



Migration Profile

NIGERIA

A. Executive Summary

Migration has always been a significant part of Nigerian history. All the major ethnic groups in Nigeria believe that their current settlement resulted from their ancestors' prior migration. In the beginning of the 20th century, after the arrival of Europeans in Africa, thousands of Nigerians started moving abroad to the Ivory Coast, Mali, Ghana, Sudan, and Togo in search of job opportunities.

After World War II many Nigerians left the country to complete their education abroad, mainly in the UK and the USA, to later return home as highly qualified professionals. These persons would play an important part in the period leading up to independence and in the post-independence period. After independence, the ethno-religious violence between groups of the (Islamic) north and (Christian) south generated several forms of involuntary migration in Nigeria. However, because of the country's relatively stable economy, the 1970s saw a large influx of both intraregional and international migrants from ECOWAS countries. With the political tensions and economic recession starting in the early 1980s, this influx lessened, and emigration became more permanent. Moreover, owing to the consequences of the Structural Adjustment Programs, many professionals decided to leave Nigeria as their wages and working conditions were declining.

Since the beginning of the twenty-first century the emigration of educated Nigerians to other African countries has increased. Many Nigerian migrants integrate successfully in their host societies and often keep in touch with their families in Nigeria, creating transnational networks. However, Nigerian emigration has the reputation of being highly criminalized due to the arrests of Nigerians using fake documents, congregating in unauthorized settlements, and engaging in criminal activity abroad.

Although Nigeria is an important destination for migrants in the region, there are typically more people emigrating from, than immigrating to Nigeria. There is a widespread desire to migrate among Nigerians. In a study conducted by the IOM, 81% of respondents indicated their desire to leave their community for economic reasons and move to non-African countries or urban settings within Nigeria. Between 1990 and 2013 the number of Nigerians living abroad more than doubled, passing the one million mark. Most Nigerians abroad live in Sudan (24%), the United States (14%) and the United Kingdom (9%). Many Nigerian emigrants also migrate to the neighbouring countries of Cameroon and Ghana.

Immigration in Nigeria has varied, and in recent years the total number of international immigrants in Nigeria has grown extensively. International migrants come from other African countries, mostly Benin, Ghana and Mali. The majority of immigrants in Nigeria are from neighbouring ECOWAS countries (74%). Refugees constitute a small proportion of the overall immigrant stock, with the majority of asylum-seekers coming from the Great Lakes Region. Nigeria is a destination country for highly skilled migration, with immigrants featuring prominently in fields such as general and corporate management, mathematics, engineering, and physical science. Immigration has made an important contribution to the recent rapid growth of the Nigerian economy. The immigration rate shows that the Nigerian economy is attractive to regional and international labour migrants.

Over time Nigeria has become an important country of destination within West Africa, as well as a country of transit. Nigeria is not only known for the large number of irregular migrants reaching European shores via Libya, but it also has high incidences of human trafficking. Additionally, the country has been deeply affected by the internal displacement of millions owing to the Boko Haram insurgency in the North.

Nigeria is one of the few countries in the west of Africa to have developed a national policy on migration. This policy is very comprehensive, covering migration and development, migration and social issues, national security, irregular movement, forced displacement, the human rights of migrants, organized labour migration, internal migration, the national population, migration data and statistics, and funding for migration management. However, migration barely features in Nigeria's main government development plans. There is currently no known collated official data on Nigerian emigrants from any Nigerian ministries or agencies. There is ultimately a lack of unified documentation and data collection at local, regional, and international levels.

B. Country Profile

I. Basic Information

Neighbouring Niger, Chad, Cameroon, and Benin, Nigeria is located along the Gulf of Guinea in Western Africa.

Nigeria has a total population of 200,964,000. The population can be divided into the following ethnic groups: Hausa (27.4%), Igbo (14.1%), Yoruba (13.9%), Fulani (6.3%), Tiv (2.2%), Ibibio (2.2%), Ijaw/Izon (2%), Kanuri/Berberi (1.7%), Igala (1%), and other (28.9%) – an estimated 250 ethnic groups live in Nigeria.

