

# WE RISE INITIATIVE: QUARTERLY REPORT

## **FORCED LABOUR AND HUMAN TRAFFICKING OF WOMEN AND GIRLS EDITION**



**TABLE OF CONTENT**

**LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS --- 2**

**ORGANIZATIONAL INFORMATION --- 3**

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY --- 4**

**ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE AND ACHIEVEMENTS --- 5**

THE SATURDAY TAKEOVER --- 5

THE LOOKBOOK --- 6

WE RISE TALKS --- 6

IWD PRESS FOR PROGRESS CAMPAIGN --- 7

#WREBL2018 --- 8

WELLNESS JOURNALS --- 9

**ARTICLES --- 10**

HUMAN TRAFFICKING IN NIGERIA --- 10

FORCED LABOUR AND HUMAN TRAFFICKING IN NIGERIA --- 16

SLAVERY IN LIBYA: WHAT WENT WRONG AND WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE? --- 22

THE 300 PROJECT --- 25

**JANUARY-APRIL 2018**

## **LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS**

<b>AU</b>	African Union
<b>DCAD</b>	Devatop Centre for Africa Development
<b>ECOWAS</b>	Economic Commission of West African States
<b>EFCC</b>	Economic and Financial Crime Commission
<b>EU</b>	European Union
<b>FG</b>	Federal Government
<b>GBP</b>	Great Britain Pound Sterling
<b>IDP</b>	Internally Displaced Persons
<b>IOM</b>	International Organisation for Migration
<b>IWD</b>	International Womens Day
<b>N</b>	Nigerian Naira
<b>NEMA</b>	National Emergency Management Agency
<b>NAPTIP</b>	National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons
<b>NATO</b>	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
<b>NCA</b>	National Crime Agency
<b>NGO</b>	Non-governmental Organization
<b>NIS</b>	Nigerian Immigration Service
<b>STF</b>	Special Task Force
<b>TAPHOM</b>	Academy for Prevention of Human Trafficking and Other Related Matters
<b>TVPA</b>	Trafficking Victims Protection Act, 2000
<b>UN</b>	United Nations
<b>UNSC</b>	United Nations Security Council
<b>UNODC</b>	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
<b>US</b>	United States
<b>The Organization</b>	We Rise Initiative

## **ORGANIZATIONAL INFORMATION**

The We Rise Initiative is a Non-governmental Organisation, empowering women and girls to rise above systemic oppression through sustainable development initiatives. The core focuses of the Organisation are three of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals:

- Quality education
- Gender equality and
- Good jobs and economic growth

With a dedicated focus to these industries, the We Rise Initiative aims to create the largest network of progressive women in Africa, while ensuring security for the girl child.

The Organisation was founded in 2015 and has since been focused on creating and anchoring projects for young women and girl children in particular.

### **MISSION**

To ensure that Africa achieves sustainable development goals four, five and eight (quality education, gender equality and good jobs and economic growth). We are working on utilizing diverse forms of empowerment to benefit women and girls through education, general inspiration and the eradication of prevalent oppressive actions such as female genital mutilation and child marriage. This Organisation aims not only to empower, but also educate African women about their universal human rights, that many have unfortunately been denied in society today.

### **VISION**

When women and girls are given a platform to succeed, the world is given a platform to succeed. Through enhancing the socio-economic and political capability of women, we envision an Africa where women are no longer the most untapped resource but the most

valuable resource. Sustainable development and progression for women and girls is imperative at the We Rise Initiative.

## **WE RISE NIGERIA**

We Rise Nigeria is a subsidiary of the We Rise Initiative, focused on running projects across Nigeria for young women and girl children. The branch of the organization was created to ensure that projects run more effectively across the country, as the We Rise Team is not only in Nigeria but also across the United Kingdom and Ghana.

The branch operates wholesomely with the rest of the team, but with a particular focus on projects beneficial to Nigeria and policies within Nigeria that we can use as a foundation for our causes.

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

In the first quarter of 2018, the We Rise Initiative has made some significant strides in terms of, organizational expansion, project activity establishment and implementation, ensuring project activity visibility, maximizing organizational social media presence for advocacy purposes and increasing the visibility of the Organization, in a general capacity.

The first quarter has seen the Organization engage in several projects, namely:

- The Saturday Takeover
- The Lookbook
- We Rise Talks
- IWD #PressForProgress campaign
- Empowerment Brunch #WREBL2018
- Wellness Journals

The twenty-first century is an extremely visual generation and therefore, digital media marketing is the primary marketing and advocacy method of the We Rise Initiative. The Organization uses social media as a tool to educate global citizens on sustainable

development, while also attracting a network of young women and men, through popular culture content and online events. Other than the Empowerment Brunch and Wellness Journals, We Rise projects are conducted on social media. By growing the We Rise network online, we believe that we can broaden our reach outside of the countries that we currently operate in, and work towards becoming a global force at the forefront of sustainable development. The Organization's main online tools are the We Rise website, Instagram and Twitter accounts.

The We Rise quarterly reports deviate from the traditional format of organizational quarterly reports, as each quarterly report is premised on a particular thematic area. In addition to providing a summary of organizational projects conducted in every quarter, the quarterly reports include articles emanating from the thematic area. The thematic areas of focus were developed in the context of specific global socio-economic and political trends as well as social grievances, affecting women and girls in Nigeria. Each thematic area complements active and proposed projects of the Organization.

