

MOBILE BONDAGE: HUMAN TRAFFICKING OF AFRICAN WOMEN

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Commissioned by AkiDwA



Background

- AkiDwA believes that trafficking of women is a form of gender-based violence
- Over the years, the organisation has encountered several victims of human trafficking in the course of their work
- Majority of victims trafficked for the purpose of sexual exploitation are women, African women
- AkiDwA can contribute on this issue further and explore how the problem can be combatted and this is a step in this direction.

Research Objectives

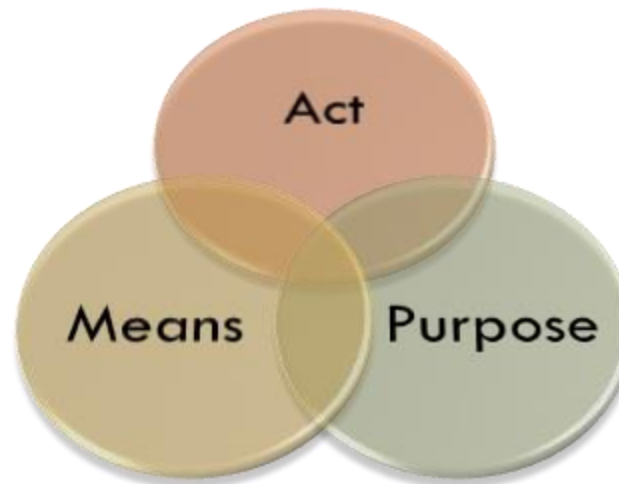
- To understand the African context
- To raise awareness of issues specific to working with African women and girls who are trafficking victims.
- To document human rights violations suffered by African women and girls who emigrate, in the countries of origin, transit, and destination.
- To identify strategies for the effective prevention of African women from being trafficked
- The application of international human rights standards to AkiDwA's work with African women and girls who are victims or alleged victims of human trafficking.

Methodology



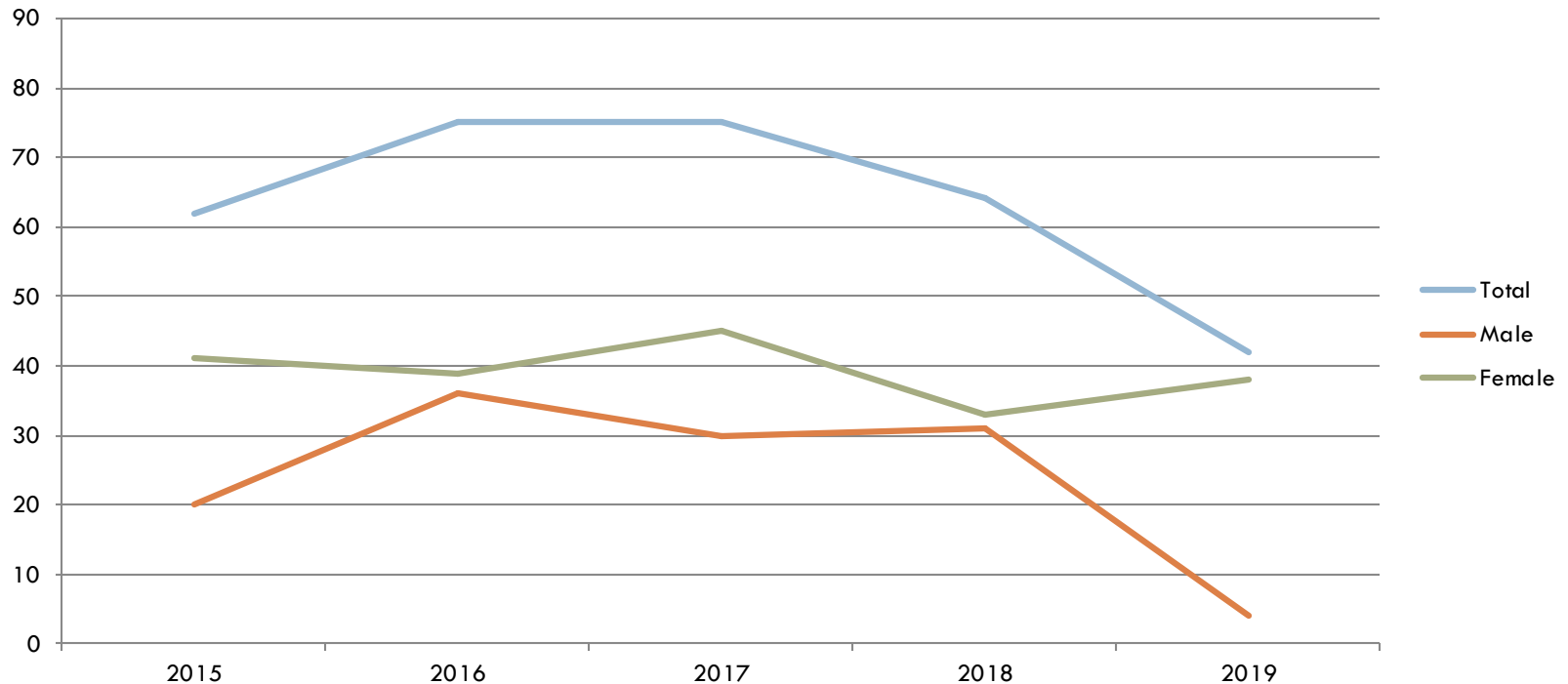
- Consultation with expert organisations working on Trafficking focusing mainly on African women
- Literature review
- Interviews/Testimonies of victims of trafficking from Nigeria

