



The Political Economy of Migration Governance in Nigeria

Kwaku Arhin-Sam (Arnold-Bergstraesser-Institut für kulturwissenschaftliche Forschung)

FUNDED BY

STIFTUNG
MERCATOR

© 2019 Arnold Bergstraesser Institute for cultural studies research e.V.
at the Albert-Ludwigs-University Freiburg im Breisgau
Windausstr. 16
79110 Freiburg im Breisgau
Telephone: +49-761-88878-0; www.arnold-bergstraesser.de

This work is a product of the research project 'The Political Economy of West African Migration Governance (WAMiG)' which based at the Arnold-Bergstraesser Institute (ABI), and undertaken within the framework of the Mercator Dialogue on Asylum and Migration (MEDAM). The WAMiG project focuses on the African perspective and its implications for European policy making. WAMiG and MEDAM policy recommendations may therefore differ slightly.

Rights and Permissions:

This work may be reproduced, in whole or in part, for noncommercial purposes as long as full attribution to this work is given.

Attribution:

Arhin-Sam, K. 2019. "The Political Economy of Migration Governance in Nigeria." Freiburg: Arnold-Bergstraesser Institute (ABI).

Third-party content:

The Arnold Bergstraesser Institute does not necessarily own all content contained within the work. The ABI therefore does not warrant that the use of any third-party-owned individual component or part contained in the work will not infringe on the rights of those third parties. If you wish to re-use a component of the work, it is your responsibility to determine whether permission is needed for that re-use and to obtain permission from the copyright owner. Examples of components can include, but are not limited to, tables, figures, or maps.

All queries on rights and licenses should be addressed to the Arnold Bergstraesser Institute.

Cover photo credit: © Kwaku Arhin-Sam

The Political Economy of Migration Governance in Nigeria

By Kwaku Arhin-Sam¹

¹ The responsibility for the contents of this publication rests with the author, not the Institute or the Mercator Dialogue on Asylum and Migration (MEDAM). Any comments should be sent directly to the author.

Contents

About the project	6
About the author	6
Acknowledgements.....	7
Executive Summary	8
1 Introducing the socio-political context	10
1.1 The context	10
1.2 Migration in Nigeria.....	10
1.2.1 Migration Governance	12
1.2.2 Migration related policies	13
1.2.3 The Migration governance framework.....	13
1.2.4 Funding Migration Governance in Nigeria.....	16
1.3 Methods	17
1.4 Structure of the Report.....	18
2 Diaspora Migration.....	18
2.1 Governance.....	19
2.2 Political stakes	20
2.3 Societal relevance	21
2.4 Conclusion.....	22
3 Irregular migration	23
3.1 Governance.....	24
3.2 Political stakes	28
3.2.1 Foreign dominance shown through funding	28
3.2.2 Divergence on returns, reintegration and legal pathways.....	29
3.2.3 Some convergence on border control albeit for different aims.....	30
3.2.4 Fragmented programmes between the federal and state level.....	31
3.2.5 Institutional challenges	31
3.3 Societal relevance	32
3.4 Conclusion.....	33
4 Refugees and Internally Displaced People in Nigeria	34
4.1 Governance.....	36
4.2 Political stakes	38
4.3 Societal relevance	39

4.4	Conclusion.....	39
5	Refugees and Asylum Seekers from Nigeria.....	40
5.1	Governance.....	40
5.1.1	Nigerian Refugees	40
5.1.2	EU Asylum.....	41
5.2	Political Stakes.....	42
5.3	Societal relevance	43
5.4	Conclusion.....	43
6	Immigration in Nigeria	44
6.1	Governance.....	44
6.2	Political Stakes.....	45
6.3	Societal relevance	46
6.4	Conclusion.....	46
7	Major findings	47
7.1	Migration governance	48
7.2	The political stakes of migration	50
7.3	Societal discourse on migration.....	51
	Abbreviations.....	52
	Bibliography	53
	Appendix.....	57

About the project

The Political Economy of West African Migration Governance project endeavours to highlight the *political dimension of migration governance* (i.e. what are the real [sometimes hidden] interests and power asymmetries) and the *multiple stakeholders* (including civil society and sub-national ones). To do this, the project considers how migration governance instruments and institutions are made and implemented, the stakes and stakeholders involved or excluded and the societal discourse that surrounds these interests. The qualitative study focuses on four case studies - the Gambia, Niger, Nigeria and Senegal – and is based on fieldwork, including semi-structured interviews in the respective countries.

The project is based at the Arnold-Bergstraessed Institute (ABI) in Freiburg, Germany and coordinated by Dr Franzisca Zanker. It is funded by the Stiftung Mercator and undertaken within the framework of the Mercator Dialogue on Asylum and Migration (MEDAM). MEDAM is a three-year research and consultation project that identifies and closes gaps in existing research and develops specific recommendations for policymakers.

Fieldwork in Nigeria took place between March and April 2019. In total, 32 interviews were conducted in Abuja, Lagos and Benin City in Nigeria, and Germany.

About the author

Kwaku Arhin-Sam has been a researcher at the Arnold Bergstraesser Institute since March 2019. He obtained his PhD from the Bremen International Graduate School of Social Sciences in 2018 and has conducted extensive fieldwork in Ghana, Nigeria and Haiti. Dr Arhin-Sam's research interests are on migration governance and politicisation, international migration and development, return migration, migrants' integration, returnees reintegration, identity and belonging politics, and policy analysis.

Acknowledgements

Special thanks goes to all the respondents in Nigeria and Germany that shared their visions and perspectives, which informed the findings of this report. Many thanks also go to Omolola Olarinde who reviewed this report and the copy editor Wendy Sheppard.

This report was presented at a dissemination event in Abuja, Nigeria on 8 July. Thanks to the guest speakers, the panel and all attendees for all the useful feedback.

Finally, I would like to thank the Mercator Foundation and the MEDAM project for the generous funding that made the WAMiG project possible. I would further like to thank the Kiel Institute for the World Economy for supporting the project throughout the research process, especially David Benček, Matthias Lücke and Melanie Radike.

Executive Summary

This report analyses migration politics in Nigeria, where there is growing concern about the high levels of irregular migration and human trafficking. The research follows a holistic understanding of migration, encompassing diaspora migration, irregular migration, displaced people, Nigerian refugees and asylum seekers, refugees and asylum seekers from other countries in Nigeria and immigration (primarily from neighbouring Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) countries). It analyses these forms of migration on three levels – governance, political stakes and societal discourse.

The high number of Nigerian asylum seekers in Europe is a concern for the European Union (EU) and its member states. Hence, Nigeria is one of the priority countries to be selected for the implementation of the EU Migration Partnership Framework (MPF).² However, The MPF is failing because of the difference in interests between the EU and Nigeria. The EU wants the return of Nigerians (irregular migrants, including failed asylum seekers). The EU's interest, however, does not live up to what Nigeria wants, which is to see regular migration pathways and sustainable developmental support. The continued domination of the EU's interest in asylum situation with less regard for Nigeria's interest may lead to Nigeria showing less interest in Nigerian asylum seekers in Europe and cooperating less with the EU on the return of Nigerians from the EU by EU member states.

Furthermore, we found the following:

Migration governance. It is theoretically comprehensive in Nigeria, but the implementation of migration related policies is very low. However, the existing governance framework for implementing the National Migration, Labour Migration, and Diaspora policies is very promising in terms of coordinating all forms of migration in Nigeria in a holistic approach. Nevertheless, lack of funding and conflict over mandate are among the challenges facing migration governance in Nigeria.

Political stakes of migration governance. Migration is not a political issue. Nevertheless, the major political stake of migration in Nigeria is diaspora migration mainly because of the potential contributions from the diaspora via remittances. Meanwhile retaining highly qualified skills in Nigeria and enforcing voting rights for Nigerians in diaspora is low on the government's interest. Moreover, the EU and EU member states are actively engaged in efforts to reduce irregular migration and trafficking to Europe, but without practical corresponding increase in regular pathways and being actively involved in the return and reintegration of Nigerians.

Societal discourse. Migration is not a political issue in Nigeria, but people talk about migration with emotion. Societal discourse on migration is embedded in the broader

² The European Union's (EU) Migration Partnership Framework (MPF) was established in June 2016. It seeks to mobilise the instruments, resources, and influence of both the EU and EU member states to establish cooperation with partner countries in order to "sustainably manage migration flows" (European Commission, 2017a, p. 2) (cf. Castillejo, 2017).

discourse on social challenges like corruption, unemployment, inadequate infrastructure and miss-management of public resources. In addition, the government's inability to retain highly skilled professionals is blamed for the high emigration of skilled Nigerians. Migration issues, especially on the treatment of Nigerian diaspora in other countries and irregular migration and trafficking, are increasingly becoming a huge part of societal discourse in Nigeria.

We therefore recommend the following:

- Nigeria should fully implement all the migration related policies and frameworks.
- The role of Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) and Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) in migration governance in Nigeria should be well captured in the existing governance framework.
- Nigeria should be clear and consistent on its interest from any potential migration agreement.
- Nigeria should pay more attention to good governance to motivate diaspora investments.
- Nigeria must stop the instrumentalization of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) and refugees.
- EU and EU countries should:
 - Consider a mix of conditions for regular migration such as scholarships, vocational and skill training programs to allow those outside the socioeconomic class to compete for regular pathways.
 - Invest in vocational and skills trainings that are useful for both Nigerian and European job markets which can lead to future labour exchanges.
 - Consider increasing the number of student visas and expand existing regular pathways (Erasmus, Blue card).
 - Reconsider the existing restrictive visa regimes as it encourages irregular migration.
 - Consider Nigerian's interests on diaspora and labour migration seriously.
 - Reconsider initiatives that undermine mobility in the region, since such actions can lose out on Nigeria as a partner for migration governance and have adverse effects on the region.
 - Partner Nigeria to retain its skilled persons who can further create jobs for unskilled Nigerians.
 - Support Nigeria without undermining efforts to implement existing migration governance structures.

1 Introducing the socio-political context

1.1 The context

The Federal Republic of Nigeria is located on the western coast of Africa. The country operates a federal government system, with 36 states. There are over five hundred different ethnic groups and different languages in Nigeria. As a former colony of the United Kingdom, Nigeria gained its independence on October 1, 1960. The period after independence saw many conflicts including the political power struggle between Igbos and the Hausa-Fulani group, the Biafra civil war of 1967-1970 and many military rules and coup de tats (Ikwuyatum, 2016).

In 1998, the country ushered in an era of democratic rule after the death of Sani Abacha, the then military head of state. In 1999, Nigeria adopted a new constitution that paved way for civilian rule. The Nigerian economy is predominantly petroleum-based and Africa's biggest economy. Since the 2008-09 global financial crisis, the economy has thus expanded to include agriculture, telecommunications, and services through an economic diversification policy. As of 2019, the estimated population of the country is at 200.96 million, making it one of the most populous countries in the world.³ Over 62% of Nigerians still live in extreme poverty.

In February and March 2019, Nigeria went to the polls to elect a new president, senators and state governors. Incumbent president Muhammedu Buhari was re-elected. The hotly contested election was broadly between the two main political parties: The All Progressives Congress (APC) with President Buhari as the presidential candidate and the People's Democratic Party (PDP) candidate Atiku Abubakar, who was the former vice president in Goodluck Jonathan's government.

Among the priorities of the Buhari government includes defeating Boko Haram, reducing corruption, revamping the economy, youth employment and infrastructure development.⁴

1.2 Migration in Nigeria

Nigeria's migration history is intertwined with Africa's four simultaneous slave trades which took place between 1400 and 1900. The first three slave trades, the trans-Saharan, the Red Sea, and the Indian Ocean slave trade resulted in an estimated 6 million people being transported from the African continent. During the fourth and largest slave trade, the transatlantic slave trade which also ushered in colonial rule in Nigeria, over "12 million slaves were exported from west, west-central, and eastern Africa to the European colonies in the Americas beginning in the 15th century"(Mberu & Pongou, 2010; p.2). Between this 500-year period of

³ Nigeria Population. (2019-05-12). Retrieved from <http://worldpopulationreview.com/countries/nigeria/>.

⁴ Unless otherwise stated, the information and opinions in this report are based on 32 interviews with policy makers, politicians, civil society activists, diaspora and academics (see Appendix). Due to the political nature of the questions many of the interviews are anonymous. We asked interviewees to state their opinions in their private capacity and are not necessarily representative of their organisation.

slave trade, Nigeria “lost over 2 million people, out of which about 1.4 million slaves were shipped to the Americas” (Mberu & Pongou, 2010; p.2).

At the time, there was a lot of mobility across the entire region of now West Africa. Overall, the move of about 30000 Tuaregs from Niger to Nigeria between 1914 and 1922 stands out as one of the early waves of immigration to Nigeria (Abba 1993, Mberu, 2010). Furthermore, the Kano-Agadez pathway (which is still active in present day Nigeria) was a trans-Saharan trade route. After all, trade and migration were (and are still) seen by border communities as beneficial to economic development.

During the Colonial era, the British colonial administration brought many people from neighbouring countries in the region to Nigeria to work in the mines, public administration, plantations, and the newly discovered petroleum industry in the Niger Delta region (Udo 1975, Adepoju 1996). Also, many Nigerians were sent to neighbouring West African countries, particularly Gold Coast (present day Ghana) as labour force for the British colony.

Nigeria gained independence in 1960 and circular migration continued. In 1969, Ghana which was a major destination for Nigerians, mass-deported over 200000 aliens from neighbouring countries, including Nigerians (Aremu & Ajayi, 2014). But the oil crisis in 1973 translated into an economic boom for Nigeria and the country attracted many labour migrants from the region. Emigration however reduced drastically. In 1980, Nigeria ratified the ECOWAS protocol on Free Movement of Goods, Capital, and People. Between 1983 and 1985, the Nigerian economy was hit as a result of a sharp decline in world oil prices. The implementation of the Structural Adjustment Programme in 1986 led to hardships in addition to fall in oil prices. The hardships in the country were blamed on labour migrants leading to the expulsion of many ECOWAS citizens whose 90-day residence permits had expired, in addition to the grace period under the ECOWAS protocol. Also, many Nigerians emigrated as a result of the hardships in the country at the time.

Presently, Nigeria is an important destination, origin, and transit country for migrants with diverse backgrounds, goals, and expectations. Conflicts such as the ongoing war between the Nigerian army and Boko Haram militants in the country’s northeast, farmer-herder conflicts in the north central, conflicts in the Niger Delta and post electoral clashes have led to high number of internal displacement and forced many Nigerians to become refugees in neighbouring countries. Furthermore, population growth, poor governance, urbanisation, unemployment, deteriorating social-economic conditions, and deepening poverty are some of the causes of emigration in Nigeria. People see migration decisions (within and beyond national borders) as an individual’s right and choice which need little or no restrictions.

Migration cannot decide election outcomes in federal level politics, and there is no sign that this will change anytime soon. According to one interlocutor “*migration is not a political issue, but people talk about migration with emotions in Nigeria*” (Esene, ICMPD, 30 March 2019).

This means migration issues still have relevance for the broader societal discussion if not necessarily at a political level. Nevertheless, some interlocutors admitted that the government

is becoming increasingly sensitive and “enlightened” on migration issues. Table one below depicts the migration trends in different parts of Nigeria.