The current climatic/environmental issues the country faces include air and water pollution owing to the fuel industry, deforestation, erosion, and desertification.

Additionally, Nigeria faces a number of transnational and social issues. Since 2009 Boko Haram fighters have killed tens of thousands of Nigerians and disrupted trade and farming in the northeast, causing a risk of famine and displacing millions of people. Nigeria is a transit point for heroin and cocaine intended for the European, East Asian, and North American markets; a safe haven for Nigerian international narcotraffickers; and a consumer base for amphetamines. Nigeria is also a major money-laundering centre, though the

country has made some progress in this matter, resulting in its removal from the Financial Action Task Force's (FATF'S) Noncooperative Countries and Territories List in June 2006. Nigeria's anti-money-laundering regime continues to be monitored by the FATF.

II. International and Internal Migrants

While internal migration impacts many educated and unskilled Nigerians, data about such complex phenomena is limited and outdated, so it is difficult to understand the real impact that internal movements have on the social and economic dimensions of the country. According to the 2006 Housing and Population Census, more than 10% of Nigerians were living in states other than where they were born. The Internal Migration Survey of 2010 showed that 23% of Nigerians were migrants who had changed residence within the last 10 years. It also reported that 46% of internal migrants were between 20 and 34 years of age, underlining the movement of young people across the country. Of those questioned, 51% were female and 49% were male.

Internal migration started after independence and increased between 1976 and 1996 when Nigerians started to move from one state to another, especially from rural to urban areas. Internal migrants come from regions in Nigeria that are significantly less developed. Being the most important economic centre of the country, Lagos attracts many national migrants in search of employment; when the capital was moved to Abuja, the latter became a major destination area for people employed in the industrial, construction, and business sectors.

Rural-to-urban migration is driven by lack of agricultural productivity, low incomes, scarcity of land, and poor socio-economic structures in rural areas. The relevance of rural-to-urban migration was highlighted in the 2006 Census, which reported that 60% of internal migrants lived in cities. According to Adeyemi Oyeniyi (IOM, 2013), the main drivers for this kind of internal migration are the opportunities major urban centres offer in the economic and educational sectors.

Most internal migrants come from the south eastern regions. Recently, however, there has been an increase in migrants from the north as a result of the terrorist activity of Boko Haram and the introduction of Sharia Law. In seven out of 36 states, over 40% of the population is comprised of internal migrants: Abia is home to 48.7% internal migrants, Ekiti 48.1%, Delta 45.3%, Imo 45.1%, Anambra 44.4%, Bayelsa 43.2%, and Lagos 40.1%. Nigerians moving from one state to another often face discrimination as they are treated like foreigners by the locals, often being excluded from political participation, which creates the potential for social conflict.

Economic growth in Nigeria since 2000 has transformed the country into an important destination for many migrants from other West African countries. Currently, Nigeria hosts over a million migrants, mostly from neighbouring countries. Ghanaians comprise the biggest community of international migrants. In 2010 the immigration stock constituted 0.7% of the estimated population of Nigeria, down from 0.8% in 2000. Immigrants from West African countries constituted 7.8% of all immigrants in Nigeria in 2000.

According to the UNDESA, women comprise 45.1% of international migrants in Nigeria. Estimated at 567,100 individuals, women represent an increasing section of the immigration

population. As men keep losing their jobs, women are turning to migration to find ways to sustain themselves and their families, including seeking higher levels of education. In Western Africa, women also tend to dominate the informal commercial sector, which is less affected by the economic crisis.

According to UNICEF, 48% of the total international migrant stock in Nigeria is under the age of 18. While children are protected under the Child's Rights Act, there is a high unemployment rate in Nigeria, especially among the younger population. The inability of the labour market to provide employment leaves the youth no option but to leave Nigeria. As a result, children become vulnerable to human trafficking.

III. Emigration and Skilled Migration

Dissatisfaction with the socio-economic conditions of the country, along with high unemployment rates, has increased emigration from Nigeria. An Afrobarometer poll from 2018 found that one in three Nigerians wants to move outside the country. This is especially so amongst younger, more educated males, who typically leave in search of employment opportunities within and outside the continent, travelling to the Middle East, Europe, America, and Asia. At the present time, Nigeria has no formal governmental structures to aid nationals migrating to other countries. Most Nigerians who emigrate are left to make their own decisions to escape from the economic hardships of their country.

