

REPORT OF THE 1 DAY STRATEGIC PLANNING MEETING ON REDUCING HUMAN TRAFFICKING IN BENUE STATE HELD AT LAWYERS ALERT CONFERENCE HALL ON THE 27TH DAY OF NOVEMBER, 2018.

Introduction



On the 24th of September 2018, a case of human trafficking was reported to us at Lawyers Alert for legal advice and possible assistance. That a certain man named **Saviour Daboor** was placed under arrest and detained by the police at the State Criminal Investigation Intelligence Department (SCIID) Makurdi for an alleged case of human trafficking. That **Saviour Daboor** an indigene of Benue State on the 4th of September, 2018 took five (5) girls to Lagos State under the guise and pretence that he will make life better for them, by giving them jobs in Lagos. On arriving Lagos, he handed over the girls to an unknown woman who is still at large and surreptitiously left the vicinity. The girls were then taken out of Nigeria to *BURKINA FASO*, obviously for prostitution and Sex Slavery rather than a conventional job as promised by Saviour. Upon realising their situation, the girls resisted but at that point they are handicapped both financially and emotionally. As part of the job requirements, a medical test was conducted on the girls and it was discovered that one of the girls was pregnant and another sick and this isn't good for the job. Thus the two were sent back home. Following the arrest of Saviour and the pressure that followed, the third girl was eventually returned. However, two of the victims of the trafficking are still held up with the trafficking gang in Burkina Faso. Saviour is under arrest and in detention and will be due in Court on the 21th November, 2018. The other members of the syndicate are still at large and two of the victims are still under their grips in a foreign land. This

is a clear case of human trafficking and women rights violation. These girls undoubtedly have been sold into slavery and from all indication will be made to serve as sex toys.



Given the above therefore Lawyers Alert held a one-day strategy building meeting with partners and stakeholders with a view towards charting out a work plan that will lead to the release of the trafficked girls and the prosecution of the culprits involved. The meeting was also intended to necessitate the building of a movement and a formidable fight that will lead to the release of the girls and subsequent arrest and prosecution of the suspects in Court to account for their actions.

Goal

The goal of this intervention is to enhance the promotion and protection of Women Human Rights in Benue State and Nigeria and to secure the return of the trafficked girls back home and the punishment of the suspected culprit.

Objectives

- To form a mass movement through collaboration with 5 identified stakeholders towards synergising on the release of the two girls and compensation for all the 5 Victims
- To design and implement an effective action plan that will lead to the achievement of the project goal.

Expected outputs

- A copy of the work plan
- Secure the arrest and prosecution of all the suspected culprits.

Expected outcome

- A reduction in the incidence of human trafficking.
- The promotion and protection of women human rights in Benue state.



The meeting was held at Lawyers Alert' conference hall. A total of 28 participants attended the meeting cutting across different organizations and groups. Participating Organizations comprised of State Actors, Non-State Actors including the Civil Society, Media and Professional groups.

The meeting commenced with self-introduction of participants. This was followed by a welcome address by the Programs Director of Lawyers Alert' head Office Mr. Lazarus Ahangba. In the address he appreciated their time and commitment to the cause of the project. He briefly introduced the purpose of the meeting and its expected outcome. He urged the participants to be active and make quality contributions. Goodwill messages from NBA, NAPTIP and Ministry of Women Affairs were also delivered. NBA expressed delight to be part of this project and offered their hand of solidarity with pledges of support in any capacity and at any moment the need arises. NAPTIP thanked Lawyers Alert for organizing this meeting and said that the meeting could not have come up at any better time than now. They said human trafficking is becoming more rampant in Benue and equally pledged their support to this project and in any other way possible. The Ministry of Women Affairs equally thanked Lawyers Alert for putting the meeting together and expressed willingness to work with Lawyers Alert in any way and manner as required. After tea break, R.A Hwande Esq, the Legal Officer at Lawyers Alert unpacked the project. In his presentation, he attempted the definition of Human trafficking, traced its history and prevalence level from the federal level to the State, the legal frameworks that criminalizes

Human trafficking both local and international. He concluded the presentation with focus on the case at hand outlining its beginning, goal, objectives, expected outputs, outcomes and the progress made so far. After his presentation, one of the victims, Ms Helen narrated in details what happened to them and how some of her friends are still held back in Burkina Faso. This was followed by questions, answers, comments and the development of a work plan and way forward.

In order to develop a more cogent work plan, the meeting broke into two working groups. A technical working group made up of Lawyers and the officials of NAPTIP and a Civil Society/ Media working group. At the end of their deliberations, each group presented their proposed action plan and persons responsible.



Civil Society/ Media Work Plan:

Create a Social Media platform that will serve as an interactive forum that will keep all the project participants together and the conversations alive.
Report the meeting and its outcome and also write features periodically on the issue to harvest public support and also sensitize People on the issues of Human trafficking.
Monitor Court proceedings regularly.

Carry out Advocacy visit to key State Actors and other public institutions including DG Radio Benue, Commissioner of Women Affairs, Wife of the Governor, Commissioner of Justice, NAPTIP and the General Manager the Voice newspapers.
Push for the rehabilitation of the victims of trafficking.
Create a coalition that will work on this project and other related issues in the State.

Technical Working Group Action Plan

The other victims should write a letter of complaint to NAPTIP in order to commence the arrest and possible prosecution of the suspect at the Federal High Court.
Explore the possibility of including Kidnap among the charges against the victim.
Monitor the progress of the case at the State High Court and explore the possibility of filing a fresh case at the Federal High Court and withdrawing the other case at the lower court.
Work closely with NAPTIP, FIDA and the NBA to ensure justice for the victims of the trafficking case.
NAPTIP to explore the possibilities of rehabilitating the victims of the case.