Table 1:
Migration trends in Nigeria

Zones (states within the zone)	Dominant Migration Trend
South-South (Akwa Ibom, Bayelsa, Cross River, Rivers, Delta, Edo)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Human trafficking and human smuggling • Irregular migration routes to Europe • High number of returnees from Europe • DP site with significant number of IDPs sponsored by German missionary group, but not recognised by the State government as an IDP camp • Hub for refugees and asylum seekers related to the Cameroon-Nigeria Bakassi region
South-East (Abia, Anambra, Ebonyi, Enugu, Imo)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Human trafficking • Irregular migration • Active diaspora
South-West (Ekiti, Lagos, Ogun, Ondo, Osun, Oyo)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Irregular migration • Immigration (immigrants from around the ECOWAS sub-region) • Transit and take-off point for trafficking and smuggling via air • Destination point for high number of returnees • Destination for child labour migrants from Bene republic • Hub for refugees and asylum seekers
North-West (Jigawa, Kaduna, Kano, Katsina, Kebbi, Sokoto, Zamfara)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identity issues (families and tribes who do not accept being Nigerian) leading to cross border migration to neighbouring countries • Child trafficking to similar tribes in neighbouring countries • Irregular migration - Kano is a major route for irregular migration to North Africa • Regular migration to the Middle East
North-East (Adamawa, Bauchi, Borno, Gombe, Taraba, Yobe)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cross border migration to the Sahel regions • IDP situation because of Boko Haram • Nigerian refugee returnees
North-Central (Benue, Kogi, Kwara, Nasarawa, Niger, Plateau, Federal Capital Territory)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nomads (herders) • IDPs because of farmer-herder conflicts

Source: Own elaboration based on interviews.

Note: This mapping is non-exhaustive because the migration trends keep changing for states.

1.2.1 Migration Governance

Migration is not one of the top priorities for the Nigerian government compared to issues like economic recovery, fighting corruption and infrastructure development. However, recent migration related issues explain the government’s increasing political interests in migration. Firstly, there is growing international pressure from development partners especially from the EU and EU member states. Like other policy thrusts in Nigeria, aid is tied to migration management/governance which require the Nigerian government to react to migration issues.

Secondly, the high financial remittances from the Nigerian diaspora is seen by the government as important for development if well harnessed. Thirdly, the high number of IDPs and Nigerian refugees in Chad and Niger is a major political challenge for the government who have campaigned to defeat Boko Haram.

1.2.2 Migration related policies

Aside from ECOWAS migration protocols, Nigeria has extensive migration laws. In 2014, Nigeria adopted a National Labour Migration Policy (NLMP). The labour migration policy was followed by the National Migration Policy (NMP) in 2015 and a draft National Policy on Diaspora Matters (NPDM) in 2016. Meanwhile, the government has hinted that Nigeria will soon adopt an Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) Policy.

The NMP is the umbrella policy on migration while the others (NLMP, NPDM and IDP) are sector specific policies.

1.2.3 The Migration governance framework

After the adoption of the Migration Policy, the government, through a Technical Working Group, and support from the Swiss government⁵ developed the Migration Governance Framework (MGF). The framework is modelled on the Whole of Government Approach as an institutional structure for the implementation of the NMP. The governance framework is made up of four levels of coordination.⁶ The first and the highest level of coordination is the ministerial committee (also called the sector policy review committee). This level brings together ministers whose ministries deal with migration-related issues. The committee is chaired by the Minister of Justice and co-chaired by the minister for intergovernmental affairs.

The second level of coordination is the Technical Working Group (TWG). Members include federal ministries, departments and agencies (MDAs) representatives and international actors whose operational activities relates to migration. The TWG makes recommendations to the ministerial committee for approval.

The next level of coordination is among the Thematic Groups (TGs). The thematic groups are responsible for coming up with sector policy recommendations. The groups are structured around the 5-prioritised⁷ areas under the NMP.

⁵ The Swiss government and Nigeria signed a migration partnership agreement in 2010.

⁶ The levels of coordination and actors within the MGF are not definite. As more actors are identified, they can be added. The role of some actors overlaps within the various levels.

⁷ The order of listing is not based on importance, but all are priority areas. Meetings are determined by members and ranges from quarterly to annual meetings.

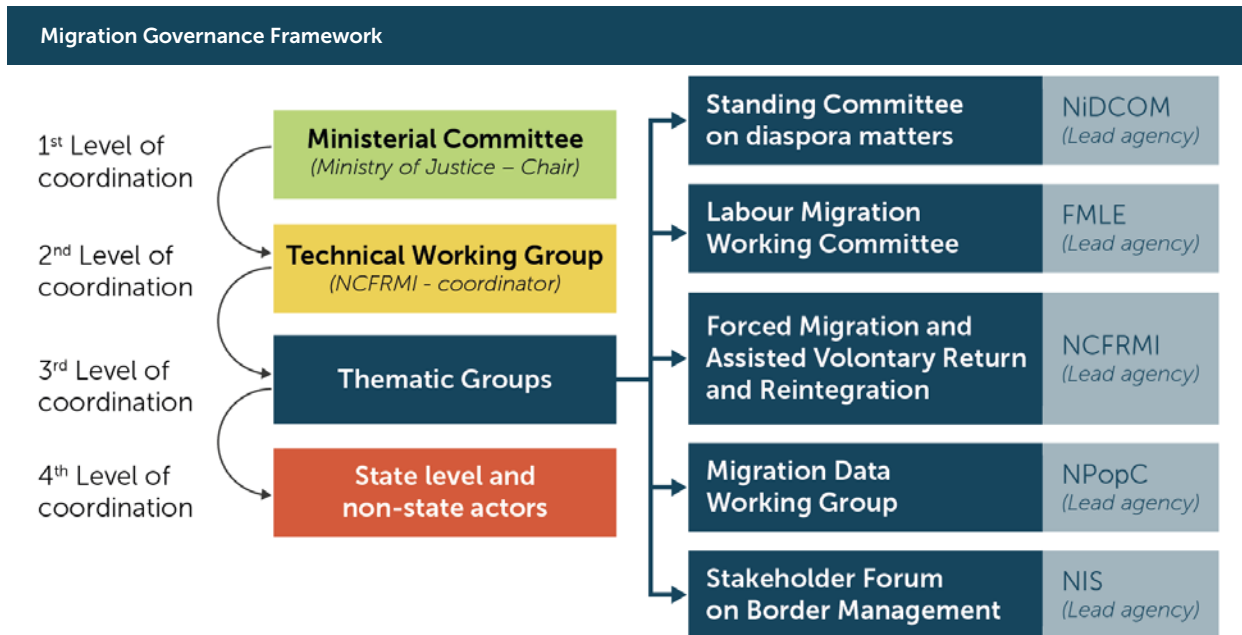
These are:

1. The Standing Committee on Diaspora Matters. The Nigerians in Diaspora Commission (NiDCom)⁸ is the lead commission for the committee.
2. The Labour Migration Working Committee: This Committee is headed by the International Labour Migration Desk of the Federal Ministry of Labour and Employment (FMLE). Members include CSOs and MDAs representatives.
3. Migration Data Working Group. This group includes all government agencies that generate migration data to harness, coordinate and share data on migration. Leading members are the National Population Commission (NPopC), and the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS). Others are the National Immigration Service (NIS), and Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA).
4. Forced Migration and Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration: The lead agency is the National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking In Persons (NAPTIP). Members include international organisations, CSOs and NGOs active in areas of return and reintegration.
5. Stakeholder Forum on Border Management: This group coordinates border controls and work to strengthen Nigeria's borders. The NIS is the lead agency and co-chaired by NAPTIP.

The final level of coordination is at the state and non-state levels. States' migration desk officers or migration related ministries/agencies, chiefs, NGOs, CSOs and religious leaders constitutes the coordination level. Here, coordination moves from federal to the state level. Some states are directly active in migration governance (Edo, Borno, Adamawa, Yobe). Other states address migration issues indirectly. For example, Lagos state indirectly addresses migration issues through an employment trust fund - the Lagos State Employment Trust Fund.

⁸ NiDCOM was established in 2017 after the Nigerians in Diaspora Commission Establishment bill was passed into Law. In November 2018 the President appointed Dabiri-Erewa as Chairman of the NiDCOM and confirmed by the Nigerian Senate in May 2019. The confirmation signalled the beginning of NiDCOM.

Figure 1:



Source: Own elaboration based on interviews.

Note: NiDCOM = Nigerians in Diaspora Commission; FMLE = Federal Ministry of Labour and Employment; NCFRMI = National Commission for Refugees, Migrants, and Internally Displaced Persons; NPopC = National Population Commission; NIS = Nigeria Immigration Service.

Coordinating the MGF

The NCFRMI is the lead agency for coordinating the entire migration architecture. Formally known as the refugee commission, the NCFRMI was reconstituted in 2009 following a presidential directive to expand its mandate. The NCFRMI (like the NiDCOM) operates directly under the Office of the President. It shows how high the commission operates within the political/government structure, yet it is not clear how much this translates into effective coordination of the MGF. Nevertheless, it shows the government attaches importance to the commission, at least from the structure perspective.

Box 1:

Overview of NCFRMI

- Six Zonal Offices (Kebbi, Kwara, Lagos, Borno, Enugu and Cross River States)
- 4 Field Offices (Kaduna, Osun, Taraba and Kano States)
- 2 Reception Centres (Lagos State and Abuja)
- Staff strength = 465.
- Challenges: Under-staffed, Under-funded

Source: Nwanelo, NCFRMI, Abuja on 1 April 2019

Each year, since 2017, the NCFRMI organises a major stakeholder forum – the National Migration Dialogue from 18th to 20 December.⁹ The dialogue encompasses the whole federation from different states who come together to find ways to manage migration effectively.

The revised NMP being implemented. However, it is still early to evaluate the level of synergy within and among the various actors of the framework for effective migration governance. Nevertheless, it is not misleading to maintain that the MGF is an ambitious effort to synergise all migration trends and stakeholders under a single coordinated framework. Also, from the MGF, the space for NGOs and CSOs is limited and undefined. The access of these non-state actors to the population and their role in shaping, implementing and evaluating policies makes them important stakeholders to be undermined in such a framework.

1.2.4 Funding Migration Governance in Nigeria

Nigeria benefits greatly from different funding regimes from the EU such as the European Union Trust Fund (EUTF) and European Development Fund (EDF). For example, funding from the 10th EDF set the stage for many policy drives including the NMP, MGF, NLMP, and NPDM. In addition, Nigeria is one of the 26 countries that benefits from the EU-IOM Joint Initiative for Migrant Protection and Reintegration.¹⁰

⁹ First Dialogue, December 18-20, 2014; Theme: 'Better Migration Management as a Tool for National Development'.

Second Dialogue, December 20-22, 2016; Theme: "Policy Coherence in Migration Governance; Managing Migration and Displacement: The Way Forward". Third Dialogue, December 18-19, 2017; Theme: "Comprehensive Approach to Combating Irregular Migration: From Rhetoric to Action"

¹⁰ The EU-IOM Joint Initiative was launched in 2016 to help migrants return to their countries of origin voluntarily and in a safe and dignified way.

Table 2:
Major migration-related projects in Nigeria, funded by the EU

Program/project	Amount	Source of funding	Timeline
EU-IOM Joint Initiative for Migrant Protection and Reintegration	€346.9 Million	EUTF	2006–
Action Against Trafficking in Persons and Smuggling of Migrants in Nigeria	€10.150 Million	11 th EDF	2018–21
Support for Reintegration and Reconciliation of Former Armed Non-State Combatants and Boko Haram Associates	€15 Million	11 th EDF	2019–23
Promoting Stability in Nigeria's North-East	€5.5 Million	EUTF	2016–19
Multi-Sector Support to the Displaced in Adamawa and Borno States	€4 Million	EUTF	2016–19
Promoting Resilience and Peaceful Coexistence among Displacement Affected Communities in North-East Nigeria	€2.123 Million	EUTF	2016–18
Strengthening Migration Governance in Nigeria and Sustainable Reintegration of Returning Migrants	€15. 5 Million	EUTF	2016–19
Protection of Migrants and Asylum Seekers Especially Children and Women Coming from Nigeria and Victims of Trafficking	€ 462,428.36	European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights	2016–19
Promoting Better Management of Migration in Nigeria	€25 million	10 th EDF	2008–13

Source: Authors' construction based on interviews and multiple secondary sources.

Note: EDF = European Development Fund; EUTF = EU Emergency Trust Fund for Africa; IOM = International Organization for Migration.

1.3 Methods

The report is a qualitative study based on expert interviews in addition to a detailed review of national policy documents and programmes. Fieldwork took place between March and April 2019 in Abuja, Lagos and Benin City in Nigeria. Some expert interviews were also conducted in Germany. The information and opinions in this report are based on 32 interviews with policy makers, politicians, civil society activists, diaspora leaders and academic experts (see Appendix 1), unless otherwise stated. I analysed the interview transcripts using Max QDA Software. I asked interviewees to state their opinions in their private capacity and thus they will not necessarily be representative of their organisation. The report was reviewed by an external country expert, Omolola S. Olarinde from Elizade University.

1.4 Structure of the Report

The rest of the report will discuss the different types of migration according to their political relevance to the Nigerian government, namely: diaspora migration, irregular migration, refugees and internally displaced people *in* Nigeria, refugees and asylum seekers *from* Nigeria, and immigration to Nigeria. For each section I discuss the governance, political stakes and political relevance. I conclude with an overview of the major findings and recommendations.

Categorising people on the move is highly politicised and often analytically blurry. We¹¹ acknowledge the overlapping nature between refugees and other migrants, as well as the agency, choice and flexibility of individual journeys. For this project, we nevertheless consider the political relevance of a type of migration journey which is not to be equated with individual form of (im-)mobility, which are likely to take place across different categories. We look at the political significance of refugees and asylum seekers from Nigeria, displacement (both internally displaced and refugees) in Nigeria, immigration to Nigeria, diaspora migration (emigration and return) as well as ‘irregular’ migration.

2 Diaspora Migration

The Nigerian diaspora is made up of people from different parts of the federation. Nevertheless, the majority originate from the South-South, South-East, North-Central and South-West of the country (ICMPD & IOM, 2010; Marchand et al, 2015). There are over 15 million Nigerians in the diaspora, of which over 27% live in the United States (US) and the United Kingdom (UK) (UNESA 2015, PDF, 2017). As of 2000, 34.5% of all Nigerian migrants in OECD countries had tertiary education. In the US and Europe alone, 83% and 46% of Nigerian migrants were high-skilled workers respectively (Docquier & Marfouk, 2004; OECD, 2012; Darkwah & Verter, 2014). Since 2000, approximately 10.7% of the tertiary educated Nigerians have emigrated (World Bank, 2011). Nonetheless, apart from the UK, the majority of Nigerian migrants in Europe are low-skilled (OECD, 2019).

Existing regular migration pathways to Europe for Nigerians include the Single Permits, the Blue Card Scheme and the Erasmus+ programme, family re-union visas and different visa schemes for students. The problem is, these regular pathways are woefully limited. For example, Nigeria received little more than ten blue cards in 2017 by EU states to non-EU citizens (Luyten, 2019). Also, the already limited pathways are mainly accessible to the few high-income class and highly educated Nigerians. From the interviews, accessibility for the majority of low-skilled and low-income class Nigerians is legally very limited.

Hitherto, Nigeria is the largest remittance recipient country in sub-Saharan Africa. In 2018 the country received more than US\$24.3 billion in official remittances (an increase of \$2 billion from 2017) representing 6.1% of Nigeria’s GDP (World Bank, 2019).

¹¹ The WAMIG project.

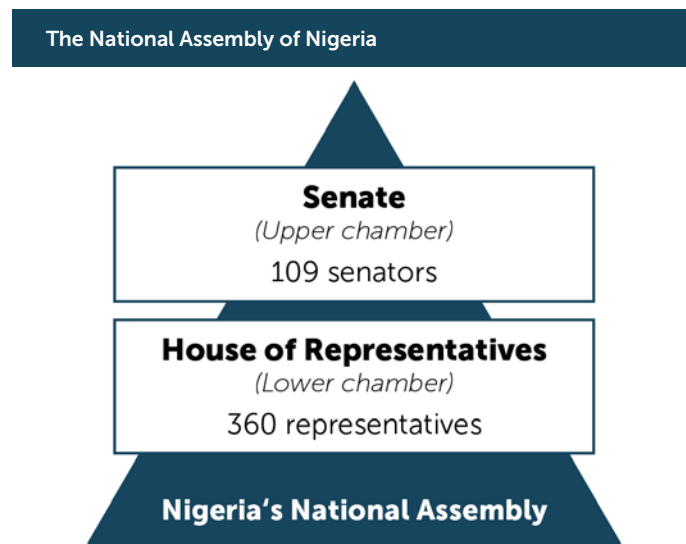
Moreover, in June 2017 the Nigerian government floated its first diaspora bonds. The five-year bond successfully raised \$300 million (Kazeem, 2017).¹² With these bonds, Nigeria was looking to get its diaspora to fund part of its \$23 billion record deficit budget.

