

4 - Victims of trafficking: access to protection and RVA

The organisation of the conference in Nigeria is an opportunity to explore whether and how repatriated Nigerian citizens, especially victims of trafficking, can effectively have access to protective measures or whether repatriation increases the risk of re-trafficking.

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Loredana Leo: We chose Nigeria because it seemed to us an emblematic country from the point of view of migration, the right of asylum and its possible compression. In Nigeria, as has already been said, the phenomenon of trafficking is extremely widespread. Therefore, what we intend to investigate in the next few days, both during the conference and the survey, is firstly what happens to those who are returned to Nigeria from both transit and destination countries and therefore whether and how effective is the risk of re-victimization. Indeed, investigating the risk of re-victimisation and understanding how much this risk of re-victimisation is effective makes us understand how much the outsourcing policies implemented by European states actually affect the right of asylum and in particular the right of asylum of a particular category of people who are victims of trafficking who, on the contrary, would have the right to international protection, as Nazzarena Zorzella explains.

Nazzarena Zorzella: The relationship between trafficking and asylum is a complicated relationship because the recognition of asylum, political refugee status and international protection is already full of difficulties given the obligation to demonstrate a series of requirements. With victims of trafficking, these difficulties are even greater as women who have been trafficked are generally not believed. They are not trusted because they tell unrealistic, repetitive stories. This is a paradox because according to the analyses, which are also the same guidelines of both the Ministry and the UNHCR, these indicators of lack of credibility per se confirm that they are victims of trafficking because they are educated in that way, because they are still subject to someone, etc.. The paradox is that the credibility that should be the cornerstone of international protection recognition becomes a reason for exclusion. Indeed, we have, for example, many Nigerian women who are repatriated after they have ended up in detention and repatriation centres and are, in fact, repatriated because they are deemed not to be credible. The question is also whether, when they are repatriated, they have a chance of getting out of the trafficking situation. I believe, therefore, the conference is an excellent opportunity to understand how to create synergies between us who work in Italy and those who work in Nigeria, in order to avoid what I believe is another paradox of the anti-trafficking system - at least in Italy - which is to keep the victim of trafficking in an inferior condition. Therefore, do

not allow the victim of trafficking to acquire his/her own self-determination, his/her own strength to succeed in being an autonomous subject. On this point, I believe that the conference could be an important opportunity to discuss also with the Nigerian centres that receive repatriated victims of trafficking.

Loredana Leo: What we are trying to ask ourselves in the various meetings and in the conference is: do these people who are repatriated for various reasons suffer a violation of their right to asylum? In what terms does this violation take place? Can we really talk about voluntary repatriation for those who are repatriated from Libya? What is the risk of re-victimisation? And therefore, what is the potential breach of the right of asylum?