The UNDESA estimated the number of Nigerian international emigrants to be 1,256,114 in 2015, increasing to 1,438,331 in 2019. According to the IOM, emigration more than doubled between 1990 and 2013 (from 465,932 to 1,030,322). Most Nigerian immigrants reside in the USA (309,699), UK (203,980), Cameroon (148,076) and Niger (130,982). In 2017 the Nigerian government passed the Immigration Regulation that would attempt to decrease illegal migration, and thus also emigration, to stop so many Nigerians from dying in the desert or at sea on their way to other countries. Despite the increasing risks and the failure of migrants in journeying to Europe by sea and desert, the number of new voyagers keeps increasing. A recent report by the United Nations revealed that 90% of Nigerian migrants in Europe would choose to make the perilous journey despite the risks if they were asked to make the choice again. This highlights the economic challenges in Nigeria that would make such a dangerous choice seem favourable.

Comprehensive data on the employment of Nigerian immigrants is not available, though emigration of skilled Nigerians is high. Nigerians with a tertiary education represent 51% of the migrant population. The most highly educated often work in the medical sector. Of the 72,000 doctors registered with the Medical and Dental Council of Nigeria (MDCN), more than half practice outside the country. Compared with the World Health Organization recommendation of one doctor per every 600 persons, Nigeria has one per every 5000. UNESCO estimates that there were 95,600 Nigerian students studying internationally in 2017. The Nigerian diaspora is among the best educated and relatively affluent of immigrant populations in most countries of destination. It is the best educated, the healthiest, and the most economically active men and women who are likely to leave Nigeria.

According to the World Bank, Nigeria received over 23 billion American dollars in remittances in 2019. This comprises more than 5% of the national GDP. Nigeria accounts for over a third of all Sub-Saharan African remittance. Between 2010 and 2019, remittances increased from 19,74 to 23,809 billion USD. This increase occurred in part because of greater engagement of the diaspora through NIDO (Nigerians-in-Diaspora Organizations). There has, however, been limited success in harnessing this remittance inflow for developmental purposes. This has been accompanied by a lack of monitoring of return migration through which the skills of the returnees could be used for development.

In 2001 the IOM started the Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration program to help Nigerians abroad return to the country. Between April 2017 and May 2018, the IOM, in collaboration with the Nigerian government, assisted more than 8,000 stranded Nigerian migrants return home.

IV. Forced Migration (internally displaced, asylum seekers and refugees)

According to the UNDESA, there were 9,019 refugees and asylum seekers in Nigeria in 2010, 1,781 in 2015, and 10,535 in 2018. According to the IOM, the low number in 2015 can possibly be explained by refugees from Liberia, Sierra Leone, and Cameroon returning to their home countries when normalcy was restored. Involuntary migration into Nigeria is caused by factors such as environmental degradation, political conflicts, persecution, and war in other parts of Africa. The main countries of departure in 2014 were the DRC, Mali, Liberia, and Côte d'Ivoire.

At the end of 2019 there were 242,326 Nigerian refugees abroad. The three main asylum countries for Nigerian refugees are Niger, Cameroon, and Chad. The main reason for Nigerians fleeing the country in recent years is the Boko Haram insurgency.

In Nigeria internal displacement of populations is caused largely by ethnic and religious conflicts, environmental disasters, civil strife, boundary and land disputes, and government policies (such as the construction of dams, commercial plantations, and oil exploration). Nigeria has one of the highest numbers of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in Sub-Saharan Africa: between 2003 and 2008 3.2 million people were forced to leave their homes. In 2012 flooding led to the displacement of 2,157,419 people, while 442,329 had to flee from conflicts. In 2014 the number of IDPs increased to 802,148, many from the north eastern regions. According to UNICEF, there were 1,713,771 IDPs in Nigeria in 2017. At the end of 2018 there were a total of 2,216,000 IDPs in Nigeria. A flood in 2018 caused the displacement of 600,000 Nigerians. The main reason for the displacement of people in Nigeria is the emergence of Boko Haram, a militant group that has been carrying out attacks (bombings and shootings) since 2014.

