



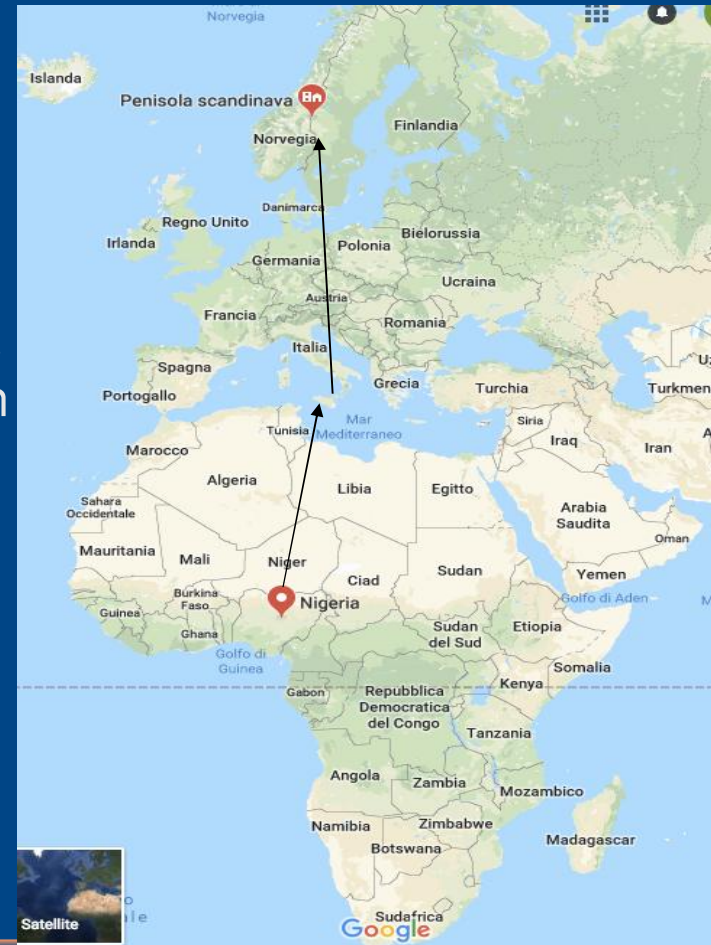
Nigerian women and girls as victims of trafficking in Italy and Europe: migration, prosecution and protection challenges

Carmela Grillone, University of Palermo

Seminar on the Exploitation of undocumented migrants, Helsinki 12-13 April 2018

Northern Europe: a second hand market for Nigerian girls

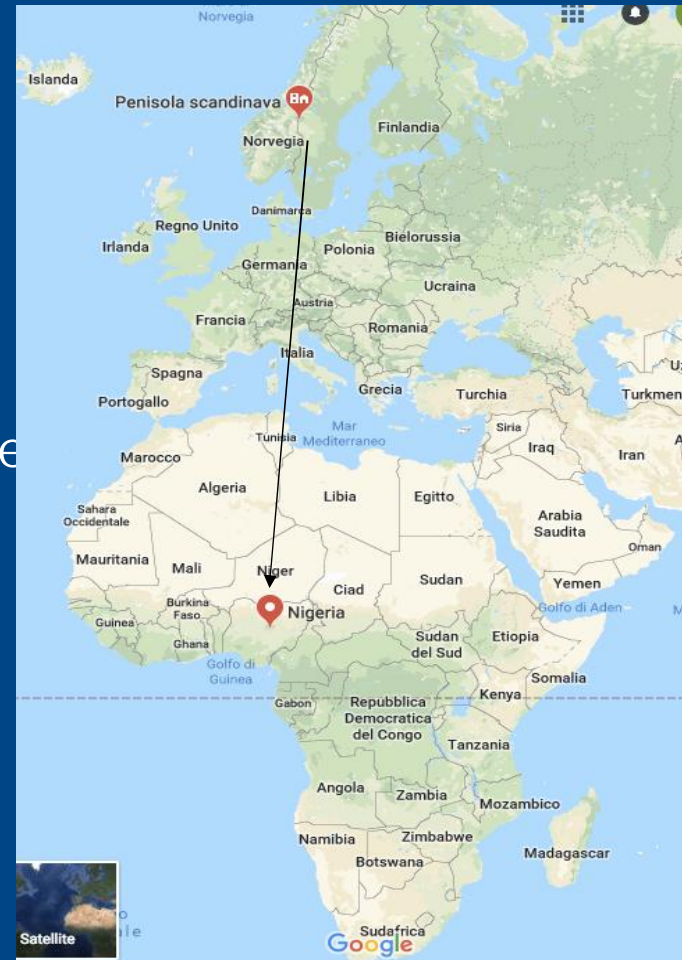
- Italian clients request adolescents/underage girls (lack of age assessment)
- “Older” Nigerian girls move to Northern Europe after having been exploited for some years in Italy and after having got an Italian residence permit/ having presented an asylum request to the Italian authorities. Thus, they can be exploited more easily across Europe
- Schengen mobility and turn-over



