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Building the Evidence Base for Effective Antislavery
Governance

Nigeria Country Profile

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About this report

This report was prepared by Dr Ana Valverde-Cano (Rights Lab Research Fellow in Antislavery Law and Policy), Dr Katarina Schwarz (Rights Lab Associate Director), and Dr Daniel Ogunniyi (Rights Lab Research Fellow).

The report is based primarily on research conducted from 2020-2021 and may not therefore consider more recent emerging evidence. Updates to the report to reflect new and emerging evidence are ongoing.

The authors welcome enquiries on the report and the project more broadly, which may be directed to Katarina Schwarz at Katarina.Schwarz@nottingham.ac.uk

About the project

The report was produced to support the research project ‘Building the Evidence Base for Effective Antislavery Governance in the UK and the Top 20 UK Source Countries’, funded by the Modern Slavery and Human Rights Policy and Evidence Centre. The research team consisted of Dr Katarina Schwarz (Rights Lab, University of Nottingham), Dr Ana Valverde-Cano (Rights Lab), Dr Daniel Ogunniyi (Rights Lab), Alexandra Williams-Woods (CSIS, University of Liverpool), and Prof Jean Allain (Wilberforce Institute, University of Hull).

The **Rights Lab** is a University of Nottingham “Beacon of Excellence” and home to the world’s largest and leading group of modern slavery researchers. Through its five research programmes, impact team, and INSPIRE project, the Rights Lab is underpinning antislavery with an advanced research agenda, collaborating with civil society, business, and government, and elevating survivor-informed research as a key part of knowledge production to help end slavery.

The **Wilberforce Institute** at the University of Hull aims to advance fundamental knowledge of slavery and emancipation, informing policy, business practice and public debate at local, national and international levels. The Wilberforce Institute brings together experts in humanities, law and social sciences to help tackle this global problem head on.

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1. Overview of antislavery and anti-trafficking governance in Nigeria

1.1. GSI rankings and government response ratings¹

	Vulnerability		Prevalence			Government response	
	Ranking ²	Score ³	Ranking ⁴	Absolute ⁵	/ 1000 ⁶	Ranking ⁷	Rating ⁸
2013	27 /162	65.01	48 /162	701,032	4.1	-	-
2014	36 /167	63.6	52 /167	834,200	4.8	42 /167	B
2016	11 /167	62.34	23 /167	875,500	4.8	51 /161	B
2018	11 /167	74.1	32 /167	1,386,000	7.7	66 /162	B

Although the nature of modern slavery makes measuring the phenomenon an inherently difficult task, the Walk Free Foundation's Global Slavery Index (GSI) aims to provide the 'best available data and information about the scale and regional distribution of modern slavery'.⁹ This includes **national prevalence estimates** of the number of people experiencing modern slavery in each country, calculated on the basis of a predictive model that accounts for individual and country-level risk factors.

National prevalence estimates are analysed in the context of results of Walk Free's **Vulnerability Model**. This model uses 'statistical testing and processes to identify the factors that explain or predict the prevalence of modern slavery'.¹⁰ The 2018 Vulnerability Model features five factors, made up of 23 distinct variables: governance issues, lack of basic needs, inequality, disenfranchised groups, and effects of conflict.

Walk Free also tracks **government responses** to modern slavery, tracking government efforts across five milestones: (1) survivors of slavery are identified and supported to exit and remain out of slavery; (2) criminal justice mechanisms function effectively to prevent modern slavery; (3) coordination occurs at the national and regional level, and governments are held to account for their response; (4) risk factors such as attitudes, social systems, and institutions that enable modern slavery are addressed; and (5) government and business stop sourcing goods and services produced by forced labour.¹¹

It should be noted that the scope, methodology, and sources underpinning GSI findings has changed over the years. This means that data between different reporting years is not directly comparable.

¹ Walk Free Foundation, 'The Global Slavery Index 2013' (2013), available [here](#); 'The Global Slavery Index 2014' (2014), available [here](#); 'The Global Slavery Index 2016' (2016), available [here](#); 'The Global Slavery Index 2018' (2018), available [here](#) accessed 04 November 2020.

² Note: a higher ranking (closer to 1) indicates high vulnerability relative to other countries.

³ Note: a higher score indicates increased vulnerability to modern slavery, with a median country score of 47.28 in 2018.

⁴ Note: a higher ranking (closer to 1) indicates a high number of people experiencing modern slavery per 1000 in the overall population relative to other countries.

⁵ Note: absolute prevalence measures the estimated number of people experiencing modern slavery in the country.

⁶ Note: prevalence /1000 measures the number of people estimated to experience modern slavery per 1000 people in the overall population.

⁷ Note: a higher ranking (closer to 1) indicates better government responses to modern slavery relative to other countries.

⁸ Note: government response ratings are broken into scoring bands, with an A rating representing the strongest government response to modern slavery (with a score of 70-79.9), followed by BBB (60-69.9), BB (50-59.9), B (40-49.9), CCC (30-39.9), CC (20-29.9), C (10-19.9), and D (<0-9.9).

⁹ Walk Free Foundation, 'Global Findings' (2018), available [here](#).

¹⁰ Walk Free Foundation, 'Methodology: Vulnerability' (2018), available [here](#).

¹¹ Walk Free Foundation, 'Methodology: Government Response' (2018), available [here](#).

1.2. TIP Rankings 2001-2019



The Trafficking in Persons report ranks countries into one of four tiers, as mandated by the Victims of Trafficking and Violence Protection Act 2000 (TVPA). A country's ranking is based on an assessment of the government's efforts to address trafficking in persons, rather than on the extent of trafficking within the country, and considers government action against the TVPA's minimum standards.¹²

Tier 1: Countries whose governments fully meet the TVPA's minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking. To maintain a Tier 1 ranking, the country must continue to make progress in its anti-trafficking efforts each year.

Tier 2: countries whose governments do not fully meet the TVPA's minimum standards but are making significant efforts to bring themselves into compliance with those standards.

Tier 2 Watch List: Countries whose governments do not fully meet the TVPA's minimum standards but are making significant efforts to bring themselves into compliance with those standards, and for which:

- (a) the absolute number of victims of severe forms of trafficking is very significant or is significantly increasing;
- (b) there is a failure to provide evidence of increasing efforts to combat severe forms of trafficking in persons from the previous year, including increased investigations, prosecution, and convictions of trafficking crimes, increased assistance to victims, and decreasing evidence of complicity in severe forms of trafficking by government officials; or
- (c) the determination that a country is making significant efforts to bring itself into compliance with minimum standards was based on commitments by the country to take additional steps over the next year.

Tier 3: Countries whose governments do not fully meet the TVPA's minimum standards and are not making significant efforts to do so. Countries ranked as Tier 3 may be subjected to restrictions on non-humanitarian, non-trade foreign assistance from the US. Impositions of such restrictions are determined by the President.¹³

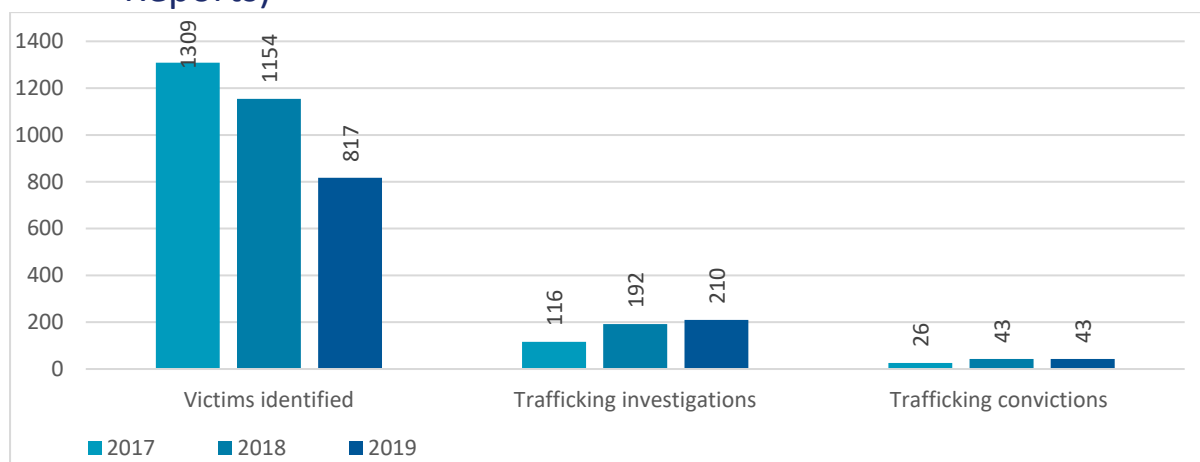
Across the 20 years of TIP reporting, Poland's rating has been consistently positive, rated as Tier 1 for 17 of the 20 years. However, in 2019, the country's rating fell to Tier 2 as a result of its efforts being considered not to be 'serious and sustained compared to the efforts during the previous reporting period'. Replacement of the high-level interagency coordination body with an auxiliary body, stagnation of funding, inadequate identification and protection for child victims, minimal efforts to address forced labour, and failure to hold labour traffickers accountable were cited as reasons for Poland's downgrading. In 2020, the Government of Poland was noted to have 'demonstrated overall increasing efforts compared to the previous period', including increasing victim identification, convictions, and sentencing without suspended sentences. However, the stagnation of funding for victim services, inadequate effort to protect child victims, lack of central consolidation of law enforcement statistics, and prosecution of trafficking crimes as lesser

¹² Minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking are found in section 108, Victims of Trafficking and Violence Protection Act 2000 (United States), available [here](#).

¹³ See further Department of State (2020), above n **Error! Bookmark not defined.**, 40-41.

offences resulted in the conclusion that the Government did not fully meet the minimum standards established in the TVPA.

