

2.2.5. Children victims of trafficking

2.2.5. Children victims of trafficking

An ‘alarming prevalence’ of child trafficking, abduction, and forced labour has been reported in Nigeria during the reference period.¹⁸⁰ According to NAPTIP, the average age of trafficked children in Nigeria is 15.¹⁸¹ Children are exploited in activities like illegal mining,¹⁸² domestic servitude, begging, street vending and forced labour in areas like textile manufacturing and agriculture.¹⁸³ Recruitment often occurs via criminal networks or trafficking groups that exploit vulnerable families, sometimes operating under the pretext of offering support or charitable assistance.¹⁸⁴ Children may also be abducted or unlawfully acquired, particularly from socio-economically disadvantage backgrounds, for purposes like illegal adoption or forced labour.¹⁸⁵ Within the phenomenon of so-called ‘baby-factories’, minor girls are exploited,¹⁸⁶ while infants are trafficked and sold¹⁸⁷ to infertile couples.¹⁸⁸

Many children are being forced into street begging also by their Quranic school teachers ¹⁸⁹ known as *mallams*. They exploit mostly boys from rural areas through forced labour in street begging and seasonal agricultural work, including across borders in Cameroon and Chad. These children often reside in unregulated, makeshift boarding facilities where they face unsanitary conditions, neglect, and exposure to disease. Reports also indicate cases of physical and sexual abuse by some *mallams* and older students. Observers note that rising poverty levels may be contributing to increased enrolment in these schools and heightened vulnerability to forced labour.¹⁹⁰

Bottom of Form

In December 2024, law enforcement authorities dismantled a child trafficking syndicate led by Pastor Dayo Bernard of the End Time Army Ministry, based in the Jos-Bukuru area (in Jos LGA of Plateau State). During the operation, five children between the ages of 2 and 4 were rescued. According to police reports, the pastor allegedly used evangelism as a means to persuade parents to release their children under the false promise of educational sponsorship. He later confessed to abducting and selling a total of 13 children.¹⁹¹ In January 2025, authorities rescued more than 200 children and dismantled several gangs and human trafficking networks as part of a series of nationwide operations focused on combating child exploitation.¹⁹² Arrests of ‘armed bandits’ were carried out in Kogi, Katsina and Ondo states.¹⁹³

The Chairperson of the Plateau State Gender and Equal Opportunities Commission attributed the increase in trafficking to ongoing insecurity, the rise in orphaned children, and the presence of IDP camps. She noted that some parents, due to lack of awareness, inadvertently hand over their children to traffickers posing as aid workers. A representative of the National Coordinator of the Christian Women for Excellence and Empowerment in Nigerian Society (CWEENS), reported that children are typically sold for between 350 000 and 750 000 naira (about 195 Euros and 420 Euros).¹⁹⁴

Armed groups, including Boko Haram, subject children to forced labour and sex slavery.¹⁹⁵ For more information see also [2.4. Children](#) and [2.10. Individuals targeted by Boko Haram](#).

[180](#)

PLAC, Nigeria Annual Human Rights Report 2024, December 2024, [url](#), p. 50

[181](#)

Nigeria, FMWASD, National Beijing +30 review, November 2024, [url](#), p. 62

[182](#)

AP, In Nigeria's lithium boom, many mines are illegal and children do much of the work, 12 December 2024, [url](#)

[183](#)

UNODC, Human trafficking, n.d., [url](#); USDOS, Trafficking in Persons Report 2024 – Nigeria, (covering April 2023 to March 2024), 24 June 2024, [url](#)

[184](#)

OCCRP, Nigerian authorities Take Down Child Trafficking Syndicates, 23 January 2025, [url](#)

[185](#)

OCCRP, Nigerian Pastor Arrested in Major Child-Trafficking Bust, 13 Children Rescued, 7 January 2025, [url](#)

[186](#)

Vanguard, NAPTIP decries surge in baby factories, sale of children across Nigeria, 20 May 2024, [url](#); DW, Why Nigeria's 'baby factories' continue to thrive, 18 March 2024, [url](#); BBC News, 'Pregnant' for 15 months: Inside the 'miracle' fertility scam, 25 November 2024, [url](#)

[187](#)

Guardian (The), HURIWA seeks emergency action on baby factories, child trafficking, 28 May 2025, [url](#)

[188](#)

Eziechine, A. O. and Esene. Q. O., Baby Factory Syndicate: An Emerging Trends of Trafficking in Agunloye's Disposable Womb, June 2024, [url](#), p. 166

[189](#)

UN Women, Assessment of national responses and strategies to combat and eliminate trafficking in persons and forced migration in Africa, January 2024, [url](#), p. 7

[190](#)

USDOS, Trafficking in Persons Report 2024 – Nigeria, (covering April 2023 to March 2024), 24 June 2024, [url](#)

[191](#)

HumAngle, New Sect Linked to Human Trafficking Emerges in Nigeria, 20 January 2025, [url](#)

[192](#)

Nigeria Police Force, [Twitter], posted on: 20 January 2025, [url](#)

[193](#)

OCCRP, Nigerian Authorities Take Down Child Trafficking Syndicates, 23 January 2025, [url](#); Nigeria Police Force, [Twitter], posted on: 20 January 2025, [url](#)

[194](#)

HumAngle, New Sect Linked to Human Trafficking Emerges in Nigeria, 20 January 2025, [url](#)

[195](#)

Freedom House, Freedom in the world 2025, Nigeria, 26 February 2025, [url](#)

© European Union Agency for Asylum 2026 | Email: info@euaa.europa.eu