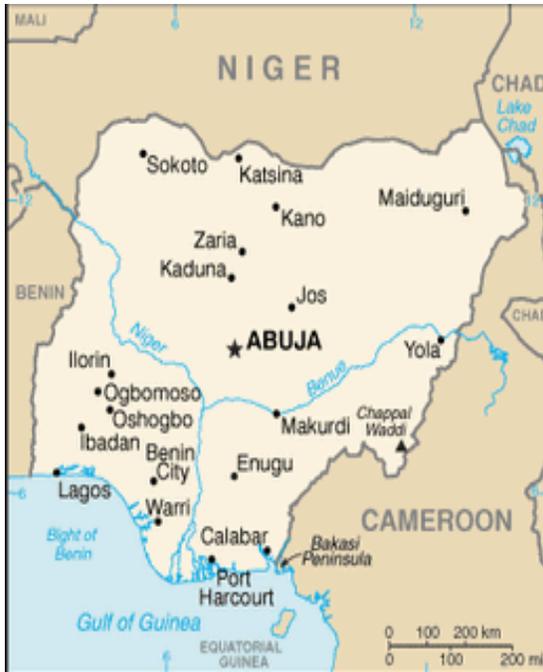


## A Human Rights Report on Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children

# Nigeria



**Population:** 170,123,140 (July 2012 est.)  
**Population Growth Rate:** 2.553% (2012 est.)  
**Birth Rate:** 39.23 births/1,000 population (2012 est.)  
**Life Expectancy:** total population: 52.05 years; male: 48.95 years; female: 55.33 years (2012 est.)  
**Literacy Rate:** total population: 68%; male: 75.7%; female: 60.6% (2003 est.)  
**Net Migration Rate:** -0.22 migrants/1,000 population (2012 est.)  
**Unemployment Rate:** 4.9% (2011 est.)  
**Gross Domestic Product per Capita:** \$2,600 (2011 est.)  
**Religions:** Muslim 50%, Christian 40%, indigenous beliefs 10%  
**Languages:** English (official), Hausa, Yoruba, Igbo (Ibo), Fulani  
**Ethnic Groups:** More than 250 ethnic groups; largest are Hausa and Fulani 29%, Yoruba 21%, Igbo (Ibo) 18%, Ijaw 10%, Kanuri 4%, Ibibio 3.5%, Tiv 2.5%  
**Capital:** Abuja<sup>1</sup>

## Trafficking Routes

Nigeria is a country of origin and transit for trafficking in persons. Nigerian women and girls are trafficked to Niger and Libya and then sent into Europe for sexual exploitation.<sup>2</sup> Countries such as Sweden<sup>3</sup> and Ireland<sup>4</sup> are destinations for trafficked Nigerian women who are then sold into prostitution. In addition, other African countries, such as Côte d'Ivoire, are destinations for Nigerian women.<sup>5</sup> Internal trafficking is also an issue in Nigeria.<sup>6</sup> Edo state is one of the country's major origin areas for victims of human trafficking.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>1</sup> CIA, THE WORLD FACTBOOK, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ni.html>.

<sup>2</sup> Teen foils alleged human trafficking bid, IOL SOUTH AFRICA, Aug. 5, 2010, available at:

<http://www.iol.co.za/news/africa/teen-foils-alleged-human-trafficking-bid-1.672154>

<sup>3</sup> Nigerian experts visit Sweden to discuss human trafficking, SWEDISH INSTITUTE, May 11, 2010, available at: <https://www.si.se/English/Navigation/Current-projects/Human-trafficking/Human-trafficking/Nigerian-experts-visit-Sweden-to-discuss-the-growing-sex-trade/>

<sup>4</sup> The happy hooker myth is a far cry from reality, INDEPENDENT, Feb. 28, 2010, available at:

<http://www.independent.ie/national-news/the-happy-hooker-myth-is-a-far-cry-from-reality-2083480.html>.