1.3. Quantitative measures on anti-trafficking governance (TIP Reports)¹⁴



Measure	Year	Qty	
Trafficking investigations	2019	210	[1]
Trafficking convictions	2019	43	[1]
Trafficking victims identified	2019	817	[1]
Trafficking investigations	2018	192	[1]
Trafficking convictions	2018	43	[1]
Trafficking victims identified	2018	1154	[1]
Trafficking investigations	2017	116	[2]
Trafficking convictions	2017	26	[2]
Trafficking victims identified	2017	1309	[2]
Trafficking victims rescued	2004-2017	11,831	[3]
Trafficking cases received	2004-2017	5350	[3]
Trafficking convictions	2004-2017	334	[3]
Nigerians referred to the UK NRM	2016	257	[3]

¹⁴ Sources:

[1] US Department of State (2020), above n **Error! Bookmark not defined..**

[2] US Department of State (2019), above n **Error! Bookmark not defined..**

[3] UK Home Office and University of Bedfordshire, 'Vulnerability' to Human Trafficking: A Study of Viet Nam, Albania, Nigeria and the UK' (Guildford Street Press, 2018)

2. Treaty commitments¹⁵

Instrument	Ratification date
1926 Slavery Convention	26 Jun 1961
1953 Protocol to the Slavery Convention	N/A
1930 Forced Labour Convention	17 Oct 1960
2014 Protocol to the Forced Labour Convention	N/A
1956 Supplementary Convention on the Abolition of Slavery, the Slave Trade, and Institutions and Practices Similar to Slavery	26 Jun 1961
1957 Abolition of Forced Labour Convention	17 Oct 1960
1966 International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR)	29 Jul 1993
1966 Optional Protocol to the ICCPR	N/A
1981 African Charter on Human and People's Rights	22 June 1983
1990 Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families	27 Jul 2009
1998 Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court	27 Sep 2001
1999 Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention	02 Oct 2002
2000 Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children	28 Jun 2001
2000 Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography	27 Sep 2010
2000 Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict	25 Sep 2012
2011 Domestic Workers Convention	N/A
Key International Commitments	
1981 African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights	1983
Key International Commitments	
1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights	
1985 Declaration of Basic Principles of Justice for Victims of Crime and Abuse of Power	
2005 UN Basic Principles and Guidelines on the Right to a Remedy and Reparation for Victims of Gross Violations of International Human Rights Law and Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law	
2015 UN Sustainable Development Goals (5.3, 8.7)	
2017 Call to Action to End Forced Labour, Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking	Endorsed

¹⁵ UN Treaty ratification info sourced from UN Treaty Collection available [here](#); ILO Convention ratifications available [here](#); Rome Statute ratification status available [here](#).

3. General country context

3.1. Constitutional structure

Nigeria is a mixed legal system comprising of English common law, Islamic law, and customary law,¹⁶ with their varied implications for human rights protection. The country has a bicameral legislature, the National Assembly, consisting of the Senate and the House of Representatives. Members are elected directly from their constituencies by a simple majority vote to serve 4-year terms.¹⁷ The Nigerian President is the head of state and government, and is elected for a 4-year term with the possibility of re-election for a second 4-year term.¹⁸ The Chief Justice of the federation, appointed by the President on the recommendation of the National Judicial Council, heads the judicial arm of government.¹⁹

3.2. Political context

Nigeria is Africa's most populous nation with an estimated population of 200 million people.²⁰ The country is composed of 36 states and the Federal Capital Territory Abuja.²¹ The 36 states of the federation are further disaggregated into 6 geo-political zones: North-Central, North-West, North-East, South-South, South-East, and South-West.²² The current president is former military head of state, General Muhammadu Buhari, who won the 2015 elections and was further re-elected for another 4-year term during the February 2019 elections. Although the elections were deemed to be free and fair, the February 2019 election in particular was held at a time when the security situation in the country was generally poor, which resulted in extremely low voter turnout, at 34.8%.²³ The 2020 Democracy Index of the Economist Intelligence Unit ranks Nigeria as 109 among 167 countries,²⁴ suggesting that democratic processes in Nigeria are still flawed.

Nigeria faces other complex challenges, including frequent communal clashes, armed conflicts, internal displacement, and a severe humanitarian crisis in the northeast.²⁵ Bad governance and corruption by the ruling class also undermine Nigeria's democracy and economic stability.²⁶ The farmer-herder conflict, which has been on the rise in recent years has become one of the gravest security challenges in Nigeria. Hundreds of thousands have now been displaced by the conflict, which has claimed more lives than the Boko Haram insurgency.²⁷ The Nigerian government has been criticised for its slow response in investigating and prosecuting perpetrators.²⁸

3.3. Migration profile

Nigeria has been dealing with a number of migration issues in recent years, ranging from massive internal movement to cross-border migration. Thousands of Nigerians apply for asylum in western countries each year, with many undertaking a perilous journey via the

¹⁶ Central Intelligence Agency, 'The World Factbook', available [here](#).

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Chapter V-VII of the Nigerian Constitution, available [here](#).

¹⁹ Sections 230, 231 Nigerian Constitution.

²⁰ Worldometer, available [here](#).

²¹ US Department of State, '2019 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Nigeria' (2019), available [here](#).

²² UK Home Office and University of Bedfordshire, 'Vulnerability' to Human Trafficking: A Study of Viet Nam, 'Albania, Nigeria and the UK' (Guildford Street Press, 2018) 6.

²³ The Economist Intelligence Unit, 'Democracy Index 2019: A year of democratic setbacks and popular protest' (The Economist Intelligence Unit Limited, 2020) 44.

²⁴ Ibid 12.

²⁵ BTI, 'Nigeria Country Report 2020' (2020), available [here](#).

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Ibid.

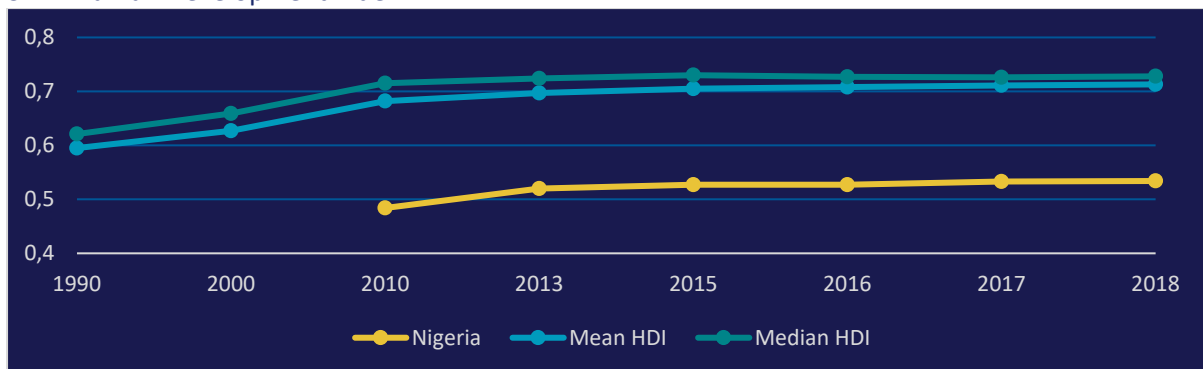
²⁸ Human Rights Council, 'Violations and abuses committed by Boko Haram and the impact on human rights in the countries affected' (9 Dec 2015) A/HRC/30/67.

Mediterranean Sea towards Europe.²⁹ Poverty drives much of the internal and external migration, as more than 70% of the Nigerian population are estimated to live below the national poverty line.³⁰ Nigeria also hosts a large number of foreigners, including those displaced by violent conflicts in other West African countries as well as employees of multi-national companies. As of mid-2019, some 1.3 million immigrants were resident in Nigeria, while the Nigerian emigrant population was estimated to be 1.4 million.³¹

Nationals of West African countries constitute 51.4% of recent immigrants in Nigeria, while 16% are nationals of other African countries.³² Only 32.7% of immigrants in Nigeria are non-Africans.³³ With regard to emigration, a study by IOM shows that as of 2013, around 35.6% of the Nigerian population lived in other African countries; 34.2% lived in Europe; 26.4% emigrated to North America; while the rest lived in Latin America, Asia, the Caribbean, and Oceania.³⁴ Nigerian migrants in African countries mostly resided in West and Central Africa (88.2%), while the United Kingdom was the preferred destination in Europe. Other destination countries in Europe include Italy, Spain, Germany, and Ireland.³⁵ The United States is by far the single most important destination for Nigerian migrants, as it hosts around 25% of all Nigerian emigrants.³⁶

3.4. Development profile

3.4.1 Human Development Index³⁷



The Human Development Index (HDI) measures average life expectancy, level of education and income for each country in the world. Each country is given a score between 0 and 1 - the closer a country gets to 1, the more developed it is.³⁸ Nigeria's scores place it in the 'Low Human Development' grouping.

²⁹ Blessing U. Mberu and Roland Pongou, 'Nigeria: Multiple Forms of Mobility in Africa's Demographic Giant' (2010), available [here](#).

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Migration Data Portal (2020), available [here](#).

³² IOM, 'Migration in Nigeria: A Country Profile 2014' (IOM, 2016), available [here](#).

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Ibid.

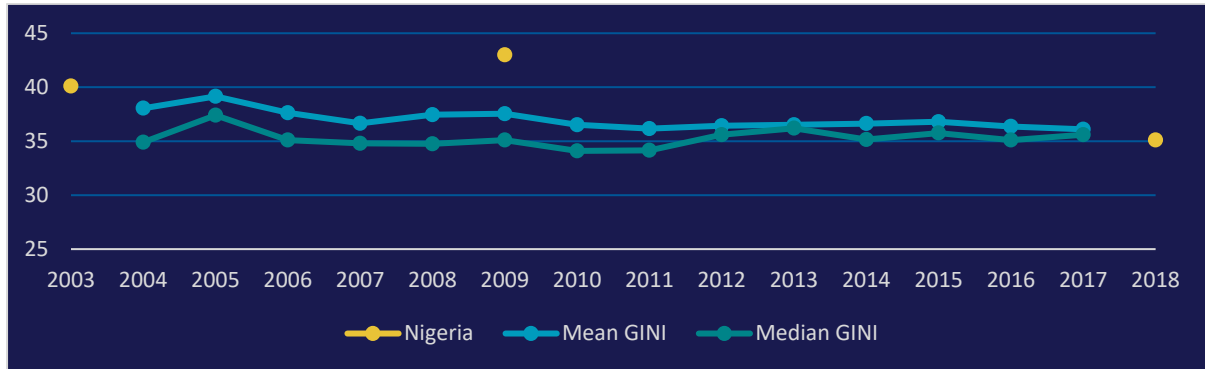
³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ UNDP, 'Human Development Indicators – Poland' (2019), available [here](#).