V. Victims of Human Trafficking

In 2012 the National Immigration Service reported that there are 1,497 illegal entry points into Nigeria. At the time, the government started to invest large sums of money to secure the borders. Air travel remains the primary mode of transportation utilized by human traffickers. NAPTIP has received support from the United Nations Office on Drugs and

Crime (UNODC) in its efforts to engage airlines, airport management authorities, and travel agencies to help detect and prevent human trafficking.

The country suffers greatly from human trafficking. Nigeria is a country of destination, transit, and origin for children and women who are sold into forced labour and sex work. Girls are victims of domestic servitude, sex trafficking, and prostitution, while boys are forced into begging, drug muling, or becoming child soldiers. Internal trafficking mainly occurs in rural areas, especially in the country's southern regions. Victims are recruited for exploitation in commercial sex rings and forced into domestic labour in urban areas. The main cities that victims are trafficked to are Lagos, Aboekuta, Ibadan, Kano, Kaduna, Calabar, and Port Harcourt. Traffickers operate "baby factories" that are often disguised as orphanages, maternity homes, or religious centres. In these places traffickers hold women against their wills, rape them, and force them to carry and deliver children. The traffickers then sell the children, often with the intent to exploit them in forced labour and sex trafficking when they are of age. Nigerian traffickers take women and children to other West and Central African countries, including Mali, Senegal, Côte d'Ivoire, and Cabo Verde, as well as to South Africa, where they are also exploited in forced labour and sex trafficking.

According to NAPTIP, which was established in 2003 and compiles human trafficking statistics in Nigeria, there was a total of 6,572 cases of human trafficking recorded between its inception and the end of 2018. During this time, 13,533 victims of human trafficking were rescued. According to CTDI, 91% of victims of Nigerian origin are women. Exploitation is 77.4% sexual in nature. The main countries of exploitation are Russia, Italy, and Morocco. Between 2003 and the end of 2018 NAPTIP reported 233 persons who were convicted of human trafficking. Although enforcement of the anti-trafficking laws remains weak in many parts of the country and insufficient resources have hampered efforts, officials have made some efforts to address trafficking and improve the investigation, prosecution, and law enforcement capabilities in high priority areas.

The country currently does not fulfil the minimum standards for eliminating human trafficking, though it is making more and more significant efforts to do so. These efforts include training government officials and raising public awareness, collaborating with international organizations and NGOs to establish anti-trafficking task forces in Borno and Ekiti states, using new technology to enhance the collection of victims' testimonies, prosecuting government officials complicit in human trafficking, and drafting memoranda of understanding to improve coordination between government agencies.

VI. National Legal Framework

The Immigration Act of 1963 is the principal legal instrument for migratory movements to and from Nigeria: it defines the conditions of entry, residence, and departure for both Nigerian citizens and foreign nationals. There are several gaps within the migration policy of the country because, until recently, Nigeria has had a *laissez-faire* attitude about migration. This is apparent in the 1998 and 2004 National Policy on Population, in which only a casual reference is made to migration. With the help of the IOM, the government wrote a new Labour Migration Policy for the country that was only completed in 2010. The policy was then approved in October 2014. It "aims to promote good governance of labour migration on

development, while mitigating its adverse impact". Other acts that deal with migration in Nigeria are the Labour Act, which protects the rights of Nigerians as well as foreign labour migrants working in Nigeria; and the Child Rights Act, which protects the rights of children by prohibiting child trafficking and child labour. Unfortunately, the government's attitude to migration has ultimately been reactive, with many of their efforts merely creating awareness about the dangers of irregular migration. Adequate resources have not been channelled to mitigate the factors that drive unlawful and unsafe migration.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs regulates migration movements in and out of the country, while the Federal Ministry of Labour and Productivity regulates labour policy for immigrants and is responsible for creating employment agreements with other countries. Within the ministries, there are a series of offices that operate to manage migration, such as the Nigeria Immigration Service (NIS), created in 1963 with the Immigration Act. It registers expatriates for naturalization, monitors borders, and controls documents. The National Commission for Refugees, Migrants, and Internally Displaced Persons (NCFRMI) deals with the framework and policy to protect and manage refugees, asylum seekers, and internally displaced persons. The National Population Commission (NPC) and the National Bureau of Statistics are responsible for collecting information on migration statistics.