<sup>5</sup> Côte d'Ivoire/Nigeria: Combat trafficking for prostitution, HUMAN RIGHTS WATCH, Aug. 26, 2010, available at: <http://www.hrw.org/news/2010/08/26/c-te-d-ivoirenigeria-combat-trafficking-prostitution>

<sup>6</sup> Trafficking of girls, abuse worsening, IRIN, July 7, 2008, available at:

<http://www.irinnews.org/Report.aspx?ReportId=79118>

<sup>7</sup> Musikilu Mojeed, Inside the Nigerian transnational human trafficking industry, THE PUNCH, Oct. 16, 2008, available at: <http://archive.punchontheweb.com/Articl.aspx?theartic=Art200810152335195>

## Factors That Contribute to the Trafficking Infrastructure

Nigeria's limited number of immigration officials cannot effectively patrol the country's vast border with Niger, and this lack of government security along the border has facilitated the trafficking of individuals in and out of the country.<sup>8</sup>

Factors such as unemployment, poverty, large family size, minimal educational opportunities, the low status of women and children, ignorance, and gender-related violence perpetuate human trafficking throughout Western Africa, including Nigeria.<sup>9</sup>

Traffickers reportedly use religion to manipulate women into forced prostitution in Europe. In 2009, police in Spain arrested 23 individuals involved in trafficking women from Nigeria to Spain. The traffickers forced the women to undergo rituals involving voodoo and black magic that scared the women into submission. The women were forced to reimburse the traffickers for their travel to Europe as a component of the ritual.<sup>10</sup> Similar cases have been reported in the Netherlands.<sup>11</sup>

## Forms of Trafficking

Women and children are trafficked for sexual exploitation.<sup>12</sup> Children are trafficked primarily for domestic labor but are also trafficked for street begging, marriage, and adoptions.<sup>13</sup> A developing trend in trafficking in Nigeria has been infant breeding operations, in which women seeking abortions are lured into a clinic and held there involuntarily until the birth of their baby. The newborn children are then sold to individuals look to adopt. In some cases, these children are sold to be raised for work as child laborers or prostitutes or for use in religious rituals.<sup>14</sup>

## Government Responses

In 2003, the government of Nigeria passed the Trafficking in Persons (Prohibition) Law Enforcement and Administration Act.<sup>15</sup> The act includes various

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<sup>8</sup> Porous Boarder aids Human Trafficking, IRIN NEWS, May 21, 2008, available at: <http://www.irinnews.org/report.aspx?ReportId=78321>.

<sup>9</sup> Anthony Mwangi, *African Union leaders and international experts launch campaign to combat human trafficking*, UNICEF NEWSLINE, Apr. 8, 2010, available at: [http://www.unicef.org/infobycountry/nigeria\\_53279.html](http://www.unicef.org/infobycountry/nigeria_53279.html).

<sup>10</sup> Spain hold "voodoo" traffickers, BBC NEWS, May 22, 2009, available at: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/8063205.stm>.

<sup>11</sup> Sheila Kamerman & Dick Wittenberg, *Nigerian human traffickers go on trial in the Netherlands*, NRC INTERNATIONAL, Mar. 16, 2009, available at: [http://vorige.nrc.nl/international/article2182980.ece/Nigerian\\_human\\_trafficker](http://vorige.nrc.nl/international/article2182980.ece/Nigerian_human_trafficker)

<sup>12</sup> HUMAN RIGHTS WATCH *supra* note 5.

<sup>13</sup> *Trafficking convictions up but progress slow*, IRIN, Mar. 15, 2010, available at: <http://www.irinnews.org/report.aspx?ReportId=88424>.

<sup>14</sup> *Babies bred for sale in Nigeria*, AGENCE FRANCE PRESSE (AFP), Nov. 8, 2008, available at: [http://afp.google.com/article/ALeqM5hV8-4is3SL23y15hYH7nm\\_v0xrgA](http://afp.google.com/article/ALeqM5hV8-4is3SL23y15hYH7nm_v0xrgA).

<sup>15</sup> Trafficking in Persons (Prohibition) Law Enforcement and Administration Act, 2003, (Nigeria), available at: [http://www.protectionproject.org/wp-content/uploads/2010/09/Nigeria\\_TIP-Act-Amendment-BILL\\_2004-and-TIP-Act\\_2003.pdf](http://www.protectionproject.org/wp-content/uploads/2010/09/Nigeria_TIP-Act-Amendment-BILL_2004-and-TIP-Act_2003.pdf)

provisions protecting minors and punishing the practice of human trafficking and the violation of free will. Procuring a minor through the use of force or coercion results in ten years of prison with an optional fine.<sup>16</sup> Trafficking with the intent to recruit persons for armed conflict is punishable by a 14-year imprisonment.<sup>17</sup> Unlawfully depriving persons of their free will is punishable by imprisonment of five years, a fine of N100,000, or both.<sup>18</sup> Any person who engages in the slave trade, requires work in the name of a debt, or possesses any slaves faces life imprisonment.<sup>19</sup> Nigerian citizens convicted of human trafficking under this legislation forfeit their passport to the government of Nigeria.<sup>20</sup>

