

3 - Why Nigeria?

Externalisation policies are implemented by international agreements between the EU and countries of origin and transit. In the latter, UN agencies currently guarantee very few interventions, including RVA. Nigeria is one of the countries with the highest rate of voluntary returns assisted by Libya. Victims of trafficking are also among those affected.

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Claudia Paladini: Hello everyone, tomorrow, February 25th, the international conference in Lagos on the outsourcing of borders, detention practices and denial of the right of asylum we told you about yesterday will begin. Today, on the other hand, we focus our attention on the reasons that led us to organize this conference right here in Lagos, Nigeria. In order to clarify the reasons for this choice, we have thought to briefly illustrate the international political context within the mechanism of externalisation of borders is located and we do so together with Thomas Santangelo.

Thomas Santangelo: It is well known that from 2015, the European Union and the member states have progressively intensified their efforts to strengthen border control policies in African countries, precisely in order to prevent or hinder the passage to Europe of people who would like to emigrate or apply for international protection. Therefore, different instruments of political, economic and logistical support have been defined by the European Union and the member states towards the governments of the countries of origin and transit. An example is the Memorandum of Understanding between Italy and Libya whose effects in terms of human rights violations are known. Faced with these two nations, the action proposed by the European Commission and some member states has been to finance humanitarian interventions in transit countries managed mainly by international agencies such as, first of all, UNHCR and IOM through instruments such as resettlement and voluntary assisted return. With Claudia Paladini we will analyse why Nigeria has been a major focus of interest. In fact, Nigeria is precisely the country for which these instruments have been used most extensively.

Claudia Paladini: If we take a closer look at the nationalities of the citizens who were repatriated from Libya by IOM with Italian funds, we notice that between 1.09.2017 and 31.05.2019 there were many repatriations of Nigerian citizens. In fact, we realized that, as has also been pointed out in some reports, a large part of these Nigerian citizens are victims of trafficking. Nigerian citizens, in fact, are a category of migrants who are particularly at risk and we all know that exploitation networks have an extremely

consolidated presence in Nigeria, especially in Lagos and Benin city. In fact, Lagos is precisely the city where we are organising this conference and it will be particularly interesting to meet here on the spot with the organisations and networks working on these issues. The networks of exploitation that are used to recruit young victims are, as we all know, extortionist mechanisms against the families of the victims that do not end when the victim is able to repay the amount owed. This process puts these women, these people who may be victims of serious exploitation, at particular risk. Consequently, our investigation will focus precisely on the possibility that these women repatriated through voluntary assisted return will actually be put in a situation of protection, especially with regard to the possibility that they may be re-trafficked. This aspect, in particular, will be the subject of the next podcast.