In light of the recent developments on slavery in Libya and the fact that a sizeable portion of the general public is still highly uninformed as to the alarming extent of human trafficking and forced labour within Nigeria and beyond, the thematic area of focus for this Quarterly Report is *Forced Labour and Human Trafficking of Women and Girls in Nigeria*.

## **ORGANIZATIONAL PROJECTS AND** **ACHIEVEMENTS**

### **THE SATURDAY TAKEOVER**

In recent years the practice of individuals taking over the Instagram accounts of various brands and organizations, has become common practice. An Instagram takeover entails a highly engaged Instagram user, taking over the Instagram account of a brand or an organization (for no more than a day) while sharing content with Instagram users.

The Saturday Takeover is a We Rise instituted campaign, whereby Instagram influencers and users with an avid following, takeover the We Rise Instagram account for a few hours, every

Saturday. The process has proven to be a formidable activity for the Organization and social media influencers to collaborate and promote each others content.

In the first quarter the Saturday Takeover was hosted by:

- Tiwalola Ogunlesi
  - Founder of the #ConfidentandKillingIt movement A movement '*inspiring a generation to wake up, discover their true worth, strength and purpose*'. The movement has informed successful events in: London; Lagos; universities across the United Kingdom; and the Oprah Winfrey Leadership Academy for Girls, South Africa
  
- Fadekemi Tejuoso
  - Founder of the Nírèti Foundation An organization founded in 2015, with the aim of feeding mothers and children in Nigeria.
  - Founder of *fadekemitejuoso.com* A personal website focused on exploring identity and self-worth.
  
- Jane Abasalie
  - Founder of *plainjaineats.com* A website focused on healthy food.
  
- Ashley Okoli
  - Instagram influencer and fashionista.
  - Creator of the lifestyle YouTube channel *Ashley Okoli*.

## THE LOOKBOOK

A showcase of powerful visual imagery annexed in inspirational content on woman hood. The showcase takes place every Wednesday on Instagram. Images are also available on the We Rise Initiative website.

## WE RISE TALKS

The We Rise Talks are a weekly Twitter discussion, hosted by the Organisation in collaboration with active social media users, where different issues relating to women and girls are deliberated on. This project has been a successful method of raising awareness of issues affecting women and girls and inspiring constructive and intellectual social engagement on such issues.

The We Rise Talks, which take place every Friday, are centered on specific topics, and the topics for the first quarter were based on sexual violence and sexual harassment:

- Sexual Harassment in Educational Institutions hosted by Chinyere Eze.
- The Influence of Social Media on Sexual Harassment hosted by Ayomide Dokunmu.
- The Effects of Sexual Harassment on Mental Health hosted by Mariam Olatidoye.
- An IWD Special: #PressForProgress Against Sexual Violence hosted by Rosie Kinsella.

## **IWD #PRESSFORPROGRESS CAMPAIGN**

Every year, International Womens Day has a theme. The intention behind these themes is to depart from the overly commercialized nature of the day, and remind the public of a number of important dynamics. These include:

- The fundamental steps women have taken towards attaining gender equality.
- The existent deficits in society which continue to oppress and preclude women from certain spaces within society.
- Women as a historically subdued group of people, are rights-bearers who have had their human rights frequently impounded, enough to warrant special consideration of their rights protection.
- Women's rights comprise of those rights that refer to rights enjoyed by men and women, that are meant to demonstrate the equality of men and women where their abilities are equal (ie. in the educational sector and as political candidates), and
- The need to celebrate women as individuals, in a world that has become accustomed to attaching the female existence to men, children and the service of others.

The theme for IWD 2018 was Press for Progress, which is essentially a global call for everyone to actively contribute towards achieving total gender equality. As the phrase connotes, it is a push for progressive efforts to alter the status quo and balance the imbalanced gender dynamic.

The We Rise Initiative commemorated IWD 2018, with a series of images used to promote IWD and the We Rise Initiative on Instagram. Images of women making waves in their relevant industries were also shared in celebration of womanhood. Representation matters when we have conversations about women, and this visual showcase was a way of showing the public that women can and are making an impact in a multitude of spaces, even in the spaces women are underrepresented in.

In addition to the image promotion, the Organisation released a video compilation featuring multiple women discussing what press for progress means to each of them. The video may be found on the We Rise Initiative channel on YouTube.

## **EMPOWERMENT BRUNCH #WREBL2018**

The We Rise Initiative Empowerment Brunch is a social gathering over brunch, set to inspire young women to take control of their lives. The project themed "Stigmas, Stereotypes and Barriers: How to Overcome and Flourish" - was officially launched at the Railroad Café, London on March 25, 2018. Tiwalola Ogunlesi (a young African pioneer and motivational speaker) and Olivia Gold (Senior Marketing Director at Debenhams and fashion & lifestyle blogger) were the guest speakers for the day. The brunch lasted about 2 hours, where the women and the guest speakers spoke about life as women in various industries, and how to overcome barriers. The food from Rail House Café added a cherry to the top of the amazing brunch!

The Brunch yielded positive responses from attendees and raised GBP 100. An additional donation of N100,000 was made to the Organization, which will accompany the proceeds of the Brunch. The sum of the proceeds and donation will go towards providing sanitary care for young women in IDP camps around Nigeria.