What is Human Trafficking?



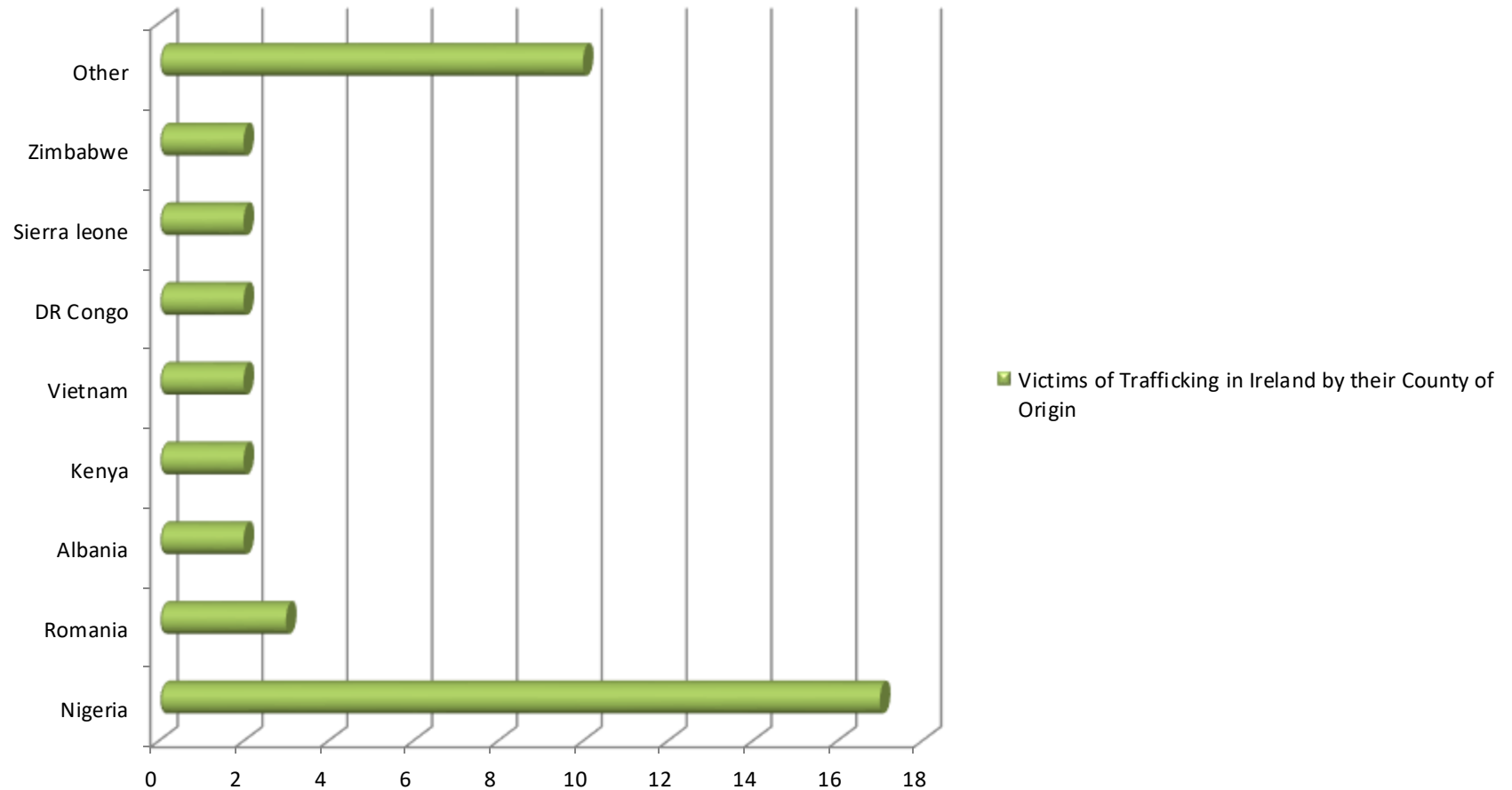
It is the act of ***recruiting, transporting, transferring, harbouring or receiving*** persons which is done by the means of ***force or threat of force or other forms of coercion, abduction, fraud, deception, abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or the giving or receiving of payments*** for the purpose of exploitation such as ***sexual exploitation, labour exploitation, forced begging, forced criminality or organ removal or other types of exploitation***

