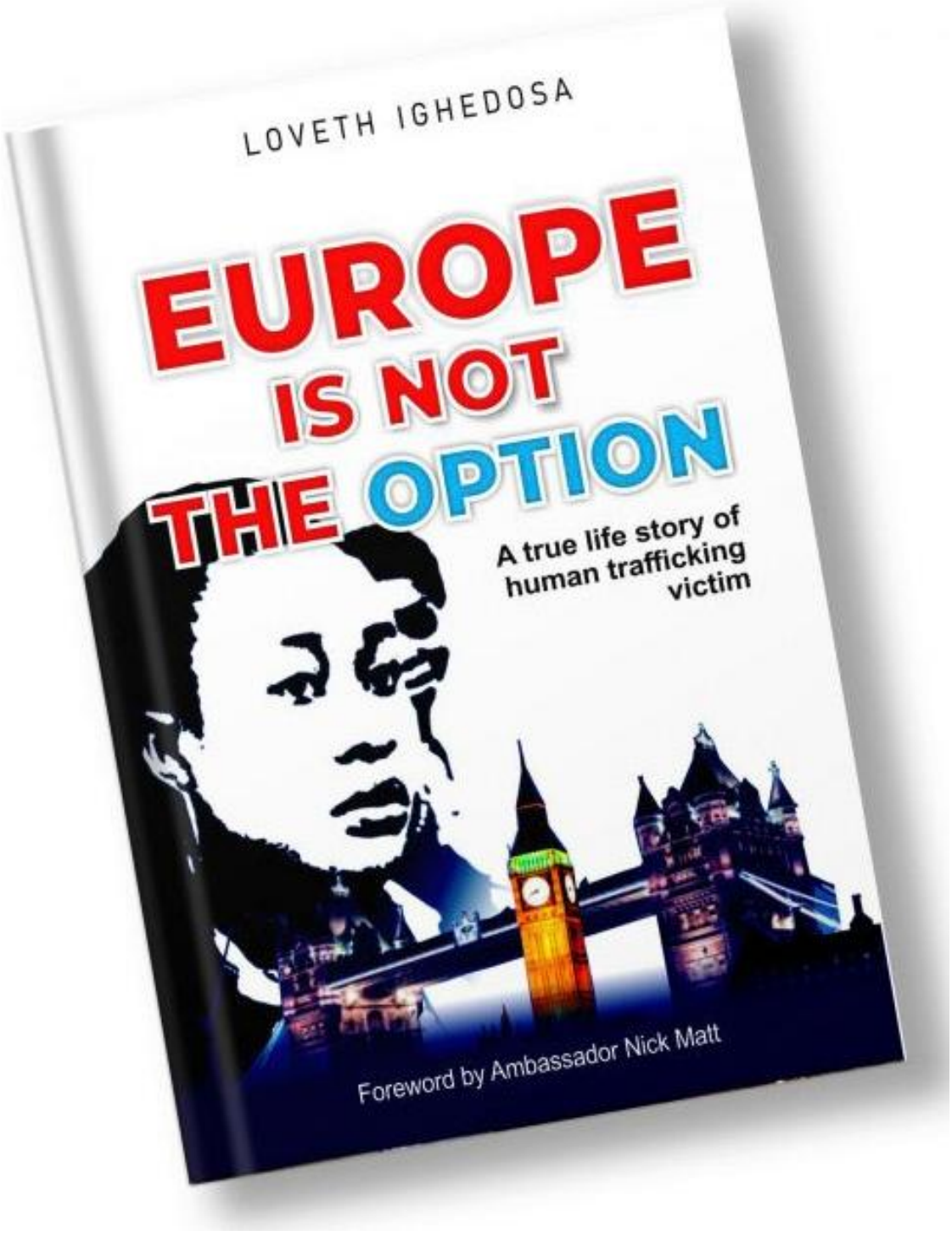

LOVETH IGHEDOSA
EUROPE
IS NOT
THE OPTION
A true life story of human trafficking victim
Foreword by Ambassador Nick Matt

EUROPE IS NOT THE OPTION

True Life Story of a Victim of Human Trafficking

BY

LOVETH IGHEDOSA

EUROPE IS NOT THE OPTION

Copyright © 2021 By Loveth Ighedosa

All rights reserved. This book is protected by the copyright law of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. No part of this book may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, such as, electronic or mechanical, photocopying, recording or by any retrieval system and information storage, without the written permission of the publisher.