Nigeria is also an active member of ECOWAS, a union that enshrined the freedom of movement in its Protocol of 29 May 1979 on the Free Movement of Persons, the Right of Residence and Establishment. This protocol allows all ECOWAS citizens to enter any ECOWAS state without a visa, to reside in any ECOWAS member state for up to 90 days without a visa, and to apply after 90 days for a permanent residence permit. As a result of these developments, there has been an increased tempo in the formulation of national migration and sectoral policies in African countries to provide an operational framework and coordinating mechanism for migration management. However, Nigeria does not yet have a national strategic framework on migration to drive the debate on migration within and outside the country.

VII. Main Actors

The State

The federal government has worked in collaboration with the ILO and the IOM to develop the National Labour Migration Policy and the National Policy on Migration. These constitute the key legal vehicles for migration-related activities in Nigeria. The IOM provides support to Nigeria's Technical Working Group (TWG) on Migration and Development. This organization is made up of ministries, departments and agencies, non-state actors, social partners, academics, and development partners working on issues related to migration, and is chaired by the National Commission for Refugees, Migrants, and Internally Displaced Persons. The Edo State government created the Edo State Task Force Against Human Trafficking (ESTFAHT) to address issues of irregular migration and human trafficking, which were endemic in the state. The NCFRMI coordinates various committees and working groups: the Standing Committee on Diaspora Matters (SCDM); the Working Group on

Labour Migration, led by the Federal Ministry of Labour and Productivity (FML&P); the Working Group on Migration Data Management (WGMD), led by the National Population Commission; the Working Group on Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration (AVRR), led by the NCFRMI itself; and the Stakeholders Forum on Border Management, led by the Nigeria Immigration Services with the support of the NAPITIP. Ultimately, there needs to be a strengthening of the capacity of Nigerian institutions and actors in order to improve ownership and reduce reliance on external support.

The Catholic Church

Formally established in 2010, The Catholic Caritas Foundation of Nigeria (CCFN) is the official relief and development arm of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Nigeria. Its priority areas include emergency response and humanitarian services (reaching internally displaced persons and refugees), health and HIV/AIDS interventions, agriculture and livelihoods support to vulnerable households, good governance programs, institutional capacity strengthening, and prevention of human trafficking and forced migration (services to returnees, widows, unemployed youths, and others in hard-to-reach communities across Nigeria and overseas). Caritas is part of the COATNET network (Christian Organizations Against Trafficking in Human Beings). They work across borders to raise awareness about trafficking and assist victims. Caritas, along with other COATNET organizations, have attempted to fight the root causes of trafficking, such as poverty and lack of opportunities, while pressing for laws to protect victims (e.g., to punish perpetrators and secure decent working conditions).

After being forced to leave in 1967 by the country's military rulers, Catholic Relief Services (CRS) returned to Nigeria in 2000 and has been implementing a variety of programs addressing migrants, refugees, and internally displaced persons since then. Focusing on strengthening the health systems, improving the agricultural sector with projects aiming to develop an economically sustainable and integrated seed system, providing emergency response and recovery programs, and building resilience among the communities and households in Northern East Nigeria: this CRS work in 13 states reaches 77 million people. Currently, CRS, with its trained and equipped community mobilizers, is carrying out hygiene promotion and Covid-19 awareness campaigns to diminish the spread of the corona virus, as well as cholera, particularly in the overcrowded camps lacking hygiene infrastructures. To alleviate disease and suffering, CRS offers water, sanitation, hygiene services and education to encourage behavioural changes, while giving the possibility to receive essential household items and hygiene products such as buckets and soap from the local markets.