2.1 Governance

The Senate Committee on diaspora is the highest governing body on diaspora matters. The committee was set up in 2009 and made up of 29 Senate members.

Since May 2019, NiDCOM is the commission in charge of diaspora migration in Nigeria. The main mandate of the diaspora commission is to implement the NPDM. Before this time, the Nigerian National Volunteer Service (NNVS) was the lead agency responsible for diaspora affairs. The NNVS coordinated diaspora engagements for activities such as medical tourism. With NiDCOM in charge, the NNVS remains under the Office of the Secretary-General of the Federation as a migration desk.

Figure 2:



Source: Own elaboration.

The interviews show high hopes for NiDCOM to coordinate diaspora engagements between the government and Nigerians back home for social and economic developments.

Upon taking up the diaspora governance mandate in May 2019, NiDCOM has become very vocal in speaking against ill-treatment of Nigerians abroad. The Commission has thus taken over the government's strong stance against xenophobic attacks on its citizens in many

¹² A diaspora bond is a sovereign bond that targets investors that have emigrated to other countries and the relatives of those emigrants (source: the financial dictionary - <https://financial-dictionary.thefreedictionary.com/Diaspora+Bond>).

parts of the world. These interventions by NiDCOM are synonymous with the government's positions in the past on such issues. For instance, in 2017, xenophobic attacks against Nigerians in South Africa in which about 100 Nigerians were deported was strongly condemned by the Nigerian government at the time (Bergstresser, 2018) as a show of responsibility towards the Nigerian diaspora.

In addition to consular services, the Nigerian Government recognises and supports the Nigerians in Diaspora Organisations (NIDO). NIDO was established between 2000 and 2001 and is active in both Europe and in North America with chapters in many countries. NIDO serve as economic gateways for investments in Nigeria and a space for political engagements and dissemination of policies. Furthermore, States that are affected by diaspora migration have come up with their governance frameworks. For example, Anambra state in 2018 established a Ministry for Diaspora and Migration while a Centre for Migration Studies has been established at the Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka.

On the one hand, the Nigerian government is undoubtedly keen on encouraging financial remittances from the diaspora with some government officials urging for harnessing remittances. For example, one interlocutor mentioned that *“we [Nigeria] do not have a national strategy to harness remittances. It is usually private decisions to send remittance and for private purposes”* (Agodi, NNVS, Abuja, 22 March 2019). While remittances to Nigeria currently exceed Official Development Assistance and Foreign Direct Investment, there is no obligation for that to continue, since remittances are essentially the “choice” of the remitter who need not be obliged to do so. Therefore, the government role should be about the responsibility of accountability of the government to the Nigerian diaspora to increase their incentive to remit.

On the other hand, there is no governance approach in dealing with the increasing trend of highly-skilled Nigerians emigrating to destinations like Canada, South Africa and the USA. Also, approaches to create a conducive environment for highly-skilled returnees are missing in the current governance approach towards diaspora migration. NiDCOM should perhaps pay attention to these gaps as well.

2.2 Political stakes

The political stakes for the Nigerian government are to encourage investments and remittances from the diaspora considering their importance for the economy. Therefore, as an underlying issue for possible bilateral or multilateral migration partnerships, Nigeria's interest is to see increased regular migration pathways for Nigerians.

We found that whilst other actors like the IOM and EU are obviously also interested in the issue of remittance, the Nigerian government is particularly active on diaspora matters. Considering the government's inability to retain highly skilled persons, the government's over interest in remittances suggests quick pay-offs rather than dealing with the longer term

problems related to the loss of skilled persons (Clemens, 2016). This corresponds to the finding that, it is in the interest of Nigeria to see an increasing Nigerian diaspora (regularly).

On the one hand, to get involved in remittances and to increase flows, the interviews show the government is in consultation with the Central Bank of Nigeria to set up money transfer systems for Nigerians in the diaspora. Furthermore, the government, in collaboration with Nigerian diaspora organisations, has been organising diaspora conferences to discuss challenges and potentials in Nigeria. For instance, the recent 2nd global Nigerian diaspora conference was held in Netherlands in April 2019 (Gbandi & Komolafe, 2019). Also, Nigeria has enrolled Nigerians in diaspora in the Nigerian National Identity Database as part of the move to harness resources and capital from the Nigerian diaspora (Gbandi & Komolafe, 2019).

On the other hand, voting rights for Nigerians abroad is a major stake for the Nigerian diaspora. Section 77(2) of the 1999 Constitution states, “Every citizen of Nigeria, who has attained the age of eighteen years residing in Nigeria at the time of the registration of voters for purposes of the election to a legislative house, shall be entitled to be registered as a voter for that election.” As a result of this provision, Nigerian diaspora are not allowed to vote in elections in Nigeria, giving them less direct stakes in the governing of the country. Indeed, Nigerians abroad can travel back and forth to Nigeria to register and then to vote during elections. During, 2019 elections, many politicians organised or were invited to town-hall meetings in the United Kingdom and the United States to explain their agendas to the diaspora and to encourage the diaspora to return and vote (Newdawn, 2019). However, returning to register and subsequently to vote is not only costly for many people but also the inconsistencies in Nigeria’s elections (as in the case of the postponing of the 2019 elections) complicates such efforts. The Nigerian diaspora is therefore interested in the amendment of the 1999 constitution to allow voting from Nigerian embassies abroad. On this issue, the government has been dragging its feet without any indication when diaspora voting rights can come to force. The Nigerian diaspora is however active on social media through political commentaries on issues in a desperate attempt to find their voices in the political decision-making process in Nigeria.

2.3 Societal relevance

Many Nigerians regard the diaspora as highly educated, and people who are well placed in society who have no problem accessing a visa to migrate. But people also recognise the role of the Nigerian diaspora in shaping the society through contributions such as school alumni infrastructure projects, origin community infrastructure and grants.

Also, social discourse among Nigerian migrants are often structured on the vast transnational networks of Nigerians. Often these networks are tribal, origin state, city or community-based; for example, the Yorubas in London, the Igbos in Netherland and Germany, the Hausa in the Middle East (Sharkdam, Akinkuotu, & Ibonye, 2014). Social media platforms like Twitter, Facebook, Instagram and WhatsApp are important for discussing

social issues among Nigerians including the diaspora. For example, many social issues are discussed under hashtags like #nigeriansabroad, #nigeriansindiaspora, and #naija; with many followings.

The loss of highly skilled persons constitutes a significant portion of social discourse. For many Nigerians, the government is doing little to retain highly skilled persons. According to one interlocutor, “*the concern is that one day you will go to the hospital and there will be no doctors*” (Bisong, ECPDM, Accra, 12 February 2019) because of the inability of the government to retain these and other professionals. The general perception toward diaspora migration is therefore positive. Social discourse favours diaspora migration and blames the government for challenges such as poverty, unemployment, poor infrastructure, corruption, lack of prospects, and inability to retain professionals that optimizes emigration. Therefore, any migration agreement by the Nigerian government can attract potential negative political sentiments. Especially if that agreement seems to favour the return of Nigerian migrants without significant efforts to tackle the above-mentioned challenges facing the country (Sodeinde, ICMPD, Abuja, 11 April 2019).

2.4 Conclusion

Migration is not an overtly politicised topic in Nigeria. Yet overall, Nigeria clearly shows preference for diaspora migration. This is evident through efforts like Senate Committee, the NPDM, NiDCOM, and supporting activities of NIDO. The government is proactively positioning itself to attract diaspora investments and encourage remittances as embodied in the activities of NiDCOM. Thus, the government is interested in increased regular pathways and less restrictive visa regimes.

However, the pressing political stakes of the diaspora to be able to vote in general elections without traveling to Nigeria is not receiving the political attention of the government.

Despite regarding the diaspora as well-educated and fortunate people, many Nigerian discussions on diaspora migration favour emigration while blaming the government for an inability to retain highly skilled professionals in addition to the many challenges facing the country.

3 Irregular migration

In 2017 a damning Cable News Network (CNN) report about the selling of African migrants by some criminal gangs in Libya, sent shockwaves across West Africa. Many of these migrants were Nigerians. The situation became a major embarrassment for the Nigerian government. On the one hand, the Nigerian government distanced themselves from the individual migrants by condemning the nature of such travels. In fact, President Buhari even questioned why Nigerians would want to use irregular routes to travel and thereby asserting that no one sent the migrants there (Kola, 2018). On the other hand, following international and national media outcries, the government, in January 2018, chartered eight flights and returned more than 1700 Nigerians¹³ from Libya to Port Harcourt (IOM, 2019a). In the same year, according to the president, the government repatriated about 3,000 Nigerians¹⁴ in July. (*The African Courier*, 2018). The CNN report in addition to the so-called refugee crisis in Europe therefore became the two major turning points in irregular migration discourses in Nigeria. While the former led to EU migration policies towards migrants' countries of origin (including Nigeria), the latter led to public outcry which added to the Nigerian government reacting to irregular migration.

Traditionally, emigration in Nigeria had been directed towards the West African sub-region. However, since the 1980s, emigration toward Europe via irregular routes has increased (Benattia, Armitano, & Robinson, 2015; Haas, 2011). For example, in 2018 alone, 25,755 Nigerian migrants applied for asylum across Europe (Eurostat, 2019).

The composition of these migrants are not uniformly distributed across the 36 states of Nigeria. Data from IOM, federal government agencies, and surveys indicate that over half of all Nigerian irregular migrants to Europe come from the Edo state and precisely Benin City, which has often been described as the corridor to Europe (Hoffmann, 2018; Agbakwuru, 2018; O'Grady, 2018). Reasons for the high number of Nigerians travelling irregularly from Benin-city include poverty, unemployment and material incentives like financial remittances for families and investments (Green, Wilke, and Cooper, 2018). In addition, lack of future prospects and lack of regular pathways, especially for low-skilled people, push many young Nigerians to migrate illegally leading to some becoming victims of sex and other forms of human trafficking (Osezua, 2016; Plambech, 2017)

In many of the southern states like Edo, irregular migration, dates to the 1980s. At the time, many Nigerians, including women from Edo state emigrated to Italy to take part in the high demand for low-skilled agricultural labour (Carling, 2006). These jobs became very competitive as time passed. Unable to access these jobs, many women from Edo sought other sources of work, including prostitution. Realising the lucrative nature of prostitution, many of these women became what is popularly known as "the Madams" and started bringing other women to join the trade.

¹³ These returns were conducted by the government with minimal support from IOM and after returning these people, the government's promise of a reintegration package was never fulfilled.

¹⁴ These returns were conducted by the government with the support of IOM..

Another contributing factor to the presence of Nigerian women in Italy is traced to romantic relationships between Nigerian women and Italian staff of Azienda Generale Italiana Petroli (General Italian Oil Company). Many Nigerian women followed their partners to Italy and after the collapse of their relationship, many were left to fend for themselves and thereby started engaging in the sex industry (Carling, 2005).

As immigration laws became restrictive across Europe in the 1990s, the Italian sex industry was lucrative and desperation in Nigeria grew, many of these Madams sought diverse ways to go around these laws including trafficking and smuggling (Giovanetti et al 2014 cited in Pascoal, 2018).

Migration is an entrenched phenomenon in Benin City. The activities of traffickers and smugglers also became rampant.¹⁵ However, we found that many people were not aware they were trafficked (especially young girls for prostitution) until it was too late and at a point where they could not free themselves. Even though many families encourage their wards to migrate, many were also not aware of the activities of the traffickers. This does not suggest that traffickers and smugglers were not known to people in Benin City. In many instances, the close relationships between the smugglers and traffickers and their victims clouds the criminal nature of these activities in the eyes of people in these communities).¹⁶ The findings also suggest that many traffickers are trafficked victims themselves who upon failure to cross to Europe come back and automatically become smugglers due to their knowledge of the routes. Apart from Edo state, many irregular migrants also come from Delta state. As of March 2019, among the returnees from Libya, 52% were from Edo state, and 17% from Delta state.

A majority of irregular Nigerian migrants start their journey from Benin City, transit through Kano, Agadez and then through the desert to Libya before crossing to Europe. For several years, the most accessible route was via the Central Mediterranean to reach Italy or Malta. Current figures show an increasing shift towards the Western Mediterranean route to Spain (Brenner, Forin, & Frouws, 2018). Due to the tightening of the Niger route Mali is now very attractive for traffickers. Since movement within the ECOWAS region is less restrictive because of weak border controls, traffickers can move and redirect their routes easily.

3.1 Governance

From the interviews, Nigeria prefers bilateral agreements to multilateral agreements in the areas of labour migration, return and reintegration. For this reason, an agreement with the EU as a block is not seen as a bilateral agreement but a multilateral agreement because any such agreement open doors for EU member states. For instance, one interlocutor mentioned that

¹⁵ Human trafficking is the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of threat, force, abduction, fraud, deception, abuse of power, giving or receiving of payments to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person for the purpose of exploitation (UNODC, 2012). Meanwhile, human smuggling is the illegal transportation of persons across international borders (Kralis, 2006)

¹⁶ Often, smugglers are well known to their victims. They are mostly close people that have the trust of their victims or the sponsors of the smuggling (family members of the victim). However, in many instances, victims are not aware they are being trafficked.

the Nigerian government does not want to sign an agreement with the EU which will result in all EU members returning Nigerian citizens. Also, with bilateral agreements, Nigeria's position is strengthened as one-country-to-another than as a country to a regional block made up of many countries. Conversely, Nigeria prefer multilateral agreements when it comes to trafficking and smuggling because of the transnational nature of such activities.

The governance of irregular migration in Nigeria happens both at the federal and state level. The governance broadly goes into three directions; sensitisation campaigns on trafficking and irregular migration, return and reintegration, and border control.

Firstly, human trafficking and irregular migration have been an issue for Nigeria long before it became a prominent issue in the EU in 2015. The foundation of Nigeria's legal framework against human trafficking is in the country's constitution, which prohibits slavery or servitude and forced or compulsory labour (Article 34.1).¹⁷ In 2003, Nigeria enacted the Human Trafficking Act which criminalised human trafficking. This bold step follows the activism of the former Vice Lady Amina Abubakar Atiku¹⁸ who travelled to Italy in 1999 and witnessed the problem of human trafficking. She went on to mobilise stakeholders that led to the Trafficking Act. Subsequently, the Anti-Trafficking Act established NAPTIP in 2003, making Nigeria the first country to criminalise human trafficking in Africa. The Trafficking Act was further revised in 2005 and 2015 to protect minors and give stricter sentencing to culprits, respectively.¹⁹ NAPTIP is very active with over 362 convictions of traffickers between 2004 and 2018.

Furthermore, Nigeria is party to several international legal frameworks like the UN Trafficking and Smuggling Protocols (ratified in June and September 2001 respectively), ECOWAS Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons, ECOWAS Policy on Protection and Assistance to Victims of Human Trafficking, the ECOWAS Guidelines on Protection, Assistance and Support to Witnesses.

Apart from investigating and jailing traffickers by NAPTIP, activities to address irregular migration and trafficking are mainly awareness-raising campaigns on the risks of human trafficking and irregular migration. Aside from government agencies like NAPTIP, the NIS and the FMLE many CSOs like Girl Power Initiative, WOTCLEF are active in this arena. Many of these campaigns are funded by the EU and EU member states. In addition to awareness campaigns, some actors are engaged in information or giving programs to give alternatives for prospective migrants. For example, the FMLE with support from IOM and GIZ and funded by EU, have set up Migration Research Centres (MRCs) in Lagos, Abuja and Benin City.