Repatriation to Nigeria from Northern Europe

Main consequences

- Re-trafficking
- Social ostracism
- Inhuman treatments
- Imprisonment in Nigeria even after having served the sentence in Europe (Section 25 of the Nigerian Trafficking Act)
- Abandonment by the family
- Economic and life failure
- Permanent physical and psychological harm, suffering and damage.



The XXIst century gendered migration wave

Quick facts

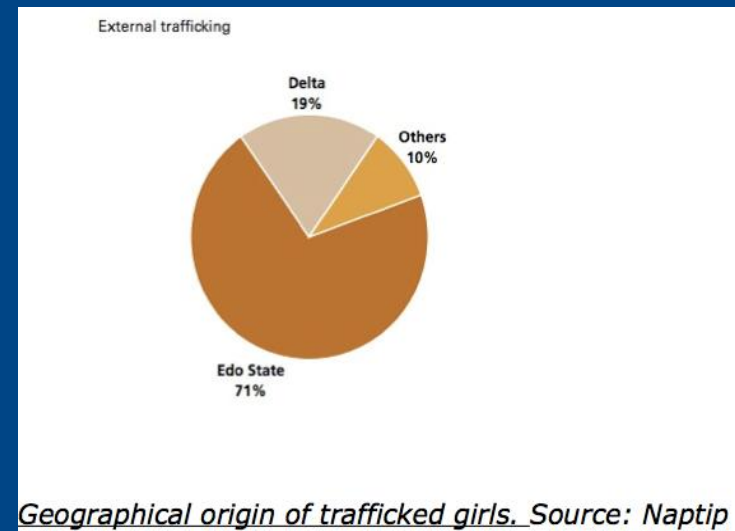
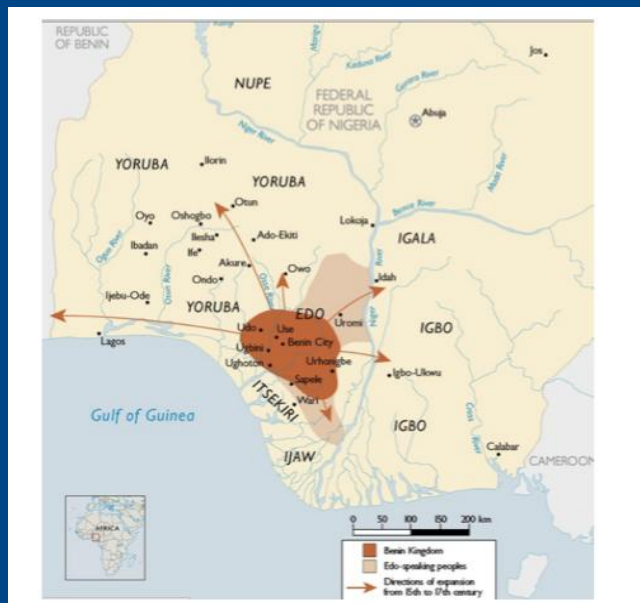
Nigeria:
corruption
136th/177