Published & distributed by Kariz Media
Lagos, Nigeria. Tel. 2348137434369

Contents

Foreword: War against Trafficking

Chapter One: Like a Platter of Gold

Chapter Two: The Naked Truth

Chapter Three: The Plight of Other Victims

Chapter Four: All that Glitters Is Not Gold

Chapter Five: Over MY Dead Body

Chapter Six: Untold Story of Victims

Chapter Seven: No Value for Human Lives

Chapter Eight: Unbelievable Realities

Chapter Nine: Effects of Trafficking

Chapter Ten: Unforgettable Experience

Chapter eleven: Last Words

DEDICATION

This book is dedicated to my Heavenly Father whose mercy saved and rescued me from the onslaught of human trafficking; keeping me alive to tell my story and also to all the victims of human trafficking and abuse all over the world.

FOREWORD

'Human trafficking is a modern form of slavery, which violates the dignity and pride of womanhood. It's one of the greatest crimes against humanity and has been considered the 3rd largest international crime. With the estimation of about 30 million victims globally, it simply means that there are more slaves today than at any time in history. Believe it. Human trafficking is real and is everywhere, though you might not see it.'

The best response to human trafficking is to prevent people from being trafficked in the first place. One of the ways to do this is to create detailed awareness among target group most likely to become potential victims, there by exposing the activities of human traffickers.

Preventive measures have always proven to be more effective than curative ones. This is also true in the fight against human trafficking. Their main strategy is deception; therefore, the greatest strategy to use against them is revealing the truths by exposing all their dirty tricks to the general public. Then, everyone will know the truth about human trafficking and that truth will set them free from their onslaught.

This is the essence of this book; it's an eye opener to every young girl desperate to relocate to Europe and a must read by every parent. The truth revealed in this book is a bombshell! Unlike most victims who prefer to remain silent, Loveth Ighedosa is courageous enough to share her experience in order to prevent anyone from falling victim. Beware! Europe is not your only option!

Amb. Nick Matt

President, Charis citizens int'l, Lagos Nigeria

CHAPTER ONE

LIKE A PLATTER OF GOLD

A Turning Point

It was around September 2007, I was living in a suburb of Benin City struggling to survive all by myself while still in my early teens. Then, suddenly like a castle in the sky, I got an unanticipated contact from someone in Europe, who promised to take me abroad for greener pastures. I was really super elated, because it was like a dream come true since travelling to Europe was one of the greatest desires of everyone I knew around. To me, I thought, 'Wow! Mine came at a platter of gold'. But little did I know that it was the beginning of a horrible ordeal- an atrocious experience I will never wish anyone, not even my enemies.

About a week later, I met with the Europe based lady who told me so much about the beauty and luxury of living in Europe. She made me believe that Europe was a land flowing with milk and honey. At that point, my joy knew no bounds because it seemed to be like a turning point in my life- it indeed turned out not just a turning point, but an epoch- making incident, however, in a very negative way. Everything she told me was a package of lies from the pit of hell well-planned-out to deceive and entice me. Unfortunately, I fell fall her tricks most probably due to the fact that I was quite credulous at that young age, still ignoramus and desperate to survive.

I Just Couldn't Wait

I hurriedly agreed and accepted her bid to take me to Europe. 'How soon will this be Ma?' I asked with ecstasy. 'We'll start to process your visa presently', she responded. Every detail and information she requested about me was provided instantly by me without any hesitation. Fast forward, all the preparations were over; my visa processing went smoothly and we're set to depart Nigeria. My expectations were so high that I couldn't help, but constantly envisioned how good things would turn out for me when I eventually get to Europe.

Europe- Land flowing with Milk and Honey?

Eventually, I arrived in Europe February, 2008 filled with high hopes and a sense of great satisfaction. I supposed I had stepped on a land full of milk and honey. 'Finally, all my struggles and sufferings in Nigeria are over', I thought within me. Sadly, that wasn't the case. In fact, unknowingly to me, it's the beginning of my agony; a promotion to a higher degree of misery.

