returned victims due to the high cost of housing in Nigeria, even for marginal, rundown housing. Regarding their chances of making a living, one of the organization’s employees noted that ‘in Nigeria, it is almost impossible for a woman to purchase supplies or food to set up a shop.’” (Women’s Link Worldwide, 2015, p. 65)

In its March 2017 report on the return situation of women who have worked in prostitution abroad, Landinfo notes that there are no aid measures by the authorities or others in place to

assist people with their housing or living expenses. The people are therefore at the mercy of market forces and their own resources. Many returnees are living with family members, Landinfo adds. This can be the household they were part of before they left Nigeria, or the household of other family members. Either way, they are expected to contribute to the cost in line with other people living in the household. In cases where returnees choose to establish their own household, they must buy or rent on the private market, but then are confronted with challenges like high deposits. (Landinfo, 20 March 2017, p. 15)

For further information on the housing situation of returnees please also see pp. 7-9 of the August 2014 IOM Country Fact Sheet:

- IOM – International Organization for Migration: Country Fact Sheet; Nigeria, August 2014
[http://www.bamf.de/SharedDocs/MILo-DB/EN/Rueckkehrfoerderung/Laenderinformationen/Informationsblaetter/cfs_nigeria-dl_en.pdf? blob=publicationFile](http://www.bamf.de/SharedDocs/MILo-DB/EN/Rueckkehrfoerderung/Laenderinformationen/Informationsblaetter/cfs_nigeria-dl_en.pdf?blob=publicationFile)

3.1.5 Access to employment and other means of livelihood

Landinfo in its report on returning women who have worked in prostitution abroad notes that the vast majority of Nigerians earn a living in a basically uncertain labour market. Very few have a steady, predictable income. Outside the public sector and large private sector companies conditions of employment are seldom formalized and the income is dependent on whether the business they operate or work for is going well or not. (Landinfo, 20 March 2017, p. 15)

The USDOS in June 2017 mentions that through its shelters NAPTIP provides among others “vocational training, financial empowerment, and business management skills” for trafficking victims (USDOS, 27 June 2017).

Landinfo writes that vocational training measures aimed at women who are considered vulnerable to become victims of trafficking generally have the form of a two to three month long training course including cooking, sewing or hair styling. In some cases this is followed by financial support or a microcredit to create own businesses. Landinfo quotes social anthropologist Stacey Vanderhurst who mentioned in 2014 that several of her informants had already completed one or several such courses or had been apprentices before they decided to travel from Nigeria, but it had not given them a steady income. Landinfo also quotes a 2014 study of Plambech who notes that among nearly 30 informants there was only one who had a business that worked well for her two years after the return to Nigeria. The others felt that life was volatile and unpredictable. (Landinfo, 20 March 2017, pp. 22-23)

According to Landinfo’s March 2017 report there are non-governmental organizations working towards rehabilitation or counselling of returnees. On one side there is a practical approach, especially around establishing yourself as employed or to allocate funds, but it’s also about building confidence and providing spiritual guidance. This reflects that the term “empowerment” is interpreted broadly and that a religious discourse pervades society in Nigeria. (Landinfo, 20 March 2017, p. 23)

Adejumo Gbadebo Olubunmi from the Department of Psychology at the Nigerian Covenant University mentions in a January 2015 report that very few NGOs “are interested in rehabilitation programmes” for trafficking victims and further notes:

“In other countries they are recognised as partners in progress. The nature of the independent role played by non-governmental organisations in rehabilitation of victims within Nigerian society calls for real participation. The response of one of the interviewees supported this view. [...] There are few NGOs that have involved themselves in rehabilitation of human trafficking victims; they are majorly in the areas of education, human rights and advocacy work.” (Olubunmi, 14 January 2015, p. 222)

According to the German political research foundation Bertelsmann Stiftung “the burdens of aging, illness, underemployment and unemployment are mostly borne by extended-family networks and the informal sector”. The foundation further notes that “social security is only available to employees of the higher education system, state-owned and partially state-owned companies, medium-sized and international companies as well as civil servants.” (Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2016, p. 16)

Regarding poverty and unemployment the Bertelsmann Stiftung writes:

“The distribution of income in Nigeria is highly unequal. More than two-thirds of the 173 million people live in absolute poverty. In addition, Nigeria will again miss the Millennium Development Goals, though it has enough resources. President Goodluck Jonathan and his government at least acknowledged a precarious level of unemployment among young people – the first time that a government raised this frightening issue taking into consideration that more than 20 million young people are unemployed.” (Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2016, p. 17)

According to the unemployment report for the fourth quarter 2016 published by the Nigerian National Bureau of Statistics “unemployment and underemployment were higher for women than men in Q4 2016”:

“During the quarter, 16.3% of women in the labour force (those between 15 - 65 willing, able and actively working or searching for work) were unemployed in Q4 2016, and a further 24.2% of women in the labour force were underemployed. On the other hand, 12.3% of males were unemployed in Q4 2016, while a further 17.9% of males in the labour force were underemployed during the same period.” (Nigerian National Bureau of Statistics, June 2017, p. 5)

For further information on access to employment and assistance services please also see pp. 10-13 of the August 2014 IOM Country Fact Sheet:

- IOM – International Organization for Migration: Country Fact Sheet; Nigeria, August 2014
http://www.bamf.de/SharedDocs/MILo-DB/EN/Rueckkehrfoerderung/Laenderinformationen/Informationsblaetter/cfs_nigeria-dl_en.pdf?__blob=publicationFile

3.1.6 Access to health care

The USDOS in its June 2017 trafficking report writes that “NAPTIP provided initial screening for all victims and referred all identified victims to government facilities for medical care, vocational training, education, and shelter. It also referred 302 victims to NGOs for additional care” (USDOS, 27 June 2017). The USDOS goes on to summarise additional care services provided by NAPTIP:

“NAPTIP had agreements with certain hospitals and clinics to provide additional medical and psychological treatment for victims, as needed. NAPTIP shelters offered short-term care, generally limiting victims’ stays to six weeks, although victims could extend their stays under special circumstances; both men and women received specialized care. If victims needed longer-term care, NAPTIP collaborated with two shelters operated by the Ministry of Women’s Affairs and NGO-run shelters. Victims in NAPTIP shelters were not permitted to leave without a chaperone, reportedly for security.” (USDOS, 27 June 2017)

Landinfo in March 2017 quotes a 2003 study by Zimmermann according to which working in prostitution in Europe often has a negative impact on health. Landinfo adds that there are no separate health services for people with health problems of this kind, either physical or psychiatric, beyond the medical examinations and follow-up provided by NAPTIP for women who return with assisted return programs. (Landinfo, 20 March 2017, p. 16)