Niger:
+441%
revenues
in 15
years

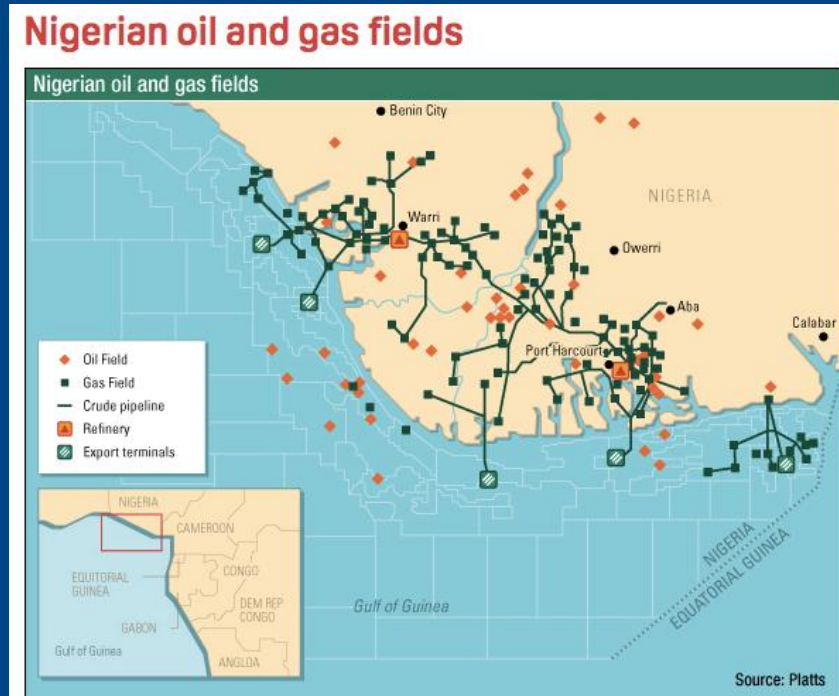
Libya:
parallel
authorities



Geographical origin of Nigerian girls and historical background



Nigerian girls' origin: the Niger Delta between wealth & extreme poverty



The Niger Delta region is one of the richest and most polluted areas in the world. Several foreign companies including Eni (Italy), Total (France), Exxon Mobil (USA), Shell (Netherlands), Chevron (USA) extract gas and oil, pouring bribes to Nigerian politicians, polluting the environment and impoverishing the population

The migratory pact or the spiritual warfare

“JUJU”: the voodoo ritual, the oath and the witchdoctor

RITUAL ELEMENTS

Symbols of life

1. Nails
2. Hair
3. Pubic and axillary hair

The first 3 elements grow and contain keratin, a protein which is resistant to decomposition.

4. Menstrual blood (→ life)
5. Girl's underwear (in some cases)
6. a written contract (in some cases)



Who owns these elements owns the person himself

ORIGIN

Iwaorivi Ritual: On the second day of the funeral, a cloth wrap containing the deceased nails and hair is prepared. The family is the only one taking part in this ritual which seals and makes perpetual the bond between the soul of the deceased and the elder son who will handle the cult of the deceased.

Edo native doctors revoke curses placed on trafficked victims



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By Chijioke Jannah [Twitter](#)



