

## **Human Trafficking: A Challenge to National and Human Security in Nigeria**

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**ABSTRACT:** *Trafficking in Persons is a serious challenge to human security and economic development of any nation. There can be no doubt that trafficking in human persons is a horrendous by-product of global poverty and the unchecked greed. Human trafficking has always been part of the global socio-economic and security challenges to mankind even though it received insufficient attention in the past. Nigeria has been rated one of the poorest countries in the world and so widespread poverty abounds even in the midst of abundant resources. This multi-billion dollar industry has not ceased to expand in the last three decades, which is a serious threat to human security and that of the nations. Human trafficking is a crime against humanity. The effects of human trafficking on the health, economic and psychological well-being of the victims are examined and discussed. Also this paper focuses on defining the notion of national and human security, then describes the causes, scope and magnitude of human trafficking in Nigeria, analyse the connection to national and human security challenges and conclude with a brief appraisal and recommendation.*

**Keywords:** *Human trafficking, human security, National security, slavery and poverty*

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### **I. INTRODUCTION**

The general focus of the study on human trafficking as an aspect of national and human security has attracted the curiosity, questions and comments by scholars, authors and newspaper editorials of all sorts. The United States Congressional Research Service (2000), reported that between 700,000 and two million people are trafficked each year across international borders that of these, 35 percent are under the age of 18 (CRS, 2000). It went further to state that trafficking of women for the purpose of prostitution is far the most comprehensive both in terms of number of individuals and financial exchange, rivalling the global narcotics and arms trades. In this connection, this multi-billion dollar industry has not ceased to expand in the last two decades, which is a serious threat to human security.

According to the definition given by the United Nations, trafficking “involves the movement of people through violence, deception or coercion for the purpose of forced labour, servitude or slavery because traffickers use violence, threats and other forms of coercion to force their victims to work against their will. This involves controlling their freedom of movement, where and when they will work and what pay, if any, they will receive. Their lives no longer belong to them but now belong to the trafficker against their will. The United Nations also defined trafficking as: “the illicit and clandestine movement of persons across national and international borders, largely from developing countries with the aim of forcing women and girl-child into sexual perversion and exploitative situations for the profit of recruiters, traffickers, crime syndicates as well as other illegal activities such as forced domestic labour, forced marriages, clandestine employment and false adoption. It is a heinous crime against humanity of which the victims are often too young, too inexperienced, too lost and too vulnerable to keep themselves safe. Child trafficking is the third largest criminal activity in the world after arms and drug trafficking.

Human trafficking is not new. What is new is the global sophistication, complexity and control of how women and children are trafficked from/to/in all parts of the globe. As defined by the United Nations, human trafficking is “The recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation. Exploitation shall include, at a minimum, the exploitation of the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labour or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery or servitude (UNO:2005).

In the last decade, the phenomenon of child trafficking has considerably increased throughout the world and especially in Nigeria. Trafficking of children for the purpose of domestic service, prostitution and other forms of exploitative labour is a widespread phenomenon in the states as well as the whole countries of the world (UNODC, 2012). Trafficking deprives a child victim the privilege to exercise his /her wide range of

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rights, including the rights to belong and be identified, the right to freedom and education amongst others which is violation of the rights of the child according to the Child Rights Law. Most times, their exploiters do not tell their parents the nature of the job they are to do until they get to their destination and even made to swear oaths of secrecy. UNICEF (2007), identified poverty, large family size and rapid urbanisation amongst others as major factors why many children are vulnerable to trafficking.

Trafficking in persons is a euphemism for slavery. This is so because its activities is not different from the slave trade of old, which saw many abled bodied African ferried across the Atlantic Ocean to Europe and other parts of the world. Though this practice has been abolished in 1805, its spirit has resurfaced in our modern society with different dimensions.