Following on the success of the first Brunch, the Organisation intends to expand on the Empowerment Brunch series, and host a Brunch in Lagos, in the upcoming quarter.

## **WELLNESS JOURNALS**

The We Rise Nigeria Wellness Journals are designed to encourage young women to address their mental health, giving themselves reason and understanding for emotions that may be affecting them. The notion of the journal is simple - provide young women with positive and encouraging messages through quotes, freedom to express themselves, factual information and advice.

### **Quotes:**

Every page of the journal will have an encouraging quote or message for young women, to add daily positivity to one's life. As this journal contains 365 pages, we will produce 365 quotes or messages that are either from inspiring women, wellness experts or truths of life. The quote/message will be placed at the top of every page.

### **Freedom of Expression:**

The We Rise Nigeria Wellness Journal is designed to give young women the ability to freely express their minds. A journal is seen as a safe place to gather your thoughts and therefore, we are to encourage users to do so. This will be done by placing questions of address on the first few pages of the journal, to give users an idea of thoughts that should be challenged when using the journal.

### **Factual Information:**

The last few pages of the journal will contain factual information on mental health both domestically (within Nigeria) and globally. Research will be carried out through both data collection and interviews. The aim is to provide 100 facts at the back of the journal - including hotlines, contact information for psychologists in Nigeria and information on wellness blogs and social media pages that users may need.

**Advice:**

The final part of the content that will be added to this journal is advice directly from psychologists and wellness experts on improving your mental health. The aim is to speak to as many Nigerian psychologists and wellness experts as possible, before focusing on the international community. This is to encourage Nigerian citizens to become more vocal about mental health issues, knowing that the taboo can be addressed and there are professionals around you to help.

## **ARTICLES**

### **HUMAN TRAFFICKING IN NIGERIA**

***Mohammed B. Abdulsalam***

*The rate of crime and human ills has greatly increased over the years. Theft, rape, assault, kidnapping, enslavement and human trafficking, have become the order of the day in recent times. Humans do not have regard for the lives of fellow humans and have instead turned fellow human beings into commodities capable of being traded for fiscal incentives or otherwise. In the wake of a global outcry aimed at human trafficking and modern day slavery, it has become necessary to explore these social ills and contribute to collective efforts towards combating the issue.*

#### ***What is human trafficking?***

According to the UN instituted Palermo Protocol (an international legal instrument that was created with a specific focus on the preventing and curbing instances of human trafficking) human trafficking occurs when people recruit, transfer, transport or harbour other people against their will by using force, blackmail, deception, fraud and other malicious means.

#### ***Elements of human trafficking***

Human trafficking may be defined by three elements:

1. The act, or what has been done to the victim. Were they *illegally* recruited, transported or harboured?
2. The means, or how it has happened. Was coercion, force, blackmail or fraud used as a means of getting the victim to their location?
3. The purpose, or why it has happened. Were victims trafficked for exploitation, slavery, organ removal or other illegal and inhumane practices?

### ***The context of human trafficking in Nigeria***

Human trafficking in Nigeria is characterized by multiple practices. Trafficked Nigerian women and girls are often recruited from impoverished and/or rural areas within the country, for the purposes of involuntary domestic servitude and sexual exploitation. Nigerian women and girls are frequently trafficked within Nigeria or transported to other West and Central African countries, primarily Gabon, Cameroon, Ghana, Chad, Benin, Togo, Niger, Burkina Faso, and the Gambia, for the same purposes. Children from West African states such as Benin, Togo, and Ghana where ECOWAS allows for free movement of persons are also forced to work in Nigeria, and some are subjected to hazardous jobs in Nigeria's granite mines. Furthermore, Nigerian women and girls are often transported to Europe (particularly Italy and Russia), the Middle East and North Africa, where they are subjected to forced prostitution. In comparison to men and boys, women and girls are more susceptible to falling prey to human trafficking. This has much to do with the immensely patriarchal nature of our society and the fact that the female existence is largely understood in the context of ownership, submissiveness and control.

### ***Human trafficking in Nigeria and the role of government, non-governmental bodies and citizens***

#### **US Tier 2 Watch List**

Human trafficking is a global problem. However, a large portion of victims come from African countries, most notably Nigeria. The US government established a tier system, to categorize countries based on how country governments meet the minimum standards of the TVPA. Currently, Nigeria is on the Tier 2 Watch List, which comprises of countries whose governments do not fully meet the minimum requirements of the TVPA, but are making

strides towards complying with TVPA standards. Countries in this list are also marked by the fact that:

- The number of victims of severe forms of trafficking is very significant or is significantly increasing; and
- There is a failure to provide evidence of increasing efforts to combat severe forms of trafficking in persons from the previous year

*(U.S State Department of State Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons Tier Placements Trafficking in Persons Report 2017)*

From what the Tier 2 Watch List denotes, the number of human trafficking victims in Nigeria is substantial and on the increase, and the government has previously failed to provide evidence of efforts to combat severe forms of human trafficking. However, its inclusion on the list also illustrates that the Nigerian government is making efforts towards complying with the following minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking in persons, as set out by the TVPA:

1. The government of the country should prohibit severe forms of trafficking in persons and punish acts of such trafficking.
2. For any act of sex trafficking involving force, fraud, coercion, or in which the victim of sex trafficking is a child incapable of giving meaningful consent, or of trafficking which includes rape or kidnapping or which causes a death, the government of the country should prescribe punishment commensurate with that for grave crimes, such as forcible sexual assault.
3. For any act of a severe form of trafficking in persons, the government of the country should prescribe punishment that is sufficiently stringent to deter and that adequately reflects the heinous nature of the offense.
4. The government of the country should make serious and sustained efforts to eliminate severe forms of trafficking in persons.