Victims of trafficking are protected under the act and will not be detained, imprisoned, or prosecuted for offenses relating to their victimization, including use of false travel documents or illegal immigration status.<sup>21</sup> The legislation promotes education and awareness by requiring airline companies to include information about human trafficking in their in-flight magazines, ticket jackets, and videos.<sup>22</sup> This act also created the National Agency for Prohibition of Traffic in Persons and Other Related Matters (NAPTIP).<sup>23</sup> As of April 2012, NAPTIP had rescued 135 victims of trafficking from the Cross River State in Nigeria.<sup>24</sup>

In 2010, the Nigerian Immigration Service increased security at the country's four international airports to help prevent cases of human trafficking. Passengers traveling to countries such as Italy, Libya, China, Malaysia, and Vietnam will be subjected to increased scrutiny and profiling.<sup>25</sup>

### **Nongovernmental and International Organization Responses**

Founded in 1999, the Women Trafficking and Child Labour Eradication Foundation (WOTCLEF) is a nongovernmental organization that focuses on trafficking, child labor, abuse of the rights of women and children, and HIV/AIDS. The foundation works to increase awareness of the trafficking of women and abuse of children for labor as well as to generate and analyze data on trafficking. WOTCLEF also seeks to rescue, rehabilitate, and reintegrate victims of trafficking, and establishes special programs to educate the public about trafficking, child labor migration, and HIV/AIDS. The foundation operates an office in Tallahassee, Florida.<sup>26</sup>

In collaboration with UNICEF, the United Nations Population Fund, ActionAid Nigeria, and the Nigerian Police Force, United Nations Development Fund for Women organized a two-day training session for 30 police officers in 2009 entitled "On Police

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<sup>16</sup> *Id.* at 16, art. 12.

<sup>17</sup> *Id.* at 16, art. 15(C).

<sup>18</sup> *Id.* at 16, art. 19(1C).

<sup>19</sup> *Id.* at 16, art. 24.

<sup>20</sup> *Id.* at 16, art. 34.

<sup>21</sup> *Id.* at 16, art. 37.

<sup>22</sup> *Id.* at 16, art. 31.

<sup>23</sup> *Id.* at 16, art. 1.

<sup>24</sup> Johnson Agbakwuru, *Nigeria: Police Rescues 135 Trafficked Victims in C-River*, ALLAFRICA, April 14, 2012, available at: <http://allafrica.com/stories/201204160387.html>

<sup>25</sup> Oyetunji Abioye, *Human trafficking: Immigration tightens security at airports*, THE PUNCH ONLINE, June 20, 2010, available at: <http://archive.punchng.com/Articl.aspx?theartic=Art20100620414984>

<sup>26</sup> Women Trafficking and Child Labor Eradication Foundation (WOTCLEF), *About Us*, <http://www.wotclef.org/about.html> (last visited June 13, 2012).

Response to Violence against Women and Anti-Human Trafficking.” This workshop aimed to increase participants’ knowledge and skills concerning the legal and policy frameworks for addressing gender-based violence and to sensitize the responses of officers to cases of gender-based violence and trafficking. This event was a follow-up to a 2008 training session, which engaged 100 police officers.<sup>27</sup>

The International Organization for Migration, African Union (AU) Commission, Economic Commission for West African States (ECOWAS), and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) coordinated the initiation of the Ouagadougou Action Plan for African Union Member states through a workshop in March 2010. The Ouagadougou Action plan combats human trafficking by promoting cooperative legislation among the members of the AU. More than 50 officials from the leading organizations and other various entities participated in the conference.<sup>28</sup>

In June 2010, the European Union released a grant of €1.2 million to fund an initiative in Nigeria targeting the protection and reintegration of trafficking victims as well as the development of the country’s institutional capacity to address trafficking suspects and cases. The project, “Enhancing the cooperation to fight trafficking in human beings from Nigeria to Europe,” is scheduled for twenty-four months. Contributing organizations include the EU, the International Labour Organization, and the Nigerian Federal Government, specifically the Ministry of Labour.<sup>29</sup>

## Multilateral Initiatives

In 2008, the governments of Nigeria and the United States cooperated to extradite a Nigerian man to the United States to face charges of the forced domestic servitude of a Nigerian teenage girl in Germantown, Maryland.<sup>30</sup> The man was convicted, received a prison sentence, and was ordered to pay restitution to the victim.