As soon as I arrived, I was picked up at the airport by the same lady in the company of her boyfriend and we went straight to her home. That night she acted like a saint and treated me like a queen as she behaved so benevolently towards me. But my happiness was abruptly cut short as my joy gradually degenerated into sorrow right from the following day as I was instructed to eat just once a day. First, I thought maybe that's how they lived in Europe. I was fed bread for one week and she kept telling me that I was being trained to face any toughness because it's tough to succeed in Europe.

After one week, she asked me to go and seek asylum and being a novice, I thought it was the best thing to happen to me especially as she described it in Pidgin English 'you go chop adoro'. Before I left for the place for asylum, she warned me sternly never to disclose to anyone that somebody brought me to Europe. She even instructed me to tell all sorts of lies and gave me a well-craftily-arranged story line to tell them as soon as I get there. She made me believe that if I did otherwise, the people there would immediately deport me to Nigeria. Realistically speaking, I didn't want that to happen, so I had to agree with her reluctantly even though I was quite confused and uncomfortable especially with all those lies I had to tell.

CHAPTER TWO

THE NAKED TRUTH

I Was so Naive

Getting to the place of asylum was indeed an eye-opener to me. It's there and then that it really started to dawn on me and I began to understand a bit of what was going on. I met several young ladies there and I started relating and chatting with some of them. At a time, to my greatest shock, one of them named Mercy said, 'Na waoo! It's not easy to work as a prostitute'. Then, I asked immediately, 'is it prostitution you people are doing here?' 'No, but you are going to do it once you depart here', she replied. I then said, 'God forbid! I came to Europe for computer studies. At that moment, they all laughed chorally, before Mercy then continued,' that's the bitter truth the lady that brought you never told you, same way the woman that brought me here deceived me'.

'No, that woman can never do that to me, besides, she is a pastor's daughter; she is not a prostitute', I argued as I challenged her. Then she said, 'you will remember this word one day, when the truth is finally out'.

The Fabricated Story

Meanwhile, before I left for asylum, my madam had cooked up a well packaged story for me to tell the officers. She even made me to rehearse it until I could tell it instinctively. She said I should tell the Austrian Government that the hospital where I was working in Nigeria was selling human parts. That the police found out, invaded the hospital and the doctor was arrested. That's why I had to escape and that I ran to meet a Reverend Father who then helped me and sent me to Europe. I did it exactly as she instructed.

I continued to stay in the asylum camp and after some weeks, I was issued an asylum card, which enabled me to move around freely. I immediately phoned my madam to tell

her because she had told me to inform her as soon as I was given the card. She was extremely elated when I gave her that piece of news. 'You are such a very lucky girl to get it easily', she exclaimed. I was then transferred to a refugee house in another state by the government. So, one certain evening I decided to phone the same lady that brought me to Europe in order to update her about my where about since I was staying in a state different from hers. I normally used someone's phone each time I needed to reach her since I never had one. She didn't have any problem with that so long she could reach me through that same line always.

Don't be too Credulous

So one day, she phoned me and told me that before long I would start working. That piece of information made me extremely joyous just like cold water to a thirsty soul. It automatically ended any atom of doubt in me about her credibility. 'I told Mercy that this woman was real and different, but they refused to believe, I can't wait to start that work and prove them wrong', I thought within me. I never suspected that the work she was referring to was actually prostitution. I was really that naïve and credulous, carried away by the woman's family's projected reputation back home in Nigeria. Unsuspectingly to me, I was dealing with the devil himself because she's in reality wickedness personified.

Suffering Exists even in Europe

Life continued as usual in that same refugee house; things were pretty tough for me because I had to survive with thirty five Euros every week, which was not really enough to sustain me, but I kept coping with that. Moreover, while in the refugee house, I shared a little-sized room with one other girl, Rachael. We're ninety two people or thereabout living in that house. We slept on a double- decker or bunk- hostel beds. It wasn't really palatable staying there. But what could one do?

Beaten Black and Blue

So, after one month since I had been staying there, the lady asked me to take permission so that I could come over to meet her in her house. Of course, I did. However, on getting there, she accused me of sleeping around with men. According to her, that was my reason for not visiting her all those while. Hardly had I started trying to explain to her that the reason was due to some of the protocols in the camp, when some persons, which I later learnt were her friends, descended on me and beat me up black and blue so mercilessly. The beating was so serious that I sustained severe injury as blood gushed out and flowed profusely from both my mouth and nose.