Today, the victims of trafficking are captured not by the brutal slave raiders but by organised recruitment networks that is less visible even to the eagle eyes of security operatives. This appears more dangerous than the technique used by the brutal slave raiders of the past. The current approach adopted by these trained exploiters are deception, coercion, threat, force or use of drug to capture their victims and travel with them across Nigerian borders on daily basis either as domestic servants or labourers, having been promised mouth-watering financial reward and to send them to good schools.

## **II. THEORETICAL AND CONCEPTUAL UNDERPINNINGS**

The theory adopted in this paper as frame of analysis is structural conflict theory propounded by Karl Marx, Engels and Lenin (1977). The theory is the method of study which gives primacy to the material conditions of the people in the explanation of social life. It examines the economic and social needs which therefore form the base on which other superstructures such as legal, cultural, social and political system rests (Chigo, 2011.111). Theories like Marxism, in its thesis on “historical materialism” present conflicts as mostly tied to economic structures and social institutions. The main argument of structural conflict theorists like (Ross, 1993), (Galtung, 1990), is that conflict is built into the particular ways societies are structured and organised. The theory looks at social problems like political and economic exclusion, injustice, poverty, disease, exploitation, and inequity as sources of conflict. Structuralists maintain that conflict occur because of the exploitative and unjust nature of human society. Paul Collier (2008), rightly identifies poverty as the cause of the insecurity of the bottom billion and came later in 2010 to talk about The Plundered Earth.

The concept used in this paper that deserves an in-depth clarification is the concept of human trafficking or trafficking in Person (TIP). However, it is important to have a prior understanding of the concept of human trafficking before we can adequately explain it. Trafficking in Persons as stated in Section 64 of the Trafficking in Persons (Prohibition) Law Enforcement and Administration Act 2003 as amended entails.

“all acts and attempted acts involved in the recruitment, transportation, within or across Nigerian borders, purchased, sales transfer, receipts or harbouring of a person involving the use of deception, coercion or debt bondage for the purpose of placing or holding the person whether for or not in involuntary servitude (domestic, sexual, or reproductive) in forced or bonded or in slave-like condition.”

Article 6 requires the criminalisation of this conduct and in addition, states are to criminalise the following conduct: “Enabling a person who is not a national or a permanent resident to remain in the state concerned without complying with the necessary requirements for legally remaining in the state.” by illegal means.

It is worthy to note that trafficking in persons is both internal and external. Internal trend is mostly done within the country, that is, from one rural area to urban centres or from one state to another. Similarly, the external dimension of Trafficking in Persons (TIP) takes place beyond the shores of the country. In all, the negative effects of human trafficking are the same as the offense of a criminal act. The Trafficking in Persons (prohibition) Law Enforcement and Administration Act 2003 is a domestication of the Trafficking in Persons Protocol Supplementing Transnational Organised Crime Convention otherwise known as the “Palermo Convention” of December 2000.

Trafficking in Person (TIP) and smuggling of migrants (SOM) often occur in tandem: the distinctions are not always evident. However, both TIP and SOM involve trafficking in Persons to obtain profit. While they are both risky and potentially life threatening, the impact for victims of TIP are usually more overriding and the harm, more difficult and complex to reverse or remedy. The quest for a better life and the attempt to escape poverty, violence and other social malaise combine to influence a major segment of Nigeria’s population to seek alternatives for better livelihood prospect for themselves and their families.

Trafficking in human beings is not new. The first International Anti-trafficking Convention was adopted in 1904 to eliminate trafficking on women and children for the purposes of prostitution and sexual exploitation (Reilly, 2000). Trafficking in human beings is a demand-driven global business with a huge market for cheap labour and commercial sex confronting often insufficient or unexercised policy frameworks or trained personnel to prevent it.

Nigeria has acquired a reputation for being one of the leading African countries in human trafficking with cross-border and internal trafficking. Trafficking in persons is the third largest crime after economic and financial crimes and the drugs trade (UNESCO, 2006).