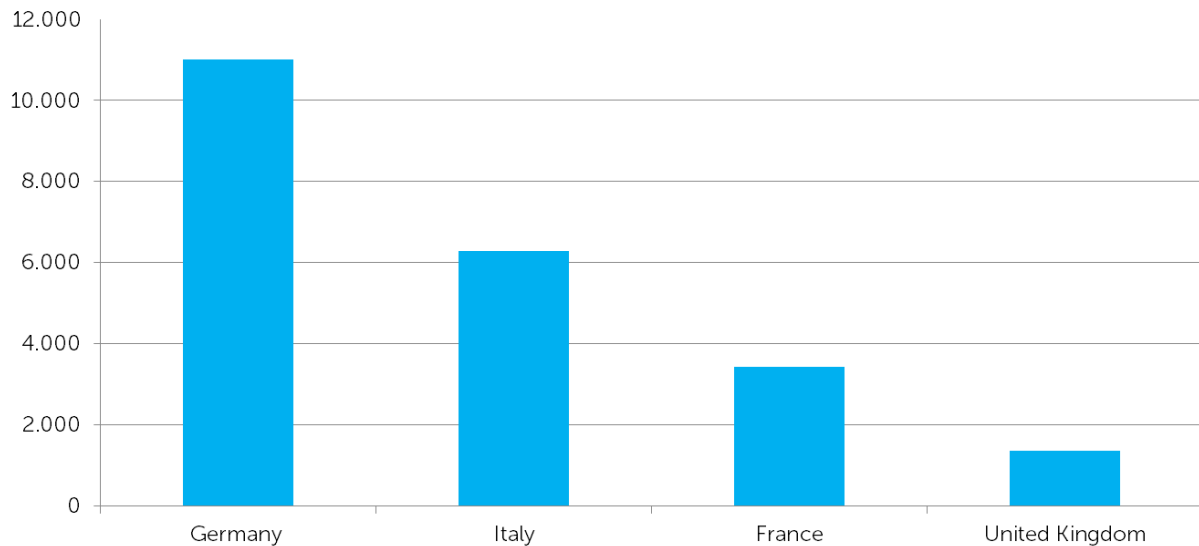
¹⁷ In Addition to the 1999 constitution, the criminal and penal codes of Nigeria also outlaw several conducts and acts amounting to trafficking.

¹⁸ She is also the founder of the Women Trafficking and Child Labour Eradication Foundation (WOTCLEF).

¹⁹ The amendments criminalised the refusal to allow minor domestic workers to go to school; having minors in brothels and changed sentencing time to no less than 10 years and maximum of life in imprisonment or both a fine and imprisonment.

Figure 3:

Asylum and first-time asylum applicants from Nigeria in 2018
(for Germany, Italy, France, and the United Kingdom)



Source: Own elaboration based on Eurostat data (2019).

Secondly, the management of return and reintegration also speaks to irregular migration.²⁰

Nigeria was the first country to sign a Common Agenda for Migration and Mobility (CAMM) with the EU in March 2015 (EU, 2016). Although this migration and mobility treaty opened the door for high level dialogue between Nigeria and the EU, the main agenda for the EU is to conclude a readmission agreement with Nigeria. As at the time of writing this report, there was still no agreement between Nigeria and the EU on return and reintegration (readmission). However, Nigeria has several bilateral repatriation agreements with individual members of the EU, for example with Germany, Switzerland, the UK and Italy. Unlike Nigeria's migration partnership with Switzerland, these agreements sometimes come with conditions to other agreements that are not directly under migration governance like political, and economic relations. For many EU member states, the stakes are high for return and readmission especially for countries with high numbers of Nigerians, like Germany or Italy (see figure 3). As a result, many of these agreements are focussed on return, although recent components offer reintegration assistance to returnees. Nigerian returnees from Libya and Europe and their subsequent reintegration is a major issue in Nigeria. Apart from the government sponsored returns from Libya in 2018 (see page 14), IOM has been the leading organisation in return and reintegration since the intensification of return and reintegration efforts in 2015. The 'EU-IOM Joint Initiative for Migrant Protection and Reintegration' provides return and reintegration assistance to transit returnees from transit countries and forced returnees from EU member states. The return component covers the voluntary

²⁰ So far, no strong political interest group has formed from the returnees themselves.

transportation of stranded migrants in transit countries and their reception period in Nigeria. Optionally, returnees may subsequently apply for the reintegration packages that are in-kind and individually tailored. Between April 2017, and July 2019, IOM has facilitated the return of over 14,000 Nigerians from transit and destination countries through IOM programs (IOM, 2019b). In addition, IOM with funding from the United Kingdom's Department for International Development (DFID) offer reintegration assistance to the 1700 returnees that were returned by the Nigerian government in January 2018.

Besides transit returnees, migrants can also be returned against their will through physical interventions (deportation) by a destination country following an order to leave upon deny of admission or termination of permission to remain in the destination country. (IOM 2019). Deportations or removals can take place on scheduled or non-scheduled operations, organized by a destination country or coordinated by Frontex in the case of the EU. Under the EU- IOM Joint Initiative, forced returnees can receive reintegration assistance through the IOM after their return through a 'Post-Arrival Reintegration Assistance' (PARA) similar to the in-kind support for transit returnees. Forced returns or deportations are generally coordinated bilaterally between the destination country and received by the NIS on behalf of Nigeria.²¹

Return and reintegration is not well coordinated in Nigeria and the long-term effect on irregular migration and trafficking is still questionable as we found that many frustrated returnees have re-migrated irregularly again. The existing forms of reintegration itself is also criticised. One interlocutor mentioned that *"reintegration is not meeting migrants at the airport, doing medical screening, putting returnees in temporary shelters, telling them Nigeria is good and giving them 10000 naira"* (Obiyan, GIAIM, Benin City, 8th April 2019). According to the interlocutor, without a conducive environment for growth and development, the short-term initiatives have a negative influence on irregular migration in the future.

The third governance approach in dealing with irregular migration is through border control. The porous nature of borders in the ECOWAS region makes it easy for traffickers and smugglers to roam the region. Efforts into border control is discussed under section 6. on Immigration.

Irregular migration governance also extends to the states level although few states have to enact policies and initiatives to manage irregular migration. A typical example is Edo state. The high number of returnees and irregular migrants from Edo state has attracted many actors and initiatives on irregular migration and trafficking. Thus, Benin City has become 'the Agadez' of Nigeria. Edo state government is known for its proactive role in tracking irregular migration and trafficking. For instance, in 2017, the State set up the Edo State Taskforce Against Human Trafficking (ETAHT) to investigate trafficking issues in the state. Also, the State Governor, Godwin Obaseki, initiated the Managing Migration through Development

²¹ Data on the number of deported Nigerians from the EU countries were hard to come by. Even though the numbers are high for Nigeria, efforts to get access to the exact number of deported migrants was unsuccessful including our request to Frontex.

Programme (MMDP) in May 2018 to tackle irregular migration and trafficking. The MMDP covers returnee resettlement and re-integration.

A non-state governance intervention in irregular migration and trafficking was witnessed on March 9th 2018, when the Oba (King) of Edo state revoked all curses²² placed on trafficked victims by traffickers, and also made a proclamation for all chief priests in the state to stop helping traffickers and furthermore placed a curse on anyone who engages in trafficking. According to an interlocutor, the Oba's proclamation has been very effective in reducing the activities of traffickers. Also, since the proclamation, many victims have come forward to speak out and testify against traffickers without fear of repercussions from the oaths.

3.2 Political stakes

3.2.1 Foreign dominance shown through funding

The Nigerian government is progressively showing political interest in the irregular migration and trafficking, return and reintegration topics, but this interest does not correspond with the needed resources to address the issue. For example, in 2016, the government reduced the annual funding of NAPTIP from 2.5 billion Nairas (\$8.22 million) in 2015 to 1.69 billion Nairas (\$5.56 million) (USDOS, 2017). The finding here corresponds to the observation made by the UN Special Rapporteur on Trafficking in Persons, Maria Grazia Giammarinaro, that *“indicator of political commitment lies in allocating adequate resources to specialised agencies and programs dedicated to the fight against trafficking, which, at present, appear significantly underfunded by the government”* (UNHCR, 2018). Indeed, the government allocated approximately 3.14 billion Nairas (\$8.7 million) to NAPTIP in 2017, a significant increase from 1.69 billion Nairas (\$4.7 million) allocated in 2016 (USDOS, 2018). Still the overall budget allocated to migration agencies remain low.

Meanwhile international actors especially the EU and EU member states fund the majority of initiatives on irregular migration, trafficking, return, and reintegration (see table 2). According to one interlocutor, as of March 2019, the number of projects supported by the EU which were still ongoing in Edo state alone amounted to about €20 million (Zerzelidou, EU Delegation to Nigeria and ECOWAS, Abuja, 20th March 2019). Several EU member states like Germany, France, Denmark, as well as Switzerland also fund many sensitisation campaigns on trafficking and irregular migration and support vocational and entrepreneurial skills trainings for returnees and potential migrants

The NCFRMI and NAPTIP are the leading coordinating agencies on irregular migration, trafficking, return and reintegration. However, because of inadequate resources it is rather the IOM and other international actors with resources that dominate in practice. This leads to the problem of ownership for Nigerian agencies who feel overshadowed by foreign organisations.

²² It is common practise for traffickers to bind their victims into oath taking, putting a curse on their victims to ensure they keep to the terms of the trafficker.

Indeed, some international organisations involve different state and non-state actors in the planning and implementation of programmes. However, the central planning and operational activities of these projects remain in the hands of international organisations. The major reasons for this are corruption and the lack of capacity on the part of Nigerian actors to take ownership of these programs. The question is, when will these capacities be built for Nigerian actors to take over these mandates? Could it be that ‘lack of capacity’ is often used as an excuse for the continued dominance of these international actors? Nevertheless, the issue of corruption that has permeated every facet of activity often renders national agencies ineffective. For instance, the findings revealed that some returnees who receive small amounts of stipend from government agencies often complain of being told that the money will be received in batches which lead to serious delays and even forfeiture of such funds in some cases.

3.2.2 Divergence on returns, reintegration and legal pathways

The foreign dominance through funding further shows a divergence between Nigerian and European interests on return and reintegration. On the one hand, yes; the high number of irregular migrations embarrass Nigeria, but the government is rather more interested in diaspora engagements to attract investments and increase remittances for development.

On the other hand, throughout the interviews, the EU and EU-member states came up as only interested in irregular migration, trafficking and return for the following basic reasons; i) to curb the flow of migrants to Europe and ii) to ‘decongest’ their countries while maintaining restrictions on regular migration. As one interlocutor questioned “*why not allow people to move? when you restrict people to move, they device ways to move and this fuels irregular migration*” (Onazi, FMLE, Abuja, 14 March 2019).

For some Nigerians, the few existing regular pathways in addition to restrictive visa regimes across Europe is part of the many reasons for people migrating irregularly. But according to a recent report by The Expert Council’s Research Unit, the EU lacks the power to implement legal migration opportunities to Europe without developing deeper cooperation with member states to implement regular migration policies (Süß, 2019). For example, it is not clear how many Nigerians have been able to access jobs in Germany via the Nigerian-German Centre for Jobs, Migration and Reintegration. In the agreement between the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development and the FMLE, although the job centre is mainly purported to provide advice on the local labour market, they are in the position to provide information on job opportunities *in Germany*. In a recent report (Olaiya & Chukwuemeka, 2019) despite the number of career training that the Centre offered to Nigerians, no Nigerian was reported to have accessed employment in Germany. An interview with GIZ in Germany revealed that chances for Nigerians (in Nigeria) in the German job market is zero to none, yet, advice on how to apply for jobs in Germany are given anyway. This creates a sense of unfulfilled promises and in turn leads a frequent complaint that these jobs centres are not working.

Up till now, none of the many resources put in place by actors like the EU and EU member states, stands out to offer realistic opportunities for regular migration. The restrictive visa regimes of the EU and its member states is thus, detrimental to the overall actions against irregular migration and trafficking on the part of Nigeria. We found that many irregular migrants perceive visas as a privilege of the high- and middle-income class and thereby gives a sense of futility in applying for travel documents. A mix of conditions for regular migration, scholarships, and skill training programs that allow those outside the socioeconomic class to compete for regular pathways should therefore be considered.

In Nigeria, there are two types of assisted voluntary returnees. There are those returnees from EU member countries and those from Libya. Returnees from Libya only get a 4-day entrepreneurial training course from IOM. Meanwhile, vocational training is optional for returnees from Europe. These vocational training courses take between six months to one year depending on the type of skills. Since the cost of the vocational training is deducted from the return package, many returnees are not actually able to complete the training due to logistical costs, like transportation and other costs.

However, the fate of deportees is different. According to Charles Nwanelo (NCFRMI, Abuja, 1 April 2019) the fate of deportees is worse than some of the returnees who voluntarily returned under AVR programs. While there are often reintegration packages for AVRs, deportees are often left to the Nigerian government to reintegrate them which in many instances does not happen due to unavailability of funds. Actors should consider covering training costs and extending vocational and entrepreneurial training courses to all returnees in future.

3.2.3 Some convergence on border control albeit for different aims

The NIS oversees Nigeria's interest in controlling and managing the 114 recognised land border posts in addition to the many ungoverned land borders. The porous nature of these borders has been blamed for irregular migration and trafficking. Nigeria wants border control because of human trafficking. For ECOWAS and the EU, the different aims for boarder control are to IMPROVE mobility in the region and to REDUCE mobility towards Europe respectively.

The Free Movement and Migration (FMM)²³ West Africa project is one of the initiatives for border management across the ECOWAS sub-region by offering capacity trainings to immigration officers in member countries on professional boarder management. Furthermore, all the international airports (Enugu, Kanu, Port Harcourt, Abuja and Lagos) in Nigeria are getting security upgrades (hardware, software, and training) to meet the Airport Excellence (APEX)²⁴ standards.

²³ This is a consortium between ECOWAS, IOM, ICMPD and ILO and funded by the EU.

²⁴ The project is funded by EU member states and implemented by IOM with a 2020 deadline.

3.2.4 Fragmented programmes between the federal and state level

Political stakes of some state governments in irregular migration and trafficking differ to those from the federal government's stake, leading to fragmented approaches. Using Edo and Lagos states, for example, the research shows that political stakes on irregular migration are different. In Edo state, issues of irregular migration are increasingly becoming political. For example, the current governor of Edo Godwin Nogheghase Obaseki had to avoid tackling irregular migration and trafficking in his manifesto upon the advice of his party. That is, there was fear of a backlash from, not only the opposition parties, but also from the voters. This is because of the disapproval from the public on the issue of trafficking that is associated with unresolved root causes of irregular migration (unemployment rate, few regular migration pathways, among others). Also, households in Edo are dissatisfied with the high number of returnees and inadequate reintegration initiatives. All of these contribute to the perception by the public of the political agenda related to tackling trafficking.

In Lagos, the political stakes in irregular migration are different and politically not a sensitive topic. Lagos is the most populated city in Nigeria, with over 17 million inhabitants; many of whom are internal migrants and immigrants from neighbouring countries. The city is the financial hub of Nigeria and the seat of most firms and businesses in Nigeria. Lagos is both a source and a transit city for the many who are air trafficked to different destinations in the world and for irregular migration. However, unlike Edo, the Lagos state government prioritises internal migration interested in job creation initiatives like the Lagos State Employment Trust Fund (LSETF). The Federal and State divide in Lagos is clear when it comes to dealing with irregular migration and trafficking. On these issues, state agencies like NAPTIP and NCFRMI take centre stage in close collaboration with IOM. This is not the case in Edo, where the State taskforce on trafficking is active and visible at the state level. This shows there are multiple potentially fragmented approaches as well as the need to take the state-level seriously.

3.2.5 Institutional challenges

The comprehensive migration governance framework comes with inter-agency rivalry at the federal level; federal-state level and amongst international organisations.

First, mandate related rivalry between government agencies. For example, the NIS considers itself better equipped to coordinate migration issues than the NCFRMI which was established in 2009. The NIS is the oldest migration agency (established in 1963) with over 27,000 staff in all the 774 local governments and generates the largest volume of migration data than any agency. Additionally, by incorporating the Palermo protocol²⁵ into the 2015 Immigration Act, the NIS has the power to prosecute people who break migration laws.