³⁸ UNDP, 'Human Development Reports', available [here](#).

3.4.2 GINI Co-efficient³⁹



Gini index measures the extent to which income distribution or consumption expenditure among individuals or households within an economy deviates from a perfectly equal distribution. A Gini index of 0 represents perfect equality, while an index of 100 implies perfect inequality.⁴⁰

3.4.3 Nigeria's achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals⁴¹

Year	Rank	Score
2020	160	49.28
2019	159	46.4
2018	150	47.5
2017	145	48.6
2016	141	36.1

The Sustainable Development Reports assess implementation of, and progress towards, the 2015 UN Sustainable Development Goals. The SDG Index and Dashboards summarise countries' current performance and trends across the 17 SDGs. All SDGs are weighted equally in the index. Changing indicators, data, and methodology used to determine rankings and scores mean that SDG index results are not comparable over time.⁴²

3.4.4 Nigeria's GDP Rates

GDP per capita (current US\$)⁴³



³⁹ World Bank, 'Gini index (World Bank estimate) - Nigeria', available [here](#).

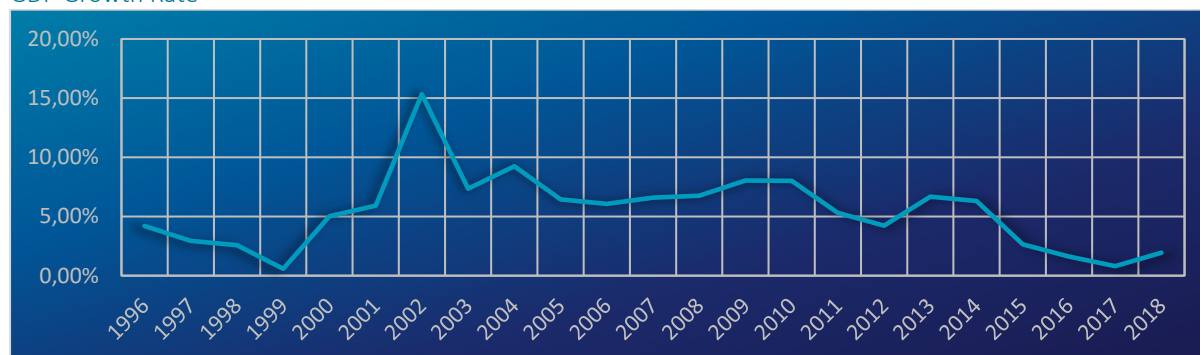
⁴⁰ World Bank, 'Metadata Glossary', available [here](#).

⁴¹ Sustainable Development Report (2020), available [here](#).

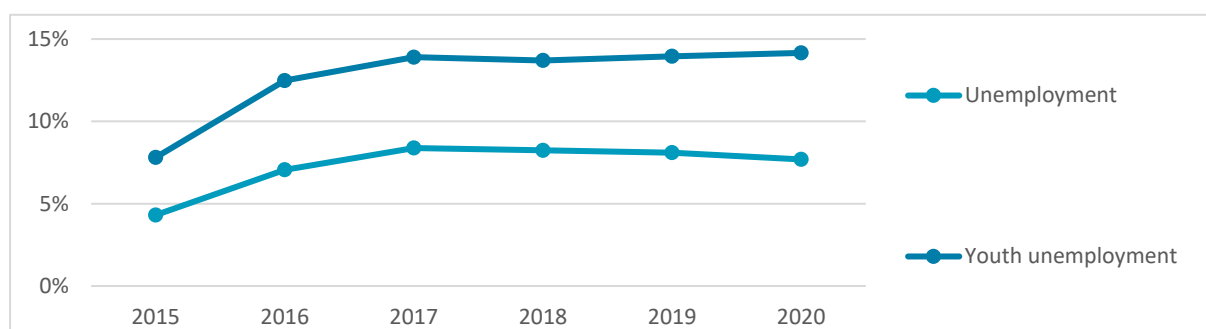
⁴² Bertelsmann Stiftung and Sustainable Development Solutions Network, 'Sustainable Development Report 2019' (June 2019) 19.

⁴³ World Bank, 'GDP per capita (current US\$)- Nigeria', available [here](#).

GDP Growth Rate



3.4.5 Other relevant indicators⁴⁴



3.5. Nigeria's human rights record

The Nigerian government has been grappling with a multitude of human rights issues, including abuse by state agents and violent conflicts in some part of the country. Persistent terrorist attacks by Boko Haram and the Islamic State in West Africa (ISIS-WA) has resulted in thousands of deaths, injuries and widespread displacement. Extensive violence has also been recorded between local farmers and herders, resulting in 1,300 deaths and 300,000 internal displacement between January and July 2019 alone.⁴⁵ Other human rights issues include extrajudicial killings, torture, and arbitrary detention by both government and non-state actors. Minority groups, in particular members of the LGBTI community have also experienced significant human rights abuse.⁴⁶

Trafficking in persons, forced and bonded labour are also widespread across Nigeria.⁴⁷ Further, human rights defenders and journalists repeatedly face intimidation and harassment while conflict in the Niger Delta region continues to threaten the safety and livelihoods of residents.⁴⁸ The criminal justice system in Nigeria is riddled with corruption and disregard for human rights. There are frequent complaints of enforced disappearance and unlawful killings by members of the Police Force, while the perpetrators usually never get punished. In a climate where payment of bribe is a condition for guaranteeing safety, non-payment could result in torture and even death in the hands of the police.⁴⁹ Apart from police brutality, communal conflict is another notable human rights issue in Nigeria. In particular, residents of Jos, Plateau state, live in constant fear due to repeated incidents of communal violence. Several homes have been burnt down and many thousands killed in the state since 2001.⁵⁰

⁴⁴ World Bank, 'Unemployment, total (% of total labor force) (national estimate) – Nigeria', available [here](#); World Bank, 'Unemployment, youth total (% of total labor force ages 15-24) (modeled ILO estimate) – Nigeria', available [here](#).

⁴⁵ US Department of State, above n 21.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Amnesty International, 'Nigeria: Human Rights' (2020), available [here](#).

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

3.6. Social support systems

Although certain social assistance programmes have existed in Nigeria since the 1960s, including the Youth Empowerment Scheme, Social Welfare Service Scheme, Youth Enterprise with Innovation in Nigeria,⁵¹ more institutionalised social programmes have a relatively recent history.⁵² In 2017, the federal government adopted the National Social Protection Policy (NSPP),⁵³ with the goal of mitigating poverty and facilitating access to key social services including health, housing, education and security.⁵⁴ The policy however requires adoption by the constituent states before it could become effective at the state level.⁵⁵

Further, the federal government has recently established the National Social Safety Net Coordination Office (NASSCO), under the office of the Vice President.⁵⁶ NASSCO is tasked with coordinating all social assistance programmes in Nigeria.⁵⁷ The TraderMoni empowerment scheme is another novel programme of the federal government, which aims to provide interest-free loans to self-employed individuals.⁵⁸ The scheme is part of the Government Enterprise and Empowerment Programme (GEEP) initiated by the government as part of its National Social Investment Programme. The GEEP itself was introduced in 2016 to provide zero-collateral soft loans to artisans, traders, and farmers.⁵⁹

The Nigerian government also runs a Conditional Cash Transfer Programme to support the poor. The programme, *inter alia*, provides a cash transfer of N5, 000 (\$16) to poor households throughout Nigeria on a monthly basis. Recipients are identified through geographical and community-based targeting.⁶⁰

⁵¹ Victor Odiase, 'The TraderMoni Empowerment Scheme of Nigeria' (2020), available [here](#).

⁵² Uchechi Anaduaka, 'Mapping child health in Nigeria: Calling for expanded child sensitive social protection' (2019), available [here](#).

⁵³ Victoria Agba-Attah, 'FG urges States to embrace National Social Protection Policy (NSPP)' <<https://prnigeria.com/2018/02/26/fg-states-national-social-protection-policy-nspp/>> accessed 27 June 2020.

⁵⁴ Ebebe A. Ukpong, 'Anticipatory Measures for Policy Success: Beyond the Crafting of the National Social Protection Policy in Nigeria' (2017) 5(1) *Journal of Research in Humanities and Social Science* 37.

⁵⁵ Victoria Agba-Attah, above n 53.

⁵⁶ Gbenga Shadare, 'Is Nigeria's social protection on the cusp of transformation?' PR Nigeria (26 Feb 2018), available [here](#).

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Victor Odiase, above n 51.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ Gbenga Shadare, above n 56.

4. National modern slavery context

4.1. Modern slavery profile

Modern slavery takes a variety of forms in Nigeria, including human trafficking, forced labour, and commercial sexual exploitation. Nigeria is a country of source, transit, and destination for human trafficking,⁶¹ especially trafficking in women and girls for labour and sexual exploitation.⁶² Trafficking victims come from rural and urban areas, especially from the country's southern region. While women and girls are usually exploited in sex trafficking and domestic servitude, boys are frequent victims of forced and bonded labour in different sectors, including mining, stone quarrying, textile manufacturing, street vending, and domestic service.⁶³ The nearly 10 million boys studying in Quranic schools, especially in the country's north are often subjected to forced begging (almajiri), while in southern Nigeria, children may be 'rented' out into street begging.⁶⁴

With regard to cross-border trafficking, the vast majority of victims trafficked to Europe for prostitution come from Edo state in southern Nigeria.⁶⁵ It is estimated that around 60% of street prostitutes in Italy are Nigerian women and girls, mainly trafficked for sexual exploitation.⁶⁶ Further, Eurostat estimates that Nigerians are among the top five non-EU trafficking victims in the European Union,⁶⁷ with Italy, Spain, Denmark, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, and France as some of the preferred destinations.⁶⁸ Europol identifies Nigerian trafficking syndicates as one of the greatest threats to law enforcement in Europe.⁶⁹ It is noteworthy that, the local communities of origin in Nigeria, especially Edo state, have accepted cross-border sex trafficking as a way of life and view sex workers as economic liberators sending remittances to their families.⁷⁰ Victims are usually subjected to a number of ritual rites before their departure, including oath swearing before voodoo (or juju) priests. Many of the victims consider the oaths sworn as solemn and are usually unwilling to break them,⁷¹ given fears of the consequences.⁷² Some rescued victims have displayed very high levels of PTSD symptoms, which reinforce their beliefs in the risks of breaching the juju oath.⁷³

Further, Nigerian women and children are trafficked to other countries in West and Central Africa, including Senegal, Mali, Cape Verde, and Cote d'Ivoire. Others are trafficked to countries in North Africa and the Middle East and exploited in sex trafficking or forced labour. Also, nationals of other West African countries are recruited to perform forced labour in Nigeria, including in granite and gold mines. As a transit country, women from neighbouring West African countries transit Nigeria en route to Europe and the Middle East, where they experience commercial sexual exploitation.⁷⁴

⁶¹ ECPAT, 'Global Monitoring Report on the status of action against commercial sexual exploitation of children' (2007), available [here](#).