*(Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000, Div. A of Pub. L. No. 106-386, § 108, as amended)*

### **The Nigerian FG's official response**

The Nigerian government's response to the growing issue of human insecurity as a result of human trafficking, was the establishment of the NAPTIP in 2003. NAPTIP is empowered by the Law Enforcement and Administration Act.

NAPTIP is mandated to investigate all cases of human trafficking arising from:

- Kidnapping;
- Exploitive labor;
- Child labor;
- Prostitution;
- Removal of organs;
- Slavery;
- Smuggling of immigrants;
- Purchase and sale persons;

The Agency's key functions also include:

- Preventing human trafficking - Special attention is given to the trafficking of women and children; and
- Rehabilitation of trafficked persons and taking the right steps to reintegrate victims back into society.

Although the establishment of NAPTIP and what it aims to do, is a stride in the right direction, the effectiveness and responsiveness of the Agency has been called into question on numerous occasions. The Agency as a result of corruption and poor governance is marred by a lack of adequate funding, which influences the capacity of the Agency to carry out its mandate effectively, and the capacity of the Agency's officials to work in a cohesive and productive manner.

At the international level, Nigeria is party to several of the existing international laws on human trafficking, and has played a key role in ECOWAS initiatives on the same subject matter. Additionally, Nigeria has entered into various bilateral agreements and memoranda agreements, such as:

- The 'Kampala Convention' (2009) which emphasizes the protection and assistance of IDP in Africa. IDPs, like women and girls from impoverished areas, are highly

susceptible to human trafficking.

- The 'Nigeria-Niger Republic Agreement, which aims to prevent, suppress and punish trafficking in persons, with an emphasis on illegally migrated women and children, who are also highly susceptible to human trafficking.
- The Maputo Protocol which in a general capacity, seeks to guarantee and protect the economic, social, cultural, civil and political rights of women and girls.

Most of these agreements are premised on collaborative action in different spheres, as a means of tackling instances of human trafficking, arising from illegal migration. Despite the humanitarian intention behind the agreements, in entering into these agreements Nigeria has overlooked the importance of negotiating better conditions of admittance and residence for victims who have fallen prey to human trafficking, as a result of the unregulated scope of illegal migration. The agreements focus mostly on procedures for repatriation of Nigerian nationals, but not on systematic reintegration and rehabilitation, which should be addressed in national policy - of which Nigeria has none. Nevertheless, NAPTIP and the NIS have partnered with the EU, the IOM and UNODC to develop strategies and initiatives aimed at combating human trafficking as a result of illegal migration in the country.

### **The Involvement of NGOs and Citizens in Eliminating Human Trafficking**

DCAD is a leading youth-based anti-human trafficking organization in Nigeria, situated in Abuja, but has a far-reaching impact felt in numerous States. The organization was founded by Joseph Osuigwe during his youth service, and has been committed to training, empowering and engaging young people to combat human trafficking and other human rights abuses in Nigeria.

Since 2013, DCAD has trained 5,030 young people and sensitized over 400,000 citizens through community awareness and media campaigns. The organization's initiatives have informed a better understanding in Nigerians (particularly youth) that it is their responsibility to galvanize and make a collective effort to combat human trafficking.

In 2015, DCAD recognized that there was an urgent need to build the capacities of skilled workers and the general public to take strategic action against human trafficking. It was in this context, that DCAD established a pilot project known as the TAPHOM. The project is aimed at equipping and empowering young people, to position themselves at the forefront of combating human trafficking. DCAD has also employed anti-human trafficking advocacy training, as a tool for equipping young people for advocacy and social action in Nigeria. 121 young people (aged between 17 and 40) from the 6 geo-political zones in Nigeria, were selected to participate in the training. Participants were equipped with advocacy skills, toolkits and information materials. Results from the evaluation of the training showed that 95% of the participants engaged in strategic anti-human trafficking advocacy and social action through the following channels:

- Media campaign
- Community sensitization
- School awareness
- Radio talk
- Publication of articles, etc.

It is clear that efforts of NGOs such as DCAD, are instrumental in instilling the citizenry with a sense of responsibility towards combating human trafficking. As much as it is necessary for governments at all levels to establish and implement effective policies with regards to human trafficking, as elucidated above, efforts must be collective and collaborative. Therefore, the responsibility of eliminating trafficking in persons falls on the government, governmental agencies, as well as NGOs and ordinary citizens. Through collaborative and collective action, we can put an end to the burgeoning menace that is human trafficking.

### ***Documented cases of human trafficking in Nigeria***

1. In 2016, DCAD played a formidable role in rescuing Amina Saliu, a 17 year old girl who was abducted from Abuja and transported to Kano, where she was forced into a marriage, she did not consent to.
  