I cried the hell out of me and wept uncontrollably. She looked at me scornfully, hissed and then said, 'that small thing, you're crying like this, you haven't seen anything yet.' 'Better go back to that refugee camp before they start looking for you', she stated. Then she sent me back to where I was staying. Some weeks later, she phoned me again to come around. But, before I went, I intentionally dropped my asylum card in the hostel. So, on getting there, the first thing she asked me was where my asylum card was.' You will need it to get another card', she said as though she really cared.

I Didn't Know It Was Prostitution

I told her that the card was in my bag and she said okay. Later, about 8p.m, she called me and said, 'it's high time you started to work'. I said ok, thinking that she meant evening computer classes as I wasn't yet acquainted with the system in Europe. Little did I know that she was referring to prostitution; it was much later before the truth finally dawned on me as everything began to unfold increasingly.

To Pay Debt I Didn't Owe

She said to me, 'it's time you knew your debt. You need to pay me the sum of seven hundred euro for the two months your bag has stayed in my house because it has been reading and a month is three hundred and fifty euro'. I was really stunned because I didn't actually live in her house; I had never slept there for once since I went for

asylum as soon as I got to Europe. In addition, she said I would pay one hundred and fifty euro as well for light bill monthly. Finally, she hit the nail on the head; 'you will have to pay me the sum of fifty thousand euro for bringing you to Europe', as she yelled at me. That her last statement struck me like the last straw that broke the camel's back.

She Spilled the Beans

Afterward, she stormed inside and came out with some harlot attires and instructed me to get dressed with them. I refused right away and asked her if that was the kind of dress used for the computer studies. At that time, she was obviously enraged as she replied me angrily and said,' which computer? *No be only computer*- you are going to work out there on the street as a prostitute'! At last, she spilled the beans and completely let the cat out of the bag. At that moment, I immediately recalled Mercy's statement (the girl I met at the asylum centre), who said to me then, 'very soon, you will discover the whole truth'. Hearing that horrible statement directly from her mouth; left me in a great shock as I sobbed uncontrollably with tears running down my face like an ocean.

I'm too Young for This

While still in that flood of tears, she said to me, 'you will cry and get tired because this is just the beginning'.' But you know I am a nurse in my country, why did you bring me to Europe just to destroy my life? I reacted tearfully. At that time, she became very furious, 'what gave you the guts to talk back at me? She said angrily. But I continued to plead, 'Please, don't' do this to me ma, I'm still too young for all these, you know my age'. The more I pleaded the more provoked she became. In fact, that woman wasn't just wicked, she was really callous! Her beast-looking-face at that point made me realize that there're indeed devil's incarnates and demons in human flesh. Subsequently, together with her boyfriend, she descended on me and bounced me like a rubber ball. I got the beating of my life as they nearly killed me that night.

Getting Prostitution Card

She left me for a while and allowed me to stay at home that night. However, she summoned me as soon as it was dawn and requested my asylum card. According to her, she had to register me as a prostitute so that I could then have the prostitution card, which they sarcastically called 'the green card'. At that instant, I had already understood that her true intention of bringing me to Europe wasn't for any computer study as she earlier claimed; it was prostitution. That was when the reality of human trafficking first dawn on me.

So, I told her that the officials had taken it from me in the refugee house where I stayed. However, on hearing that, she became very aggressive and started beating me up again using any object she could lay hand on. She then asked me to go back to that place and collect the card that her boyfriend would be coming to pick me up after four days.

CHAPTER THREE

THE PLIGHT OF OTHER VICTIMS

During this whole process, apart from Mercy and her friends I mentioned earlier, I also came across several other girls with similar experiences that were in the same shoe with me; we always discussed our plights with one another each time we met. They also complained about the inhuman and cold-blooded treatment they got from their madam respectively. Some said they would have to work for a certain amount of money every day before coming home in order to meet up with their madam's target. Others said that there were times their madam would send them out for several days without shower or food. It's that pathetic!

Living in Bondage

These so called human trafficking madams are so wickedly crafty that they would block all your access to reach out to your family back home in Nigeria the moment you get hooked in their net. They would never allow you to have a phone. Therefore, anyone who wished to phone her family must do that with the madam's phone right in her presence. They intentionally did that so that they could monitor every phone conversation and prevent their victims from revealing the truth to their family about the hell-like treatment being meted out against them.