⁶² CEDAW Committee, 'Concluding observations on the combined seventh and eighth periodic reports of Nigeria' (24 July 2017) CEDAW/C/NGA/CO/7-8, available [here](#).

⁶³ US Department of State (2019) above n 12, 357.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ European Asylum Support Office (EASO), 'Nigeria: Sex trafficking of women', (2015) 15, available [here](#).

⁶⁶ ECPAT, above n 61 **Error! Bookmark not defined.**

⁶⁷ European Commission, 'Data collection on trafficking 2018 in human beings in the EU' (2018) 13, available [here](#).

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ European Asylum Support Office (EASO), above n 65, 12.

⁷⁰ Clementina A. Osezua, 'Changing Status of Women and the Phenomenon Trafficking of Women for Transactional Sex in Nigeria: A Qualitative Analysis' (2013) 14(3) *Journal of International Women's Studies* 25.

⁷¹ Anthony W. Dunkerley, 'Exploring the use of juju in Nigerian human trafficking networks: considerations for criminal investigators', (2018) 19(1) *Police Practice and Research* 83, 86.

⁷² IOM, 'Human Trafficking through the Central Mediterranean route: Data, stories and information collected by the International Organisation for Migration' (2017) 18, available [here](#).

⁷³ Anthony W. Dunkerley, above n 71, 86.

⁷⁴ US Department of State (2019), above n 12.

4.2. Causes and drivers of modern slavery and transnational trafficking

The causes and drivers of modern slavery in Nigeria appear to be multiple and overlapping. Some of the determinants include unemployment, poverty, lower levels of education, corruption, conflict, lack of social safety nets, cultural or religious norms that support exploitation, abuse of traditional fostering practices, as well as limited options for safe and legal migration.⁷⁵ The relevant factors are further highlighted in the 2019 report of the Special Rapporteur on Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children, where after a country visit to Nigeria she noted that 'poverty, displacement, economic hardship and unemployment, especially among young people, and restrictive European migratory policies, gender inequality, discrimination and stereotyping, coupled with strong traditional practices and beliefs, are identified as the main root causes of trafficking in persons in Nigeria. Multiple factors contributing to this phenomenon also include the disruption of family and community support systems. The large profits generated for the traffickers in Nigeria, coupled with the high level of impunity and the well-structured and adaptable nature of the Nigerian trafficking networks, are among the reasons for its endurance'.⁷⁶

Another study conducted in Nigeria has pointed out that 'gender, gender inequalities, sex discrimination and a lack of good governance were each suggested to be exacerbating factors. Gender imbalances within the society were outlined as key factors for understanding trafficking within and from Nigeria. Recruitment methods were varied, ever changing and often related to close personal and family ties. It was suggested that traffickers are rarely strangers and often work within communities with people they are very familiar with'.⁷⁷

It is noteworthy that some of the initial pull factors for trafficking of Nigerian women to Europe included broader demands for labour in Southern Europe, while a notable push factor included the drastic impact of the Structural Adjustment Programme adopted by the Nigerian government during the late 80s, which resulted in widespread unemployment.⁷⁸ Beyond these, more recent migrations and subsequent exploitations have been induced by a number of other factors, including violence against women, disruption of family support systems, high demand for sex workers in Europe, and corruption in Nigeria.⁷⁹ Another study has also pointed out that, the lives of the trafficking victims are often marked by a trigger or childhood experience, including being orphaned, lack of family and community support, and limited access to education, which makes them vulnerable to offers made by traffickers.⁸⁰

Trafficking of women and girls from Edo state could partly be explained by poverty and cultural factors in which family inheritance devolves exclusively to male children. As a result, many women and girls seek alternative survival pathways by migrating abroad. Discrimination in terms of inheritance rights is one of the main root causes of trafficking from Edo state; while remittances sent to family members in the state further perpetuate the migration and exploitation cycle.⁸¹

4.3. Particularly vulnerable groups

Women and girls from across Nigeria, especially Edo state, are vulnerable to modern slavery. These individuals are often subjected to sex trafficking both within the country and abroad, including in Italy, Spain, the UK, and other European countries. It is estimated

⁷⁵ UK Home Office and University of Bedfordshire, above n 22, 37.

⁷⁶ Human Rights Council, 'Report of Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons, especially women and children' (2019) A/HRC/41/46/Add.1.

⁷⁷ UK Home Office and University of Bedfordshire, above n 22, 37.

⁷⁸ European Asylum Support Office (EASO) report – Nigeria: Sex trafficking of women, above n 65, 12.

⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁰ Myriam Cherti et al., 'Beyond Borders: Human Trafficking from Nigeria to the UK' (Institute for Public Policy Research, 2013) 5, available [here](#).

⁸¹ Human Rights Council, above n 76, 14.

that 80% of all female Nigerian migrants in Italy are either sex trafficking victims or will become one.⁸² An IOM report has indeed noted that during 2016 alone an estimated 80% of Nigerian girls arriving in Italy were potential victims of trafficking for sexual exploitation.⁸³ IOM further noted an increase in the number of children and adolescent victims, even though many of the underage girls falsely declare themselves adults to avoid child protection pathways, which might become an obstacle for their traffickers.⁸⁴

Further, children in northern Nigeria are vulnerable to exploitation in Koranic schools, where Islamic teachers often force their pupils to beg on the streets and subsequently collect whatever money they receive.⁸⁵ Children from the northern region are also susceptible to recruitment by terrorist group Boko Haram, who often use child soldiers in combat operations and suicide bombings.⁸⁶ There is also evidence that children from all over the country experience other forms of exploitation such as domestic servitude, farm labour, forced marriage, and work in illegal mining sites and quarries.⁸⁷

⁸² US Department of State (2019), above n 1263.

⁸³ IOM above n 72, 9.

⁸⁴ Ibid 10.

⁸⁵ US Department of Labour, '2018 Findings on the Worst Forms of Child Labor' (US Department of State, 2018), available [here](#).

⁸⁶ Ibid

⁸⁷ Human Rights Council, above n 76.

5. Antislavery governance frameworks

5.1. Legislative measures

Antislavery legal frameworks in Nigeria are diverse. Different aspects of the phenomenon are prohibited by largely fragmented pieces of legislation, including the constitution, the 2015 Trafficking Act, the Child Rights Act, the Labour Act, the Penal Code and the Criminal Code.

5.1.1. The Nigerian Constitution 1999⁸⁸

Section 34(1) of the 1999 Constitution of Nigeria prohibits slavery, servitude and forced or compulsory labour in general terms. Section 35(1) further prohibits deprivation of personal liberty except when deprivation is in accordance with the law.

5.1.2. The Trafficking in Persons (Prohibition) Enforcement and Administration Act 2015⁸⁹

The 2015 Act is the primary anti-trafficking legislation in Nigeria. The Act repeals the 2003 anti-trafficking legislation and adopts a definition of human trafficking, which is, in many ways, consistent with article 3 of the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (Palermo Protocol). It states in section 13(2) that, 'any person who recruits, transports, transfers, harbours or receives another person by means of (a) threat or use of force or other forms of coercion; (b) abduction, fraud, deception, abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability; or (c) giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation of that person commits an offence', punishable with a prison term of not less than 2 years and a fine of at least N250, 000 (\$640). Section 13(3) further elaborates on the meaning of 'abuse of a position of vulnerability', defining it to include 'intentionally using or otherwise taking advantage of an individual's personal, situational or circumstantial vulnerability to recruit, transport, transfer, harbour or receive that person for the purpose of exploiting him or her, such that the person believes that submitting to the will of the abuser is the only real or acceptable option available to him or her and that this belief is reasonable in the light of the victim's situation'.

The facilitation of trafficking by individuals residing within or outside Nigeria is also prohibited under section 13(4), and is punishable with imprisonment of not less than 5 years and a fine of at least N1,000,000 (\$2,550). This provision captures the domestic and cross-border aspects of human trafficking, which may be facilitated locally but is also increasingly facilitated by criminal syndicates living abroad. Also, consistent with article 3(b) and (c) of the Palermo Protocol, the 2015 anti-trafficking legislation states that the consent of victims to the exploitative practice is irrelevant (s. 13(5)), while the means specified in section 13(2) are not required to be proved where the victim is a child 13(6).

Different exploitative practices, including exploitation for the purpose of forced prostitution, pornographic performance, sexual exploitation (s. 14-18); forced or compulsory recruitment for use in armed conflict (s. 19); organ harvesting (s. 20); forced labour (s. 22); slavery, servitude and debt bondage (s. 24, 25); are prohibited under the legislation with minimum penalties ranging from 5 or 7 years imprisonment. The Act is also notable for criminalising aiding and abetting by commercial carriers, vessel operators and travel agents, especially where the aim is to facilitate trafficking in persons or pornography and exploitation in tourism. The prescribed penalty is payment of a fine of up to N10, 000,000 (\$25,500)(s. 35). It is worth mentioning that, although compared to the 2003 Act, the 2015 legislation has removed the option of a fine in lieu of a prison

⁸⁸ Nigerian Constitution 1999 available [here](#).