2. A Nigerian woman, Franca Asemota, 38, was found guilty of attempted sex trafficking of several Nigerian girls, and was sentenced to 22 years of imprisonment. The girls were transported through Heathrow Airport, with the intention of disbursing them to

work as sex workers in brothels across Europe. Italian authorities had identified Asemota as a trafficking suspect in 2012, but fled from Italy to Nigeria when some of her co - conspirators were arrested by Immigration Enforcement investigators. In an operation coordinated by the United Kingdoms NCA, she was arrested by the EFCC in Benin City in March 2015, and was subsequently extradited to the United Kingdom in January 2018, after her identity was confirmed. Asemota was said to have trafficked a number of girls from Lagos to London, between August 2011 and May 2012. (*Punch, August 5th, 2016*).

3. In January 2017, the STF in charge of internal security in Plateau State, in collaboration with the Police Force, intercepted three suspected traffickers conveying 145 children in two trucks from Bauchi and Jigawa States to Plateau, Kaduna and Nasarawa States. The children were said to be between 4 and 8 years old. (*The Sun, 21st January, 2017*).
4. In late November 2017, personnel of Vigilante Group of Nigeria (VGN) Abia State, reportedly arrested 6 members of a child trafficking syndicate. (*The Nation November 3rd, 2017*).

## FORCED LABOUR AND HUMAN TRAFFICKING IN NIGERIA

***Samuel Olufeso and Mohammed B. Abdulsalam***

*Millions of men, women and children across the globe are victims of human smugglers. Such victims, like commodities, are purchased and sold for the purposes of sexual exploitation, slavery or forced labour. The trade is ubiquitous and its perpetrators profit heavily from it, hence, its perceived lucrative nature. In Nigeria, the trade has reached alarming levels as the market continues to spread like a bush fire in the dry season.*

### ***Sex trafficking and forced prostitution of Nigerian women***

In Nigeria, especially in the South-South region, this trade is widespread. In this region, oil production is chiefly serving the global economy to the detriment of the local population. The locals are deprived of their means of living due to environmental dilapidation, episodic conflicts

and alarming insecurity. This in turn informs a copious supply of poor and susceptible Nigerian women, as well as a corresponding increase in the income of European men, and their ability to demand womens sexual pleasure (Olaniyi, 2011).

It is these ills that have snowballed into push factors. These factors have a worldwide reverberation, but differ in local emphasis and magnitude. Although armed conflict amplifies conditions of hardship and insecurity fosters conditions for trafficking in all commodities, it is ultimately poverty, high unemployment rates, destitution of opportunities, and the quest for a means of livelihood that serve as the driving force behind trafficking of humans in Nigeria. It is these factors that make women and girls highly susceptible, in addition to the fact that Nigerian society is deep-rooted in systemic gender imbalance.

In the South-South region of the country, women and girls are more vulnerable to trafficking due to the following facets:

- Unequal access to education: This reduces womens opportunities to increase their earnings in more skilled occupations.
- Lack of legitimate and fulfilling employment opportunities, especially in rural communities.
- Traditional attitudes and practices, which stand in harmony with violence against women.
- Sex-selective migration policies and deterrent emigration rules, put in place as protective measures, impede/reduce womens legitimate migration. Also, most legal avenues of migration offer prospects in usually male-dominated sectors (construction, agriculture etc.)

It is the summative results of these ills that have pushed women outside their native milieus to other destinations where the pasture is thought to be greener. On arrival in new cities, women are forced to monetize their bodies to earn a living, and financially support their parents and siblings back home. In other instances, some crime syndicates, recruit women from Nigeria and transport them to Europe for illicit merchandising.

#### ***Facts about sex trafficking in Nigeria***

- The majority of victims of sex trafficking in Nigeria are women (*Carling*).

- Worldwide, an estimated 800,000 women and girls are bought and sold annually. About 200,000 of them are from Nigeria (*MclInnis*).
- Nigerian sex traffickers use religion as a method of controlling the women they traffic. The traffickers place parts of their bodies such as hair, nails, menstrual blood, and pieces of their underwear on traditional shrines, where the women are forced to swear an oath of secrecy (*MclInnis*).
- Sex trafficking in Nigeria is believed to be a form modern-day slavery, brought about by various social mischiefs such as greed, poverty and poor legislation (*Ojukwu*).
- The States of Edo, Delta, Imo, and Kano are the most notorious Nigerian States for sex trafficking, where both women and girls are the most likely victims (*Ojukwu*).
- Most Nigerian sex trafficking victims are lured to European countries to work as sex slaves (*Carling*).
- 60% of prostitutes in Italian and Belgian cities are Nigerian women, who become sex workers through coercive and violent means (*Mbakaogu*).
- The sex trafficking of women from Nigeria to Europe is such a well-known occurrence in Edo. It is a pervasive notion that many women who travel to European countries from Edo State, for work purposes, are likely going to be robbed of their agency and forced into sex work (*Carling*).

### ***The nature of domestic slavery in Nigeria***

Nigeria is a source, transit, and destination country for the trafficking of women and children, for the purposes of forced labour. Within Nigeria, women and girls are trafficked primarily for domestic servitude and commercial sexual exploitation purposes. Boys are trafficked for forced labour purposes, often serving in the following scopes: street vending, agriculture, mining, stone quarries, and domestic help. Trafficking in young boys also takes shape in forms that are not as deliberate as the above. For example it is a common practice in Northern Nigeria, for religious teachers to traffic boys, under the guise of religious pupillage. As a result of negligence on the part of the religious teachers, these religious pupils eventually become destitute street wanderers. (*U.S. State Department, Trafficking in Persons Report, June, 2009*).