Among the main actors proactively working with migrants and refugees is JRS Nigeria, accompanying, serving, and advocating for displaced people in the country. Several initiatives have been developed, especially in the North Eastern part of the country, with programmes such as the Farmers Field and Business School program aiming to train and equip internally displaced women so that they can be protagonists of their own success, as well as the Accelerated Learning Programme (ALP) addressing the lack of access to education and helping displaced children integrate into the mainstream school system.

Dioceses have been responding to the needs of the many refugees finding themselves in situations of vulnerability due to the ongoing brutal conflicts that started in 2010. The Catholic Archdiocese of Calabar and the Diocese of Makurdi, for example, are trying to attend to the needs of Cameroonian refugees from the Anglophone regions who have been forced to move due to the ongoing war along the border regions between Cameroon and Nigeria. Together with Catholic Caritas Foundation Nigeria, the Justice Development Peace Commission, and the Foundation for Justice Development and Peace (FJDP), these Dioceses are trying to provide humanitarian assistance, including livelihood assistance, to all the refugees arriving in the country. Furthermore, the Diocese of Maiduguri, whose Bishop leads the Migrants and Nomads Commission of the Catholic Bishops Conference of Nigeria, has built a chapel in the Minawao Camp in Cameroon to serve and assist Nigerian displaced persons daily moving to Cameroon's north region due to Boko Haram attacks. The Diocese also falls within the Lake Chad region where, due to the climate crisis, the shrinking of Lake Chad has been causing millions of migrants to move. The local church, together with the government, is involved in tree planting projects and awareness campaigns for the care of the environment, although facing important insecurity and financial challenges.

To help internally displaced people in Nigeria, the Community of Sant'Egidio has also been providing emergency and humanitarian assistance to the many families living in the IDP camps of Kunchigoro and Abuja since 2017. In addition to the essential means of subsistence, the Community is currently providing protective masks for Covid-19 to help the camp's residents face the pandemic.

The Conrad N. Hilton Foundation's Catholic Sisters Initiative in Nigeria works to bring awareness to human trafficking, especially to the conditions that contribute to the vulnerability of young women to sexual slavery domestically and abroad. The Sisters provide rehabilitation, housing, spiritual assistance, and counselling for victims of human trafficking, as well as skills development to help them secure alternative forms of employment.

International Organizations

The IOM provides support to the Nigerian government to better manage migration. It has helped the government to develop strategies to engage with the Nigerian diaspora abroad and has also supported the government in the drafting of the national migration policy. Since 2002, based on a Cooperation Agreement, the IOM has been supporting the efforts of the Nigerian government to manage migration through capacity-building, advisory services, and technical assistance on migration matters (including migration health and information, assisted voluntary returns, and counter-trafficking). Strong collaboration has been established with the national migration stakeholders to enhance border management, fight trafficking in humans, and reduce regular and mainstream migration. The UNHCR collaborated with the government to provide support for issues related to refugees, asylum-seekers, and IDPs.

Other Organizations

There is a long list of NGOs that support the NAPTIP in human trafficking eradication efforts in Nigeria (e.g. Girls Power Initiative, Young Girls Foundation, Gender Care Initiative, etc). Civil society organizations are critical partners in combating issues of migration management in Nigeria. Several civil society organizations have worked in collaboration with government agencies on issues related to migration, human trafficking, as well as Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration (AVRR).

VIII. Other issues

Since 2009 Boko Haram fighters have killed tens of thousands of Nigerians in hundreds of attacks and disrupted trade and farming in the northeast, causing a risk of famine and displacing millions of people. The group violently opposes any political or social activity associated with Western society, including voting, attending secular schools, and wearing Western dress. Although the Nigerian military has regained control in parts of the country's north-east, civilians in Nigeria, Cameroon, Chad, and Niger continue to be affected by the grave violations of human rights, widespread sexual violence, forced recruitment, and suicide bombings. To date the Lake Chad Basin region has been grappling with the displacement of over 3.4 million people, including over 2.7 million IDPs in north-eastern Nigeria. The challenges of protecting these displaced members have been compounded by the deteriorating security situation as well as the socio-economic fragility of the region.

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