²⁵ The Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons Especially Women and Children supports the UN Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime. It fosters a comprehensive international approach in the countries of origin, transit and destination to prevent trafficking, punish the traffickers and protect victims of trafficking (Assembly, 2000; Shoaps, 2013; United Nations, 2000).

Second, there are disputes between some federal and state actors such as between ETAHT and NAPTIP. On the one hand, the Taskforce seeks a broader mandate at the state level because of its knowledge of the state's landscapes around trafficking. NAPTIP on the other hand has the power to prosecute as a federal agency and will not tolerate any mandate of the Taskforce beyond investigating cases.

Third, there is high inter-organisation rivalry between leading international organisations especially between the IOM and UNHCR. At the UN level, the different mandates of these UN organisations are clear. However, on the ground in Nigeria, due to the enormous funding for IOM by funders like the EU, IOM is involved in almost all aspects of migration. These extensive roles of IOM leave less room for other UN and non-UN organisations like UNHCR, ILO and ICMPD to operate. In the end, these disharmonies draw national actors. For example, some organisations will only choose to work with specific agencies, CSOs or NGOs.

Furthermore, there is a culture of over dependency on individuals who direct national agencies. For instance, the directors of NAPTIP and NIS came up in the interviews as the reason behind the effective management of these agencies. Thus, removing or the retirement of hardworking heads of agencies without equally motivated directors is a concern. Similarly, from the interviews, the Edo Taskforce is considered a personal taskforce of the current state governor, putting the future of the taskforce in doubt after Governor Obaseki's tenure. Finally, although the Oba of Edo's pronouncement on traffickers is working, without an institutional effort of other traditional leaders to take similar steps, it is only a matter of traffickers changing their routes to other states at present.

3.3 Societal relevance

Indeed, irregular migration and trafficking to Europe is not new to Nigeria. But the CNN reports on the detention camps in Libya drew many people's attention and irregular migration became prominent in social discourse. According to one interlocutor, "*many Nigerians didn't think there is anything like irregular migration. Migration is migration so far as there is the opportunity*" (Gbandi, NIDO, Hamburg, 13 February 2019). Regular or irregular migration was not a social discourse, only that the individual is able to support the family back home. However, after the CNN report, such views on migration are gradually changing, but it does not stop determined people, especially the youth, to take their chances.

The difference between households who have a member abroad and households without anyone abroad is visibly clear for many communities in Nigeria. Families with high migration rates are better off and attract social recognition than non-migrant families because of remittances from members abroad. For example, it is estimated that a majority of households in Benin City has at least one person who is abroad and competition is common among these households to showcase wealth. According one interlocutor, "*if a family does not have somebody who is living in Italy or Spain or elsewhere, that family is not recognized*" (Bisong, ECPDM, Accra, 12 February 2019). To keep such a reputation means the members abroad are not only under pressure to send money back to the families but are also expected to facilitate

the migration of other family members. The high expectations of migrants also mean that social shaming, and stigmatisation awaits those who return without wealth. Therefore, upon return, many returnees prefer to stay in Lagos to avoid the potential shaming and stigmatisation in their native states but to also explore opportunities in Lagos. One interlocutor described that *“in Lagos, people do not care about the background of people (migrant or not). It is all about survival for everyone”* (Abisoye, LSETF, Lagos, 3 April 2019)

Furthermore, many Nigerians see irregular and trafficked migrants as low educated persons who see migration as the only way out of the hardships in the country. Besides, some Nigerians, including many in public services, perceive irregular migrants (especially female trafficked victims) as people who left the country mainly for sexual exploitation on their own accord. This often leads to a lack of empathy for trafficked victims. It also shifts the attention away from the organised criminal networks behind these crimes.

3.4 Conclusion

Nigerians constitute the highest number of West Africans who use irregular routes to reach Europe. Governance approach toward dealing with irregular migration follows three inter-related themes- a) sensitisation on irregular migration and trafficking b) return and reintegration c) boarder control.

Despite statistical evidence that movement across the Mediterranean has decreased in the past years, in the case of Nigeria the root causes of irregular migration and trafficking have still not been addressed. Youth unemployment and corruption continue to soar, good governance is still lacking, hope and prospects continue to dwindle. And the few existing regular migration pathways have no room for the majority of low social and income class in society so there is a sense of futility in applying for travel documents.

Many irregular migrants are smuggled and or trafficked and as result, Nigeria is keen on anti-trafficking laws. At the Federal level, apart from the Anti-Trafficking Act and establishing NAP TIP, Nigeria is also part of several multilateral agreements and protocols on smuggling and trafficking. Some states like Edo and Lagos, however, have specific governance approaches to irregular migration and trafficking.

Meanwhile, sensitisation campaigns on irregular migration and trafficking have been stepped up especially in Edo state where the rate of irregular migration and trafficking is high. None of these and many other funded activities by the EU and EU member states offer real opportunities to effectively deal with the root causes of irregular migration. Destination countries may consider a mix of conditions to expand existing regular pathways including scholarships and skill training programs to allow people from low-socioeconomic backgrounds to compete.

The political stakes in irregular migration in Nigeria is diverse across the many actors involved. Low budget and funding from the government to support irregular migration and its related issues indicates low interest from the government on the topic. Instead, the

dominant funders of irregular migration activities are the EU and EU member states, indicating that the political interest in this topic is rather international than Nigerian. Hence, the question of how current efforts and actions are sustainable after international funded projects elapse remains unanswered. Some of the interlocutors were optimistic that the government will take over when these funds are used up. Others, however, opined there is an overall lack of interest from political elites on the issue of irregular migration. The dominance of international organisations who command the expertise and the financial power brings up the issue of ownership for Nigerian institutions who often seem to be at the mercy of these powerful international organisations for funding and capacity building. Government agencies taking over the control of issues of irregular migration and coordinating operations on return and reintegration can ‘force’ the government to take more financial responsibilities towards the topic of irregular migration. For this to happen, government institutions should show competency and reduce corruption.

On boarder control, while Nigeria aims to tackle human trafficking ECOWAS and the EU aims to *improve* mobility in the region and to *reduce* mobility towards Europe respectively. These diverging aims may bring problems when it comes to policy implementations.

The lack of synergy and rivalry among actors at the federal level (NIS and NCFRMI), between federal and state level actors (ETAHT and NAPTIP) and among international actors (IOM UNHCR) is a setback to the governance of irregular migration in Nigeria. These conflicts are mainly around mandates and funding.

Overall, the negative effect of irregular migration and trafficking have dominated social discourse on migration in Nigeria. Yet, returnees still face stigmatisation and branded failures when migration (regular or irregular) yields no economic return for the individual and the his/her family.

4 Refugees and Internally Displaced People in Nigeria

The Boko Haram insurgency dates to 2009, when a Nigerian security forces’ clampdown on an Islamic sect resulted in the death of 800 people (Ioannis Mantzikos et al., 2013). Among those killed was Mohamed Yusuf, the leader of the Islamic sect called Jama’atu Ahlis Sunna Lidda’awati Wal-Jihad – meaning ‘People Committed to the Propagation of the Prophet’s Teachings and Jihad’ also known as Boko Haram which means “western education is forbidden”(Adelaja & Penar, 2018; Mantzikos et al., 2013). This Islamic sect was incepted in the early 2000s and kept a low profile. But after the death of their leader, the sect became extremely violent and wreaked havoc on communities in Northeastern Nigeria before

extending insurgency beyond their territory to places like Abuja and Kano in 2011 and 2012 respectively.²⁶

In 2014, with authorisation from the African Union (AU) the Lake Chad Basin Commission reactivated a Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF)²⁷ to conduct combat operations against Boko Haram, intercept trafficked weapons, free hostages and encourage defections.

In 2018, the Nigerian Army, in collaboration with the MNJTF scaled up its counter-insurgency campaign with major offensives in Yobe and Borno states. Non-State Armed Groups (NSAGs)²⁸ - especially insurgents, also intensified their operations in what has been described as a change in tactics and staged deadly attacks on the Nigerian Army. The situation escalated the already high number of IDPs in Nigeria. This violent crisis has impacted all the demographics of the affected communities. Girls and women are mostly abducted, raped and turned into sex slaves while NSAGs forcefully recruit boys and men to either fight at battlefronts and or forced to commit suicide bombings.

In addition to insurgency, the interviews show that other conflicts and situations have also led to internal displacement in Nigeria. In 2018, Adamawa state experienced deadly inter-communal conflicts involving more than 100 communities which led to further displacement in the Northeast. Also, political violence and clashes in the last elections (both 2015 and 2019) have led to internal displacement across the country. Aside from these, natural disasters, for example, flooding in states along the river Niger like Anambra, farmer-herder conflicts in North Central Nigeria and other community clashes across the country also account for internal displacements.

As of 31 March 2019, Nigeria had recorded a total of 1.948.349 IDPs (UNHCR, 2019b). Out of the total number of IDPs, 92% are displaced by the Boko Haram insurgency in Northeastern Nigeria (UNHCR, 2019b).

Furthermore, Nigeria is host to 1992 refugees (see Table 5) and 1,089 asylum seekers.²⁹ The refugees with the highest population are Cameroonians and are mostly located in settlements in the southern part of Nigeria close to the border with Cameroon.

²⁶ In August 2016, Boko Haram split into two ideological factions on who to target. While Boko Haram continue to target Muslims, the new group, the Islamic State-West Africa (ISIS-WA) which is supported by the Islamic state wants to engage with Muslims rather than targeting them. (Mahmood, 2018).

²⁷ Established by the Lake Chad Basin Commission in 1998 to fight highway banditry and other cross-border crimes. The current MNJTF is made up of troops from Nigeria, Niger, Cameroon, Chad and Benin and has its headquarters in N'Djamena, Chad.

²⁸ NSAG here refer both insurgents such as Boko Haram and counter-insurgent armed groups such as neighbourhood guards, village hunters' guild, and the government-supported Civilian Joint Task Force.

²⁹ UNHCR updates for October 2019. See <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/country/nga>.

Table 3:
Refugee population in Nigeria

Country of origin	Population	Percentage
Cameroon	46,378	95.7%
Democratic Republic of Congo	635	1.3%
Central African Republic	449	0.9%
Others	335	0.7%
Syrian Arab Republic	249	0.5%
Mali	144	0.3%
Ivory Coast	128	0.3%
Chad	88	0.2%
Sudan	47	0.1%
Total	48,453	100%

Source: UNHCR, October 2019.³⁰

4.1 Governance

Governing IDPs in Nigeria

Nigeria has been struggling with IDP situations for the past ten years. The migration governance framework captures IDPs under the Forced Migration and Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration thematic group and coordinated by NCFRMI. A draft IDP policy is still before the National Executive Council waiting for approval but without any indication of passing soon.

Primarily, IDPs are governed from a humanitarian³¹ perspective such as provision of shelter, healthcare, schooling etc. And from a security perspective, the aim is to end the insurgency in the Northeast. Currently, there are three main levels of humanitarian coordination of IDPs in Nigeria. First is the Presidential Committee for the Northeast Initiative³² which was set up in 2009 to oversee all remedial programmes aimed at addressing the crisis in the Northeast. Second, the Inter-Ministerial Taskforce for the Northeast,³³ made up of relevant MDAs, serves as a platform to effectively confront the humanitarian response

³⁰ See the UNHCR's Operational Data Portal (<https://data2.unhcr.org/en/country/nga>).

³¹ The 2019 Humanitarian Response Plan is part of a three-year strategy (2019 – 2021) funded from Nigeria's share of the USD\$ 2.17 billion multi-year funding that was pledged for the Lake Chad region by donors at the high-level Oslo II conference in 2018. There is also the Humanitarian Response Strategy (January 2019 to December 2020) initiated by UNOCHA, following a \$1 billion appeal in 2018 that was 67% funded (\$700 million).

³² This initiative was established by President Muhammadu Buhari in 2017 as a national strategy, coordination and advisory body for all humanitarian interventions, transformational and developmental efforts in the Northeast. See <https://pcni.gov.ng/>.

³³ The Taskforce was set up in 2016 to support the government's efforts in managing humanitarian situations. The Ministry of Budget and National Planning leads the taskforce.

in the Northeast. Third, the Humanitarian Civil-Military Coordination is a platform for planning and exchanging information between humanitarian actors and the military.

Many IDPs in northeast Nigeria are hosted in camps because of the volatile security situation in the Northeast where many of these camps are located. Even so, IDPs that are hosted in southern Nigeria like Lagos – far away from Boko Haram insurgencies – are also kept in camps. There are also IDP camps in Abuja. Relief efforts for IDPs are more based on providing basic needs. Besides, these assistances suffer corruption and logistical challenges. For instance, there were reports of corrupt officials from National Emergency Management Agency and Borno State Emergency Management Agency diverting aid and as a result of logistical challenges it was impossible to pay the monthly sum of N40,000 that the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) pays IDPs in Yobe state via a UBA bank account (Alqali, 2016).

Governing refugees in Nigeria

Refugee governance in Nigeria, follows the NCFRMI Act³⁴ including other international conventions on refugee protection. These conventions include the Articles of Convention relating to the status of refugees of the 28th July 1951 UN convention on Refugees, the 1954 UN convention on statelessness, the 1969 OAU³⁵ convention governing the specific aspects of refugee problems in Africa, and the 2008 ECOWAS Common Approach on Migration (emphasis on protection of asylum seekers).³⁶

Furthermore, the NCFRMI Act also mandates the NIS to issue passports for refugees in accordance to International Protection No. 11 (example Prima Facie or individual recognition approach to Refugee Status).³⁷ However, it takes significant time for an asylum seeker to be granted refugee status in Nigeria. Also, inconsistencies in the process of status recognition puts asylum seekers in limbo for a long time risking potential secondary movement that can lead to irregular migration and trafficking.

On refugee settlements, Nigeria is currently pursuing the UNHCR's comprehensive refugee response framework for local integration. This approach creates refugee settlements next to Nigerian communities to enhance refugee self-reliance in accordance to the Global Compact on Refugees (Nwanelo, NCFRMI, Abuja, 1 April 2019).

³⁴ Nigeria's 1989 National Commission for Refugees Act was repealed and enacted into the NCFRMI Act in 2009.

³⁵ Organisation of African Union now known as African Union (AU).

³⁶ The ECOWAS Common Approach on Migration introduces a regional approach to migration through gender dimension, human trafficking, and managing legal migration. The non-binding document acts as an overarching framework on migration.

³⁷ A prima facie approach is the recognition by a State of refugee status based on readily circumstances in the country of origin. Even though prima facie is often used for groups, a State can also recognise refugee status individually.

4.2 Political stakes

There is a political instrumentalization of IDPs in Nigeria by the government which is about showing strength in the war against Boko Haram.

During the 2015 election, after Goodluck Jonathan's administration had exhausted all means for defeating Boko Haram, the then-presidential candidate Muhammadu Buhari, who is also a former military man, campaigned heavily on having what it takes to defeat Boko Haram and stabilise the region. However, after four years and the rising number of IDPs, the situation is putting political pressure on the government (Paul & Ahmed, 2018). Considering the rising numbers of IDPs and Buhari's legitimacy as a military man, dealing with IDPs has become a major feat to show military strength. Thus, Buhari declared the Northeast as "post-conflict stabilisation phase" on June 6, 2018 (*News24*, 2018). In the same month the army asked 2000 IDP to return to their home district of Guzamala, adding to the 1,200 IDPs who were also asked to return to the city of Bama in Borno state in April 2018 (Orji, 2018; Urowayini, 2018). Many international actors including the UN criticised these desperate political moves noting the volatile situation of the region in the face of intensified bombings by Boko Haram.

Another reason for the high political stakes of the Buhari government in the IDP situation is because the president is from Northern Nigeria. According one interlocutor, "*they [Northerners] are his [President Buhari] people. He understands that context better than the irregular migration in the south which is in the interest of the EU to stop it*" (Sodeinde, ICMPPD, Abuja, 11 April 2019). This goes with the understanding that the President is "*spending a lot of political capital in the North on the plight of the IDPs*" (ibid).