According to UNESCO (2006) an increased number of people are trafficked from areas in Oyo, Osun and Ogun in the South-West; Akwa Ibom, Cross River and Bayelsa in the South-South, Ebonyi and Imo states in the South-East; Benue, Niger and Kwara states in the Middle Belt to cities such as Lagos, Abeokuta, Ibadan, Kano, Kaduna, Calabar and Port Harcourt. Internally trafficked Nigerians come from all parts of the country, but some states tend to provide more trafficked persons than others. These states include Akwa Ibom, Cross River, Delta, Edo, Imo, Ebonyi, Kano, Ogun, Oyo and Lagos (Adebamke, 2002).

Generally, human trafficking is a socio-economic, political and security phenomenon associated with the movement of people within and across national borders either legally or illegally and which has forced labour, sexual exploitation, human rights violations and security threats as some of its consequences. From the literature, six approaches to its conceptualisation are noticeable. First, it is equated with slavery. Second, human trafficking is described as part of transnational organised crime. Third, it is seen as part of global immigration challenge. Fourth, it is conceptualised as a human rights violation problem. Fifth, it is synonymous with prostitution and sixth, it is the negative aspect of globalisation (Lee, 2011).

### **The National And Human Security Implications Of Human Trafficking**

Human security was given serious consideration in the 1994 Human Development Report (HDR) of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and as such can be regarded as part of the debate about security studies and its focus on the state and national interest (UN, 1994). In Nigeria as in other developing countries, the important questions of security were not geopolitical, not even related to the issues of balance of military power. Instead, insecurity arose from disease, hunger, poverty, unemployment, social and economic conflicts, crime and political repression. Accordingly, question of security and insecurity are also found on personal and interpersonal levels. Natural disasters such as floods and earthquakes have the capacity to cause more havoc on people than fratricidal wars, terrorism and genocide. These threats transcend national borders; they constitute a challenge to our global human security.

The present notion of security requires shifting the thought from territorial security, excluding, to a greater emphasis on human security, ensuring security through military power to achieving security through sustainable human development. In this line of thinking, the policy implications go above and beyond military means and defence capacities, with primary attention given to preventive diplomacy to addressing the root causes of threats, to the engagement and commitment to capacity and nation-building globally, to a more equitable economic development (UN, 2009).

Human trafficking the modern form of slavery is at the intersection of all the threats identified above, either because such threats are the push-and-pull factors for human trafficking, or human trafficking per se creates fertile ground for augmenting some of these threats. Hence, there is an innate correlation of national security and human security. They are mutually reinforcing the primarily, protective functions of national security as well as the primarily, empowerment role of human security.

The broad conception of human security is concerned with human vulnerability overall, and therefore encompasses all forms of threats from all sources. This include in addition to organised political violence recognised in the narrow concept, and other forms of violence, threats of natural disasters, diseases, environmental degradation, hunger, unemployment and economic downturn. The broad formulation of threats to human security has been proposed by a number of authors, including UN documents on human security since 1994, the European Council and the Barcelona Group, the Commission for Human Security, Government of Japan as well as academics.

Macfarlane and Khong (2006) cited four conceptual innovations concerning human security. Firstly, it has placed human beings at the core of security and the state is no longer privileged over the individual. The evidence is that the central idea is the primacy of human life as the objective of security policy. However, foreign policy of nations is still being formulated on the basis of national interest. Secondly, it has provided a vocabulary for understanding the human consequences of violent conflict. Thirdly, some states and regional organisations have incorporated human security concerns into their foreign policy. Fourthly, securitising such issues as health and the environment has resulted in more policy attention and resources for these issues.

With respect to the security implications of human trafficking, there is no separation between human trafficking and organised crime in the literature. According to the Palermo Convention, organised crime is: “ a structured group of three or more persons, existing for a period of time and acting in concert with the aim of committing one or more serious crimes or offences established in accordance with this Convention, in order to obtain, directly or indirectly, a financial or other material benefit” (UN, 2004). Accordingly, Brock et al, in their study, seem to conclude that even law enforcement agencies and the media associate human trafficking with

sexual exploitation of women. The link between human trafficking is also supported by Stoecker, who strongly argues that “human trafficking is, without a doubt a major branch of organised crime (Stoecker, 2000).

