

1.3.6. Traffickers and trafficking networks

[Main COI references: [Targeting](#), 2.4; [Trafficking](#), 1.1.3, 2.1, 2.3]

Trafficking in human beings (THB) is defined in the EU Anti-Trafficking Directive as: ‘The recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or reception of persons, including the exchange or transfer of control over those persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation.’ [\[10\]](#)

The exploitation can take different forms, such as prostitution or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labour, slavery, removal of organs, ‘baby factories’, etc. Trafficking occurs within Nigeria as well as to third countries.

Madams and criminal networks, including cults, are central actors to the process of sex trafficking. Traffickers may use deception, such as false offers of jobs and promises of safe travel to destination countries, and manipulation through traditional beliefs (*juju*). Violence against victims has also been used. In some circumstances, the victims’ families support and encourage the trafficking for economic reasons.

^[10] Directive 2011/36/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 5 April 2011 on preventing and combating trafficking in human beings and protecting its victims, and replacing Council Framework Decision 2002/629/JHA. [[back to text](#)]