Contrary to the indications by the government that the Northeast is in a post conflict stabilisation phase, there are real threats facing IDP populations in the region. The accidental bombing of an IDP camp in Borno state by the Nigerian Army led to over 230 deaths and shocked the public (Bergstresser, 2018). In another bombing of an IDP camp near the Cameroon border, 52 people were killed. IDP camps in Nigeria were also targeted by suicide bombers in 2017 (Bergstresser, 2018). The government may not only be in denial about the security situation of IDPs but seems to prioritise the politicisation of the situation than the security of IDPs. Despite the political instrumentalization of IDPs, camps remain sorely underfunded, i.e. some money is thrown at the issue but not actually enough to improve the lives and conditions of IDPs.

ECOWAS is less active in the IDP scene in Nigeria in terms of interventions. Meanwhile the EU and its member states funds several humanitarian projects in the Northeast (see table 2) in addition to military support to the Nigerian army by some EU member countries like Germany (Nkala, 2015).

In terms of refugees, there are no well-known active refugee groups with political interest. According to a UNHCR staff, the major stake for refugees in Nigeria includes access to land

for settlements, provision of schools, accessibility to healthcare and livelihood opportunities (Hollo, UNHCR, Abuja, 26 March 2019).

4.3 Societal relevance

The space for the IDP situation and refugees in Nigeria's social discourse is low, especially compared to the topic of irregular migration. This is not to say IDPs are not part of the social discussions at all. For instance, following up to this year's election, there was a media outcry when the president declared the Northeast as a post-conflict area and the Nigerian army asking IDPs to return to their hometowns. Although these public outbursts were mainly in relation to the political instrumentalization of the situation, they constitute social relevance on the IDP topic. However, the interviews show that the entire situation in the Northeast still seems far away from many people in Nigeria. In the words of one of the interlocutors, "*in Nigeria, if you talk about the situation in the northeast, people who are in Lagos, some people don't even know this situation exists*" (Gbandi, NIDO, Hamburg 13th February 2019). This is because, despite the number of people affected by the conflict in the Northeast, social discussions are dictated by social platforms that are concentrated in southern Nigeria and are focused on issues in the South than in the North.

The social reception towards refugees in Nigeria is cordial. This is also because Nigeria is not new to refugee situations. The country hosted several refugees from the region, significantly Liberian and Sierra Leonean refugees in the 1980s and 1990s. Nevertheless, low key conflicts about land and other resources between refugee settlement and host communities are common but are often settled by community leaders from both sides.

4.4 Conclusion

Displacement in Nigeria is a concern considering the number of people affected. The intensified and ongoing war between insurgents like Boko Haram and the Islamic State West Africa (ISWA) and the Nigerian Armed Forces has displaced over 1.9 million people and counting. Also, Nigeria is a host to over 1992 refugees, the majority of whom are from Cameroon. Nonetheless, some conclusions can be drawn:

First, there is political instrumentalization of IDPs by the Buhari government aimed at showing military strength. This is as a result of pressure to fulfil political promises and for political gains plus the fact that the president himself comes from the conflict region.

Second, as a result of the political interest of the government in IDPs, the Buhari administration has spent a considerable amount of resources on the IDP. Nevertheless, after ten years, there is no indication that the IDP situation will be over any time soon. The lack of improvement in the IDP situation indicates that the political will to address IDPs is not to genuinely help IDPs but rather to show military strength in the insurgency. Considering that many IDPs have lost their livelihoods as a result of the conflict and require basic needs

including schooling for the many children, the IDPs in Nigeria continue to need all the required support in addition to security.

Third, apart from those times when political discourse translates into socially relevant issues especially during elections, IDP issues have less societal relevance. This is partly because many Nigerians see internal displacement as a form of internal migration.

Fourth, the role of ECOWAS in IDPs governance in Nigeria is very minimal if not invisible. Despite the growing number of IDPs in the region, IDP is not part of the six domains of the ECOWAS common approach on migration. Considering that “*many IDPs and refugees are also trafficked and involved in irregular migration*” (Hollo, UNHCR, Abuja, 26 March 2019), IDP issues should be on ECOWAS’ agenda.

5 Refugees and Asylum Seekers from Nigeria

In addition to IDPs, the Boko Haram insurgency has also forced many Nigerians to flee to neighbouring countries for asylum and refugee protection. As of May 2019, the total number of Nigerian refugees in Neighbouring countries was 239,667 made up of 118,868 in Niger, 104,884 in Cameroon and 15,915 in Chad (UNHCR, 2019a).

The Lake Chad Basin (Nigeria, Niger, Cameroon and Chad) have been struggling with a serious humanitarian situation since the Boko Haram insurgency spread from Nigeria to these neighbouring countries in 2014. The attitude and reaction of Nigerian and Chadian states (and host communities) towards Nigerian refugees have been largely positive compared to Cameroon. The Cameroonian military often suspect Nigerian refugees as Boko Haram members.

Nigeria also has the highest number of asylum applicants to the EU among other West African countries. In 2018 alone, a total of 25,755 Nigerian migrants applied for asylum across Europe (Eurostat, 2019). According to the European Asylum Support Office, aside the conflict in the Northeast, Nigerians seek asylum in the EU for reasons like state persecution of militant groups in the Niger Delta, separatist movements, and non-state persecution from herders and farmers, student cult, and traffickers and trafficking networks (EASO, 2019)

5.1 Governance

5.1.1 Nigerian Refugees

International conventions limit Nigeria when it comes to dealing with Nigerian refugees in other countries. On this, the UNHCR has the international mandate. And just like the Nigerian government, the governments of Niger, Cameroon and Chad are bounded by the 1954 UN convention on statelessness and the 1969 OAU convention governing the specific

aspects of refugee problems in Africa. Nevertheless, under the Nigerian migration governance framework, the NCFRMI oversees Nigerian refugees and asylum seekers under the thematic group on Forced Migration and Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration.

In March 2017, Nigeria signed an agreement with Cameroon, and the UNHCR on repatriation. The agreement committed the two countries to the voluntary return of Nigerian refugees. Although the agreement has been violated several times by Cameroon, Nigeria is looking to make similar agreement with Chad. The reason is, that with these agreements, Nigeria’s role in dealing with its refugees in these countries is emboldened. For example, in April, the Nigerian government, in consultation with UNHCR, voluntarily repatriated 4000 Nigerian refugees from Cameroon to Yola in Adamawa State (UNHCR, 2019). This was only possible because of the tripartite repatriation agreement between the two countries and UNHCR. Although these returns are shows of protection for citizens, the subtle political instrumentalization by the Nigerian government cannot be ignored.

5.1.2 EU Asylum

The EU and EU member states govern the issue of Nigerian asylum seekers in the EU. The number of asylum applications from Nigerian citizens in Europe, between 2016 and 2018 are presented in the charts below.

Figure 5:

EU Asylum Decisions

Chart 1: Final decisions on total 48,955 asylum applications by Nigerians to the EU in 2016

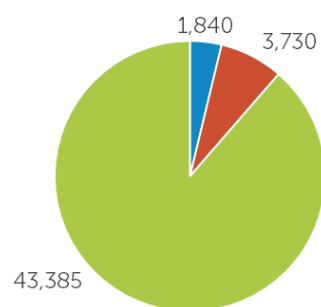


Chart 2: Final decisions on total 41,855 asylum applications by Nigerians to the EU in 2017

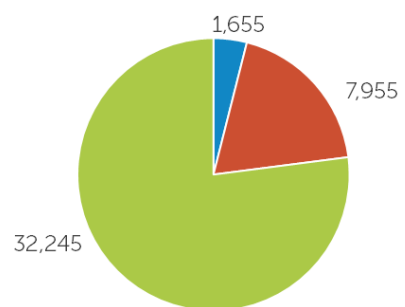
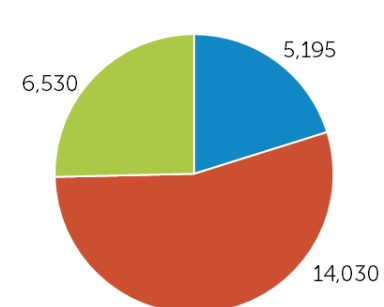


Chart 3: Final decisions on total 25,755 asylum applications by Nigerians to the EU in 2018



■ accepted ■ rejected ■ undecided

Source: Own elaboration based on Eurostat data.

5.2 Political Stakes

Apart from the Nigerian government, neighbouring countries like Cameroon, Chad and Niger, and the UNHCR have political stakes in the Nigerian refugees across the region. These political interests are often shown through repatriation efforts. The repatriation of Nigerian refugees by the Nigerian government is a sign of improved security in Nigeria even if this comes at the cost of refugee protection. As mentioned earlier, these efforts constitute political legitimacy for the Buhari government. If Nigerian refugees continue to stay in neighbouring countries, it signals insecurity. Therefore, to highlight their own stability, the government have tried several times to repatriate Nigerian refugees within the Lake Chad Basin. It is also embarrassing for the Nigerian government if it continues to have refugees abroad. It signals the government is unable to handle the conflict and may also be involved in political persecution. As Whitaker points out, it is in the interest of states to label migrants as migrants rather than refugees, since the producing states can avoid political embarrassment and receiving states can avoid giving them the refuge they seek (Whitaker, 2017). In the case of Nigeria, it is better to repatriate Nigerian refugees and bring them into IDP camps and label them as IDPs to avoid the embarrassment of the having refugees abroad.

In the case of Cameroon, the political stake is to reduce the number of Nigerian refugees who are often suspected by the Cameroonian army to be Boko Haram members. This has led to maltreatment and the subsequent unlawful repatriation of Nigerian refugees. For instance, in April and May 2017, the Cameroonian army unlawfully deported 13,000 Nigerian refugees from the Minawao Camp³⁸ in Cameroon to the Banki displacement camp in Nigeria (Human Rights Watch, 2017). Again, in June 2017, intense pressure from the Cameroonian authorities forced the Nigerian authorities into sending military trucks to help Cameroon deport around 1,000 Nigerian asylum seekers (Human Rights Watch, 2017). This move by the two countries without the consent of the UNHCR constituted unlawful forced return and a breach of international laws. Deported Nigerian refugees from Cameroon often end up “back to war, displacement and destitution in Nigeria’s Borno state”(Human Rights Watch, 2017; 1). For example, many of the refugees who returned from Cameroon are known to have died when insurgents attacked the Banki IDP camp in September 2017. Furthermore, some refugee returnees are kept in militarised camps in very restrictive security perimeters set by the Nigerian military who manage these camps. Although they may be back in their own country, these refugee returnees’ have very limited capacity to engage in meaningful livelihood activities.

UNHCR sees the protection of refugees and asylum seekers as its mandate and therefore takes a political stake in the topic. We found that the UNHCR was side-lined on issues relating Nigerian refugees in Cameroon. The Cameroonian military since 2015 have been very restrictive in giving the UNHCR access to register Nigerian refugees in the Minawao Camp.

³⁸ The Minawao camp is dedicated to Nigerian refugees. According to the Human Rights Watch, 2017 report, refugees in this camp face harsh treatments including limited access to water and food, and they suffer violence and abuse by the Cameroonian soldiers.

The UNHCR is however critiqued by right activists for only disparaging the Cameroonian authorities publicly for their force deportations after the signing of the tripartite agreement between UNHCR, Cameroon and Nigeria in 2017.

5.3 Societal relevance

Nigerian refugees who are repatriated from neighbouring countries to Nigeria are different from deportees from the EU. On the one hand, a majority of Nigerian refugees in the Lake Chad Basin are from northeast Nigeria, and when they return to Nigeria, many end up in militarised IDP camps. And as IDPs in camps, they hardly get social attention. For instance, the platforms where accurate information on Nigerian refugees are shared and discussed are usually web pages and social media handles of international organisations. For political publicity, repatriation by the government are sometimes reported in national media platforms but after their return the social relevance reduces.

On the other hand, Nigerian asylum seekers in Europe are mostly from southern Nigerian states and upon their deportation, many either return to their States of origin or stay in Lagos. Here, many face stigmatisations when they come back without wealth.

5.4 Conclusion

The Boko Haram insurgency has forced many people in northeast Nigeria to flee to neighbouring countries. In total there are 239,667 Nigerian refugees scattered across the Lake Chad Basin; Niger (118,868), Cameroon (104,884) and Chad (15,915).

Apart from the conflict in northeast Nigeria, state persecution of militant groups in the Niger Delta, separatist movements, and non-state persecutions from herders and farmers, student cult, and traffickers and trafficking networks have forced many Nigerians to seek asylum in the EU.

Since 2014, Cameroon have been forcefully returning Nigerian refugees against international law and conventions. The bad treatment of Nigerian refugees by Cameroonian soldiers is used by the Buhari government as justification to help repatriate Nigerian refugees. However, the interest of the Nigerian government in these repatriations is to show a sense of stability and security which also underlines the government's campaign promise. Furthermore, the refugee situation is an embarrassment for the Nigerian government because it gives a sign that the government cannot control conflict and may also be involved in political persecution. But many of these refugees are returned to IDP camps and further suffer worse conditions. By doing this, the Nigerian authorities only changes the label of the people involved from refugees to IDPs without corresponding improvement in humanitarian provisions.

6 Immigration in Nigeria

Nigeria has the highest number of immigrants in West Africa even though the number has reduced because of the economic slowdown after 2015.³⁹ As of 2015, Nigeria had 1.2 million immigrants totalling at 0.7% of the Nigerian population. According to the last census (2006), many migrants in Nigeria (51.4%) were from the ECOWAS region.

6.1 Governance

The NIS within the Ministry of Interior oversees immigration issues in Nigeria within the framework of the 2015 Immigration Act which replaced the 1963 Immigration Act. The Immigration Regulations 2017⁴⁰ was then passed as an implementation document for the 2015 Immigration Act and aims to gradually “*change immigration governance from control to easing mobility*” (Abubakar, NIS, Abuja, 2 April 2019). Immigration governance falls within the thematic group on Border Management Committee led by the NIS under the NMGF.

Regionally, immigration is governed by the 1969 ECOWAS Free Movement Protocol. The protocol allows ECOWAS citizens with valid ECOWAS document proper documents (Passport or travel certificate) to enter and stay visa-free for up to 90 days in Nigeria. After 90 days, ECOWAS citizens need to apply for an ECOWAS Residency Card. Nigeria is also in the process of deploying the ECOWAS citizenship ID cards⁴¹ following Senegal, Guinea-Bissau and Ghana.

Non-ECOWAS citizens from countries that have visa abolishing agreements with Nigeria do not need visa to enter Nigeria and can stay only up to the number of days stipulated in such agreements. All other non-ECOWAS citizens need a visa to enter the country. Non-ECOWAS citizens with employment contracts in Nigeria must apply through their employer to be granted an expatriate quota from which they can start the process of getting a work permit.⁴²

The 5th domain of the 2018 ECOWAS Common Approach to Migration puts emphasis on the integration of immigrants. According to the interlocutor from the NIS, although the common approach is non-binding document, NIS has adopted its principles on immigrants’ integration. Furthermore, ECOWAS is in the process (still in consultation stage) of coming up with a migration policy for the region. According an interlocutor, this ECOWAS migration

³⁹ Up until 2015, the GDP growth in Nigeria was about 6.5%. In 2016 Nigeria lapsed into recession, the inflation rate rose up to more than 18%. Currently, the country is out of recession and has started growing slowly with an economic growth rate of around 2% and inflation rate between 11 and 12%.

⁴⁰ The Immigration Act 2015 significantly expanded the mandate of the Immigration service, procedures for appointments and clarification of certain mandates and roles in addition to the introduction of state of the art on border control and management procedures.

⁴¹ The ECOWAS ID card is expected to replace existing travel documents (ECOWAS passports and travel certificates) to make it easy for ECOWAS citizens to move within the region.

⁴² Temporary work permit visas, which are essentially a single-entry visa for short term stays of usually 60 days are also possible.

policy “seeks to harmonise the existing migration related protocols and further provide guidelines for member states to maximise migration benefits” (Elumelu, ECOWAS, Abuja, 25 March 2019).