⁸⁹ The Trafficking in Persons (Prohibition) Enforcement and Administration Act, 2015 available [here](#).

sentence for trafficking offences, Nigerian courts have, sometimes, continued penalising with fines only.⁹⁰

5.1.3. Penal Code and Criminal Code 1990⁹¹

The two legislation separately criminalise human trafficking in southern and northern Nigeria – the Criminal Code outlaws criminal activities in the south while the Penal Code prohibits relevant activities in the north. The practice of procuring women and girls for prostitution is expressly criminalised under section 223 of the Criminal Code and the Penal Code. Further, voodoo practices or juju, which may be otherwise associated with the commission of a crime is prohibited under section 207 of the Criminal Code and Penal Code. This prohibition is particularly important as it is often linked with human trafficking in Nigeria.

207. Unlawful trial by ordeal: prohibited juju

(1) The trial by the ordeal of sasswood, esere-bean, or the poison, boiling oil, fire, immersion in water or exposure to the attacks of crocodiles or other wild animals, or by any ordeal which is likely to result in the death of or bodily injury to any party to the proceeding, is unlawful.

(2) The President or, as the case may be, the Governor of a State may by order prohibit the worship or invocation of any juju which may appear to him to involve or tend towards the commission of any crime or breach of peace, or to the spread of any infectious or contagious disease.

223. Procuration

Any person who

(1) procures a girl or woman who is under the age of eighteen years to have unlawful carnal connection with any other person or persons either in Nigeria or elsewhere; or

(2) procures a woman or girl to become a common prostitute either in Nigeria or elsewhere; or

(3) procures a woman or girl to leave Nigeria with intent that she may become an inmate of a brothel elsewhere; or

(4) procures a woman or girl to leave her usual place of abode in Nigeria, with intent that she may, for the purposes of prostitution, become an inmate of a brothel either in Nigeria or elsewhere,

is guilty of a misdemeanour and is liable to imprisonment for two years.

A person cannot be convicted of any of the offences defined in this section of this Code upon the uncorroborated testimony of one witness.

The offender may be arrested without warrant.

224. Procuring defilement of woman by threats or fraud, or administering drugs

Any person who-

(1) by threats or intimidation of any kind procures a woman or girl, to have unlawful carnal connection with a man either in Nigeria or elsewhere; or

(2) by any false pretence procures a woman or girl to have unlawful carnal connection with a man either in Nigeria or elsewhere; or

⁹⁰ Committee on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families, 'Concluding observations on Nigeria in the absence of a report' (23 May 2017) CMW/C/NGA/CO/1, 9.

⁹¹ Criminal Code available [here](#); Penal Code available [here](#).

(3) administers to a woman or girl, or causes a woman or girl, to take, any drug or other thing with intent to stupefy or overpower her in order to enable any man, whether a particular man or not, to have unlawful carnal knowledge of her, is guilty of a misdemeanour and is liable to imprisonment for two years.

A person cannot be convicted of any of the offences defined in this section upon the uncorroborated testimony of one witness.

5.1.4. The Child Rights Act 2003⁹²

The Child Rights Act (CRA) codifies the rights of Nigerian children in different thematic areas and criminalises some practices that are particularly widespread in the country including forced labour, trafficking, child marriage, and commercial sexual exploitation. Section 28 specifically prohibits forced labour and industrial work, and prescribes a penalty of a fine not exceeding N50,000 (\$130) or imprisonment for a term of five years or to both fine and imprisonment. Where such offences are committed by corporate bodies, the penalty is payment of a fine of N250,000 (\$640). The prohibition of child marriage and child betrothal is also found in sections 21 to 23 of the Act.

Section 30 of the Act further criminalises the use of children for prostitution, pornographic performance, drug trafficking, domestic labour as well as sexual labour. The Act also forbids using children as slaves or for 'practices similar to slavery such as sale or trafficking of the child, debt bondage or serfdom and forced or compulsory labour'. The Act is generally complementary to the Trafficking Act and the Labour Act and offers additional protection to children in the prohibited areas. The penalty for buying, selling or dealing in children is 10 years imprisonment. Nevertheless, it is worth noting that, to date, the CRA has yet to be ratified by 12 of Nigeria's 36 states on the grounds of conflict with religious and cultural practices, demonstrating gaps in the legal framework of those states – mainly the Muslim states in northern Nigeria.

5.1.5. Labour Act 1990⁹³

The Labour Act regulates employment relations across different sectors in Nigeria. It prohibits deceptive or fraudulent recruitments (s. 45), ill-treatment or neglect of workers (s. 46), and protects children from undertaking 'immoral' activities or any work that may be injurious to their health (s. 59(6)). The Act further contains an explicit prohibition of forced labour, stating in section 73(1) that: 'Any person who requires any other person, or permits any other person to be required, to perform forced labour contrary to section 34 (I) (c) of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria 1999, shall be guilty of an offence and on conviction shall be liable to a fine not exceeding N1,000 or to imprisonment for a term not exceeding two years, or to both.' Although the provisions of the Labour Act could offer additional protection to individuals exploited in the workplace, the penalty of a fine not exceeding N1,000 (\$3) or a prison term not exceeding 2 years, appears to be less stringent and insufficient to discourage forced labour. It is important to revise the relevant punishments to reflect stricter sanctions.

5.1.6. Edo State Trafficking in Persons Prohibition Law 2018

In May 2018, the Edo State governor signed the Edo state anti-trafficking bill into law, to provide a state-level framework for anti-trafficking efforts.⁹⁴ This is particularly noteworthy as many Nigerian victims of trafficking are from the state.

A 2018 country visit by the Special Rapporteur on Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children however noted that key challenges remained in the implementation of relevant legislation in Nigeria.⁹⁵ She specifically identified lack of resources and training of public officials as important obstacles to effective implementation of laws.⁹⁶ As such,

⁹² The Child Rights Act, 2003 available [here](#).

⁹³ The Labour Act, 1990, available [here](#).

⁹⁴ Pathfinders Justice Initiative, 'Edo State Human Trafficking Bill Signed into Law by Governor Obaseki' (Pathfinders, 2018), available [here](#).

⁹⁵ Human Rights Council, above n 76.

⁹⁶ Ibid.

despite the existence of laws, there continues to exist impunity with regard to human trafficking and forced labour in Nigeria.⁹⁷

5.2. Prosecution

Since its inception, NAPTIP has reportedly secured 396 trafficking related convictions (2004-2019).⁹⁸ The Agency reported investigating 203 cases in 2019, of which the majority related to facilitating foreign travel for prostitution (46), child abuse (36), general procurement for sexual exploitation (19), forced labour within Nigeria (15), and employment of children as domestic workers (15).⁹⁹ Investigations were also conducted in other areas including buying or selling of human beings, abduction, and forced marriage.¹⁰⁰ NAPTIP further reported making 701 arrests in 2019, with most arrests relating to the facilitation of foreign travel for prostitution, and buying and selling of human beings for any purpose.¹⁰¹ The Agency secured 18 convictions involving 25 persons (14 males and 11 females) during 2019. Most convictions related to procurement of persons for sexual exploitation and facilitating foreign travel for prostitution.¹⁰²

In 2018, NAPTIP reported receiving a total of 1076 human trafficking and related cases, of which 206 cases were fully investigated. It also reported arresting 823 suspects (450 males and 373 females) during the reporting period. NAPTIP's legal department received 227 cases for prosecution during the year, of which 75 were charged to court including some outstanding cases from 2017. The Agency won 31 cases in 2018, of which 50 persons (29 males and 21 females) were convicted for various offences. Of the 31 cases won, 8 related to procurement for sexual exploitation, 6 for facilitating foreign travel for prostitution, 4 for buying or selling of human beings for any purpose, 4 for attempted offense under the trafficking Act, and 2 for forced labour within Nigeria. The 6 remaining convictions were each secured for abduction, conspiracy, fraud, child labour, recruitment for pornography, and recruitment for prostitution abroad.¹⁰³

5.3. National policies and plans

5.3.1. National Policy on Child Labour

The federal government with the support of the International Labour Organisation adopted the policy in 2014,¹⁰⁴ with the objective of eliminating child labour in the country by 2020.¹⁰⁵

5.3.2. National Action Plan for the Elimination of Child Labour (2013-2017)¹⁰⁶

The Policy charts a roadmap for eradicating child labour in Nigeria and recognises the need for stakeholder coordination, especially in eliminating the worst forms of child labour. The Policy, *inter alia*, aims to facilitate the rehabilitation and re-integration of child labour victims and prevent relapse into exploitative practices. It also recognises the linkages between child labour programmes and poverty alleviation initiatives for breaking the cycle of child labour and its intrinsic link with economic deprivation. Awareness creation and advocacy are also considered effective strategies for combatting child labour in Nigeria.

⁹⁷ Accountability Hub, 'Labour Exploitation: Nigeria', available [here](#).

⁹⁸ NAPTIP, 'Details of Conviction from 2004 to May 2019' (2019), available [here](#).

⁹⁹ NAPTIP, '2019 Data Analysis' (2020), available [here](#).

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

¹⁰² Ibid.

¹⁰³ NAPTIP, '4th Quarter analysis' (2018) 8, available [here](#).

¹⁰⁴ ILO, 'ILO and Nigeria Launch National Child Labour Policy' (2014), available [here](#).

¹⁰⁵ National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons (NAPTIP), 'Nigeria Country Report on Human Trafficking 2019' (NAPTIP, 2019) 59, available [here](#).

¹⁰⁶ National Action Plan for the Elimination of Child Labour (2013-2017) available [here](#)

5.3.3. National Policy on Protection and Assistance to Trafficked Persons in Nigeria¹⁰⁷

The Federal Executive Council of Nigeria adopted the Policy in 2008, as a framework through which NAPTIP could provide effective support services to trafficking victims. It specifically governs the treatment of trafficking victims by social workers and caregivers, and further stipulates the rights and privileges of those victims.

5.3.4. National Policy on Protection of Children in Formal Care 2008

This policy aims to protect children in safe houses and shelters, by providing guidance on the roles of caregivers in formal care.

5.3.5. National Action Plan for Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism

The policy sets out to end the recruitment of children by the Civilian Joint Task Force (CJTF), which was established to support the state in the fight against Boko Haram in Nigeria's Northeast. The Policy also aims to provide disarmament and safe re-integration of children associated with the CJTF into society.