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SAR OPERATIONS

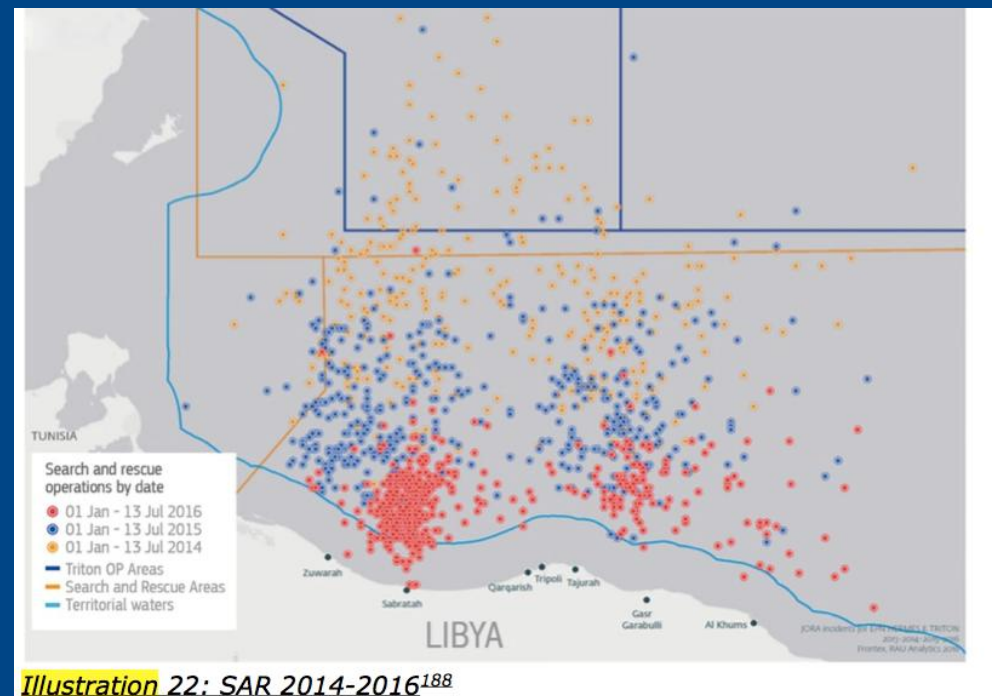


Illustration 22: SAR 2014-2016¹⁸⁸

Migrants' Sicily

Trapani

Landing port for migrants

Palermo

Capital of Sicily and a landing port

Catania

Major city close to Mt Etna, and a landing port for migrants. The train station is a hub for people who wish to seek asylum elsewhere in European countries, although an international accord states they must do so in their first EU destination. Local police ignore those migrants who wish to continue their journey onwards.

Porto Empedocle

Landing port for migrants.

Mineo

There are currently 3,080 migrants staying in this remote centre, a former US base. Almost all are from Nigeria, Ghana or Zambia and arrived in Sicily by boat from Libya. Most had been there about a year, awaiting asylum.

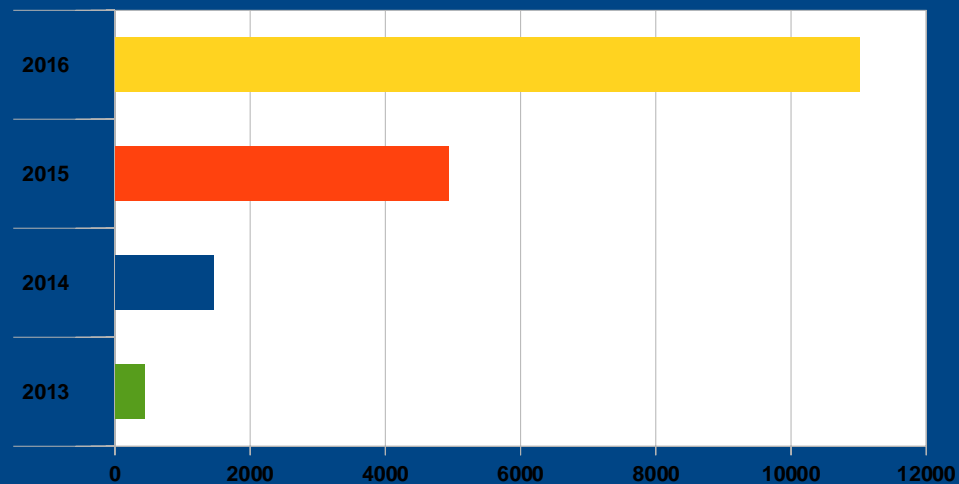
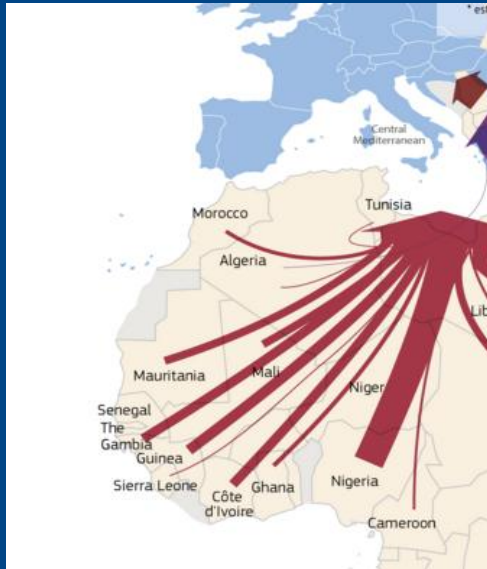
Augusta

Landing port for migrants. At the local "Green School" there are 130 unaccompanied minors, all male.