Rita Was Scorched with an Electric Iron

I still remember Rita vividly, one of the girls. Her case was really quite pitiful. She was about 17 then. Rita showed me a severe injury on her left arm where her madam burnt her with a scorching electric iron for dozing off while cooking as a result of tiredness. She said she would have to leave 7.pm and return 8.am every day working as a prostitute so that she could meet up with the madam's demands. According to Rita, even when she returned home the next morning exhausted, the madam would never allow her to sleep or rest, but subject her to tedious house chores.

The Young Virgin Infected with HIV

There's also the case of AB, her own story was absolutely mind-blowing and even up till now, I still feel sorry for her for the brutal and ruthless treatment she suffered in the hand of her heartless madam; 'it's a portrayal of man's inhumanity to man.' AB told me how her madam deceived her and brought her to Europe, making her believed that she's going to work in a white man's farm. The saddest part of her story was the fact that she was even still a virgin by the time this lady brought her to Europe. She said the moment the woman discovered that she was a virgin; she was super elated and immediately invited four hefty men to sleep with her the same day. She said the madam later told her, 'so sorry my dear, I just have to do this so that you will be able to pay me the money I used to bring you to Europe'. AB also told me that it got to a time that the madam started doing home service; she would bring men to the house and they would sleep with her (AB), and pay the madam (after the deed) who would be waiting outside.

As AB disclosed to me, she said there's a particular day that a certain man came in and forcefully slept with her without condom. She said she tried to resist and dissuade him from sleeping with her without protection since they always used protection. However, the man told her that he had already paid the madam extra money for sex without condom. In spite of her struggle, the stupid man prevailed against her and succeeded to sleep with her without protection simply because the madam had got extra pay for it.

Unfortunately for AB, some months later she noticed that she wasn't really feeling all right, so, she decided to go for a medical checkup and when the test result was finally out, AB tested positive- she had been infected with HIV by that man who slept with her without protection. And she would have to live with that stigma for the rest of her life- I pray a miracle happen to AB.

Gift's Womb to be Cut off for Abortion

Another time, I met a young lady named Gift, who was also a helpless victim of human trafficking. Gift and I met in a train station. I noticed that she was with a baby who was crying very laud, but she wasn't even paying any attention, Let alone pet the baby. I was really concerned and so, I went close to her and said, 'Hello! 'Do you know that I kept saying hello for several times, yet Gift was just stationary at a standstill! Meanwhile, her baby kept crying. Thus, I decided to touch her and as soon as I did that, she suddenly came to herself and acted like someone who had been unconscious. 'Is everything okay with you?' I asked her in anticipation. She said she was okay. I said no, 'you're not okay because I had been standing with you since trying to call your attention to your crying baby, and you're just carried away. What's wrong with you? You can talk to me!' I told her confidently. By that time, she admittedly broke into tears. 'I never knew my baby had been crying', she said. Then, she intensified her cry. It was so much that I had to arrange a place for us to relax and discuss. Again, I asked her, 'what is the problem?' So, that's how Gift began to open up to me as she narrated the horrible ordeal she suffered from her madam.

According to Gift, a certain lady brought her to Europe with the belief that she was coming to continue with her salon business since she's already a stylist in Nigeria. The woman convinced Gift with her sugar- coated tongue that her salon business would skyrocket and blossom like wildfire the moment she relocated to Europe. Of course, that wasn't the case. Gift was over joyous over the whole idea. However, that joy was short-lived as the whole narrative changed as soon as her legs touched the ground of Europe. As typical, the madam forced her into prostitution. She would even bring men to her house to sleep with Gift. She never allowed Gift to work in the street as a prostitute so that she could collect the money from her useless customers directly by herself.

Moreover, according to her, this thing continued for a long time, until when one man insisted that he must sleep with her without condom. She tried to resist him, but he still

had his way. Few months later, Gift became pregnant without even knowing the father of her unborn child. She tried to hide it from the madam, nevertheless, she soon found out. Gift said when the madam eventually found out, she took her to the hospital for abortion without delay. After examining her, the doctor declared that it was impossible to abort the child. The madam then asked the doctor why, and according to the doctor, the pregnancy was a complex scenario and any attempt to abort it, meant that her womb had to be removed. The madam responded immediately to the Doctor, 'remove her womb, then! When Gift heard that her madam had instructed the doctor to cut off her womb, Gift said, 'I Screamed and started crying'. 'Mummy please, please madam mummy, don't do this to me. Gift usually called her madam mummy.