5.3.6. Guidelines on National Referral Mechanism (NRM) for Protection and Assistance to Trafficked Persons in Nigeria (2014)¹⁰⁸

The NRM guideline is a framework through which relevant agencies collaborate to protect and promote the rights of trafficking victims. The guideline contains procedures for referring trafficking cases from the national anti-trafficking agency to other organisations and vice-versa. The guideline also address other specific issues including protection, prevention, and rehabilitation of trafficking victims.

There is also evidence that the Inter-Ministerial Taskforce on Trafficking in Persons, which is chaired by NAPTIP, has drafted a Protocol for Identification, Safe Return, and Rehabilitation of Trafficked Persons,¹⁰⁹ which is currently pending cabinet approval.¹¹⁰ In 2018, NAPTIP also approved a 2019 anti-trafficking national action plan and further drafted a five-year action plan in collaboration with NGOs and international donors.¹¹¹

5.4. National institutions and inter-departmental coordination

Different institutions perform specific roles in combatting modern slavery in Nigeria. The central anti-trafficking body in the country is the National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons (NAPTIP), which was established by the 2003 Trafficking in Persons (Prohibition) Enforcement and Administration Act, and is currently governed by the 2015 anti-trafficking legislation. The Agency, which operates under the Federal Ministry of Justice, is tasked with coordinating human trafficking interventions in Nigeria and administering the anti-trafficking Act. It operates at national and zonal levels, with powers to investigate human trafficking offences, including arresting suspects, searching and seizing premises. The body also has a mandate to create anti-trafficking awareness programs through seminars, workshops, and publications to inform the public on the dangers of trafficking in persons.¹¹² NAPTIP operates 10 shelters across Nigeria with capacity to accommodate 334 individuals at a time.¹¹³

NAPTIP has a multi-stakeholder board composed of representatives of civil society organisations as well as representatives from the Federal Ministry of Justice, Federal Ministry of Women Affairs, Federal Ministry of Labour and Productivity, Nigeria Police

¹⁰⁷ Reference to the Inter-Ministerial Taskforce on Trafficking in Persons as well as Protocol for Identification, Safe Return, and Rehabilitation of Trafficked Persons [here](#)

¹⁰⁸ Guidelines on National Referral Mechanism (NRM) for Protection and Assistance to Trafficked Persons in Nigeria (2014) available [here](#)

¹⁰⁹ US Department of Labour, '2018 Findings on the Worst Forms of Child Labor', above n 85.

¹¹⁰ US Department of State (2019), above n 12, 356.

¹¹¹ Ibid.

¹¹² NAPTIP, available [here](#).

¹¹³ US Department of State (2019), above n 12, 355.

Force, National Intelligence Agency, Nigeria Immigration Service, and the National Planning Commission.¹¹⁴

However, there are varying views on the effectiveness of NAPTIP and coordination with other agencies. A report by the Special Rapporteur on Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children notes that 'coordination might be challenging in practice, especially considering that the Agency does not yet have offices in the border areas'.¹¹⁵ Another challenge is inadequate funding and allegations of corruption.¹¹⁶ Further, another study has pointed out that, it is potentially problematic that NAPTIP is in charge of both prosecution and victim rehabilitation. The victims often lack the courage to seek assistance because of fears of testifying against their traffickers.¹¹⁷ There are also concerns that NAPTIP prioritises prosecution over prevention and rehabilitation of victims.¹¹⁸

Regarding the worst forms of child labour, the National Steering Committee for the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour has been set up to coordinate protection efforts with other agencies.¹¹⁹ The committee is composed of representatives from governmental agencies, NGOs, faith-based organisations, UNICEF, and ILO.¹²⁰ Also, the Nigerian president has created the Office of the Special Assistant to the President on Human Trafficking and Child Labour, with a mandate to coordinate all trafficking related activities in the country.¹²¹ The Office collaborates with other government agencies and NGOs dealing with the issue of human trafficking. Apart from this, the Ministry of Labour and Employment is tasked with enforcing core labour standards across Nigeria. The Ministry deploys labour inspectors across the country to investigate violations of labour standards, including child labour.

At the state level, as a prominent hub for human trafficking in Nigeria, the Edo State Taskforce against Human Trafficking was established in 2017 to respond to trafficking issues in the state. The agency, which is entirely state-funded, was created to complement the work of NAPTIP and other bodies.¹²²

5.5. Victim support and assistance frameworks

Trafficking victims are guaranteed support and assistance under the 2015 Trafficking in Persons (Prohibition) Enforcement and Administration Act. Section 61 of the Act prohibits the discrimination of trafficking victims on any basis (s. 61(a)), and further states that 'a trafficked person has access to adequate health and other social services during the period of temporary residence' (s. 61(b)). Furthermore, section 61(c) provides that, 'a trafficked person has access to the embassy or consulate of the country of which he is a citizen or where there is no embassy or consulate, has access to the diplomatic representative of the state that takes charge of the country's interest or any national to protect him.' Section 61(e) also provides that 'a trafficked person is not denied temporary residence visas during the pendency of any criminal, civil or other legal action.' While these provisions may generally protect the rights of trafficking victims, they however seem to mainly focus on foreign trafficking victims and do not seem to capture the issue of domestic trafficking appropriately.

Nevertheless, through the NAPTIP Shelters for Human Trafficking Victims, the government-funded program, 10 shelters with a total capacity of 334 victims are run

¹¹⁴ NAPTIP, <<https://www.naptip.gov.ng/about-naptip-2/organizational-structure/>> accessed 29 June 2020

¹¹⁵ Human Rights Council, above n 76.

¹¹⁶ UK Home Office, 'Country Information and Guidance Nigeria: Trafficking of women' (August 2016) 40, available [here](#).

¹¹⁷ European Asylum Support Office (EASO), above n 65.

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

¹¹⁹ US Department of Labour, above n 8585.

¹²⁰ Ibid.

¹²¹ Olaide A Gbadamosi, 'International Perspectives and Nigerian Laws on Human Trafficking' (Network for Justice and Democracy, 2006), available [here](#).

¹²² APPG, 'Human Trafficking Between Nigeria and the UK: Addressing a Shared Challenge' (2018) 14, available [here](#).

across different zones in Nigeria.¹²³ The shelters provide medical, legal, and psychological support to domestic and foreign victims. Other services provided at the shelters include business management and vocational training skills.¹²⁴ These shelters are also available to Nigerian trafficking victims exploited abroad upon their return. NAPTIP has concluded agreements with certain medical centres to provide additional medical support to victims, as required. Further, NAPTIP sometimes refer child trafficking victims to orphanages and foster homes for care.¹²⁵

Since 2004, NAPTIP has reportedly rescued 14,688 trafficking victims.¹²⁶ However, after visiting one of the shelters in Nigeria, the Special Rapporteur on Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children, noted that the shelter was 'infringing on the freedom of movement of survivors, who also face limitations in terms of access to health care and education, as they often have to be accompanied to school or hospital by a social worker'.¹²⁷

5.6. Training and capacity-building for responders

In a national report submitted to the Human Rights Council in 2018, Nigeria indicated that NAPTIP has been undertaking anti-trafficking training programmes for a number of agencies, including the Nigeria Police Force, Immigration Service, Nigeria Customs Service, National Drug Law Enforcement Agency, Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps, National Intelligence, Federal Road Safety Commission, and Department of State Security.¹²⁸ The Committee on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families has further noted that Nigeria is 'providing extensive specialized anti-trafficking training to officials from various government ministries and agencies'.¹²⁹

Through partnerships with foreign donors and other international partners, Nigeria trained at least 302 officials on identifying and investigating human trafficking in 2018.¹³⁰

5.7. Public awareness raising

The Nigerian government in collaboration with local NGOs conduct media campaigns to create broader anti-trafficking awareness. In the past, campaigns have been organised in market places, and key community stakeholders are engaged in the process. Further, the United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute (UNICRI), the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and the Italian Ministry for Foreign Affairs have undertaken awareness raising programs in Edo State, in conjunction with the Coalition against Human Trafficking, a network of six local NGOs.¹³¹

NAPTIP continues to raise awareness at transit centres, schools, and churches, and extensively utilise radio and TV programs to educate the public on the risks of human trafficking. At least once every week, NAPTIP's zonal offices lead such outreach campaigns to raise awareness of trafficking. NAPTIP also conducts awareness campaigns in IDP camps in Maiduguri, in northeast Nigeria as well as in Benue, in central Nigeria. At the state level, the Edo State Task Force as well as officials of the Lagos state government also conduct public awareness campaigns.¹³²

¹²³ US Department of State (2019), above n 12, 355.

¹²⁴ Ibid.

¹²⁵ Ibid.

¹²⁶ NAPTIP, above n 99, 13.

¹²⁷ Human Rights Council, above n 7676.

¹²⁸ Human Rights Council, 'National report submitted in accordance with paragraph 5 of the annex to Human Rights Council resolution 16/21' (27 August 2018) A/HRC/WG.6/31/NGA/1.

¹²⁹ Committee on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families, above n 90.

¹³⁰ US Department of State (2019), above n 1263, 355.

¹³¹ ECPAT, above n 61 **Error! Bookmark not defined.**

¹³² US Department of State (2019), above n 1263, 356.

Further, the national report submitted to the Human Rights Council in 2018 indicates that the government is carrying out awareness raising programmes in primary, secondary and tertiary institutions across the country.¹³³

5.8. Efforts to address vulnerabilities and drivers

The Nigerian government is taking steps to address vulnerabilities as well as drivers of modern slavery. With regard to the exploitation of almajiri children in Quranic schools for instance, a framework has been adopted for developing and integrating almajiri education into the universal basic education scheme, which could prevent Quranic teachers from exploiting children through forced begging.¹³⁴ Also, the Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development, is implementing an action plan to eliminate sexual and physical violence against children and is encouraging states in northern Nigeria to adopt the Child Rights Act.¹³⁵

As poverty is a major driver for modern slavery, the government is taking measures to provide social safety nets, including the TraderMoni program and the cash transfer program to help poorer Nigerians who are at higher risks of exploitation. Further, regarding the oaths of secrecy, which usually traps victims in conditions of exploitation, traditional rulers are reportedly revoking curses, which is helping to liberate many vulnerable individuals. In particular, in 2018, the traditional ruler of Benin in Edo State 'released' trafficking victims from their oath of secrecy and placed a curse on traffickers.¹³⁶

The revision of the 2003 trafficking Act in 2015 is also improving the criminal justice system. The legislation has removed the option of fine as a penalty for relevant offences, which could deter potential perpetrators if well implemented. The adoption of a state-level legislation in Edo state could also have a positive effect in reducing vulnerabilities.