Pozzallo

Landing port for migrants

Arrivals of Nigerian women in Italy 2013-2016 (IOM)



First non-European country of origin of women/girls trafficked for sexual exploitation: Nigeria

Age: younger in comparison with the past

RIPARTIZIONE DELLE MINORI PER REGIONE DI ACCOGLIENZA

REGIONE	PRESENTI E CENSITE	%
SICILIA	538	51,9
PUGLIA	71	6,8
CALABRIA	69	6,7
EMILIA ROMAGNA	64	6,2
LOMBARDIA	53	5,1
PIEMONTE	50	4,8
TOSCANA	38	3,7
LAZIO	30	2,9
SARDEGNA	23	2,2
VENETO	23	2,2
CAMPANIA	20	1,9
PROVINCIA AUTONOMA DI BOLZANO	19	1,8
PROVINCIA AUTONOMA DI TRENTO	12	1,2
FRIULI VENEZIA GIULIA	11	1,1
LIGURIA	5	0,5
MOLISE	3	0,3
UMBRIA	3	0,3
BASILICATA	2	0,2
MARCHE	2	0,2
ABRUZZO	1	0,1
TOTALE	1.037	100

MINISTERO DEL LAVORO E DELLE POLITICHE SOCIALI

Direzione generale dell'immigrazione e delle politiche di integrazione

FOCUS MINORI STRANIERE NON ACCOMPAGNATE

SEGNALAZIONI al 31/01/2017

DISTRIBUZIONE PER FASCE D'ETÀ

FASCE D'ETÀ	PRESENTI E CENSITE	%
17 ANNI	515	49,7
16 ANNI	244	23,5
15 ANNI	112	10,8
7-14 ANNI	154	14,9
0-6 ANNI	12	1,2
TOTALE	1.037	100

RIPARTIZIONE DELLE MINORI PER CITTADINANZA

CITTADINANZA	PRESENTI E CENSITE	%
NIGERIA	483	46,6
ERITREA	165	15,9
ALBANIA	97	9,4
SOMALIA	54	5,2
COSTA D'AVORIO	43	4,1
MAROCCO	26	2,5
GAMBIA	21	2,0
GUINEA	12	1,2
UCRAINA	11	1,1
MALI	11	1,1
GHANA	11	1,1
ETIOPIA	7	0,7
EGITTO	7	0,7
BRASILE	7	0,7
REPUBBLICA SERBA	6	0,6
ALTRE	76	6,2
TOTALE	1.037	100

Choice of Italy, Sicily and Palermo: issues at stake

- Italy as a destination country (not as a transit country as in the case of most migrants)

- Impunity

- Lack of attention to the phenomenon (enforcing authorities do not consider it as a priority)

- Presence of criminal organizations (both local and Nigerian) already rooted in the territory

“Stanley talks to a woman asking if Jennifer or Blessing can go and work in Palermo because it is a good place (...) in that place the Police does not disturb”.

Wiretapping n. 2738 dated 20.2.2004 and n.5757 dated 5.4.2004, Judgement 12/5/2010, Court of Torino-V Penal Section

From the Sea to the Ports....