In 2009, the governments of Nigeria and Italy, along with INTERPOL, signed an agreement to bolster cooperation against human trafficking by collaborating to find successful tactics to combat the practice. This two-year program targets organized crime and illegal immigration in Italy by allowing Nigerian police officers to be deployed to Italian border checkpoints, airports, and harbors to work alongside Italian counterparts.<sup>31</sup>

Nigeria has ratified the UN’s Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women,<sup>32</sup> the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC),<sup>33</sup> and

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<sup>27</sup> Nigerian police force committed to eliminate human trafficking and violence against women, SAY NO-UNITE- END VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN, Nov. 25, 2009, available at: <http://saynotoviolence.org/join-say-no/nigerian-police-force-committed-eliminate-human-trafficking-and-violence-against-women>

<sup>28</sup> Press Release, IOM, AU, ECOWAS, and UNODC Joint Launch of Ouagadougou Action Plan to Combat Human Trafficking, (March 23, 2010), available at: <http://www.iom.int/jahia/Jahia/media/press-briefing-notes/pbnAF/cache/offonce?entryId=27139>

<sup>29</sup> Akor Sylvester, Nigeria: FG, EU Unite Against Human Trafficking in Abuja, ALL AFRICA, July 1, 2010, available at: <http://allafrica.com/stories/201007020422.html>

<sup>30</sup> Patricia M. Murret, Nigerian extradited on human trafficking charges, GAZETTE NEWS, Feb. 13, 2008, available at: [http://www.gazette.net/stories/021308/poolnew213147\\_32371.shtml](http://www.gazette.net/stories/021308/poolnew213147_32371.shtml)

<sup>31</sup> Press Release, Nigeria, Italy and INTERPOL sign accord to step up fight against human trafficking, people smuggling and transnational organized crime, (Feb. 17, 2009), available at: <http://www.interpol.int/News-and-media/News-media-releases/2009/PR009>

<sup>32</sup> United Nations Treaty Collection (UNTC), *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) - signatories*, available at:

the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress, and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children.<sup>34</sup> Nigeria has signed the Optional Protocols to the CRC on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict<sup>35</sup> and the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution, and Child Pornography.<sup>36</sup>

Nigeria has ratified the four main conventions of the ILO related to trafficking: Convention 29 on Forced Labor, Convention 105 on the Abolition of Forced Labor, Convention 138 on Minimum Age, and Convention 182 on the Worst Forms of Child Labor.<sup>37</sup>

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[http://treaties.un.org/Pages/ViewDetails.aspx?src=TREATY&mtmsg\\_no=IV-8&chapter=4&lang=en](http://treaties.un.org/Pages/ViewDetails.aspx?src=TREATY&mtmsg_no=IV-8&chapter=4&lang=en) (last visited June 13, 2012).

<sup>33</sup> UNTC, *Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) - signatories*, available at:

[http://treaties.un.org/Pages/ViewDetails.aspx?src=TREATY&mtmsg\\_no=IV-11&chapter=4&lang=en](http://treaties.un.org/Pages/ViewDetails.aspx?src=TREATY&mtmsg_no=IV-11&chapter=4&lang=en) (last visited June 13, 2012).

<sup>34</sup> UNTC, *Protocol to Prevent, Suppress, and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children - signatories*, available at:

[http://treaties.un.org/Pages/ViewDetails.aspx?src=TREATY&mtmsg\\_no=XVIII-12-a&chapter=18&lang=en](http://treaties.un.org/Pages/ViewDetails.aspx?src=TREATY&mtmsg_no=XVIII-12-a&chapter=18&lang=en) (last visited June 13, 2012).

<sup>35</sup> UNTC, *Optional Protocol on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflicts- signatories*, available at:

[http://treaties.un.org/Pages/ViewDetails.aspx?src=TREATY&mtmsg\\_no=IV-11-b&chapter=4&lang=en](http://treaties.un.org/Pages/ViewDetails.aspx?src=TREATY&mtmsg_no=IV-11-b&chapter=4&lang=en) (last visited June 14, 2012).

<sup>36</sup> UNTC, *Optional Protocol on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution, and Child Pornography-*

*signatories*, available at: [http://treaties.un.org/Pages/ViewDetails.aspx?src=TREATY&mtmsg\\_no=IV-11-c&chapter=4&lang=en](http://treaties.un.org/Pages/ViewDetails.aspx?src=TREATY&mtmsg_no=IV-11-c&chapter=4&lang=en) (last visited June 14, 2012).

<sup>37</sup> International Labour Organization, NORMLEX Information System on International Labour Standards, *Ratifications for Nigeria*, available at:

[http://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=1000:11200:2528994653727987::NO:11200:P11200\\_COUNTRY\\_ID:103259](http://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=1000:11200:2528994653727987::NO:11200:P11200_COUNTRY_ID:103259) (last visited June 14, 2012)