5.9. Frameworks for international coordination

Nigeria has entered a number of bilateral and multilateral agreements to strengthen anti-trafficking efforts. For instance, in 2005, Nigeria and Benin Republic signed the Cooperation Agreement to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons with an Emphasis on Trafficking in Women and Children, which facilitated the setting up of a Joint Committee on Trafficking in Persons and joint border patrols. Further, given the high number of Nigerian trafficking victims in Italy, Nigeria and Italy have concluded several agreements and MOUs for closer cooperation between the two governments.¹³⁷ From 2009 to 2012, the European Union and the ILO undertook a 1.26 million euro programme aimed at strengthening cooperation between Nigeria and Italy. The programme focused on training law enforcement officials in Nigeria and developing better anti-trafficking strategies.¹³⁸ The 2019 US TIP Report however notes that 'law enforcement cooperation with Italy remained uneven, partly due to the lack of a signed mutual legal assistance treaty'.¹³⁹

In 2005, Nigeria signed the regional level Multilateral Cooperation Agreement to Combat Child Trafficking in West Africa to, *inter alia*, prevent and control child trafficking, to formulate and implement regional and national plans of action and to mobilise resources for the implementation of relevant anti-trafficking programmes.¹⁴⁰ In 2006, Nigeria entered another multilateral agreement with ECOWAS member states and members of the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) to strengthen anti-trafficking

¹³³ Human Rights Council, above n 128.

¹³⁴ Ibid 7.

¹³⁵ Ibid.

¹³⁶ PM News Nigeria, 'Human trafficking: Oba of Benin places curses on sorcerers, cultists' (9 Mach 2018), available [here](#).

¹³⁷ ECPAT, above n 61.

¹³⁸ Walk Free Foundation (2018), available [here](#).

¹³⁹ US Department of State (2019), above n 12, 355.

¹⁴⁰ UNODC, 'Bilateral and multilateral cooperation agreements or arrangements' (2008), available [here](#).

cooperation, including victim repatriation and extradition of traffickers. The agreements remain legally binding on relevant countries.¹⁴¹

Further, the ECOWAS Regional Action Plan for the Elimination of Child Labour, especially the worst forms was adopted to protect children from works that may be detrimental to their physical, social or psychological well-being. The Regional Action Plan (RAP) further aims to provide a coordinated platform for carrying out child labour interventions programmes at the regional level.¹⁴² Also, through the UK/Nigerian Joint Border Task Force, NAPTIP supported law enforcement efforts, which resulted in significant arrests and prosecutions in a number of European countries.¹⁴³

¹⁴¹ ECPAT, above n 61, 17.

¹⁴² ILO, 'ECOWAS Regional Action Plan for the Elimination of Child Labour, especially the worst forms' (2013), available [here](#).

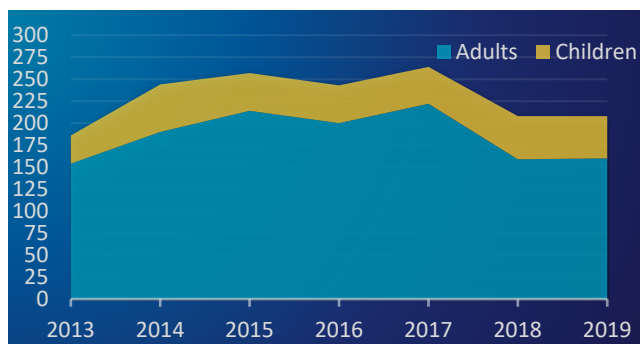
¹⁴³ US Department of State (2019), above n 12, 355.

6. Experiences of modern slavery of Nigerian nationals in the UK

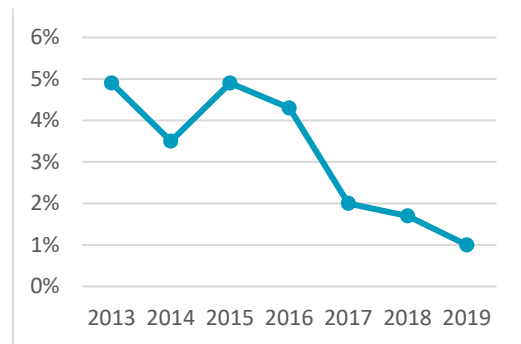
6.1. Nigerian nationals in the UK National Referral Mechanism

Nigeria nationals have consistently been in the top twenty nationalities represented in National Referral Mechanism referrals, representing between the 3% (2018 and 2019) to the 12% (2013) of all referrals. The number of Nigerian nationals referred into the NRM has varied from 186 potential victims referred in 2013, up to 264 referrals in 2017. Adults have always made up the majority of Nigerian nationals referred into the NRM, with between 32 (2013) and 54 (2014) Nigerian nationals referred who were minors at the time of their exploitation from 2013-2019.¹⁴⁴ Since 2013, the proportion of Nigerian nationals referred, as a proportion of all referrals, has been steadily decreasing.

Number of Nigerian nationals referred into the NRM by age at time of exploitation

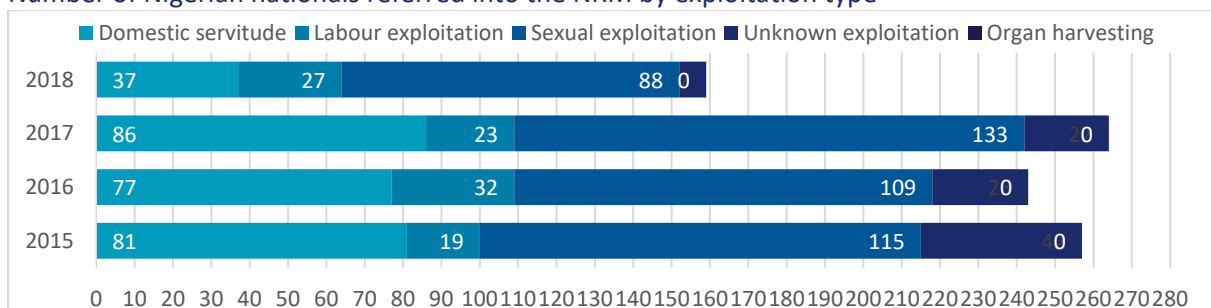


Proportion of potential victims referred into the NRM that are Nigerian nationals



Nigerian nationals referred into the NRM typically experience sexual exploitation, with only a relatively small proportion of Nigerian potential victims recorded as having experienced labour exploitation. While gender data was not disaggregated by nationality from 2015-2019, NRM reports included such data in the 2013 and 2014 reports. In these years, the majority of Nigerian nationals referred into the UK NRM were male (86% in 2013 and 87% in 2014)—consistent with the trend of victims of sexual exploitation being majority female.

Number of Nigerian nationals referred into the NRM by exploitation type¹⁴⁵



¹⁴⁴ Home Office, 'National Referral Mechanism Statistics UK: End of Year Summary 2019: Data tables' 2nd edn available [here](#); National Crime Agency, 'National Referral Mechanism Statistics – End of Year Summary 2018' (2019) available [here](#); National Crime Agency, 'National Referral Mechanism Statistics – End of Year Summary 2017' (2018) available [here](#); National Crime Agency, 'National Referral Mechanism Statistics – End of Year Summary 2016' (2017) available [here](#); National Crime Agency, 'National Referral Mechanism Statistics – End of Year Summary 2015' (2016) available [here](#); National Crime Agency, 'National Referral Mechanism Statistics – End of Year Summary 2014' (2015) available [here](#); National Crime Agency, 'United Kingdom Human Trafficking Centre: National Referral Mechanism Statistics 2013' (2014) available [here](#).

¹⁴⁵ Ibid. Note that exploitation type data is not disaggregated by nationality in the 2013, 2014, or 2019 data and these years are therefore excluded.

6.2. Typical journeys from Nigeria to the UK for trafficking victims

Typical journeys from Nigeria to the UK start in Edo State with victims coming from rural areas rather than cities or towns.¹⁴⁶ They are mostly trafficked through Libya where they can end up travelling over 1,000 km to the Mediterranean border, often during this journey they can experience substantial amounts of exploitation and abuse.¹⁴⁷ Another route that is often used to traffic people from Nigeria to Europe is via the Mediterranean from Morocco to Spain.¹⁴⁸ Flights play a significant role in trafficking sometimes via other European countries such as Italy, Spain and France travel via bus and boat far less common.¹⁴⁹

6.3. Experiences of exploitation and working conditions in the UK

In the UK, it has been reported they mainly experience sexual exploitation or are forced into domestic servitude.¹⁵⁰ They are subjected to various forms of coercion and intimidation, with regular instances of rape or assault, forced drug taking, forced masochistic sex acts, risk of physical violence and STD transmission.¹⁵¹ They are subjected to sexual exploitation primarily in private accommodations and, to a lesser extent, in brothels.¹⁵²

6.4. Consequent effects of trafficking on survivors

In general terms, human trafficking exerts psychological effects on survivors that persist after intervention, and even after community reintegration. Effects include anxiety, depression, alienation, disorientation, aggression, suicidal ideation, attention deficit, and posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD). In this context, community support and coping mechanisms may mitigate these effects.¹⁵³ Nigerian victims' needs for support and vulnerability means they are prone to abusive relationships or began prostitution again for survival.¹⁵⁴ The imbalances of power make them feel like it is a relationship they cannot escape.¹⁵⁵ Further, they can face severe psychological crises and may also experience traumas resulting from their experiences.¹⁵⁶

6.5. Particular needs, requirements, and considerations for support and engagement

It is important to note that some traffickers make their victims take a juju oath to make them compliant with the threat of death if they break the oath, disobey their traffickers or try to leave. Thus, they are often scared of returning to Nigeria due to the remaining debt with the traffickers.¹⁵⁷ There are instances of efforts to counter these effects. In 2018, the National Agency for the Prohibition of TIP and the governor of Edo State partnered with a

¹⁴⁶ The All-Party Parliament Group Nigeria, 'Human Trafficking Between Nigeria and the UK: Addressing a Shared Challenge' (2018) 4-6; US Department of State (2019), above n 12, 357.