Domestic slavery refers to the practice of exploiting and exercising undue control over another, in order to coerce them into performing services of a domestic nature, in undesirable conditions.

In Nigeria, many cultures have normalized the concept of the house help and, unlike trafficking for sexual exploitation for example, forced labour in such instances, often goes undetected and accepted. This has to do with a number of factors:

- As Nigerians, we have mutilated our understanding of domestic help, by perceiving house helps as second-class citizens, and not employees.
- As a result of societal perception of domestic workers and the informal nature of domestic service, domestic work is poorly regulated and undervalued.
- Due to the interconnectedness of domestic slavery and domestic help, it is often hard to draw a distinction between the two, and properly delineate what both practices constitute.
- In the event that we are able to recognize cases of domestic slavery, cognitive dissonance and an unwillingness to be introspective, prevents us from denouncing such practices, so we resign ourselves to acceptance of it.

House helps typically live and work in their employers household, performing tasks which include: cooking, cleaning, running household errands and seeing to different menial duties. In most instances, they do not work within a set time frame, often working 10 to 16 hours a day, whilst being on-call outside of that time period, for little or no fiscal compensation, living in inhumane conditions and being subject to limited freedom. Outside of this, they may also be commissioned as nannies or other forms of domestic help. Domestic workplaces are connected to off-duty living quarters and often not shared with other workers. Such an environment can isolate domestic workers and is conducive to exploitation, because authorities cannot inspect homes as easily as they can in formal workplaces.

Young girls below the age of 16 are frequently employed as unregulated domestic helps, notwithstanding the provisions of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, the Childs Rights Act, the Labour Act and the Compulsory Free Universal Basic Education Act, which all infer that no young person shall be employed in an environment that is immoral or detrimental to their health. Despite the existence of the aforementioned laws, the law explicitly states that no young person below the age of 16 shall work for more than 8 hours a day, *except* if said young person is employed in domestic service. The law also provides ineffective monitoring structures, to ensure that young persons in domestic service are treated properly in their places

of employment. It is clear that the laws do not adequately protect young persons in domestic service, and simply reinforce our distorted understanding of domestic help.

In order to enhance our understanding of what domestic slavery comprises of, it is important to establish elements that distinguish domestic help from domestic slavery/ domestic service malpractice:

- Where a house-helps employment arrangement transitions into a situation whereby they cannot leave at their freewill, it becomes a case of enslavement.
- Where domestic workers are paid meager wages but expected to work more than 10 hours a day, it becomes a case of enslavement.
- Where wages are paid through an agent of the domestic worker, and the worker never reaps the benefits of their wages, it becomes a case of enslavement.
- Where domestic workers are subjected to physical, sexual and mental abuse, it becomes a case of domestic service malpractice, bordering on domestic slavery.
- Where domestic workers are provided with inadequate and inhuman means of accommodation, it becomes a case of domestic service malpractice, bordering on domestic slavery.
- Where domestic helps are deprived of basic human rights such as right to food, right to adequate healthcare and
- In the case of young girls under the age of 16, where they are denied their right to education, it becomes a case of enslavement.

### ***Documented incidents of domestic slavery in Nigeria***

Nigeria is not just the most populous nation in Africa, it is also characterized by largest number of people living in conditions of modern slavery, in the continent. Below are a few documented incidents of domestic slavery in Nigeria:

1. In August 2004, several boys from Benin City, were rescued from labour camps in the South-Western States of Oyo, Osun and Ogun. The boys, some as young as 4 years old, were found working in granite quarries, sleeping out in the open and malnourished. Young boys from Togo were recruited to work as agricultural workers in Nigeria, in return for their school fees. The boys ended up working thirteen hours a day and were beaten if they complained or did not work hard enough. After, 1 to 2 years they were given bicycles and told to peddle home. Unfortunately, many never made it to their homes whilst others were

- robbed. (*The Association Press AP, 27<sup>th</sup> September, 2003*).
2. In April 2014, after the Boko Haram jihadist insurgent group abducted more than 200 girls in Northern Nigeria, the group's leader Abubakar Shekau threatened to sell the girls into slavery. Their fate remains uncertain. (*New York Times, 5<sup>th</sup> April, 2014*).
  3. Titi is one of countless young girls working as domestic servants in cities across the nation, far from their homes in rural Nigeria or neighbouring countries such as Benin. In her own words, she says Sometimes, she beat us, recounting the businesswoman who had flogged the girls for the smallest mishaps, such as breaking a plate. Sometimes, she didn't give us breakfast till after 1pm, Titi, now 14, told the Thomson Reuters Foundation from Lagos, where she works for a nicer family cleaning, cooking and caring for children for 18 hours a day. (*The Independent, Monday 24<sup>th</sup> of July 2017*)
  4. On Tuesday, November 14, 2017, a Mrs Motunrayo Ayadi made news for allegedly throwing her 13-year-old housemaid from the second floor of the house. Mrs Ayadi allegedly did this because she suspected her housemaid Deborah Matthew of stealing her jewellery. The incident occurred on Saturday, November 11, 2017, and little Deborah sustained a gash on her forehead as well as other injuries. (*Pulse Opinion, 15<sup>th</sup> November, 2017*)
  5. In March 2016, a woman was arrested for allegedly burning her house help with a hot piece of iron. (*Pulse Opinion, 25<sup>th</sup> March, 2016*).
  6. In the same year, a woman got into trouble for allegedly torturing her 12-year-old house help for reportedly stealing pieces of meat. (*Pulse Opinion, 27<sup>th</sup> October, 2016*).
  7. The children who look after the homes of many middle-class Nigerians, do not just endure physical abuse, but also mental and sexual abuse. In a recent case, a man was discovered to have murdered his wife after raping and impregnating their housemaid. (*Pulse Opinion, 6<sup>th</sup> July, 2016*)
  8. Pregnant woman beats housemaid to death (*Pulse Opinion, 15<sup>th</sup> November, 2017*)