Another area in immigration governance in Nigeria is data generation and database management. The NIS is a major migration data producer and in addition an MoU has been signed between NIS, NBS and NPopC to coordinate migration data gathering and sharing.

Whilst the legal instruments governing immigration to Nigeria are quite extensive, the bureaucratic governance of immigration is still complicated and requires some level of streamlining.

6.2 Political Stakes

Nigeria as the big brother in the region plays a complicated role in relation to ECOWAS. Nigeria played a primary role in the creation of ECOWAS, hosts the headquarters of ECOWAS and still remains the largest funder of ECOWAS, contributing around 40.9% of the community levy between 2013 and 2015 (NAN, 2018). Indeed, gone are the days of mass deportation of ECOWAS citizens as Nigeria continues to play a leading role within the ECOWAS community.

Despite the importance of ECOWAS for Nigeria and the large number of other ECOWAS citizens in Nigeria *‘there is no particular political interest by the Nigerian government in immigration’* (Esene, ICMPD, Abuja, 30th March 2019). Nigerians tend to blame their economic hardships directly on corruption, mismanagements, poor governance among others and generally see immigrants having nothing to do with these problems. Besides, immigration, and more significantly from the ECOWAS community, are culturally and socially well embedded with the sub-regional governance structure and theoretically well regulated under ECOWAS. It is almost as if to say that Nigeria has got its immigration issues taken care of by ECOWAS and its protocols.

EU and EU member states have shown indirect political stakes in immigration issues in Nigeria, by supporting ECOWAS projects financially and technically⁴³ for a well-managed migration movement in the region. The interest of the EU and EU member states on immigration in the region are indirectly part of the overall agenda to reduce irregular migrant flows from West Africa to Europe. There is however a contrast here; the EU is supporting ECOWAS to improve mobility on one hand, while aiming to reduce mobility through border management via ECOWAS member states on the other. This signals inconsistency in EU policies and a controversial congruous implementation of these policies.

Moreover, some immigrant communities are quite active. For example, the Senegalese and Beninese communities in Oyo, Ibadan state are active in areas of security and administrative

⁴³ Examples are the EU funding of the €26 million Support to Free Movement of Persons and Migration in West Africa (FMM West Africa) project and the €10 million Spanish fund for ECOWAS for building capacities of member states on migration management.

services for their members. They work hand in hand with the NIS in the registration of members and getting themselves known and getting acquainted with government policies targeting migrants. Many of these migrant groups in Nigeria serve as liaisons between the Nigerian government and members of their migrant communities.

6.3 Societal relevance

Most of the migrant populations are unskilled or low skilled, especially those from the ECOWAS region. Many are integrated in the Nigerian society via inter-marriages and business partnerships. For example, migrants from countries like Niger, Cameroon and Chad, are easily interwoven into the Nigerian society as a result of shared religion, language, markets, and culture.

Whilst xenophobia is hardly an issue in Nigeria, xenophobic attacks on Nigerians elsewhere is a major social discussion and attracts strong criticism from the government via the diaspora commission. For example, on 13 August 2019, Nigerian students called for the expulsion of South Africans in Nigeria and gave an ultimatum to South African Companies to relocate their businesses following the xenophobic attacks on Nigerians and subsequent deaths of Nigerians in South Africa (*African News*, 2019). The diaspora commission's action on these issues is very important. On the one hand, while their strong condemnation of xenophobic attacks on Nigerian citizens abroad is welcome, the manner and tone of such criticisms on the other hand, should be diplomatic and cautious in order to not instigate counter-xenophobic actions against migrants in Nigeria.

6.4 Conclusion

Nigeria has the highest number of immigrants in West Africa, especially from the region. Nigeria plays the big brother role in the sub region and as a result, the country is generally tolerant of ECOWAS citizens in its immigration governance. EU and EU member states continue to have indirect stakes in immigration issues in Nigeria. Many of these EU stakes are directed towards the regional body ECOWAS with the goal that it translates into national immigration governance. Yet, the EU's involvement with ECOWAS to promote free movement in the region is a disjuncture to the EU's involvement in irregular migration issues with ECOWAS member states which seems to reduce migration towards Europe.

Although, Nigerians have been victims of xenophobic attacks in different parts of the world in recent times, the social attitude and relationship with immigrants in Nigeria is generally positive. This is attributed to the close cultural mix especially between Nigerians and citizens of the sub-region.

7 Major findings

On the whole, migration is not a priority for the Nigerian government. However, it is increasingly becoming a critical political and social issue of interest for Nigerians. The embarrassment that came from the high number of stranded irregular Nigerian migrants in Libya was a wakeup call for Nigeria. In addition, the European response to the higher number of refugees and other migrants in Europe since 2015 puts pressure on Nigeria to act.

Overall, Nigeria contends with the following forms of migration. First, diaspora migration attracts the most political stakes for the government. With the high amount of remittances from the Nigerian diaspora, the government has not shied away from efforts to engage the diaspora on development and investments. Nigerian diaspora's political, financial, and high-skilled human capital in addition to their densely connected transnational networks are important resources. The government acknowledges this hence the proactive approach towards diaspora migration governance.

Second, irregular migration and trafficking are complex topics for many actors in Nigeria. The government's low funding shows their low interest in these topics. The EU and EU member states are however fixated on campaigns to stop irregular migration and human trafficking which has turned 'Benin City into the Agadez of Nigeria'.

Intricately connected is European policymakers relentlessness on returns against the lack of interest of Nigeria on this without workable alternatives. Thus, without improved structures, employment opportunities and accessible regular migration pathways, these awareness campaigns may not only be ineffective, but returns can become a nuisance to the country. For instance, frustrated returnees without jobs and prospects can add to the already existing social pressure on the few socio-economic infrastructures which can lead to returnees joining armed conflicts and crimes that can destabilise the already stretched democracy. It is also a possibility that returnees can constitutionally put pressure on the government and demand good governance and accountability. However, there is no sign that the government is ready to take chances with any of such possible outcomes.

Also, apart from trafficking (which require legal mandates for its governance), international actors have overshadowed government agencies on the issues of irregular migration, return and reintegration in Nigeria. Theoretically, government agencies and ministries coordinate the existing different forms of migrations but practically these agencies are mostly occupied with capacity building and trainings while international agencies control the funds and dictate migration governance directives. Taking over the complete coordination and managing returns and reintegration by government agencies and commissions holds a significant political stake for the government agencies in the coming years, given that corruption is checked at the minimum.

Third, internal displacement and Nigerian refugees hold significant political stakes for the Buhari government itself whose ultimate political goal is the successful return of displaced persons to their villages as a show of (military) strength. Such a goal is tied to the political

promise by the current government to end the Boko Haram insurgency in northeast Nigeria. Admittedly, the Buhari administration has committed immense political and humanitarian resources to IDPs in Nigeria and Nigerian refugees in neighbouring countries. However, the over concentration on show of strength has resulted in IDPs and Nigerian refugees sent back to unsafe villages and IDP camps respectively. In the end, it shows the deplorable state of IDPs and Nigerian refugees as political instruments in the face of the most complicated conflicts the country has ever witnessed.

Asylum applications in Nigeria take a long time to process, and the provision of services to refugees are progressively slow. However, refugee settlement communities are well received by host communities through the local integration approach. The largest number of refugees are Cameroonians who fled to Nigeria as a result of the Anglophone and Francophone conflict in Cameroon.

Furthermore, Nigeria continues to attract many immigrants, especially from within West African. Immigration laws are quite progressive and are slowly shifting towards easing mobility. Long gone are the days of mass deportations of ECOWAS citizens in Nigeria as the country continues to play the critical big brother role in West Africa.

7.1 Migration governance

Nigeria has achieved a lot when it comes to governing migration issues. Nigeria has a National Migration Policy since 2015, a National Labour Migration Policy from 2014, a National Policy on Diaspora Matters (recently validated) and an Internal Displacement Policy (yet to be adopted). To implement the National Migration Policy, a comprehensive Migration Governance Framework has been put in place. Central to this framework is thematic groups which categorise and define various migration related themes and place them under the coordination of national agencies and commissions. However, despite the growing importance of migration and the number of organisations involved, migration is by no means one of the top priorities of the Buhari administration. Instead, defeating the insurgency in the Northeast, corruption, getting the economy back on track, creating employment for the youth and improving infrastructure are among the many issues that take precedence.

Four major findings in terms of migration governance are presented:

1. **The Nigerian government is proactive in some areas, but reactive in others**

The development of the National Migration Policy comes as a result of the governments reacting to existing standards, calls from international partners and to some degree, dictates from financial and technical support by international organisations like the IOM. In some areas like labour migration and diaspora, the government is decidedly proactive. Such policies mirror Nigeria's interests in migration. Firstly, the government is interested in diaspora engagements for financial and other forms of investments for national development. Secondly, Nigeria is

interested in regularised migration for its citizens. A labour migration policy therefore shows the various ways the government seeks to manage regular migration pathways.

2. The Nigerian government is active in policy development; less on implementation

The political will which led to existing impressive migration policies and governance framework in Nigeria does not correspond to the political will for implementation. This is highlighted by a lack of federal budget and funding of migration related activities. Moreover, the low synergy among different actors despite the migration framework is partly to blame for low implementation of migration related policies. Meanwhile, the role of CSOs and NGOs in existing implementation frameworks is both limited and unclear.

3. On return and readmission, Nigeria prefers bilateral to multilateral agreements

The findings show that any return and readmission agreement between the EU as a body and Nigeria are considered to be multilateral and would give total access for EU members to return Nigerians. To avoid such implications Nigeria prefers to negotiate with individual EU states bilaterally on such issues.

In light of these findings, we recommend that:

- Nigeria should fully implement the whole migration policies and frameworks before adding anything else.
- CSOs and NGOs' role in migration governance should be made clear to harness the contribution of such organisations directly for policy development and implementations.
- EU and EU countries should consider the following:
 - Considering that many Nigerians still migrate for the reason of education, increasing the number of student visas and expanding the Erasmus+ and similar programs will be very helpful.
 - Consider a mix of conditions for regular migration such as scholarships, and skill training programs that allow those outside the socioeconomic class to compete for regular pathways.
 - Invest in vocational and skills trainings that are useful for both Nigerian and European job markets which can lead to future labour exchanges.
 - Reconsider the existing restrictive visa regimes as it encourages irregular migration. Instead, easing visa procedures and accessibility should be taken seriously.
 - Partner Nigeria to retain its skilled professionals who can in-turn create jobs for low skilled Nigerians.

7.2 The political stakes of migration

The political stakes of migration for Nigeria changes on the different migration topics.

We found that:

1. The Nigerian government prioritises diaspora relations, but only for development opportunities

Diaspora migration is on the top list of migration related interests for Nigeria mainly for the developmental contributions from the diaspora via remittances. Meanwhile retaining highly qualified skills in Nigeria and enforcing voting rights for Nigerians in diaspora is low on the government's interest.

2. The EU prioritises irregular migration, but without improving legal pathways

The EU and its member states are actively engaged in efforts to reduce irregular migration to Europe without the corresponding increase in regular pathways and being actively involved in return and reintegration of Nigerians.

3. The topic of return is complex and used politically

Yet, the issue of different forms of return attract the political attention of Nigeria. On the one hand, the fact that Nigeria has refugees in neighbouring countries and a high number of IDPs is embarrassing for the West African superpower. Therefore, repatriating Nigerian refugees from neighbouring countries and returning IDPs to their villages respectively is a prime goal. For the Buhari government, achieving this goal is a symbol of control over the conflict in the Northeast, and constitutes a political legitimacy. However, such disparate goals have put many returnee IDPs and refugees under the direct threats of Boko Haram insurgencies. On the other hand, Nigeria is embarrassed by the maltreatment of stranded irregular Nigerian migrants in Libya and hence is tolerant towards initiatives to safely return and reintegrate them. However, Nigeria is not particularly interested in the return of irregular migrants (including deportees). The high unemployment rate in addition to the many existing problems means returning these migrants back to Nigeria will further weaken existing political, social and economic infrastructures.

4. The approach towards ECOWAS by the EU is contradictory

ECOWAS' efforts in the region is aimed towards regional mobility and integration. However, there is a low commitment from ECOWAS towards IDP situations in the region. Also, the EU's effort in ECOWAS member states are towards reducing mobility to Europe through stricter boarder control, contradicting their own efforts of supporting ECOWAS's regional mobility/integration goal for a borderless west Africa.

In light of these findings, we recommend that:

- Nigeria should come out boldly and be consistent with its interest and what it wants from migration agreements, for example on labour migration.

- The Nigerian diaspora is under no obligation to invest or remit money to Nigeria. Therefore, the government should concentrate efforts on good governance and other initiatives to motivate the diaspora to invest in the country.
- Refugees and IDPs should be repatriated/returned only to safe areas and the instrumentalization of these people must stop.
- For the EU and EU member states, any migration related efforts should take Nigerian interests seriously.
- Meanwhile EU initiatives that undermine mobility in the region should be reconsidered since such actions can lose out on Nigeria as a partner for migration governance and have adverse effects on the region.

7.3 Societal discourse on migration

Societal discourse on push factors of migration are embedded in the broader discourse on social challenges like corruption, unemployment, inadequate infrastructure and mismanagement of public resources. The government's inability to retain skilled Nigerians is also blamed for emigration and loss of skilled persons. Migration issues, especially on irregular migration and human trafficking, constitutes a significant part of societal discourse.

We also found that:

1. There is a mixed reaction towards returnees and those travelling irregularly. There is still stigmatisation towards returnees who come back with no wealth. Meanwhile there is a growing lack of sympathy towards irregular migrants (including trafficked victims) as many see irregular migration as individual choices. In fact, the question of whether people who migrate irregularly do so voluntarily or are forced by social challenges and lack of prospects in Nigeria is highly contested in social debates.
2. Gradually, migration issues are gaining momentum in people's minds thanks to the social education on irregular migration and its dangers. However, it is uncertain how this will shape social discourse in the coming future. With many actions and resources floating around to warn people about using irregular routes, a change in national orientation towards meeting social needs and hope of future prospects in Nigeria is critical.