Similarly, Salt (2009), offers three possible suggestions in support of the strong association of human trafficking with organised crime. Firstly, he argues that in many cases different nationalities are found among same group of trafficked persons brought into a country by a criminal syndicate. Secondly, he points out that travelling entails good logistics which only organised crime can provide for victims. Thirdly money is also needed to process documents for trafficked persons.

In linking human trafficking to organised crime, illegal migration and security, Burgess (2008), describes human trafficking as involving the “movement of men, women and children from one place to another and placing them in conditions of forced labour. He lists domestic labour, sweatshops, factory or restaurant work and forced prostitution as current forms of human trafficking. Burgess further argues that human trafficking deprives victims of state-based systems of social welfare and protection (both physical and emotional), human rights and dignity, and negatively impacts on their health and global governance. Furthermore, he posits that human trafficking impacts on public in general and as well as on global security through its linkage to illegal migration, “networks of international crime, money laundry, weapons and drug traffic. Human trafficking brings with it a greater presence of criminal organisation which can lead to problems of national security, violations of national legislation and a decline in public confidence in government (Kruger, 2010).

National security means the national defence, foreign relations or economic interest of the nation. It could be argued that on some level, if not all, crimes have negative effect on a peoples’ way of life. However, there are a few crimes that are so corrosive to a society that they start to bring down the collective rather than just individuals. Indeed the crime of murder could hardly be seen as a national security crime, yet genocide, the systematic killing of whole groups of people, certainly would be. The same is true with a single case of involuntary servitude or forced prostitution. Standing alone, these crimes do not constitute a breakdown of national security, but taken as a whole, in the context of human trafficking, these crimes indeed represent a breach of national security.

While human trafficking, slavery, smuggling and kidnapping may be linked to some extent, it is sometimes difficult to establish the link between human trafficking and security. This is even more difficult when security is defined purely from a traditional Cold War perspective in which military threats are regarded as the only major national security (existential) threat to the state. However, a Post-Cold War perspective of security has shown that states can be objectively threatened from a variety of sources other than the military. In this regard, human trafficking linked to organised crime has serious security implications for individuals and the state. At the individual level, trafficking affects the human dignity, safety, and health of victims (Throung, 2003). At the state level, human trafficking undermines state capacities by corrupting state security institutions such as the police, and the judiciary as well as senior government officials (Gastrow, 2001).

The state-centric security infrastructure often deployed by government to curb human trafficking has proved unproductive both as a strategy of deterrence and as an instrument for homogenising deeply heterogeneous communities in Nigeria. Community-based organisations, local non-governmental organisations, and sympathetic international actors should factor the way forward within the realities of contemporary Nigeria.

### **Human Trafficking: Its Scope And Magnitude**

Nigeria is a source, transit and destination country for women and children subjected to trafficking in persons, specifically in conditions of forced labour and forced prostitution. Trafficked Nigerian women and children are recruited from rural areas especially in Edo state in the South-South region of Nigeria from where contemporary trend in human trafficking started. Women and girls as a result of their vulnerability are for involuntary domestic servitude and forced commercial sexual exploitation and boys for forced labour in street vending, domestic servitude, mining and begging. Children are taken from Nigeria to other West and Central African countries, primarily Gabon, Cameroon, Ghana, Chad, Benin, Togo, Niger, Burkina Faso and the Gambia. Children from West African states like Benin, Togo, Ghana where Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) rules allow for easy entry, are also forced to work in Nigeria and some are subjected to hazardous jobs in Nigeria’s granite mines (UNODC, 2012).