## SLAVERY IN LIBYA: WHAT WENT WRONG & WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE?

**Aishat Braimah**

*In late 2017, the world stood together to publicly denounce the practices of modern-day slavery in Libya. The world stood together astounded and mortified as we watched videos, that captured emaciated human beings with heartbreakingly listless expressions on their faces being auctioned and sold at slave auctions, women and girls being raped and assaulted by their slavers, men being brutally abused by slavers, and slavers robbing human beings of their personal dignities and agency. The Nigerian FG, later identified most of these victims as Nigerians. So how did this happen? Why did this happen? What could have been done to prevent these unspeakable crimes against humanity? How can we ensure that these inhuman practices do not repeat themselves in the future?*

The world became privy to the news of slavery in Libya, in November 2017. However, the IOM released a report in April 2017, which documented the existence of slave market conditions in Libya (*IOM Learns of Slave Market Conditions Endangering Migrants in North Africa, International Organization on Migration, April 11 2017*). The report specifically highlighted that the numerous women and men who were being extorted and forced into slave labour, were migrants from Nigeria. Several news outlets had reported on the issue early in 2017, but the situation did not gain global attention until much later in the year, once social media pushed it to the forefront of breaking news. As a global outcry permeated all corners of the world, everyone aimed their anger and disgust at Libya and Libyans for having the audacity to enslave fellow human beings. Much later, it was reported by Sahara Reporters, that many of the slavers were in fact Nigerian and Ghanaian trafficking kingpins (*Nigerians, Ghanians Are Slave Masters in Libya, Returnee says, Sahara Reporters, Dec 3 2017*). This information was also contained in the April 2017 report disseminated by the IOM. In April 2017, the IOM report was brought to the attention of Nigerian FG and its agencies, who chose to remain silent on the issue, until the shocking events unraveled on the world stage in November 2017.

### ***How did the Libyan slave trade establish itself?***

There are several factors and occurrences, which led to the enslavement of thousands of Nigerians in Libya. Following the assassination of the long-serving Libyan president, Muammar Gaddafi by Libyan rebel sects and NATO forces, Libya has been in a state of anarchy. A Banana Republic of sorts, with several armed factions battling everyday, in a bid to claim the leadership of the country. The lack of governance and regulation, coupled by the fact that the Mediterranean Sea lies between Libya and Europe, and serves as a transiting destination for African migrants on their way to Europe, played a significant role in paving the way for the establishment of illicit human markets, to which thousands of African migrants fell victim. Going down the chain of accountability, we have to acknowledge Nigerias substantial role in the dilapidation of governance and regulatory structures in Libya. In 2011 when the US government pushed forward the illegal UNSC Resolution to invade Libya, Nigeria was one of three African countries that supported the resolution, without sufficiently considering its lack of political and strategic interests, in the event of the inevitable anarchy in Libya.

The fairly recent migrant crisis in Europe influenced the EUs decision to create rigid buffer systems in Libya and other African ports leading to Europe, as a means of reducing the number of illegal African migrants arriving in Europe. These inhumane EU systems fostered a vast increase in the number of African migrants withering away in anarchical Libya, who in turn became victims of the slave trade in Libya.

### ***Why were so many Nigerian women victims of the Libyan slave trade?***

Although Nigeria prides itself as being one of the largest economies in Africa, inequality remains deeply ingrained in the fabric of Nigerian society. The country is beset by a lack of adequate education and development, lack of sustainable opportunities, poverty and corruption. The highly patriarchal nature of Nigerian society, places a larger disadvantage on young women, as the glass ceiling towards prosperity, is much more defined for women, than it is for men. This, coupled with the socio-economic deficits of the country, has informed a burgeoning sex-trafficking industry within the country and beyond its borders. On one end of the spectrum, many young women were kidnapped from their localities in Nigeria, and sold into the sex slave industry in Libya. Then on the other end, a sizeable number of young women were lured into Libyas sex-slave industry, on false promises of lucrative earning potentials and assurances of a better life in Europe. Nigerian traffickers took full advantage of

the destitute nature of the country faced by the vast majority of citizens, and preyed on impoverished, naïve and desperate young women, who were unknowingly chasing a mirage of a better life. While in the sex-slave industry, young women were often sold several times, to different individuals, who frequently raped and impregnated them. According to the IOM, the practice of trafficking and selling young women as sex slaves, has increased by more than 600% from 2014 to 2017 (*Nigerians Return From Slavery in Libya to Thriving Sex-trafficking Industry Back Home, The Washington Post, January 23, 2018*).