Gift said she got a shocking response from the madam. 'Stop calling me your mummy, the earlier you stop this 'your cry cry', the better for you. This is what I do to all my girls when they get pregnant. I don't care about your life in anyway; all I care about is getting back the money I used to bring you here'. I need my money!' The madam said all these things to her in the doctor's presence. The doctor then discharged them and asked them to come back in a week's time.

Gift said that was when it dawn on her that she was faced with life and death and so, she had to do everything possible to escape. Luckily for her, she was able to escape from her madam and ended up being a single mother against her own wish. This is how wicked these human traffickers could be! So, Gift was literarily depressed and pained by her experience as she pondered on her past as of the time her baby was crying and I was trying to get her attention. That's why she was completely lost in thought.

Black Soap Practice

There is also this common practice among these human traffickers no one has told you. They call it black soup! The madam would usually wash off her private part in a bowl and use the water to cook food for their girls. Anyone that eats from that food automatically becomes useless in life especially if the person goes against the madam.

But thanks be to God who has delivered us from the powers of darkness and translated us into His kingdom.

Ose' Was Thrown Down from a Storey Building

Ose' was another friend of mine I would love to talk about. Ose', up till now still carries a massive open injury on one of her legs. She was also a victim of human trafficking. She recounted to me how the terrible injury came about:

'It happened one fateful day. I had just returned from work as a prostitute, when my madam asked me to boil some rice. So, I put it on the fire, but unfortunately, I dozed off and that was how the whole rice got burnt. It was my madam's shout that woke me up. She started beating and hitting me with iron as though I were a criminal. Once my madam started beating someone, she wouldn't release that person until he/she had become weak or lost consciousness. She thrashed me mercilessly before she pushed me down from a storey building. I had severe fracture on my waste because that's the part that hit the ground as I fell and my left leg was badly injured. I was hospitalized for several months before I could work again. They had to fix iron on some part of my leg'; it's God who saved me'. Said, Ose.

CHAPTER FOUR

ALL THAT GLITTERS IS NOT GOLD

Like the saying goes, 'all that glitters is not gold'! I know there're very many of you young ones out there whose greatest desire is to travel out of the country. Don't be so desperate because desperation has led so many to an early grave. Europe shouldn't be the only option. Seek and follow God's perfect plan and purpose for your life. You're a child of destiny. Therefore, do not allow these blood- sucking demons take advantage of your ignorance. That is the essence of this book; to expose the tricks and activities of all these human traffickers. Just don't jump at any opportunity to travel out without proper investigations; 99% of such opportunities are scam. Remember, human traffickers will not tell you that they're traffickers. They've well-trained agents who can easily spot your venerability and leverage on it.

The Reality of Human Trafficking

Human trafficking is a global problem and one of the world's most shameful crimes affecting the lives of people all over the world. Traffickers deceive women, men and children with lies and force them into exploitative situations in Europe. Believe you me, human trafficking is real. Many Nigerian girls in Europe are living in pains and fear, especially those that have been victims of trafficking. It's not something that one should experience in life because it's not everyone that's lucky enough to survive it. Victims of human trafficking suffer lots of unimaginable things: dehumanization, abuse, subjugation and molestation inflicted on them by their madams. Some madams will even go to the length of collecting their victims' menstrual pad, pubic hair (from their private part), etc for charm. The worst thing is that none of their family members back home in Nigeria would know what they're going through; instead they would ignorantly even be expecting these girls to start sending dollars home.

They Have No mercy

Those madams don't have conscience at all! Hence, they show mercy to no one even if you happen to be their younger sister. All they are after is their money; it doesn't concern them what happens to the girls. Their health, security and safety do not concern the madams. So, whether it's extreme winter when you hardly see anyone on the street because of excess cold or intense summer, the hottest season of the year, these girls are forced to be on the street half- naked. If anything happens to them in the process, the so called madam would lie to their family members back home in Nigeria. Subsequently, some of these girls have lost their lives, while others have contracted incurable diseases because of prostitution. I even met some who have become crippled.