In the words of Onoibholo (2008), Nigerian women and girls are trafficked to Europe, especially Italy, France, Spain and Russia and to the Middle-East and North Africa, for forced prostitution. Traffickers sometimes move their victims to Europe by caravan, forcing them to cross the desert on foot, and subjecting them to forced prostitution to pay heavy debt for travel expenses. During the reporting period, Nigerian girls were repatriated from Libya, Morocco and Mali, where they were reportedly held captive in commercial sex trade (US Department of State, 2010). Nigeria has been named by the United Nations office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) as among the eight countries considered the highest in human trafficking in the world. Ms Amina Abdulrahnan, a National Project Officer of UNODC mentioned Thailand, China, Albania, Bulgaria,

Belarus, Moldova and Ukraine as the other seven countries tagged by a recent UNODC report as Nigeria's counter-part in the despicable record of most trafficked persons in the world.

According to the United States Department of State Bureau (2005), women and children were most at risk of being trafficked. Those at risk are the poor, the unemployed, refugees, illegal immigrants, the uneducated, run-away girls, homeless persons, orphans and teenagers. Boys were trafficked primarily to work as forced bondage, labourers, street peddlers and beggars while girls were trafficked for domestic service, street peddling and commercial sexual exploitation. Trafficking in children, and to a lesser extent, women occurred within the country's borders. Children in rural areas were trafficked to urban centres to work as domestics, street peddlers, merchant traders and beggars.

On the otherhand, the United Nations Office of Drugs and Crime (UNODC) reported that individual criminals and organised criminal groups conducted trafficking, often involving relatives or other persons already known to the victims. Traffickers employ various methods during the period under review. Some of the trafficked persons were organised into special areas such as document and passport forgery, recruitment of new culprits and transportation arrangement. To recruit young women, traffickers often make false promises of legitimate work outside the country. Traffickers also deceived child victims and their parents with promises of education, training and salary payments. Once away from their families, children were subjected to harsh treatment and intimidation. Traffickers subjected the victims to debt bondage, particularly victims forced into prostitution. In some cases traffickers employed practitioners of traditional magic or juju, to threaten victims with curses to procure their silence. National Agency for Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons and Other Related Matters (NAPTIP) estimated that 90 percent of the girls trafficked through Benin routes were threatened by juju practitioners. Victims are transported by air, land and sea. They established land routes to Europe and transited Benin, Togo, Ghana, Cote d'voire, Guinea, Mali, Niger and Morocco (UNODC, 2012).

According to Mojeed (2008), voodoo is another major factor oiling the wheel of trafficking in Nigeria. Insiders in the trafficking business say once arrangements for victims' trips abroad are completed, traffickers seal the deal by taking the victims to shrines of voodoo priests for oath taking. There, victims are made to swear that they would never reveal the identities of their traffickers to anyone if arrested whether in the course of the journey or in the destination countries. It has been confirmed that voodoo, known as juju in the Nigerian parlance, is playing a great but nauseating role in human trafficking business. When traffickers are arrested in Nigeria, victims have often failed to show up in court to testify against them for fear that they would die if they violate the oaths they took. In administering the oaths, the traffickers usually collect the finger nails, menstrual blood and pubic hairs of the girls in preparing concoctions. NAPTIP's Deputy Director of Prosecution and Legal Services, Mr AbdulrahimShaibu, said his agency had difficulty prosecuting traffickers because "victims are afraid of juju and are hardly forthcoming". This is a serious threat to human security (Mojeed, 2008). Human trafficking labelled modern-day slavery, is enslavement, a crime against humanity as it includes "the exercise of any or all of the powers attaching to the right of owner over a person". Indeed, it is fast-growing black market industry throughout the world as no country is immune from this criminal enterprise. It affects communities across the board, on a micro and macro level, be they countries of origin, transit or destination.

People have fallen and are still falling into this modern-day slavery in appalling numbers. It is estimated that up to 27 million people in the world today are under some form of human trafficking (Bales, 2000). The ILO has estimated that about 20.9 million people are exploited in forced labour, or sexual servitude (ILO, 2012). In 2006, the United States records indicated that about 800,000 people were trafficked across international borders yearly, 80 percent of which are women and 50 percent of the latter are minors. Human trafficking challenges the rule of law through perpetuating the culture of corruption and aggravating the status of safety, security and preservation of law of every nation involved (UNODC, 2008).

