

Committee on the Application of Standards

Date: 5 June 2023

Governments appearing on the list of individual cases have the opportunity, if they so wish, to supply written information to the Committee.

► Information on the application of ratified Conventions supplied by governments on the list of individual cases

Nigeria (ratification: 2002)

Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182)

The Government has provided the following information.

The recruitment and use of children in armed conflict

The Committee of Experts noted "... from the Report of the Secretary-General on Children and Armed Conflict that an action plan was signed between the Civilian Joint Task Force (CJTF) and the United Nations to end and prevent the recruitment and use of children and a standing order was issued by the CJTF in this regard. However, it noted that although there was a decline in the total number of verified cases of recruitment and use of children for armed conflict, the Report of the Secretary-General indicated that grave violations and abuses committed by Boko Haram against children remained gravely disturbing, in particular the use of children as carriers of person-borne improvised explosive devices as well as the large number of abductions".

The Federal Government of Nigeria's response in the Report of the Secretary-General on Children and Armed Conflict has indicated that the Government report covers the period from January 2020 to December 2021. The report focuses on the three conflict-affected states in north-east Nigeria, namely, Adamawa, Borno and Yobe. It highlights grave violations against children committed by the terrorist groups – Boko Haram-affiliated and splinter groups, notably Jama'atu Ahlis Sunna Lidda'awati Wal-Jihad and Islamic State West Africa province.

The Government had previously reiterated its position on this same concern that terrorism is a global issue of concern and is worrisome to the world population especially those living within and in the midst of the terrorists' war zones. It has not been easy for Nigerians and others in similar or even worse situations. Parents losing a child to terrorist marauders is a horrendous experience and bane to society and the Government has deployed the military on recovery missions and to protect communities from further kidnapping sprees by terrorists.

The Government, through the Ministry of Defence, is carrying out regular sensitization workshops and ensuring the registration of members of vigilante groups who are also closely monitored by the Nigerian Security and Civil Defence Corps. Also, child victims who have been released and/or rescued from the enclaves of Boko Haram are adequately rehabilitated through the Operation Safe Corridor carried out by the Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs, Disaster Management, and Social Development and the Ministry of Defence. Moreover, the Child Rights Bill has been signed into law by some of the central states of the Federation with protracted armed conflicts such as Borno State in Nigeria.

On monitoring mechanisms and penalties

Efforts at monitoring mechanisms and penalties are inter-ministerial. The Trafficking in Persons (Prohibition) Enforcement and Administration Act, 2015 prohibits the forced or compulsory recruitment of children for use in armed conflict. It also addresses the penalties for violation of the Act and the punishment for perpetrators. The victims, inclusive of children, are adequately rehabilitated and integrated into society with the assistance of the Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs, Disaster Management and Social Development. To this effect, a Bill to amend the Trafficking in Persons (Prohibition) Enforcement and Administration Act, No. 4, 2015, provides stiffer penalties for cases of trafficking in persons and criminalizes orphan trafficking. More efforts include the inauguration of State Task Forces against Human Trafficking in the 23 states of the Federation of Nigeria; the inauguration of the Anti-Trafficking in Persons and Violence Against Persons (A-TIVAP) Vanguard in 82 Federal Unity Colleges, 2 Nigeria Air-force Schools, and 1 Command Day Secondary School; and the establishment of National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons (NAPTIP) offices in 28 states of the Federation of Nigeria. In addition, the Government reiterates its previous statements on monitoring and penalty mechanisms. The Government notes the Committee of Experts' request in this respect and it will continue to provide information on identified cases of trafficking in children under 18 years, the prosecutions brought, the convictions obtained and the penalties imposed.

Preventing the engagement of children in the worst forms of child labour, access to free basic education and the special situation of girls

The Government restates its previous position on the various measures put in place to improve access to education which include the National Policy on Inclusive Education, the Safe School Initiative launched in the North West for students affected by the conflict, the Students Tutoring, Mentoring, and Counselling Programme, and the School Enrolment Campaign. The Government notes the June 2022 press release by UNICEF as mentioned by the Committee of Experts with the intention to make inquiries in consultations with the Katsina State Government on the press statement and the figures attributed to it. Nationally, there is no gender discrimination as regards access to education in Nigeria. Boys and girls are given equal opportunity to attend school and gain knowledge. The Government is taking deliberate measures to curb any irregularities in this regard to increase school enrolment and attendance rates at primary and secondary school levels and to lower drop-out rates.

The *almajiri* (children in Islamic schools who are also sent out to beg: according to the Office report) phenomenon is being curbed by the establishment of the Almajiri Special Education Project with the aim of integrating basic education into the Koranic schools to form a holistic curriculum for that segment of society and diminish the risk of worst forms of child labour. The Almajiri schools are present and making inroads into the educational emancipation of the most affected and vulnerable children and youths.

Legally, national laws in the spirit of the Articles and provisions of the Convention are very robust and comprehensive to protect children from the worst forms of child labour. They include but are not limited to the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria as the ground norm, labour laws, the National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons Act, 2015, as amended, and the Immigration Act, etc. These laws cover the minimum age at work, the minimum age for hazardous work, the prohibition of forced labour, the prohibition of child trafficking, the prohibition of commercial sexual exploitation of children, the prohibition of the involvement of children in illicit activities, and the minimum age for voluntary military recruitment.

Child labour agencies and committees in Nigeria include the Ministry of Labour and Employment, the Ministry of Women Affairs, the NAPTIP, the Nigeria Police Force, the Nigeria Immigration Services, the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs, Disaster Management and Social Development, the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Mines and Steel Development, the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, the National Human Rights Commission, the National Population Commission, employers' and workers' organizations, faith-based organizations, and civil society organizations/non-governmental organizations.

Finally, the Government notes all the observations and requests by the Committee of Experts on the issues of concern. It also acknowledge that the issue of the elimination of child labour, especially the worst forms of child labour, is a prerequisite for sustainable development and economic growth. Consequently, it considers that the efforts and zeal by the Government to date, will ultimately ensure the eradication of forced labour, modern slavery and human trafficking, and elimination of the worst forms of child labour, including the recruitment and use of child soldiers by the year 2025 as a matter of priority. The Federal Government of Nigeria reaffirms its commitment to the ideals of the Convention as ratified.