A Show of Wickedness

The kind of wickedness exhibited by those traffickers is unreasonable. As these girls returned from the street where they stayed all night obviously badly affected by cold; the madam would make sure she switched off the heater in their rooms, even though it's still those girls that would pay the bills. These girls would be deprived from eating the food they buy and cook. Some madams would jam-pack up to six girls in one tiny room like a prison. I pray none of you or your relative ever come in contact with those demonic madams. They treat their victims like animals. They would give the girls a certain target amount to bring everyday; a target so high that they had to literarily make the street their home before they could meet up. These girls would hunt for men (who don't even want them) to sleep with them so they could meet up with their madam's demands.

The Real Slaves of this Modern Age

Human trafficking is a modern form of slavery, which violates the dignity and pride of womanhood. It's one of the greatest crimes against humanity and has been considered the 3rd largest international crime. With the estimation of about 30 million victims

globally, it simply means that there are more slaves today than at any time in history. Believe it. Human trafficking is real and is everywhere, though you might not see it.
The best response to human trafficking is to prevent people from being trafficked in the first place. One of the ways to do this is to create awareness among target group most likely to be potential victims, thereby exposing the activities of human traffickers. This is the essence of this book; it's an eye opener to every young girl desperate to relocate to Europe. Beware! Europe is not the only option.

These girls have unintentionally lost their self-respect and woman dignity as they exchanged their body for 15- 20 Euro. Their pride of womanhood has been snatched away by those greedy madams. *Girls in envelope are the real slaves of this generation*. Human traffickers are very cunning and deceitful. They're like wolves in sheep clothing. Their mission is to steal, kill and destroy your destiny. Their agents are everywhere trying to recruit their next victim. As a young girl, please don't believe anyone who promises a heaven-on-earth kind of life in Europe. Even as parents, we must be responsible enough to protect and cater for our children. These people will not tell you that they're traffickers, so, be wise.

Deceit is their Main Strategy

These madams would use all manners of lies to lure innocent girls to Europe promising them jobs, education and skill acquisition. However, as soon as they arrive in Europe, the story would change automatically. They would force these girls into prostitution and demand them to pay 50, 000 to 70, 000 euro as recompense for the money used to sponsor their trips to Europe. They would even lie to the girls that they could pay up all the money within three months if they should work very hard. That's absolutely impossible.

A Victim of Family Circumstances

One time, I saw a young girl of 16 years old named Rhoda who was also a survivor of human trafficking. She's a mere victim of the circumstances surrounding her family. Rhoda said she only agreed to travel to Europe because of the poverty state of her family. She said her family was even living below poverty. Rhoda was the first born child among seven siblings and all of them were living in one room with their parents. So, in her quest to improve her family life, she unknowingly fell prey for traffickers' trap. By the time she got to Europe, Rhoda was told that she would pay the sum 80, 000 euro before she could be free from working for the madam. Rhoda said she's completely shattered and depressed. Who would she cry to? Nobody! One of the strategies employed by traffickers is using death threat to continually intimidate and victimize the girls. Rhoda, in spite of her age, at 16, she had to sleep with 15 -20 men daily. She worked in a hotel both as a stripper and a prostitute.

A Mother's Blame

Rhoda kept blaming her mother for her plight because it's her mother who convinced and persuaded her to travel out despite the fact that she wanted to opt out of it later on. But the mum never knew what she was then passing through in Europe. Rhoda's madam wasn't only cruel; she's also dubious as she kept cheating Rhoda by deducting from her payment. It took Rhoda several years before she could complete the 80.000 euro. You could imagine the kind of suffering and injustice such a little girl had gone through.

CHAPTER FIVE

OVER MY DEAD BODY

As I listened to these pathetic stories, I pondered within myself how I would be able to survive. I would weep and weep for days, thinking about my life. At this time, I was still very much in a serious fight with my madam that over my dead body would I get involved with such heinous act called prostitution. 'I would rather die,' I vowed!' 'It's either you take me to the computer school you promised me or you send me back to my country.

Now, Back to My story

Surviving in Europe is not an easy task. In fact, it's survival of the fittest. The only option the madam gives is prostitution, which is not an easy task. They would never allow you to do any other work. Now, let's go back to my own personal experience, which I paused at the end of chapter two to chip-in other people's stories. At the time my madam insisted that I must come and stay with her so that I could pay up her money through prostitution; she sent her boyfriend to come and bring me to the place she was staying. Meanwhile, her boyfriend kept calling me as soon as they got to the city I was, but I refused to answer the call and told the lady whose line they usually reached me not to answer. I was ready to face the repercussion. The boyfriend then went back home since they couldn't get through to me on the phone. The moment she learnt that I didn't return with them, she immediately phoned my parent back home in Nigeria and lied to them that I had made away with her money. I was hiding from pillar to post in Europe like a vagabond for a long time before I eventually met a good Samaritan who bought a phone for me so that I could reach out to my parents. I thought they must have been worried and longing to hear from me. Unknowingly, madam had already polluted their minds with lies. So, my parents reprimanded me and ordered me to go back to her immediately. However, I had to tell them the whole truth, which sounded so incredible to them due to the way they used to perceive her.