Transnational organised crime including human trafficking, weapons and drug trade, continue to pose a great threat to the territories and population of many countries, and can be described as the dark side of globalisation. Human trafficking is one of the most serious security problems in our contemporary world. It is also a major concern of human security and national security. Combating human trafficking from its root causes to its prevention and persecution levels will enhance the security and development of our nation.

### **Causes Of Human Trafficking**

Although Nigeria has enormous natural resources, corruption takes a serious toll on the country's economy. Poverty has been identified as the principal driving force behind this trade and the most visible cause of the vulnerability of women and children to trafficking in Nigeria. An International Labour Organisation (ILO) report found out that forty percent of Nigeria's street children are from poor and deplorable backgrounds and lack the opportunity of going to school, and so, with or without their consent, if the consent is obtained by fraud, are trafficked.

In a nutshell, gender issues that fuel Trafficking in Persons (TIP) and Smuggling of Migrant (SOM) can be attributed to the root causes of human trafficking detailed below. Thus, the most effective strategies for

curbing TIP and SOM will need to address some of the fundamental issues highlighted below, whether in the short, medium or long term. However, the root causes are political, economic, socio-cultural and technological in nature. Although the causes of human trafficking are many and may vary from region to region and from country to country, there are factors that have been observed to be present in many regions and countries where human trafficking is widespread like Nigeria. The root causes of human trafficking have been discussed in the context of “push” and “pull” factors.

Push factors are internal problems such as poverty, unequal development, conflicts, natural disasters, dysfunctional families and social and gender discrimination, which tend to force people to leave their countries. Pull factors are external factors such as global demand for cheap labour, improved communication systems, improved transport networks by air, land sea and expanding global tourism. While push factors intensify vulnerability to trafficking, pull factors facilitate the demand for trafficked victims in destination countries (Anti-Slavery International, 2003). The different causes of human trafficking are subsequently examined.

1. **Economic hardship:** Poverty and increasing unemployment leading to low quality of life in a developing country like Nigeria within the backdrop of globalisation serve as the push and pull factors that influence supply and demand for female and male labour. Although globalisation is portrayed as positive for economic development, it also creates and facilitates several global problems. It has been observed that the dark side of globalisation is the growth of transnational crime of which human trafficking is one. Berdal and Serrano (2002) argue that “as transaction costs have fallen, there are over greater opportunities for illicit traders to operate in an unrestricted fashion across borders. Nowhere is this more true than in the coercive or deceitful movement of human beings across borders for purposes of exploiting them economically ( Berdal and Serrano, 2002).
2. **Social and cultural expectations:** Prevalent stereotypes and gender perceptions about men’s and women’s roles, their worth as well as what they have capabilities to also or not to do increase vulnerability of males and females to TIP or SOM. However, poverty has been identified as a major “push” factor facilitating human trafficking globally. Poverty in some cases, may force vulnerable families to allow their children to live away from their homes, especially with relatives in urban areas where the chances for finding good jobs are greater. Neglect by their relatives and harsh economic conditions in the urban areas may make the children vulnerable to human trafficking. In extreme cases, poverty can force parents to sell their children to human traffickers in order to free themselves from debt bondage (Shifman, 2001).

Gender discrimination as socio-cultural issue equally causes human trafficking. Due to culturally induced discrimination against women in some situations, they are often denied a voice and a right to protection against violence. This limits their access to education, employment and property rights, resulting in a low income earning capacity and forced early marriage. Situations such as this, place young women in a vulnerable position for human trafficking (Troung, 2006). Troung is also of the view that lack of empowerment of women due to culturally based gender discrimination contributes to an increase in poverty in sub-Sahara Africa, and explains why victims of human trafficking are mainly women and children (Troung, 2006).