Business Day, a daily newspaper based in Lagos, provides the following general overview on the Nigerian health system in April 2017:

“Healthcare services in Nigeria have been and are still very poor. One of the limitations to the full achievement of a universal healthcare delivery system is the limited coverage of Nigerians under Social Health Insurance. [...] However, the coverage of the National Health Insurance Scheme is still below 5%. Some of the reasons for this can be attributed to ignorance, weak governance, funding etc. Most people covered that make up this 5% are workers in paid employment where a direct deduction from their wages (their contribution) is made into the pool. The larger uncovered population is mostly the unemployed who live in the rural areas. [...] Also, essential (Basic) healthcare services are lacking, as most PHC facilities are short of the minimum healthcare package stipulated by the National Primary Healthcare Agency. Where Private clinics are available, they are not affordable, since about 70% of Nigerians live below \$1/day. Given that over 65% of Nigerians live in rural areas, it is easy to understand why most Nigerians do not have physical and financial access to basic healthcare services. [...] Funding constraints play a major role in the non-availability of affordable and accessible healthcare services by Nigerians. There appears to be, in addition, insufficient political will by Governments at all tiers to invest appropriately in healthcare. There are also Human Resource Constraints. The health sector in Nigeria is facing a major human resources crisis. It has been a challenge trying to understand why with the large human resource base the nation prides itself about, there still exists a huge deficiency in the health workforce. [...] In the same vein, we must unlock some negative socio-cultural determinants that hinder positive health seeking behaviour among vulnerable Nigerians, especially the illiterate, poor and marginalized rural dwellers. The preferred resort to traditional medicine is a huge factor that hampers the drive to get quality healthcare to them.” (Business Day, 19 April 2017)

In a January 2015 study Adejumo Gbadebo Olubunmi from the Department of Psychology at the Nigerian Covenant University notes that human trafficking victims “often require special attention”:

“For example, they may suffer permanent and/or chronic medical conditions requiring intensive and lifelong treatment. Some of them have experienced sexual assault during their trafficking experience, putting them at risk for an increased number of associated health and mental health issues. The provision of health facilities in rehabilitation centers is essential. The findings revealed, as presented in Table 6, that participants in government rehabilitation centres rated health facilities available as high with over 30% either see these facilities as excellent or good against only 10% participants from NGOs’ homes reported good health facilities. The response of one of the interviewees revealed inadequate personnel to handle health related issues in NGOs facilities. NGOs have limited resources to mobilize health personnel and are often not looking for funds that are available locally, preferring to wait for international donors to approach them.” (Olubunmi, 14 January 2015, p. 222)

For further information on access to employment and assistance services please also see:

- IOM – International Organization for Migration: Country Fact Sheet; Nigeria, August 2014
http://www.bamf.de/SharedDocs/MILo-DB/EN/Rueckkehrfoerderung/Laenderinformationen/Informationsblaetter/cfs_nigeria-dl_en.pdf?__blob=publicationFile

4 Returns and re-trafficking

4.1 Re-trafficking and re-migration of victims of trafficking

A 2015 report by Women's Link Worldwide, an international organisation promoting the human rights of women and girls, on trafficking of Nigerian women and girls notes that "[r]e-trafficking is rampant in Nigeria":

"Because trafficking victims are so often handed over to the networks by their own families, friends or members of their communities, the risk of re-trafficking is extremely high upon return. It is also common for victims to face ostracism, discrimination and exclusion by their families, local community or sometimes even the authorities when they return." (Women's Link Worldwide, 2015, p. 68)

The Norwegian Country of Origin Information Center Landinfo in its March 2017 report writes that some of the women who travel to Europe to work as prostitutes did so before. This holds true both to women who are forced to return to Nigeria as well as women who have returned voluntarily. The motives for renewed departure do not differ from the motives the migrants held when they departed for the first time. Landinfo goes on to quote papers on trafficking in Nigeria by Sine Plambech and Irene Peano from 2014 and 2013 (Landinfo, 20 March 2017, p. 26). Plambech in her 2014 paper notes:

"Among the 25-30 informants, almost half had migrated or had attempted to migrate to Europe more than once. Even though many of the deported women have had exhausting and rough experiences in Europe, all of them except one, whom I present in the next section, wished to return to Europe at some point in the future. This stands in contrast to the idea of sedentariness, subsuming the practice of deportation and perhaps even more so the practice of AVRR, which implies that the women return to their home to stay." (Plambech, 2014, p. 61)

Irene Peano mentions in her 2013 paper that after being deported as "illegal" migrants, "several women knowingly re-negotiated their passage to Europe under the same conditions, and did so repeatedly". She adds that "this would not in principle undermine their potential claims to the status of 'victim.'" (Peano, January 2013, p. 12). Peano describes a conversation she had with a deported woman in 2007:

"After the first traveling instance, which she explained is often the harshest due to the inexperience of the women, subsequent attempts usually turn out more favorably, and the contract negotiated with the 'sponsorer' need not entail the same restrictions in terms of freedom of movement and rate of repayment as it often does the first time around. She cited the example of a friend of hers, currently in Sardinia, who had gone there for the second time but could live away from her madam and send money home to her mother." (Peano, January 2013, p. 25)

Landinfo in its March 2017 report further notes that women who already were in Europe once or several times are more experienced and often older than those traveling for the first time. Landinfo believes it is likely that they will often be less vulnerable to family pressure than younger and less experienced women (Landinfo, 20 March 2017, p. 27).

According to NAPTIP head Julie Okah-Donli, the agency is interested in well-formulated pre-return activities by the European Union and other partners to prevent victims among others from being re-trafficked. Okah-Donli stated that the way trafficking victims are handled must be changed. It must be ensured “that they are not only returned, but make sure that the entire package is such that they will not be re-trafficked and that it is in line with the standard protocol on voluntary returnees”. (NAPTIP, 18 October 2017)

Kilden, an information centre for gender research and an affiliated sub-unit of the Research Council of Norway, in July 2013 mentioned the following:

“A key objective of the return and reintegration programme is to prevent trafficking from reoccurring, but so far we have limited knowledge about what has happened to the women who have chosen to return,’ writes the coordination unit for victims of human trafficking under the Norwegian National Police Directorate in its report from 2012. The unit writes that some women choose to return without assistance. Some travel to other European countries. Many disappear without a trace.” (Kilden, 3 July 2013)

4.2 Instances of victims of trafficking returned to Nigeria before having extinguished their “debt” towards traffickers

In the August 2017 EASO report, Sine Plambech elaborates on women going back to Europe because they still have debt:

“Many of the women either want to go back to Europe or are forced to go back to Europe because they still have the debt. If they are returned before the debt is paid back, the madams or the traffickers will ask or force them to go back, maybe not after three months, six months or one year. Several will leave after one or two years. Whether it is re-migration or re-trafficking is often a very complex issue to discuss, but they would enter the sex industry again.” (EASO, August 2017, p. 54)

Landinfo writes in its March 2017 report it is likely that women who return voluntarily, either have repaid their debt, or renegotiated it to a level where it is realistic to be able to repay it after returning to Nigeria. Thus, women with remaining debt on return are primarily found among those who have been forcibly returned. At the same time, a part of the forcibly returned is ready to pay the debt, but is deported because of lacking residence permits in Europe (Landinfo, 20 March 2017, p. 24).