### ***The way forward***

In terms of responsibility and accountability, the Nigerian FG ranks top of the list. From its decision to support the 2011 UNSC Resolution, to the years of continued poor governance plaguing the country, to its decision to ignore the April, 2017 IOM report - the Nigerian government was a catalyst in facilitating the grim fate of many of its citizens, rather than an formidable actor in protecting its citizens. It took a global outcry and the financial and strategic intervention of the IOM, the EU and the AU, to spark a flame of constructive action, under the seats of the Nigerian FG and its relevant agencies (NAPTIP, NEMA and NIS).

The events following the developments of the Libyan slave trade, demonstrate that eliminating trafficking in persons, requires collective effort. It is simply not enough to rely on State governments. In light of this, individuals and institutions alike, must accept that it is our collective responsibility to put an end to human trafficking and modern day slavery. The Edo State government (most of the Libyan returnees hail from Edo and Delta State) has instituted a number of initiatives, to support the reintegration of returnees into normal society. These programs include state-funded agricultural programs, aimed at arming returnees with proficient skillsets in the agricultural sector. From these initiatives, it is evident that the State governments and the FG do have the capacity to create better living environments for its citizens. The re-integration programs, although noble in their intentions, need to form part of strategy to prevent instances of human trafficking, rather than a response to human trafficking. It is pervasive knowledge that prevention is much better than the cure. Furthermore, individuals and NGOs should play a more active role in: pushing the respective Nigerian governments to establish programs and initiatives that will: lead to more job opportunities; rehabilitate the Nigerian education sector; achieve sustainable development within the country; and ensure effective security at the countrys borders. Individuals and

NGOs should also do more, with regard to sensitizing the public about human trafficking. The situation requires us to be introspective, strategic and creative in developing preventative measures.

## **WHAT WE RISE AIMS TO DO: THE 300 PROJECT**

***Samuel Olufeso***

In a world fraught with heinous crimes against women and girl children, the 300 Project aims to tackle some of these crimes that stand in dissonance with humanity. With an emphasis on human trafficking of female victims, the project seeks to raise awareness of this epidemic, through a sensitization and progressive campaign.

As a result of the current wave of human trafficking across the globe, this project seeks to ignite a discussion, attracting discussants and sympathizers from different cultures. Consequently, this global conversation is expected to address the plight of victims especially those ones in the forgotten corners of the world.

The UN, World Bank, Global Slavery Index, NAPTIP and the Government of the United States, make up a portion of a number of institutions that have collated information, statistics and factual case studies to highlight the prevalence and severity of human trafficking within Nigeria and the ECOWAS region. In 2016, the Global Slavery Index reported that 875,500 Nigerians were victims of modern slavery. Despite this alarming figure, the Nigerian government has neither prioritized the fight against human trafficking nor provided minimum funding to agencies and NGOs to combat this scourge (Devatop Centre for Africa Development, 2017). This submission reverberates the assessment of the United States TVPA that Nigeria does not conform within the minimum benchmark for the elimination of trafficking, despite its substantial efforts. The assessment further noted that Nigeria does not encounter the same harsh resource constraints of other countries in the ECOWAS region, however, it uses paltry sums and personnel to combat trafficking of women and children.

As elucidated above, human trafficking has been a burgeoning issue for Nigeria and the recent crisis involving human trafficking and enslavement of Nigerians in Libya, has resulted in a widespread negative contextualization of Nigeria, and the governments incapacity to

ensure the human security of citizens. This has necessitated a clarion call for collective efforts to combat human trafficking. In response to this call, the 300 Project was birthed by the chromosomal combination of the We Rise Initiative and Paul Ukonu Project.

As a Nigerian platform anchored on sustainable development and empowerment of the oppressed persons nationwide, the Paul Ukonu Projects employs photography and imagery to communicate messages of prevalent instances of oppression, that have remained clandestine. The Wise Rise Initiative on the other end, is an African NGO that emphasizes empowering young women and girls to rise above 21st century oppression.

The initiative adopts a novel and unique perspective, by employing photographic and visual channels to relay a message to the public and raise awareness of human trafficking. In order to achieve this, the project aims to set a global record by photographing a whopping 300 models at a go. The 300 models will be presented in a simple yet dark manner (black cotton underwear with red crosses over their mouths, natural hair and feet or hands tied in chains) to depict the agonies and casualties of human trafficking, affecting women and girl children. The intended location of the shoot is under the Falomo Bridge, where the Chairman of Arts and Culture for Lagos State painted murals of girl children to depict the social and cultural hardships felt by them. The location provides a strategic and contextually relevant backdrop for the project.

Essentially, the project seeks to lend its voice to the on-going global movement against sex trafficking and slavery, through progressive methods coupled with the integration of public figures, in order to achieve the following objectives:

- Ignite dialogue about the prevalence of human trafficking, with specific reference to the Nigerian girl child in.
- Compel government to enact legislation to criminalize and curb instances of trafficking.
- Enhance efforts to retrieve information and statistics on trafficking offences and make it available to agencies, think-tanks and the public.
- Inform a campaign/movement that will convey the goals of the project, long after its conclusion.
- Tackle the issue of human trafficking within the ECOWAS region.

The inherent message behind the project is to dissuade perpetrators of this heinous act that perches against humanity. Also, it will relay messages to relevant state agencies and stakeholders to step up their games to nip this ugly trend in its buds. The time to act is now.