From the above analysis, it can be seen that human trafficking is caused by combination of several factors which are political, economic and socio-cultural in nature. Human trafficking has also persisted because of its clandestine nature. Though mainly considered as a socio-economic problem, human trafficking has significant security implications for the state, individual, society, region and even the international system. As a result of the porous nature of Nigeria boundaries, citizens from other neighbouring African countries of origin such as Niger and Benin Republic, used this porosity to cross the international border to enter into the country as refugees and some of them end up doing menial jobs in Nigeria or fall prey to “traffickers”. No doubt the political and economic situations in various African countries contribute to rendering Africans vulnerable to human traffickers.

### **III. CONCLUSION/RECCOMENDATION**

In order to build a nation free from fear and free from want, the Nigerian government enacted laws to stop the criminal act of human trafficking. Provisions of the Child Rights Law in S.11 (a-d) provides that a child shall not be subjected to physical, mental or emotional injury, abuse, neglect or maltreatment, including sexual abuse, to torture, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment. Section 32(1)(2) and (3)(a&b) prohibits unlawful sexual intercourse with a child and punishes the offender to life imprisonment. This section also provides that it is not an excuse that the offender did not know that the child was not above 18 years or with the consent of the child. Section 33(1-2) prohibits any other form of sexual abuse or exploitation and punishes the offender to 14 years imprisonment. Section 34(1-2) prohibits any other form of exploitation and punishes the offender to 5 years imprisonment. Section 36(1) prohibits importation or exposure of children to harmful publication.

National Agency for Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons and Other Related Mattes (NAPTIP) is an agency of government established to enforce the Trafficking in Persons (Prohibition) Law

Enforcement and Administration Act 2003 amended in 2005 and to address the challenge of Human Trafficking. NAPTIP is the central agency in Nigeria for dealing with matters to do with TIP. The law vests the power to arrest, search, and seize on the Nigeria Police Force, The Nigerian Immigration Service (NIS) Customs and NAPTIP officials.

As could be seen above Nigeria government is fighting human trafficking by enacting the above mentioned laws. If trafficking can be stopped, the national security threat it poses will conclude as well. The key to stopping trafficking, in the writer's opinion, is to understand where it comes from. Responders must understand the reason people become victims, which usually occurs because of combination of extreme poverty and the unstable country's inability to protect its citizens. Hence, law enforcement must not only go after the traffickers but also those that allow this business to thrive.

If one takes a cursory look at what happened in the United States of America on September 11, 2000, that incident has brought with it a new era of looking at every issue from a national security angle. Many crimes that were considered only harmful to the target group of people (women or children) are now being seen as crimes that impact entire nations, and human trafficking is one of these crimes. The connection between trafficking and national security is not as obvious as in Nigeria but it represents a serious risk to standard of living and way of life of the Nigerian people, and thus represents a serious national security threat.

Though much is being done to prevent human trafficking, there is still not enough being done to educate the people of the world about the horror of the problem. Education concerning human trafficking should begin with programmes that are focused on sex slavery, with special emphasis directed at the males who are contributing to the problem by buying sexual services. Countries also need to be required to implement tougher security and border controls to detect and prevent trafficking. The media could play an indispensable role in educating the public about the many manifestations of global human trafficking. Once individuals are educated on the realities of human trafficking, they need to be empowered to speak out. Because trafficking is generally, a transnational activity, only collective, multilateral or transnational responses will succeed in having a major impact. To fight human trafficking, various stakeholders must cooperate. Bringing all relevant actors together can be challenging. An institutionalised mechanism for the referral of victims that brings together a broad range of actors is much needed. A transnational referral mechanism (TRM) is thus a response to complex transnational security risks, linking governmental and non-governmental actors across borders in a joint effort to protect victims and prosecute traffickers.

Human trafficking is a struggle for the lives and dignity of innocent women and children. And that is why all of us must be dedicated to the strategies that will help us prevail. Human trafficking denies hundreds of thousands of people their basic human rights and poses a serious public health risk and fuels organised crime around the world. Trafficking can only be eliminated through combined efforts at national, regional and international levels. The world must come together to act as one in this regard. They must stop the criminals and terrorists from using human trafficking as a resource, but even more importantly, the world must stop human trafficking in the name of common decency. The time to act is now.

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