Plambech in 2014 gives the following overview on unpaid debts:

“[...] while some of the women were exposed to threats of violence in Europe if they did not keep up with debt installments, these threats rarely materialized into actual violence either in Europe or upon return. The fear that traffickers would wait for them at the airport upon their return to cash in on unpaid debts has often been used as a persuasive argument against repatriation, the logic being that the European countries might in fact return the women right back into the arms of their traffickers. Both Cynthia and Grace [victims of trafficking interviewed by Plambech] still owed money to their madams. Grace explained that the person to whom she owed money had not contacted her upon return, and she

was not fearful since she knew that if those individuals came and made demands her neighbors would help her, and she would then go to the police. Cynthia still owed approximately \$10,000 of which a portion was being paid by the Danish father of her child. The remaining debt was unsettled, but did not cause problems for her. The women explained that because the traffickers had so many women going to Europe they did not turn to violent means to collect the unpaid debt of the deported women.” (Plambech, 2014, p. 150)

Plambech further explains that “[u]pon deportation, the madam is given less attention by the women”, however, “in some cases, if the women still have debt, the madam might nevertheless be an important character, either as the woman is trying to figure out how to pay back the money, or as the madam is the one who can assist the migrant returning to Europe.” (Plambech, 2014, p. 22)

Landinfo notes that traffickers (“backers”) don’t automatically claim outstanding debt. When the debt is expected to be covered, there are no conflicts about repayment of residual debt. The traffickers know that both the women and their families have limited opportunities to repay large amounts in Nigeria and that the women rarely go back to Nigeria voluntarily, before they turned successful migrants. Furthermore, the traffickers have to take care of their reputation and may have difficulties in recruiting new women if they are known to be conflict-seeking. Threats of violence or violence against women who have returned to Nigeria while still having outstanding debt do not appear to be widespread. In an interview with Landinfo in 2012, Plambech stated that her informants had experienced disagreements about repaying debt, but then went to the local police and then agreed with the backers about further repayment. Landinfo adds that on the other hand, it seems somewhat more common that traffickers exert pressure on family members in Nigeria while the women are still in Europe. However, it is not possible to say anything about the scope. And again the traffickers will have to take into account what influence such a conflict may have on their reputation. (Landinfo, 20 March 2017, p. 25)

4.3 Situation of victims of trafficking upon return

4.3.1 *Single mothers and their children born abroad (in Europe)*

In the August 2017 EASO report, Sine Plambech explains with regard to women leaving children abroad when returned to Nigeria:

“I also wanted to draw attention to return assistance marketing. In return assistance posters you see a neat little family - mother, father and child - going back to their nice little house. That is not how return is in Nigeria. Of course, often it is women who are sent back on their own leaving here the children they have. I have several women in my research that have left their children behind, not mentioning to anyone that they have a child if the child was not registered, or leaving the child with family members in Italy and Spain. They are returned to Nigeria and they hope to get back to their child at some point, fighting for many years in Edo state or in Nigeria to come back to the child that they left behind in Europe.” (EASO, August 2017, p. 53)

Landinfo in March 2017 reports that some Nigerian female migrants have given birth to children while they were abroad. According to Queen Chinwe Okaro, senior programme coordinator of IOM, who was interviewed by Landinfo in Abuja in May 2009, it is not necessarily regarded as problematic if women return with children born abroad, even in cases where it is clear that the child's father is not African. What will matter is the explanation given to the family and the environment on return. Landinfo says there is little reason to believe that people will question the woman's story as long as it seems realistic. Since also in Nigeria women are left to themselves and are abandoned by boyfriends or husbands and there are cases of men not recognising childbirth, there is no reason why such an explanation will not be believed. Landinfo notes that there is no phenomenon in Nigeria that children are regarded as added responsibility or as a fault for the choices parents have made. According to Landinfo's report the director of the Nigeria Association of Women Journalists (NAWOJ), Maureen Atuonwu, at a meeting in June 2009 said that the biggest problem for women with children who do not have contact with their father or don't know him is that the children are regarded as worse off than other children since they only have access to the network of the mother's family. Landinfo further notes there is little to indicate that it is considered negative that a woman has had relations with a white man or had children with him. Her explanation of how she ended up returning with children after a stay abroad will be relevant for the reactions from her environment. (Landinfo, 20 March 2017, p. 12)

Regarding migrants returning with children from abroad Landinfo mentions that they are facing the same situation as other Nigerian mothers with children. The challenges are the same: the support for children, education and health care, and care for those who need it. This will be particularly challenging in the cases where the children's father contributes little or nothing financially. According to Landinfo representatives of NAPTIP said that there is full access regarding reception of women returning with children. Several NAPTIP representatives said that accompanying children are not a barrier to receiving help in a return situation. NAPTIP as an agency has broad experience with children because child victims of trafficking constitute a larger group than adult women in their work. (Landinfo, 20 March 2017, p. 16)

4.3.2 Orphans / persons without family support

No Information concerning the return situation of trafficked orphans or persons without family support could be found. The following information refers to the general situation of orphans and vulnerable children:

Strengthening Partnerships, Results, and Innovations in Nutrition Globally (SPRING), a project funded by the US agency for development cooperation USAID in May 2016 describes the situation of orphans and vulnerable children (OVC):

“Nigeria's Federal Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development estimates that there are 17.5 million orphans and vulnerable children (OVC) nationwide. These children face enormous challenges to their health and development and it is estimated that 95 percent of OVC do not receive any type of medical, emotional, social, material, or school-related assistance (National Population Commission, Federal Republic of Nigeria, and ICF International 2013). Childhood malnutrition is one of the major causes of childhood

morbidity and mortality in Nigeria and a cross-sectional study of 2015 revealed that more than a quarter of OVC studied showed symptoms of mild to moderate malnutrition. In addition, close to 70 percent experienced household food insecurity, putting them at risk for malnutrition (Tagurum et al. 2015).” (SPRING, May 2016)

Yetunde Winifred Olagbuji from the Ondo State Primary Health Care Development Board in September 2015 provides the following overview on the situation of OVC in Nigeria:

“Nigeria has one of the largest burdens of Orphans and Vulnerable Children (OVC) in the world and is facing an orphaning and vulnerability crisis of potentially catastrophic proportions (United Nations Children’s Fund and Policy Project, 2004). The number of adults and children living with HIV (a major cause of orphanhood) in Nigeria was 2.8 million in 2008 and this is one of the highest in the world (UNICEF and Policy Project, 2004). The 2008 Situation Assessment and Analysis (SAA) on OVC revealed that 17.5 million (24.5%) of Nigerian children are OVC (Federal Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development, 2008). The survey further showed that 7.3 million were orphaned from various causes while the national prevalence of OVC is 24.5% and that of Edo State is 15%. Evidence also exists to show that OVC in Nigeria live in deplorable conditions and are exposed to neglect, exploitation, abuse and deprived of basic human rights and needs (UNICEF, 2002). Thus, Nigeria is facing an emergency situation in which millions of children are in dire need of care and special protection measures (McKenna, 2010). The burden of poverty makes families and communities unable to cope with the increased number of orphans (McKenna, 2010). Orphanages or other group residential facilities may seem a logical response to growing orphan populations but it can however, impede the development of national solutions for orphans and other vulnerable children. In the worst cases, orphanages can be dangerous and unregulated places where children are subject to abuse and neglect (Feranil et al., 2010).” (Olagbuji, September 2015, p. 205)

Olagbuji goes on to mention a number of policy frameworks regarding orphans and vulnerable children adopted by the Nigerian government:

“These include the Child Rights Act (CRA) (2003), which incorporates the UN conventions on the Rights of a Child, and the National Guideline and Standard of Practice (NGSP) for OVC, in Nigeria (National Population Commission and ICF Macro, 2009). Twenty one of the thirty six states (including Edo state) of the Federation and the Federal Capital Territory have domesticated the law, and a vigorous advocacy campaign is currently being undertaken by the Ministry of Women Affairs for other states to follow suit (Federal Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development Nigeria, 2006; 2008). The goal of the NGSP for OVC in Nigeria is to provide comprehensive, efficient and effective care, support and protection of orphans and vulnerable children in Nigeria (Federal Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development, 2007).” (Olagbuji, September 2015, p. 205)

The USDOL says in its September 2017 report that “NAPTIP coordinates with the Ministry of Women’s Affairs and Social Development and state governments to provide social services to child trafficking victims through the National Referral Mechanism” and mentions nine NAPTIP shelters for human trafficking victims which provide “legal, medical, and psychological services,

as well as vocational training, business management skills, and family reunification” (USDOL, 30 September 2017, p. 6).

The Boston University Center for Global Health and Development in December 2009 gave an overview on organisations then working on the issue of orphans and vulnerable children:

“In response to the OVC challenge, apart from the government at various levels, a number of organizations are involved in OVC work in Nigeria. They include international NGOs, mainly USG [U.S. Government] and Global Fund implementing partners, local NGOs [non-governmental organisations], FBOs [faith-based organisations], and CBOs [community based organizations]. With the exception of the MTN Foundation, the role of the private sector is very small. Some of the main international NGOs involved in OVC work include the Columbia University International Center for AIDS Care and Treatment Programs (CU-ICAP), Catholic Relief Services (CRS), Center for Development and Population Activities (CEDPA), and Winrock International/AIM.” (Boston University Center for Global Health and Development, December 2009, p. 3)

Regarding support and care services for OVC the Boston University Center for Global Health and Development further stated:

“There are five models of care in Nigeria: community-based care, informal foster care, institutional care, home-based care, and mobile care services. Community-based care is the most dominant model and the one promoted by the national policy. [...] Among the local organizations visited, most provide health care and psychosocial support (90% & 91%), followed by food and nutrition; shelter was the least served (63%). Great strides have certainly been made to deal with the OVC situation. However, the response by both domestic and international organizations remains insufficient. Although there is neither nationally aggregated data on coverage of services, nor data on numbers of OVC most in need of services, anecdotal evidence shows that the current scale of services is far from reaching a significant number of the millions of OVC in need.” (Boston University Center for Global Health and Development, December 2009, p. 4)

A February 2017 article by The Conversation provides the following information on the importance of the family in Nigeria:

“Unlike the Western ‘extended family’, Nigerian families are tightly knit through ancestral ties. This makes the closeness of the biological connection irrelevant in determining the importance of the relationship. This creates a very profound sense of moral and financial obligation among family members, a factor which has great importance in the dynamics of sex trafficking. In Nigerian families, for instance, the wealthier family members are both expected and feel obligated to provide financially for those who struggle.” (The Conversation, 12 February 2017)

4.3.3 HIV positive victims of trafficking

No Information concerning the return situation of HIV positive victims of trafficking could be found. The following information refers to the general situation of persons living with HIV/AIDS:

A November 2017 article by Nigerian newspaper Premium Times contains information on the situation of persons who need treatment for HIV/AIDS in Nigeria:

“The National Agency for the Control of AIDS, NACA, has said only about one in three persons who need treatment for HIV/AIDS in Nigeria are getting the life-saving treatment. The agency has therefore called on state governments to invest in HIV/AIDS programme to enable more people with the virus get treatment. Over one million people are receiving treatment for the disease in Nigeria, although about three million need the treatment. According to health officials, it is only in about nine states in the country that more than half of their people living with HIV are on treatment. The Director-General of NACA, Sani Aliyu, at a joint press conference in Abuja to commemorate the World AIDS Day, on Wednesday urged state governments to invest in the fight against the disease. [...]

‘At the moment, we have about three million Nigerians requiring HIV treatment. At about N50,000 per patient, per year, that translates to about N150 billion. That is more than 60 percent of the 2017 federal Ministry of Health budget. ‘Therefore the approach to handling the HIV funding is not only to try and increase the budgetary allocation to HIV, but overall to try and increase the overall federal health budget. Because federal health budget cannot devote 60 percent of its budget towards a single disease condition,’ the NACA boss [Sani Aliyu] said.” (Premium Times, 22 November 2017)

The National Agency for the Control of AIDS (NACA) on its website provides the following overview on antiretroviral therapy (ART) in Nigeria:

“The Federal government of Nigeria introduced the national ART programme in 2002 and under the programme couple of thousands of adults and children were given access ARV drugs. The price of the drugs was heavily subsidized by the government with help from several donor agencies. In 2004, the programme experienced some supply challenges. In 2006, another program was started with the goal of providing ARV drugs at no cost to about 250,000 HIV-positive patients. Although a total of 74 treatment sites were participating in this program by the end of 2006, only about 15% of PLWHA [People living with HIV/AIDS] needing ARV drugs in Nigeria had access to this treatment (Monjok et al., 2010). NACA remains at the forefront of these efforts. [...]