¹⁴⁷ The All-Party Parliament Group Nigeria, above n 146, 5; US Department of State (2019), above n 12, 357.

¹⁴⁸ Myram Cherti, Jenny Pennington and Peter Grant, 'Beyond borders: Human trafficking from Nigeria to the UK' (Institute for Public Policy Research, 2013) 26.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid, 44.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid, 27-29; Press Association, 'Hundreds of Nigerians illegally trafficked to UK, says anti-slavery chief' *The Guardian* (2015), available [here](#); US Department of State (2019), above n 12, 357.

¹⁵¹ Myram Cherti, Jenny Pennington and Peter Grant, above n 148, 29-30.

¹⁵² Ibid, 30.

¹⁵³ See generally David Okech et al, 'Social Support, Dysfunctional Coping, and Community Reintegration as Predictors of PTSD Among Human Trafficking Survivors', (2018) 44 *Behavioral Medicine*, 209-218, and Asefch Haileselassie Reda, 'An investigation into the experiences of female victims of trafficking in Ethiopia' (2018) 11 *African and Black Diaspora: An International Journal* 87.

¹⁵⁴ Myram Cherti, Jenny Pennington and Peter Grant, above n 148, 56.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid, 43

¹⁵⁶ UK Home Office 'Country Policy and Information Note Nigeria: Trafficking of women' (2019) 50, available [here](#).

¹⁵⁷ Ibid, 47; United States Department of State (2019), above n 12.

religious leader to broadcast a ceremony where the leader performed a ritual dissolving all juju curses performed by traffickers.¹⁵⁸

7. The impact of COVID-19

7.1. Government's Response to COVID-19

As many countries around the world are beginning to ease lockdown measures, Nigeria's COVID-19 cases appears to be rising.¹⁵⁹ On 30 March, the federal government announced measures to contain the spread of the coronavirus by declaring a total lockdown of Lagos, Ogun, and Abuja.¹⁶⁰ Many other states have declared lockdown measures within their jurisdictions.¹⁶¹ Restrictions in Lagos, Ogun, and Abuja, have put close to 30 million people out of work.¹⁶² Given the health and economic ramifications of the pandemic, the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) has undertaken a 15% devaluation of the naira, and prepared to inject N3.6 trillion (\$9.25 billion) liquidity into the banking system. The government has approved N15 billion (\$38.6 million, 0.01% of GDP) to support the national effort to combat the disease. It further announced a N5 billion (\$12.9 million) special intervention fund to the Nigerian Centre for Disease Control, and a N10 billion (\$25.7 million) grant to Lagos State Government, Nigeria's commercial capital.¹⁶³ The government has designed some relief measures, including the provision of financial palliatives to over 11 million Nigerians listed on the National Social Register. However, considering that an estimated 100 million people might be in critical need of social support, there remains significant lengths to be covered.¹⁶⁴ Also, about 2 million internally displaced people fleeing the Boko Haram insurgency in the northeast, will receive two months of food rations.¹⁶⁵

The CBN has revised interest rates on all its interventions downwards from 9 to 5%, and a 1-year moratorium has been introduced on all its intervention facilities, effective March 1. The Central Bank has also designed a stimulus package, which includes a 50 billion naira (\$138.89 million) credit facility to small and medium enterprises as well as small households most affected by the pandemic.¹⁶⁶ Also, a 100 billion naira (\$277.78 million) credit has been offered to the health sector, and 1 trillion naira (\$2.78 billion) offered to the manufacturing sector.¹⁶⁷ In addition, the Bankers Committee of Nigeria has pledged a N3.5 trillion support to pharmaceutical companies.¹⁶⁸ The committee has also pledged to assist essential health companies in purchasing raw materials, and encouraging local production of drugs.¹⁶⁹

Further, the Lagos State government has announced support, mostly in the form of food packages, for its residents; the government is initially targeting 200,000 households from the 14 million population.¹⁷⁰ At the national level, the federal government has requested a N500bn approval from the National Assembly, and has further withdrawn \$150 million from the Sovereign Wealth Fund, to support vulnerable citizens. However, several weeks

¹⁵⁸ United States Department of State (2019), above n 12, 357.

¹⁵⁹ Matthew T Page, 'Coronavirus: Nigeria's 'Fiscal Flu'' (2020), available [here](#).

¹⁶⁰ Aljazeera News, 'Nigeria: Buhari to unwind COVID-19 lockdown in key states' *Aljazeera* (27 April 2020), available [here](#).

¹⁶¹ Human Rights Watch, 'Nigeria: Protect Most Vulnerable in COVID-19 Response' (2020), available [here](#).

¹⁶² Camron Aref-Adib and Sarah Martin, 'Economic impacts of and policy responses to the coronavirus pandemic: early evidence from Nigeria' (Supporting Economic Transformation, 2020), available [here](#).

¹⁶³ Ibid.

¹⁶⁴ Toyin Adeniji, 'Coronavirus: Nigeria's informal economy hit hard' *The Africa Report* (27 May 2020), available [here](#).

¹⁶⁵ Camron Aref-Adib and Sarah Martin, above n 162.

¹⁶⁶ Central Bank of Nigeria, 'Guidelines for the implementation of the N50 Billion Targeted Credit Facility' (23 March 2020), available [here](#).

¹⁶⁷ Chukwuka Onyekwena and Mma Amara Ekeruche, 'Understanding the impact of the COVID-19 outbreak on the Nigerian economy' *Brookings* (8 April 2020), available [here](#).

¹⁶⁸ Nairametrics, 'From pandemic to poverty: Nigeria's future with COVID-19' *Nairametrics* (9 May 2020), available [here](#).

¹⁶⁹ Ibid.

¹⁷⁰ Tofe Ayeni, 'Nigeria VS Coronavirus: Hardest hit least helped, informal workers' *The Africa Report* (2 June 2020), available [here](#).

have passed, with little evidence to show how the stimulus package has been re-distributed.¹⁷¹

Overall, the average size of the stimulus package in advanced economies is 12% of the GDP, while the average stimulus in Sub-Saharan Africa is 0.4% of the GDP. The total stimulus package in Nigeria is 0.34% of the country's GDP, which is considered insignificant given the scale of exposure and vulnerabilities.¹⁷²

7.2. Impact of COVID-19 on Nigerian workers and vulnerable population

The coronavirus pandemic has had varying impacts across Nigeria, with the informal sector severely affected. The informal sector employs around 80% of the total workforce in Nigeria, with many of the workers employed as cab drivers, hairdressers, street traders, food vendors.¹⁷³ In Lagos state alone, the informal sector employs around 5.5 million workers, which is about three-quarters of the state's 7.5 million working population.¹⁷⁴ Strict measures announced by federal and state governments to contain the pandemic have negatively affected almost all SMEs and informal sector employees. It is projected that the responses could indirectly lead more people into abject poverty, reversing the economic gains recorded in recent years.¹⁷⁵ Local traders and food vendors, who typically earn meagre amounts have expressed concerns about their ability to feed their families during the lockdown.¹⁷⁶ Further, as crude oil exports account for around 76% of Nigeria's foreign exchange and 11.8% of the GDP, the fall in the price of oil by 60% since early 2020 has considerably reduced export revenues.¹⁷⁷ Also, Cocoa, which is the main agricultural export product, has seen a dramatic fall in price. The Nigerian film industry, Nollywood, which employs around 1 million Nigerians, is equally facing extreme challenges, as its production hub in Lagos has been shut since lockdown measures were imposed. These factors are having huge impacts on the economy and employment.¹⁷⁸

The global scale of the pandemic has also resulted in lower remittances from Nigeria's diaspora population.¹⁷⁹ Remittances typically account for around 6% of the country's GDP but dipped by half in February as a result of lockdown measures announced in the world's major economies.¹⁸⁰ Although the government has reportedly started making payments to families listed on its National Social Register, which it intends to do over a 4-month period, the payment processes are less transparent.¹⁸¹ On 4 April, the Social and Economic Rights Accountability Project (SERAP), made a freedom of information request seeking details on the government's relief funds. SERAP noted that 'We are seriously concerned that millions of the country's poorest and most vulnerable people have not benefited from the announced palliatives, donations, reported cash payments, cash transfers and other benefits.'¹⁸² Apart from transparency issues, the payment is only likely to reach a fraction of individuals in desperate need. The payment targets 11,045,537 people from 2,644,493 households, which is far below the 90 million plus people estimated to live in extreme poverty in Nigeria.¹⁸³

Apart from informal sector employees, private sector workers in the formal sector do not seem to have any better experience. Many private employers have either slashed salaries by 50% or failed to pay their employees altogether; others have been completely laid off.

¹⁷¹ Ibid.

¹⁷² Nairametrics, above n 170.

¹⁷³ Human Rights Watch, above n 161.

¹⁷⁴ Toyin Adeniji, above n 164.

¹⁷⁵ Ibid.

¹⁷⁶ Human Rights Watch, above n 161.

¹⁷⁷ Camron Aref-Adib and Sarah Martin, above n 162.

¹⁷⁸ Ibid.

¹⁷⁹ Matthew T Page, above n 159.

¹⁸⁰ Ibid.

¹⁸¹ Human Rights Watch, above n 161.

¹⁸² Ibid.

¹⁸³ Ibid.

Also, growing frustration is leading to criminality in many parts of Nigeria, especially in Lagos and Ogun states, where mass looting of shops and houses have been noted.¹⁸⁴ The violent conflicts in the northeast has also created increased risks at internally displaced camps where spacing and sanitary conditions are huge problems.¹⁸⁵ Nevertheless, the Nigerian government has been working with international partners to mitigate this challenge.¹⁸⁶

¹⁸⁴ Oke Ogunde, 'The impact on Nigeria of the coronavirus pandemic: socioeconomic pandemonium!' (2020), available [here](#).

¹⁸⁵ Ifiok Ettang, 'Nigeria's Displaced Camps Among Most Vulnerable to Coronavirus' (2020), available [here](#).

¹⁸⁶ Ibid.