Recorded Victims of Human Trafficking in Ireland



Over the last five years, there have been a total of 319 victims of trafficking reported in Ireland

Victims of trafficking in relation to their countries of origin



Synthesis of Push and Pull Factors

Pull Factors

- Demand for sexual services
- Economic Prospects
- Higher Standard of Living
- Safety
- The Allure of the “ West”

Push Factors

- African Juju
- Poverty
- Illiteracy
- Gender Inequality
- Gender Based Violence
- Familial Crisis
- Morality Crisis
- Police Corruption
- Insecurity/Political instability

Demand for Sexual Services

- “- Over 650 women are typically advertised for prostitution online every day on Escort Ireland*
- Hidden subgroups and private markets of coerced and trafficked women within the Irish sex trade.”*
- Sexual Exploitation Research Programme, (SERP)2020*

Victim's voices

“I’ve suffered so much in this life. For someone to say she can help me. She said I would be working in a restaurant to make the money to pay her back for helping me arrange my travel. I was happy.”

- Gift

Impact of Human Trafficking on Women



- Sexually Transmitted Infections/ Diseases
- Violence
- Torture
- Consumption of Hard Drugs
- Post trafficking trauma

Victim's voices

““When I think about it, I am not happy. They urinated on my face. They beat me. I usually cry when they are doing it. When I am shouting no one would come and save me. They had paid my Madam, so they did what they liked to me.”

-Gift

National Plan to combat human trafficking

- Referral of potential victim by:
 - Border Control at the Airport
 - Non-Governmental Organisations
 - The victim themselves could report to the local Gardaí
 - Workplace Relations Commissions
 - A concerned citizen may also referral potential victim of human trafficking

- Identification of suspected victim of Anti Human Trafficking Unit

National Plan to combat human trafficking

Victim Support Structure

- Healthcare Plan
- Legal Support
- Accommodation Arrangements
- Immigration Arrangements

The Domestic Legislation and Administrative Arrangements

- Criminal Law (Human Trafficking) Act 2008
- Criminal Law (Human Trafficking) (Amendment) Act 2013
- Criminal Law (Sexual Offences) Act 2017
- International Protection Act 2015
- Illegal Immigrants (Trafficking) Act 2000
- The Child Trafficking and Pornography Act 1998
- Administrative Immigration Arrangements for the Protection of Victims of Human Trafficking

Ireland Policy Challenges – The African Women Perspective

□ The Problem with Identification: The Role of the Gardaí

Status Dichotomy

- Prosecutor vs Supporter
- Illegal immigrant vs Victim of Trafficking

Ireland Policy Challenges – The African Women Perspective

- The Problem with Identification: The Victim Witness
 - Language Barrier
 - Fear of the authorities
 - Familial ties or communal ties with traffickers
 - Juju Oath
 - Ignorance of the law

Victim's Voices

“I was afraid of seeing police, afraid that I would be caught. I cannot talk to the police. I will try ... In Germany; police came to carry people home.. I don't want to go home.”

- Omo

Ireland Policy Challenges – The African Women Perspective

- The Accommodation Dilemma
 - Risk of further harm from SGBV
 - Insecurity
 - Privacy
 - Access to services

Victim's voices

“In Baleskin, I was staying alone. Now in this B&B it is difficult. I am sharing room with people. I can't take my counselling sessions ... I had to wait till my roommate was away before I could even take your call.”

- Uyi

Strategy and Recommendations

- The establishment of gender-specific accommodation
- Statutory definition of reasonable grounds for suspicion that a person is a victim of human trafficking
- Codification of the current practice guidelines that currently provide for the national referral mechanism and the victim support structure.
- The recognition of human trafficking as a ground for granting asylum in national law.
- The optimisation of human trafficking related Garda training which includes a sensitisation of the background of African women.
- Raising public awareness of human trafficking especially of the decriminalisation of the sale of sex work for professionals among relevant communities.
- Transnational anti-trafficking effort between Ireland (destination country) and countries of origin

Strategy and Recommendations

- The inclusion of AkiDwA, an organisation which tackles issues affecting African women, as stakeholders in the Ireland's anti-trafficking policy to provide key services including:
 - Access to employment
 - Access to education and training
 - Accompaniment to support services
 - Accompaniment to Garda interviews
 - Raising Awareness in its network of the African communities and asylum seekers in direct provision
 - Provide African victim centred sensitization for professionals.

THANK YOU FOR LISTENING

This Baseline Research on Human Trafficking of African women will be made available on
www.akidwa.ie