Our agency has been playing an indispensable role in making sure that the percentage of people with access to subsidized ART is greatly improved. At around 30 percent presently and with over 600,000 on ART in Nigeria, all hands are on deck to up this number. NACA will continue to be reference point in the fight against HIV/AIDS in the country and continent.” (NACA, undated)

The Nigerian newspaper The Nation in October 2017 writes that “President Muhammadu Buhari has committed its government to support treatment of 50,000 HIV/AIDS patients in a year”:

“This pledge, made at a special event during the UN Assembly in New York on getting countries to work towards ending AIDS by 2030, indicates readiness of the government to add this number to 60,000 patients already receiving subsidy from a combination of

sources that include donor funding and government assistance. Under this scheme, the government will provide anti-retroviral treatment for 50,000 patients each year. This pledge is timely in view of the heavy reliance on donors for such treatment. Although a modest commitment in relation to the total number of people estimated to have HIV/AIDS, the move is still encouraging, especially that hundreds of patients are paying out-of-pocket for the expensive drugs and procedures required by AIDS patients. Currently, Nigeria is estimated as having about three million people with the infection, with close to one million already receiving treatment made possible by a cocktail of funding sources: out-of-pocket payment, donors' funds and government assistance." (The Nation, 12 October 2017)

Nigerian newspaper This Day quotes the Director-General of NACA, Dr. Sani Aliyu, in a November 2017 article:

"If we must take our response to the next level, we must address the challenges related to our health system infrastructure, unmet need for commodities, data quality and human resource for health and funding. These challenges constitute key barriers to universal access to HIV/AIDS services in Nigeria. It costs about N50,000 to provide ART [antiretroviral therapy] to a person living with HIV for a year. With the size of our treatment programme (at over one million PLHIV on ART), we will require at least N50 billion Naira annually to keep them on treatment, while we require to triple amount annually to achieve and maintain ART coverage saturation in Nigeria." (This Day, 29 November 2017)

In its March 2017 report the USDOS mentions with regard to stigmatisation of people living with HIV/AIDS:

"According to the 2013 NDHS [Nigeria Demographic and Health Survey], administered to a broad cross section of society throughout the 36 states and the FCT [Federal Capital Territory], 50 percent of women and 46 percent of men reported holding discriminatory attitudes toward those with HIV. The public considered the disease a result of immoral behavior and a punishment for same-sex sexual activity. Persons with HIV/AIDS often lost their jobs or were denied health-care services. Authorities and NGOs sought to reduce the stigma and change perceptions through public education campaigns." (USDOS, 3 March 2017, Section 6)

In her book on Human Trafficking and Prostitution among Women and Girls of Edo State, Mary Dorothy Ezeh elaborates on a situation when returning trafficking victims contracted HIV/AIDS:

"The worst thing happens if any of the girls contracts HIV/AIDS, as soon as the sickness is identified the entire community members become sad because they will no longer receive the assistance their daughters would have given them if they had succeeded. The effect is that the girl will be abandoned, denied, rejected and isolated both in the victim's family and within the community. All the community members will be making fun of her; even her friends will no longer associate themselves with her. In order not to bear the shame, none of the community member will associate herself/ himself with the victim. Later, the victim will be left to die."(Ezeh, 2017, Section 5.6.3)

4.3.4 *Trafficking victims with physical disabilities*

No Information concerning the situation of trafficking victims with physical disabilities could be found. The following information refers to the situation of persons with disabilities in general:

The Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF) and other organisations note the following in a joint report to the CEDAW Committee:

“Furthermore, there is a high increase of various forms of gender-based violence and stigmatization experienced by persons with disabilities. Psychosocial support is not available to them, especially in the rural communities. A Disability Rights Bill was passed by the 6th and 7th National Assembly but did not get signed into law by the former President. Currently, the bill is yet to be signed by the present President.” (WILPF, June 2017, p. 10)

The USDOS in its March 2017 human rights report mentions that no federal laws “prohibit discrimination against persons with physical, sensory, intellectual, or mental disabilities in employment, education, air travel and other transportation, access to health care, or the provision of other state services” and gives the following overview:

“The law does, however, prohibit discrimination based on the ‘circumstances of one’s birth.’ Plateau and Lagos States have laws that protect the rights of persons with disabilities, while Akwa-Ibom, Jigawa, Osun, and Oyo States took steps to develop such laws. The Ministry of Women’s Affairs and Social Development has responsibility for persons with disabilities. Some government agencies, such as the NHRC [National Human Rights Commission] and the Ministry of Labor and Productivity, designated an employee to work on issues related to disabilities.

Mental health-care services were almost nonexistent. Officials at a small number of prisons used private donations to provide separate mental health facilities for prisoners with mental disabilities. All prisoners with disabilities stayed with the general inmate population and received no specialized services or accommodations.

Persons with disabilities faced social stigma, exploitation, and discrimination, and relatives often regarded them as a source of shame. Many families viewed children with disabilities who could not contribute to family income as liabilities and sometimes severely abused or neglected them. Many indigent persons with disabilities begged on the streets. Persons with intellectual disabilities were stigmatized, sometimes even within the community of persons with disabilities.” (USDOS, 3 March 2017, Section 6)

The USDOS further mentions vocational training centres operated by the government in Abuja and Lagos “to train indigent persons with disabilities” and mentions the establishment of further facilities:

“Individual states also provided facilities to help persons with physical disabilities become self-supporting. Persons with disabilities established self-help NGOs such as the Hope for the Blind Foundation in Zaria, Kano Polio Victims Trust Association, the Albino Foundation, and Comprehensive Empowerment of Nigerians with Disabilities. The Joint National Association of Persons with Disabilities served as the umbrella organization for a range of

disability groups. In 2008 the Ministry of Education estimated that, of 3.25 million school-age children with disabilities, only 90,000 were enrolled in primary school and 65,000 in secondary school.” (USDOS, 3 March 2017, Section 6)

Premium Times in March 2017 reports that the Nigeria Disability Right Bill is presently being reviewed by the Senate. Lois Aula, the Executive Director of the Cedar Seeds Foundation, has “called on the Senate to pass the proposed law”. According to her, “for too long, women with disabilities had been sidelined, marginalised and left behind from development agenda”. (Premium Times, 27 March 2017)

The Nigerian newspaper The Guardian in a September 2017 article mentions that the Medical Rehabilitation Therapists Board of Nigeria (MRTB) “called for the formulation of a disability policy and bill for its inclusion in the National health Policy” and added that “persons leaving with any form of physical or congenital conditions encounter widespread barriers in accessing healthcare and related services, with worse health outcomes than people living without disabilities” (The Guardian (Nigeria), 7 September 2017).