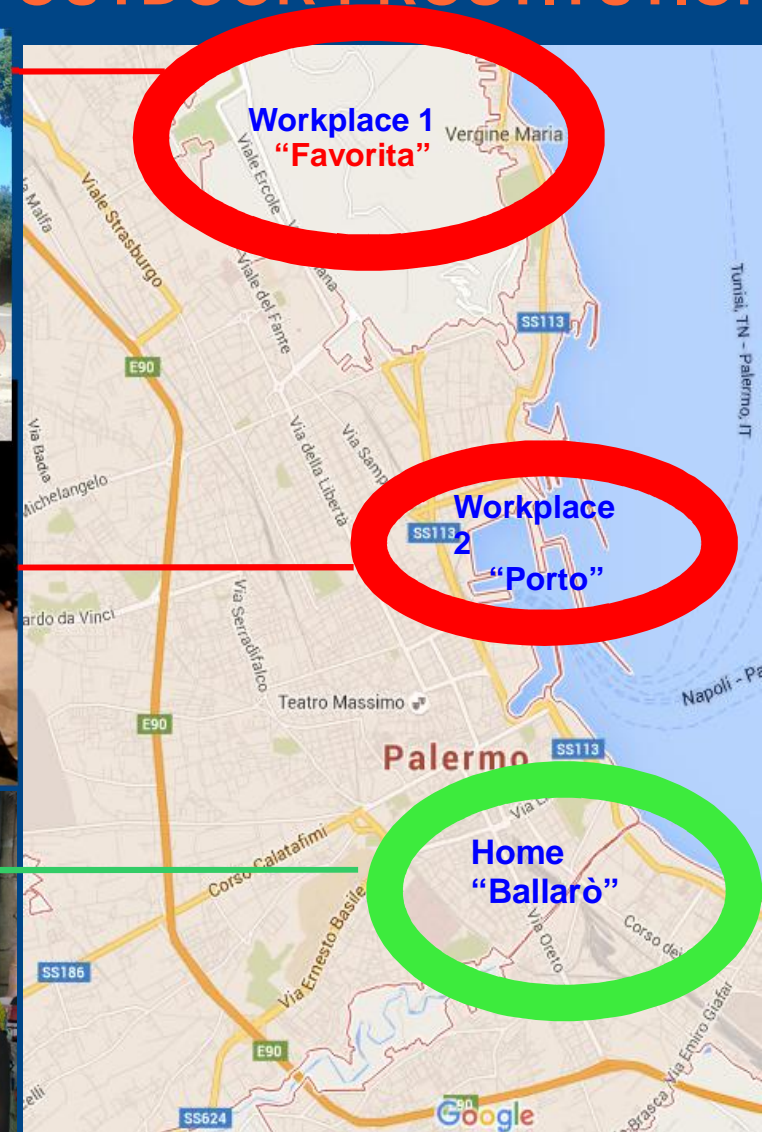
...to Reception Centers.....to the ROAD



Main Nigerian Prostitution Hubs in Italy



PALERMO: MAPPING NIGERIAN OUTDOOR PROSTITUTION



Profile of a girl

Changed identity: Name and Age

Average age: 13-25 years

Origin: predominantly rural areas of the Edo (90%) and Delta (9%) States

Education level: Illiterate (40%), Primary School (30%), Secondary School (20%), University (10%)

Religion: Christian (70%), Muslim (15%), Animist (10%), Atheist / Agnostic (5%)

Tribal Facial Signs: Identification lines of various tribes engraved on the face

Hair: Use of different wigs to avoid identification

Face: covered with makeup and often "bleached" through the use of whitening creams

Languages spoken: Pidgin English and Bini (Edo)



Economy of Slavery: the price of life

— Amount of the debt (travel cost to Italy, rent expenses excluded):

From €35,000 (land+sea) to €70,000 (plane)



**Time needed to
repay the debt:
3-7 years**

Price to be paid by each customer

€5 to 20

Earnings per day

€20-200

Average money requested by the madame

€3,000 per month

House Rent per month

€200-250

Sidewalk Rent ("Pizzo") per month

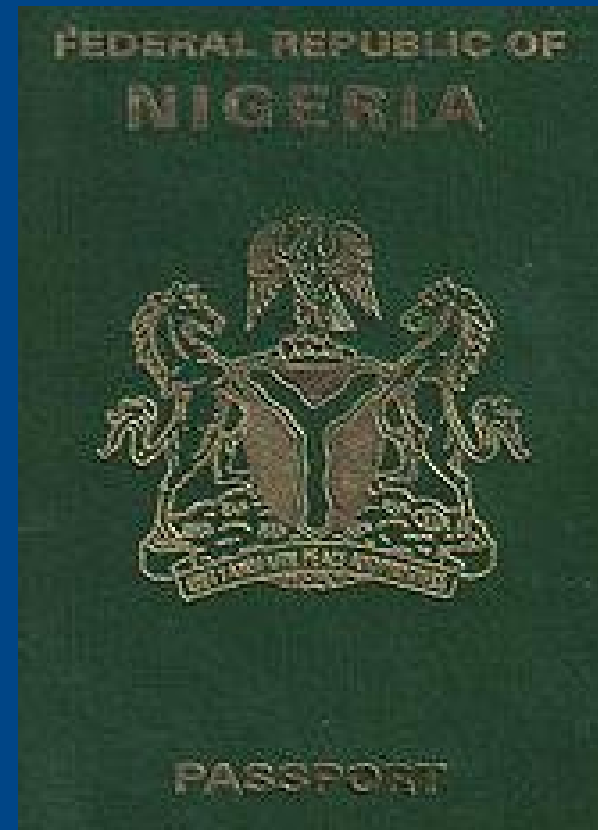
€100-200

Random Sanctions per year

€2000

Documents held by girls

- Undocumented
- Nigerian Passport seized by Madame
- Counterfeited Passport
 - Passport of a deceased girl
- First application for asylum
- Appeal against negative decision by the Territorial Commission
- International protection (from 1 to 5 years)