Abbreviations

ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
EU	European Union
EDF	European Development Fund
EUTF	European Union Trust Fund
FMLP	Federal Ministry of Labour and Productivity
ICMPD	International Centre for Migration Policy Development
IDP	Internally Displaced Persons
ILO	International Labour Organization
IOM	International Organization for Migration
MDAs	Ministries, Departments and Agencies
MGF	Migration Governance Framework
NAPTIP	National Agency for the Prohibition of Traffic in Persons and Other Related Matters
NCFRMI	National Commission for Refugees Migration and Internally Displaced Persons
NBS	National Bureau of Statistics
NiDCom	Nigerians in Diaspora Commission
NIS	Nigeria Immigration Service
NLMP	National Labour Migration Policy
NMP	National Migration Policy
NNVS	Nigeria National Volunteer Service
NPopC	National Population Commission
UN	United Nations
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

Bibliography

- Adelaja, A., Labo, A., & Penar, E. 2018. "Public Opinion on the Root Causes of Terrorism and Objectives of Terrorists: A Boko Haram Case Study." *Perspectives on Terrorism* 12(3), 35-49. Retrieved from <https://www.universiteitleiden.nl/binaries/content/assets/customsites/perspectives-on-terrorism/2018/issue-3/03--public-opinion-on-the-root-causes-of-terrorism-and-objectives-of-terrorists-a-boko-haram-case-study.pdf>
- Adepoju, A. 1996. "International migration in and from Africa: Dimensions, Challenges and Prospects." Population, Human, Resources and Development in Africa (PHRDA), Dakar.
- African News*. 2019, August 13. "Nigerian students call for expulsion of South Africans. The Morning Call." Retrieved from <https://www.africanews.com/2019/08/13/nigerian-students-call-for-expulsion-of-south-africans-the-morning-call/>
- Agbakwuru, J. 2018. "FG inaugurates Migration Centre in Edo." <https://www.vanguardngr.com/2018/03/fg-inaugurates-migration-centre-edo>.
- Alqali, A. 2016. "Nigeria: When Aid Goes Missing." *IWPR*. Retrieved May 21, 2019, from Institute for War and Peace Reporting website: <https://iwpr.net/global-voices/nigeria-when-aid-goes-missing>
- Aremu, J. O., & Ajayi, A. T. 2014. "Expulsion of Nigerian Immigrant Community from Ghana in 1969: Causes and Impact." *Developing Country Studies* 4(10): 176-186-186.
- Assembly, G. 2000, November. Protocol on Trafficking.
- Benattia, T., Armitano, F., & Robinson, H. 2015. "Irregular Migration Between West Africa, North Africa And The Mediterranean." Retrieved from www.alticonsulting.com
- Bergstresser, H. 2018. "Nigeria." In J. Abbink, V. Adetula, A. Mehler, & H. Melber (Eds.), *Africa Yearbook* 14.
- Brenner, Y., Forin, R., & Frouws, B. 2018. "The "Shift" to the Western Mediterranean Migration Route: Myth or Reality?". *Mixed Migration Centre*. [https://doi.org/August 22, 2018](https://doi.org/August%2022,%202018)
- Carling, J. 2005. "Trafficking in Women from Nigeria to Europe." Migration Policy Institute: 1-6.
- Castillejo, C. 2017. "The EU Migration Partnership Framework Time for a Rethink?". In Die. Retrieved from <http://www.die-gdi.de>
- Clemens, M. A. 2016. "Losing our minds? New research directions on skilled emigration and development." *International Journal of Manpower* 37(7): 1227-1248. <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJM-07-2015-0112>
- Darkwah, S. A., & Verter, N. 2014. "Determinants of international migration: The Nigerian experience." *Acta Universitatis Agriculturae et Silviculturae Mendelianae Brunensis* 62(2): 321-327. <https://doi.org/10.11118/actaun201462020321>
- EASO (European Asylum Support Office). 2019. *Country Guidance: Nigeria*. <https://doi.org/10.2847/096317>
- European Commission. 2017. Partnership Framework on Migration - one year on. Fact Sheet, (June 2017). https://eeas.europa.eu/sites/eeas/files/factsheet_partnership_framework_on_migration.pdf
- European Union. 2016. Nigeria: Action and Progress under the Migration Partnership Framework - June 2016 to June 2017. (June 2016), 2016-2018. Retrieved from https://eeas.europa.eu/sites/eeas/files/factsheet_work_under_partnership_framework_with_nigeria.pdf

- Green, D.P., Wilke, A. and Cooper, J. 2018. "Silence Begets Violence: A mass media experiment to prevent violence against women in rural Uganda." Working paper.
- Gbandi, K., & Komolafe, V. 2019. "Communiqué of the 2nd Nigerian Global Diaspora Conference April 2019, Almere, Netherlands." *The African Courier*. Retrieved from <https://www.theafricancourier.de/africa/communique-of-the-2nd-nigerian-global-diaspora-conference-april-2019-almere-netherlands/%0D>
- Haas, H. de. 2011. "Irregular Migration from West Africa to the Maghreb and the European Union: An Overview of Recent Trends". *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 37(32): 522–523. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1369183X.2010.512208>
- Hoffmann, C. 2018. "Die Stadt der Rueckkehrer." <https://www.tagesschau.de/ausland/benin-city-rueckkehrer-101.html>.
- Home Office, UK. 2017. Country Policy and Information Note Nigeria: Boko Haram. Retrieved from https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/778715/Nigeria_-_BH_-_v3_-_January_2019.pdf
- HRW (Human Rights Watch). 2017. "They Forced Us Onto Trucks Like Animals ." <https://doi.org/978-1-6231-35201>
- Ikwuyatum, G. O. 2016. "The Pattern and Characteristics of Inter and Intra Regional Migration in Nigeria." *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science* 6(7) : 114–124.
- IOM (International Organization for Migration). 2017. Migration Flows to Europe 2017 Overview: 1–13. Retrieved from <https://reliefweb.int/report/world/migration-flows-europe-2017-overview>
- . 2019a . Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration. Retrieved September 11, 2019, from International Organization for Migration, Nigeria website: <https://nigeria.iom.int/programmes/assisted-voluntary-return-and-reintegration>
- . 2019b. Traditional and Religious Leaders Join Forces to Curb Irregular Migration. Retrieved July 7, 2019, from Regional Office for West and Central Africa website: <https://rodakar.iom.int/news/traditional-and-religious-leaders-join-forces-curb-irregular-migration>
- IOM MENA. 2015. *Migration trends across the Mediterranean: connecting the dots*. Migration Policy Practice IOM, (June).
- Kazeem, Y. 2017. "Nigeria's first ever diaspora bond has raised \$300 million." Quartz Africa. Retrieved from <https://qz.com/africa/1014533/nigeria-has-raised-300-million-from-its-first-ever-diaspora-bond/>
- Kola, T. 2018. "You are on your own, Buhari tells Nigerian irregular migrants." Retrieved July 11, 2019, from *The African Courier*. Retrieved from <https://www.theafricancourier.de/migration/you-are-on-your-own-buhari-tells-nigerian-irregular-migrants/>
- Luyten, K. 2019. "Legal migration to the EU." Retrieved from [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2019/635559/EPRS_BRI\(2019\)635559_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2019/635559/EPRS_BRI(2019)635559_EN.pdf)
- Mantzikos, I., Adibe, J., Onuoha, F., Solomon, H., Baken, D. N., Salaam, A., ... Siegle, J. 2013. "Boko Haram: Anatomy of a Crisis." In M. Ioannis (Ed.), *e-International Relations*. Retrieved from <https://www.e-ir.info/wp-content/uploads/Boko-Haram-e-IR.pdf>
- Marchand, K., Langley, S., & Siegel, M. 2015. "Diaspora Engagement in Development: An Analysis of the Engagement of the Nigerian Diaspora in Germany and the Potentials for Cooperation. "

- Mberu, U. B., & Pongou, R. 2010. "Nigeria : Multiple Forms of Mobility in Africa ' s Demographic Giant. " *Migration Policy Institute* (June 2010): 1–22.
- NAN (*News Agency of Nigeria*). 2018, December 6. "Nigeria contributes \$710m to ECOWAS, more than 13 countries put together." *Premium Times*. Retrieved from <https://www.premiumtimesng.com/news/headlines/299453-nigeria-contributes-710m-to-ecowas-more-than-13-countries-put-together.html>
- Newdawn, N. 2019, January 19. "Nigerians disgrace Atiku, Saraki at Town hall meeting in U.S - New Dawn Nigeria. *Newdawn Newspaper*, Nigeria.
- News24*. 2018, July 7. "Buhari says Boko Haram-hit NE Nigeria now "post-conflict." Retrieved from <https://www.news24.com/Africa/News/buhari-says-boko-haram-hit-ne-nigeria-now-post-conflict-20180706>
- Nkala, O. 2015. "Germany To Broaden Scope of Support for Nigerian Army." Retrieved September 23, 2019, from *Defence News* website: <https://www.defensenews.com/land/2015/11/20/germany-to-broaden-scope-of-support-for-nigerian-army/>
- O'Grady, S. 2018. "Nigerian Migrants Get a Welcome Home. Jobs Are An- other Story." <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/01/world/africa/migrants-nigeria-libya.html>.
- OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development). 2019. *Migration Data Brief 5: Are the characteristics and scope of African migration outside of the continent changing?*. <https://doi.org/10.0%>
- Olaiya, T. A., & Chukwuemeka, E. B. 2019. "Programme Migration for Development (PMD) Migration and Reintegration Advice in Nigeria." Retrieved from www.giz.de
- Orji, S. 2018, July 4." Boko Haram, IDP returns and political calculations in Nigeria. Why are IDPs being urged to return to unsafe areas in Nigeria's northeast? ".*Aljazeera News*. Retrieved from <https://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/opinion/boko-haram-idp-returns-political-calculations-nigeria-180704135508696.html>
- Osezua, C. O. 2016. "Gender Issues in Human trafficking in Edo State, Nigeria." *Revue Africaine de Sociologie* 20(1): 36–66. <https://doi.org/10.2307/90001845>
- Pascoal, R. 2018. "Stranded: The new trendsetters of the Nigerian human trafficking criminal networks for sexual purposes."
- Paul, C., & Ahmed, K. 2018. "As Nigeria elections loom, refugees ordered back to unsafe region." *Reuters*. Retrieved May 21, 2019, from *Reuters* website: <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-nigeria-security/as-nigeria-elections-loom-refugees-ordered-back-to-unsafe-region-idUSKCN1LE18K>
- Plambech, S. 2017. "Sex, Deportation and Rescue: Economies of Migration among Nigerian Sex Workers." *Feminist Economics* 23(3): 134–159. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13545701.2016.1181272>
- Policy Development Facility. 2017. "Nigeria Diaspora Study: Opportunities for Increasing the Development Impact of Nigeria's Diaspora." Retrieved from <https://www.pdfnigeria.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/Nigeria-Diaspora-Study-Final-Report-2.pdf>
- Sharkdam, W., Akinkuotu, O., & Ibonye, V. 2014. "The Nigerian Diaspora And National Development: Contributions, Challenges, And Lessons From Other Countries." *Kritika Kultura* 23: 292–342. <https://doi.org/10.13185/KK2014.02318>
- Shoaps, L. L. 2013. "Room for Improvement: Palermo Protocol and the Trafficking Victims Protection Act." *Lewis & Clark Law Review* 17: 931–972.

Süß, J. 2019. "Can the European Union deliver feasible options for legal migration? Contradictions between rhetoric, limited competence and national interests." <https://doi.org/SSN 2364-7043>

The African Courier. 2018. "You are on your own, Buhari tells Nigerian irregular migrants." Retrieved September 5, 2019, from Migration website: <https://www.theafricancourier.de/migration/you-are-on-your-own-buhari-tells-nigerian-irregular-migrants/>

Udo, R. K. 1975. "Migrant tenant farmers of Nigeria: a geographical study of rural migrations in Nigeria". *African University Press*, Lagos.

UNHCR (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees). 2018. End of visit statement, Nigeria by Maria Grazia Giammarinaro. Retrieved May 16, 2019, from Statement website: <https://www.ohchr.org/en/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=23526&LangID=E>

———. 2019a. Nigeria Situation. Retrieved June 30, 2019, from Operational Portal website: https://data2.unhcr.org/en/situations/nigeriasituation#_ga=2.72954389.74165055.1561847052-1572706767.1549380893

———. 2019b. Operational Portal - Nigeria.

UN (United Nations) . 2000. "United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime." *Trends in Organized Crime* 5(4): 11–21. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12117-000-1044-5>

UNDESA (United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs). 2015. *Trends in International stocks: The 2015 Revision*. United Nations database, POP/DB/MIG/Stock/Rev.2015

Urowayini, W. 2018, June 17. "Boko Haram: 2000 IDPs return to Guzamala LGA to celebrate Eid-el-Fitr 6 years after – Army". *The Vanguard*. Retrieved from <https://www.vanguardngr.com/2018/06/boko-haram-2000-idps-return-guzamala-lga-celebrate-eid-el-fitr-6-years-army/>

USDOS (United States Department of State). 2018. *2018 Trafficking in Persons Report - Nigeria* Publisher. Retrieved from <https://www.refworld.org/docid/5b3e0ab6a.html>

Whitaker, B. E. 2017. "Migration within Africa and Beyond." *African Studies Review* 60(2): 209–220. <https://doi.org/10.1017/asr.2017.49>

World Bank. 2019. *Migration and Development Brief : Migration and remittances recent developments and outlook*. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17441730.2013.785721>

Appendix

List of interviews and focus group, on Nigeria's migration policy			
Date	Interviewee	Organization/profession	Place
12.02.2019	Amanda Bisong	European Centre for Development Policy Management, Maastricht	Accra
13.02.2019	Kenneth Gbandi	Nigerians In Diaspora Organisation	Hamburg
14.02.2019	Austin Obinna Ezejiofor	Nnamdi Azikiwe University	Abuja)
14.03.2019	Sunday Onazi	Federal Ministry of Labour and Productivity	Abuja
18.03.2019	Frantz Celestin	International Organization for Migration	Abuja
20.03.2019	Eleni Zerzelidou	Delegation of the European Union to Nigeria and ECOWAS	Abuja
21.03.2019	Ambassador Jesper Kamp	Danish Embassy	Abuja
21.03.2019	Imabong	Women Trafficking and Child Labour Eradication Foundation	Abuja
22.03.2019	Emmanuel Agodi	Nigerian National Voluntary Service	Abuja
25.03.2019	Tony Elumelu	Economic Community of West African States	Abuja
25.03.2019	Orakwe Arinze	National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons	Abuja
26.03.2019	Roger Hollo	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees	Abuja
27.03.2019	Roland Nwoha	Idia Renaissance	Benin City
28.03.2019	anonymous	Edo State Taskforce Against Human Trafficking	Benin City
27.03.2019	Blessing Ehiagwina	Girls Power Initiative	Benin City
28.03.2019	Bibiana Emenaha	Committee for the Support of the Dignity of Women	Benin City
28.03.2019	anonymous	Migration Resource Centre	Benin City
29.03.2019	Alenkhe O. Augustine	Academic (University of Benin City)	Benin City
30.03.2019	Mattias Esene	International Centre for Migration Policy Development	Abuja
01.04.2019	Unyime Johnson	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees	Benin City
01.04.2019	Charles Nwanelo Ken	Migration division, National Commission for Refugees, Migrants and Internally Displaced Persons	Abuja
01.04.2019	Lawal Hamidu	Refugees division, National Commission for Refugees, Migrants and Internally Displaced Persons	Abuja
02.04.2019	Ismaila Dangou	Economic Community of West African States	Abuja
02.04.2019	Lawal Abubakar	Nigeria Immigration Service	Abuja
02.03.2019	Jide Olatuyi	Policy Consult (CSO)	Abuja
03.04.2019	Teju Abisoye	Lagos State Employment Trust Fund	Lagos
03.04.2019	Abrham Tamrat Desta	International Organization for Migration	Lagos
04.04.2019	Olufunso Owasanoye	Human Development Initiative	Lagos
04.04.2019	Mienye Mimi Badejo	Migration Resource Centre , Min. of Employment	Lagos
08.04.2019	Emmanuel Obiyan	Global Initiative Against Illegal Migration	Benin City
11.04.2019	Mojisola Sodeinde	International Centre for Migration Policy Development	Abuja
01.07.2019	Pantovic, Olivera	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit	Eschborn

IMPRINT

PROF. DR. ANDREAS MEHLER
Director

andreas.mehler@abi.uni-freiburg.de

Publisher:

Arnold Bergstraesser Institute for
cultural studies research e.V.
at the Albert-Ludwigs-University Freiburg im
Breisgau
Windausstr. 16
79110 Freiburg in Breisgau, Germany
Phone: +49-761-88878-0
Email: info.abi@abi.uni-freiburg.de

Value Added Tax Id.-Number:

DE 142116817

Authorized Representative:

Prof. Dr. Andreas Mehler (Director)

Cover Picture:

© Photo by Kwaku Arhin-Sam

Responsible Supervisory Authority:

Ministry of Science, Research and Art in
Baden-Württemberg



© 2019 Arnold Bergstraesser Institute for
cultural studies research e.V.

The Political Economy of West African Migration Governance (WAMiG)

The WAMiG project highlights the political dimension of migration governance and the multiple stakeholders. To do this, the project considers how migration governance instruments and institutions are made and implemented, the stakes and stakeholders involved or excluded and the societal discourse that surrounds these interests. The qualitative study focuses on four case studies—the Gambia, Niger, Nigeria and Senegal.

The project is based at the Arnold-Bergstraesser Institute (ABI) in Freiburg. It is funded by the Stiftung Mercator and undertaken within the framework of the Mercator Dialogue on Asylum and Migration (MEDAM). MEDAM is a research and consultation project that identifies and closes gaps in existing research and develops specific recommendations for policy makers.

As the WAMiG project focuses on the African perspective and its implications for European policy making, WAMiG and MEDAM policy recommendations may differ slightly.



FUNDED BY