4.3.5 Male victims of trafficking

No Information concerning the return situation of male victims of trafficking could be found.

4.3.6 Already exploited in Nigeria before departing

No Information concerning the return situation of victims of trafficking, who were already exploited in Nigeria before departing could be found.

5 Willingness and Ability of the state to provide protection to victims of trafficking and returnees

5.1 Nigerian national and local protection mechanisms

5.1.1 *Relevant legislation*

The International Movement against all forms of Racism and Discrimination (IMADR), an international non-profit, non-governmental human rights organization devoted to eliminating discrimination and racism, in October 2015 mentions international rights instruments that Nigeria is party to:

“Nigeria is party to the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in persons, especially women and children (Trafficking Protocol) supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, as well as to a number of international human rights instruments, including the United Nations Slavery Convention (1927), the Convention for the suppression of trafficking in Persons and of the Exploitation of the Prostitution of Others (1949), the ILO Forced Labour Convention (1930, No. 29), the ILO Abolition of Forced Labour Convention (1957, No. 105), the ILO Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention (1999, No. 182). Nigeria also ratified other international instruments which have provisions that can apply by extension to the protection of the human rights of trafficked persons, including: the Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (1979), the Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989), the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography (2000), the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (1984), the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (1965), the UN General Assembly Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women (1993), the Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families (1990), the ILO Conventions 97 and 143 on Migrant Workers and 181 on Private Employment Agencies.” (IMADR, October 2015, p. 3)

Women Advocates’ Research & Documentation Centre (WARDC) describes further legal instruments on the international and national level:

“The UN Trafficking Protocol requires states parties to take action to penalize trafficking, protect victims of trafficking, and grant victims temporary or permanent residence in the countries of destination. Nigeria ratified both the Convention and the UN Trafficking Protocol in June 2001 and the Smuggling Protocol in September 2001. On the regional and sub-regional levels, AU and the ECOWAS, enacted part of the legal, and policy framework for dealing with the problem of trafficking. These include the ECOWAS Plan of Action to Combat trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children, the ECCAS/ECOWAS Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children, the ECCAS/ECOWAS Multi-lateral Cooperation Agreement to Combat Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children, the ECOWAS Policy on Protection and Assistance to Victims of Human Trafficking, the ECOWAS Guidelines on Protection, Assistance and Support to Witnesses. Also relevant is the AU Migration Policy. Other relevant legal

instruments on the national level are the Child Rights Act (2003) and the Child Rights Laws of the states that have passed them. These legislation, passed at the federal and states levels address the problems of trafficking through penalization. Also, the various Penal and Criminal Codes applicable at the federal and states' levels contain provisions, which penalize trafficking in persons as well as sexual exploitation of women and girls." (WARD, June 2017, p. 15)

IMADR writes that in 2003 Nigeria "became the first African country to enact an anti-trafficking legislation with the Trafficking in Persons (Prohibition) Law Enforcement and Administration Act 2003" and describes the 2015 amendment of this law:

"In March of this year, the Trafficking in Persons (Prohibition) Enforcement and Administration Act, 2015 was passed and repealed the previous law. The new Act primarily intends to reflect recent developments in trafficking that were not included under the previous act. For instance, it ensures that the penalties for breaching the provisions of the law are consistent with the spirit of the Trafficking Protocol. Indeed, the penalties given for offences listed under the 2003 Act were severely inadequate for the purpose of dissuasion and deterrence. The 2015 Act increases the penalties for trafficking offenders. It prescribes a minimum penalty of five years' imprisonment and a minimum fine of one million naira (\$5,470) for labor trafficking offenses. The law prescribes a minimum penalty of five years' imprisonment for sex trafficking offenses and a minimum fine of one million naira (\$5,470); the minimum penalty increases to seven years' imprisonment if the case involves a child. Moreover, the 2003 Act was found to be inadequate in effectively combating the evolving crime of Trafficking in Persons, with several new trends which were not taken into consideration at the time of enactment. The new law prohibits all forms of trafficking, including trafficking for organ trade or ritual murders." (IMADR, October 2015, p. 4)

The USDOS also mentions the 2015 amendment of the "Trafficking in Persons Law Enforcement and Administration Act" and goes on to describe the contents of the act:

"The Trafficking in Persons Law Enforcement and Administration Act, as amended in 2015, criminalizes all forms of trafficking and prescribes a minimum penalty of five years imprisonment and a minimum fine of one million naira (\$3,290) for sex and labor trafficking offenses; the minimum penalty for sex trafficking increases to seven years imprisonment if the case involves a child. These penalties are sufficiently stringent and commensurate with those prescribed for other serious crimes, such as rape. Enforcement of the law remained ineffective in many parts of the country, and while officials made efforts to address trafficking cases, insufficient resources and jurisdictional problems between state and federal governments hampered efforts." (USDOS, 27 June 2017)

The USDOL in September 2016 notes that the amendment increased the "penalties for human trafficking offenders" and restricts the "ability of judges to penalize human trafficking offenders with fines in lieu of prison time". The act further "criminalizes the employment of children under age 12 in domestic work". (USDOL, 30 September 2016, p. 4)

CEDAW in its July 2017 concluding observations on the state party report of Nigeria "welcomes the revised Trafficking in Persons (Prohibition) Law Enforcement and Administration Act, which

entered into force in 2015” and also welcomes “the establishment of a trust fund for victims of trafficking in 2008” (CEDAW, 24 July 2017, p. 9).

The full text of the Trafficking in Persons (Prohibition), Enforcement and Administration Act 2015 can be found under the following link:

- Trafficking in Persons (Prohibition), Enforcement and Administration Act 2015, 30 March 2015
<http://placng.org/new/laws/T23.pdf>

The USDOS in its Investment Climate Statements for 2016 notes with regard to anti-child labor efforts:

“The GoN [Government of Nigeria] adopted the Trafficking in Persons (Prohibition), Enforcement and Administration Act of 2015 on March 26, 2015. While not specifically directed against child labor, many sections of the new law support anti-child labor efforts. The Violence against Persons Prohibition Act was signed into law in on May 25, 2015 and again while not specifically focused on child labor, it covers related elements such as ‘depriving a person of his/her liberty,’ ‘forced financial dependence/economic abuse,’ and ‘forced isolation/separation from family and friends’ and is applicable to minors.” (USDOS, 5 July 2016)

A Special Rapporteurs report published by the UN Human Rights Council (HRC) in June 2016 also refers to the issue of child trafficking and notes:

“Nigeria has transposed the Convention on the Rights of the Child into national law through the enactment of the Child Rights Act, 2003, which prohibits, among others, slavery and practices similar to slavery, such as the sale of or trafficking in children, debt bondage, serfdom and forced or compulsory labour for children. The Act guarantees the provision of special protection measures for children in need, including assistance and facilities necessary for education, training, preparation for employment, rehabilitation and recreational opportunities in a manner conducive to achieving their fullest possible social integration and individual development. Furthermore, the Act prohibits the recruitment of children into the armed forces. In terms of the federal structure of Nigeria, national law does not apply unless specifically adopted by state assemblies. Only 22 out of 36 states have enacted the Child Rights Act. Borno, Yobe and Adamawa, the three north-eastern states most affected by the Boko Haram insurgency, have not yet done so. The lack of harmonization between sharia law and civil law is also said to be one of the challenges preventing states’ adoption of the Act. It is noteworthy that the Child Rights Act defines a child as someone under the age of 18, while the definition in the State Children and Young Persons Laws applicable in the three north-eastern states is someone under 15.” (HRC, 15 June 2016, p. 6)

IMADR further mentions the legal provisions in the Constitution of Nigeria concerning slavery, servitude and forced labour:

“Section 34 of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (1999) guarantees the right to the dignity of the human person thus prohibiting the subjection of any person to

slavery and servitude. It prohibits the subjection of any person to slavery or servitude providing that: 'Every individual is entitled to respect for the dignity of the person and accordingly; no person shall be subjected to torture or to inhuman or degrading treatment; no person shall be held in slavery or servitude; and no person shall be required to perform forced or compulsory labour.' Other relevant provisions in the Constitution are those that safeguard the rights to movement (Section 41), personal liberty (Section 35), and those that prohibit torture and inhuman or degrading treatment, slavery, servitude and forced labour (Sections 34(1)(a) (b) and (c) respectively)¹⁵." (IMADR, October 2015, p. 3)

IMADR describes the legal prescriptions of the two codes of criminal law in the country:

"Nigeria has two codes of criminal law; the Criminal Code covering the Southern states of Nigeria and the Penal Code applying to the North. The Criminal Code does not define what constitutes trafficking nor does it deal with the various forms of trafficking. However, it deals with the offences which may constitute external trafficking for prostitution and slavery. For example the Criminal Code makes it an offence to procure women and girls for prostitution in or outside Nigeria (223(2)). There are also provisions dealing with offences of unlawful deprivation of liberty, slave dealing, forced labour, and sexual offences. For instance, section 365 deals with unlawful confinement or detention against a person's will while Section 366 covers compelling someone to do something by threats, surveillance or other intimidation and is punishable by one year of imprisonment. If this involves assault, the penalty increases to five years. The Criminal Code prohibits slave dealing, and Section 369 punishes slave dealing with imprisonment for 14 years upon conviction of any offender. The Penal Code contains similar provisions on trafficking. Section 275 prohibits to induce girls below 18 to incitation of prostitution and others similar practices. Section 278 provides that any person who buys, sells, hires, lets to hire or otherwise obtains possession or disposes of any person below 18 years with intent that the person will be or is likely to be employed or used for prostitution or other unlawful or immoral purposes is guilty of an offence punishable with imprisonment up to ten years and liable to pay a fine in addition. Section 279 creates the offence of slave dealing and provides that any person who exports, imports, removes, buys, sells, disposes of, traffics or deals in any person as a slave or accepts, receives or detains such person is liable to imprisonment for a maximum of 14 years and a fine. Section 280 punishes forced labor with a fine and one year imprisonment; enticement or leading away of any woman or girl (with or without her consent); for immoral purpose with imprisonment of up to 7 years and a fine. The Penal Code does not define the term traffic." (IMADR, October 2015, pp. 3-4)

5.1.2 Implementation of legal mechanisms in practice

WARDC in June 2017 writes that the National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons (NAPTIP) was established in 2003 as Nigeria enacted an anti-trafficking legislation (WARDC, June 2017, p. 15). In its June 2017 report on trafficking in persons, the USDOS describes the government funding provided to NAPTIP in 2016:

"The government allocated approximately 1.69 billion naira (\$5.56 million) to NAPTIP in 2016, which was a significant decrease from 2.5 billion naira (\$8.22 million) allocated in 2015. As of December 2016, the national assembly had only reported disbursing 1.27

billion naira (\$4.17 million) of the 2016 funding to NAPTIP, and NAPTIP required approximately 1.3 billion naira (\$4.27 million) for personnel costs alone. The national assembly allocated an additional 208 million naira (\$683,760) to NAPTIP in 2016 specifically to assist trafficking victims and other vulnerable people in eight states; it was unclear how much of this funding was disbursed during the reporting period. Because this amount was significantly less than the 581 million naira (\$1.91 million) allocated for victim protection in 2015 and the government identified more trafficking victims than the previous reporting period, it was unclear how NAPTIP maintained the same quality of victim services. Although NAPTIP is mandated to care only for victims of trafficking crimes under the 2015 anti-trafficking law, the government often referred victims of other crimes to NAPTIP, which reduced its capacity to care for trafficking victims.” (USDOS, 27 June 2017)

According to the same report, the Nigerian government “decreased funding for the National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons and Other Related Matters (NAPTIP), including its budget for victim services” (USDOS, 27 June 2017).

NAPTIP summarises the functions and powers of the agency on its website:

- NAPTIP - National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons: About NAPTIP, undated (b)

https://www.naptip.gov.ng/?page_id=112

According to the USDOS the Nigerian government “conducted extensive training throughout the reporting period”:

“NAPTIP, in collaboration with international partners, provided specialized training to approximately 243 government employees, including judges, prosecutors, NAPTIP officials, and other law enforcement on victim identification; investigation and prosecution of trafficking cases; counseling; and disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration. NAPTIP developed and distributed a manual to law enforcement agencies on identifying trafficking victims and referring cases to NAPTIP and conducted train-the-trainer training on the procedures across agencies. In addition, it assisted 14 countries with their anti-trafficking efforts through training courses, joint intelligence sharing, and mutual legal assistance. The government dismissed the director general of NAPTIP in February 2016 and did not nominate a replacement until March 2017. While in the interim the agency had an acting director, the lack of permanent leadership hampered the agency’s effectiveness.” (USDOS, 27 June 2017)

The Nigerian newspaper This Day in August 2017 notes that the “federal government has extended the whistle blowing policy to crimes in trafficking in persons”:

“The extension was sequel to a request by the Director-General of the National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons (NAPTIP), Julie Okah-Donli, who had applied to the federal government to extend the policy to issues of human trafficking to encourage people report cases of trafficking in persons and provide information on assets of traffickers to the agency without fear of reprisals. According to a release signed by Vincent Adeloje on behalf of NAPTIP's Head of Press and Public Relations, the approval of the

agency's application was conveyed by the Hon. Attorney-General of the Federation and Minister of Justice, Mr. Abubakar Malami (SAN) in a letter dated August 7, 2017 and signed by the Director (Solicitors Department) Z. S Adeyanju, In the statement, Adeyanju stated that the approval was given based on the fact that the request by NAPTIP for the inclusion of Human Trafficking cases in the whistle blowing policy of the present administration was not in conflict with any extant law." (This Day, 23 August 2017)