Ballarò (Palermo): headquarters of the Nigerian mafia in Italy

- Collaboration
Sicilian/Nigerian mafias
- **Black Axe, Eye, Vikings**,
mafia cultist groups
dealing with drugs and
sexual exploitation



2 Legislative tools for sexually exploited girls to have a residence permit in Italy

1. Italian Immigration Law

Art 18 Residence for social protection purposes

It can be granted in 2 cases:

A formal police report containing the exploiters name and details

A request for a “social recovery path” without police report

Critical issues:

- long time

- discretionary power of local police offices in accepting the applications for residence ex art 18 without reporting of a crime

2. International Protection Request (Asylum/Humanitarian Protection)

Critical issues:

- long time
- refusal in 70% of cases
- false declarations

Migration challenges (1)

- EU borders externalization and agreements with origin and transit countries (political will pretends to ignore root causes of migration)
- Unrecognized condition of vulnerability subsequent to the journey (permanent psychological and physical damage)
- Corruption in EU Members' consular offices in Nigeria
- Still unaddressed responsibility of former colonial powers in creating artificial boundaries in many African countries
- EU economic interests override human rights: intervening to export democracy in Arab countries but turning a blind eye on abuses of multinational companies of European origin
- Prostitution policies (reglamentarists and abolitionist countries) as migratory pull factor

Migration challenges (2)

- Economic dependence on trafficking (i.e. Niger)
- Migration de facto dealt with as an emergency not as a structural problem (political issue)
- Denied rights at Fortress Europe: SAR, reception center business, protection of minors (age assessment and legal guardianship)

Prosecution Challenges

HT is a crime whose punishability is very difficult.

- Few trials and convictions ex art 601 p.c. (HTSE): smuggling is more often punished
- Complexity in investigations of transnational crimes
- Lack of collaboration of Nigerian judiciary
- Limited resources (wiretapping in Italy/Nigeria)
- Lack of reliable mediators/translators
- Contradictions of victims in police reports (fear of vodoo/traffickers) -->lack of credibility--> discriminatory attitude of Italian authorities towards victims
- Double role: victim and exploiter
- Difficulties in prosecuting Madams and Traffickers living in other countries (i.e. holders of refugee status in Northern Europe remotely controlling victims from other cities/countries)
- Lack of understanding of forced criminality

PROTECTION CHALLENGES

- Non recognition of exploitation/criminal activities in other countries (Libya, other EU countries)
- Exasperation of victims in multiple interviews (revictimization)
- Poor public funding (+ corruption habits)
- Inadequate assistance in both Italy and Nigeria in terms of
 - > limited time (Art 13: 3+3 months, Art 18: 18 months)
 - > defective shelters in most Italian regions (NGO-run, unqualified personnel, lacking basic services, low safety level, insufficient monitoring by public authorities). In Italy huge regional differences among shelters (indicator: number of girls successfully completing a program)
- Discretionary access to Art 18 protection policy
- Antitrafficking national toll-free number: not accessible from Lyca
- Uncoordinated and poor identification practices
- Outreach Street Units: entirely NGOs-run
- Huge number of dropouts from rehabilitation programs

Need for a normative convergence at EU level
A European law on mafia-like associations (In Italy: Penal Code art. 416 bis)

Confiscation of assets even without a final conviction based on the Directive on the freezing and confiscation of instrumentalities and proceeds of crime (2014/42/EU)

A European unified approach to the right of asylum in trafficking cases

Set-up a periodical monitoring mechanism addressing refugee status holders of Nigerian origin, even when living in Northern European countries (remote control of victims)

Evaluate impact of different prostitution policies on trafficking

Unlink victims' protection (and residence permits) from conditionality (cooperation with authorities)

Evaluate impact of European multinationals (in particular oil companies) in Nigeria in terms of corruption, resources pandering and consequently on impoverishment and forced migration of local population