In November 2017 This Day further notes that the "Edo State Government has approved the bill to enact the Edo State Trafficking in Persons Prohibition, Enforcement and Administration Law 2017". The bill "provides for the establishment of the Edo State Task Force on human trafficking and other related matters" and "will be sent to the Edo State House of Assembly for consideration and passage". (This Day, 1 November 2017)

The UN Committee on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families (CMW) in its May 2017 report notes that "although the 2015 amendment to the Trafficking in Persons (Prohibition), Enforcement and Administration Act removed judges' ability to impose a fine in lieu of a prison sentence for trafficking offences, the State party's courts continue, in certain cases, to penalize traffickers with only fines" (CMW, 23 May 2017, p. 9).

Similarly, the USDOS notes that despite the "2015 amendment that removed judges' ability to sentence traffickers to pay fines in lieu of prison time, Nigerian courts penalized one trafficker with the option of a fine or imprisonment":

"Furthermore, despite the identification of 599 forced labor and child labor victims, the government only convicted two labor traffickers. The government only convicted one trafficker for child forced begging, despite the prevalence of the practice. The government conducted joint investigations or cooperated with authorities from eight countries on 19 cases involving Nigerian nationals during the reporting period, compared with cooperating with foreign governments on 43 cases in the previous reporting period." (USDOS, 27 June 2017)

The USDOS in its June 2017 trafficking in persons report notes that the "government maintained anti-trafficking law enforcement efforts, but there were increased reports of government complicity in human trafficking" (USDOS, 27 June 2017). According to CMW "[t]rafficking-related corruption and complicity at all levels of government remains pervasive" (CMW, 23 May 2017, p. 10).

Regarding the efforts taken by the Nigerian government for the elimination of trafficking the USDOS notes:

"The Government of Nigeria does not fully meet the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking; however, it is making significant efforts to do so. The government demonstrated significant efforts during the reporting period by investigating, prosecuting, and convicting traffickers; conducting anti-trafficking training for law enforcement officials; and repatriating some Nigerian trafficking victims identified abroad. However, the

government did not demonstrate increasing efforts compared to the previous reporting period.” (USDOS, 27 June 2017)

5.1.3 Instances of criminal prosecution of traffickers

In its May 2017 report covering the first quarter of 2017 NAPTIP writes that 90 suspected traffickers were arrested:

“From the table above, ninety (90) suspected traffickers were arrested for their alleged involvement in various offences of human trafficking. This comprises fifty (50) males and forty (40) females. The alleged offence of Forced Labour within Nigeria has the highest frequency of arrested suspects with 17 (18.9%) persons. The next crime is alleged Exportation of persons for Prostitution in which the Agency arrested 16 (17.8%) suspected offenders. The third number is Employment of Child as domestic worker and inflicting grievous harm for which offence the Agency arrested 14 (15.6%) suspected offenders. The least number of arrests by the Agency was in connection with alleged Custody Battle, Illegal Adoption and Attempted Act of Human Trafficking with one suspected person arrested for each of the offences. While for the offence of Buying and Selling of Human Beings, the Agency arrested three suspected offenders.” (NAPTIP, May 2017, p. 5)

NAPTIP adds that “the Agency arraigned thirty one (31) suspected traffickers at different courts across the country.” Suspected traffickers were arraigned in courts for the following alleged offences: exportation of persons for prostitution; procurement of persons for sexual exploitation; recruitment of persons under 18 years for prostitution; foreign travel which promotes prostitution; buying or selling of human beings for any purpose; forced labour outside Nigeria; employment of child as domestic worker and inflicting grievous harm; fraudulent entry of persons; conspiracy to commit trafficking offence; attempt to commit an offence under this act. (NAPTIP, May 2017, p. 9)

Regarding pending cases NAPTIP further notes:

“In the quarter under review, the Agency’s Legal and Prosecution Department received for legal opinion, Forty-two (42) cases from the Investigation and Monitoring Department. Twenty-two (22) of those cases were successfully charged to Court. This brought number of pending cases in different courts across the country to 145.” (NAPTIP, May 2017, p. 7)

In the first quarter of 2017 four traffickers were convicted. According to NAPTIP this “brings the total number of convictions won by the Agency from inception to two hundred and sixty six (265) [sic] with three hundred and fifteen (315) convicted persons.” (NAPTIP, May 2017, p. 10)

Concerning investigations, prosecutions, and convictions for trafficking offenses the USDOS in June 2017 notes:

“NAPTIP reported 654 investigations, 24 prosecutions, and 23 convictions for trafficking offenses, compared with 507 investigations, 32 prosecutions, and 24 convictions the previous reporting period. It was unclear how many investigations were pending and how many had been dismissed at the end of the reporting period. Most convictions took place under the 2015 amended anti-trafficking law, although some judges also convicted

traffickers under the 2003 anti-trafficking law and its amendments and other laws for employing a child with force, fraud, or coercion; transporting or attempting to transport women and girls abroad for exploitation; and knowingly soliciting or patronizing a sex trafficking victim. Prison sentences upon conviction ranged from 18 months to 14 years imprisonment; of the 23 convictions, 22 resulted in imprisonment without the option of paying a fine.” (USDOS, 27 June 2017)

Page 33 of the following paper by Muhammed Tawfiq Ladan of the Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, Nigeria provides a table on the “number of convictions secured by NAPTIP on human trafficking cases” from August 2004 to December 2015:

- Ladan, Muhammed Tawfiq: recent legal, policy and caselaw trends in combating trafficking of children and women in Nigeria, Dezember 2015
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The Nigerian newspaper Premium Times in August 2017 reports the arrest of six persons “including a 25-year-old Abu Dhabi-based lady for alleged trafficking of girls from Nigeria to the United Arab Emirates to engage in forced prostitution” by NAPTIP (Premium Times, 23 August 2017). The Nigerian newspaper Daily Trust in November 2017 reports that the “Kaduna state Police Command has arrested a woman in connection with alleged trafficking of 21 children in Gwagwalada” (Daily Trust, 9 November 2017). The Nigerian newspaper The Guardian mentions that “Operation Safe Haven (OPSH), a multi-security task force maintaining peace in Plateau State and some parts of Bauchi and Kaduna, has paraded two women over alleged trafficking of a four-day old female baby” (The Guardian (Nigeria), 15 November 2017).

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