Europe Is Not a Bed of Roses

I used to think that life in Europe was a bed of roses until I came and experienced it myself. Some people even think that there's money to pick from the ground on the streets of Europe. Don't be fooled dear! There're people suffering in Europe. My suffering began right from the refugee home as we continually suffered lack and want. A little sized kitchen was allocated to several persons; hence, we had to queue for hours before we could cook. I remember wearing a pair of jeans and a shirt for several months. Therefore, at night I had to clothe myself with bed sheet so that I could wash them to wear the next day. Sometimes, I would stay for days without food, which badly affected my health. I was like a tramp! I suffered all those things simply because I refused to work as a prostitute. My madam had seized the luggage I brought from Nigeria before I went to the refugee camp so that I wouldn't escape from there. So, while there we had a place where we could select used clothes to wear.

While I was still trying to survive here in Europe, my madam's family started fighting my parents back home in Nigeria. Her parents even phoned and threatened me that if I didn't pay their daughter's money, they would afflict me with madness. When I saw the issue was becoming so serious, I decided to call the same lawyer who drafted the agreement because we had already agreed that after I was done with the computer course I would start working and pay her the sum of 15,000 euro. But the lawyer dubiously wrote fifty thousand euro, instead of fifteen thousand intentionally, and I never knew that they're all working together as traffickers; after all, I wasn't suspicious at that time.

A Big Regret

So, when I called the lawyer to complain to him that the madam was forcing me to work as a prostitute; I was stunned at his response. 'What's wrong with that, is that not what others have been doing and are you different from them? The lawyer said to me and hanged up the phone angrily. That's when I realized that they're working as partners. I became more devastated and started crying and regretting my decision to

leave my job as a nurse back in Nigeria and coming to Europe to work as a prostitute. I kept asking myself why. I kept wondering how I would get over that predicament I had been entangled with! I had no help from nobody, except for the 35 euro I was being paid and from which, I had to buy my monthly ticket which cost 10 euro. What even baffled me the most was that anytime I even tried to explain my plight to some well mature men and women, they would advise me to comply and do whatever my madam had asked me to do so that I wouldn't regret later since that's what everybody is doing. That, in actual fact got me so frustrated.

My Family and I were victimized

It was as if I had become a social defiant as everyone I saw seemed not to have any problem with prostitution. I felt like the whole world was against me. Thankfully, my parents were never in support of me going into prostitution. I would forever be grateful to them because their decision to stand by me at that most trying time was my greatest source of courage. I kept receiving threats from different angles both home and abroad instigated by my madam. The crisis became so intense that my 3 year's old little cousin, my uncle's son was kidnapped by my madam's family. All these things happened only because I refused to work as a prostitute. In the same process, my uncle and his wife were arrested, tortured and slept in prison for several days. My madam was using her influence and affluence to harass and intimidate my entire household.

It was such a hell-like experience for me even up to the extent of everyone telling me just to accept in order for peace to reign. I wish I could, but I just couldn't. I was firm with my decision. Initially, it wasn't easy though due to the 'baptism of fire' and continuous threats I received, as well as everyone trying to convince me to do it and save my family, however, I constantly persevered.

So this whole thing kept coming up at different intervals. About a year later or so, I attended a programme. As soon as her friends saw me, they quickly called to inform her. And that was how she came and started fighting with me right in the programme. The pastor even tried to intervene and plead with her on my behalf, she obstinately

refused and there was nothing she didn't do to me that day. Time after time, she kept sending people to attack me, so, I could no longer go out.

A Friend Betrayed and Poisoned Me

In the midst of that storm, I met a much older lady, named Beatrice, who I thought I could confide on due to her seemingly experience. Unknown to me, Miss Beatrice was my madam's pen friend. I told her everything that had happened to me; how my madam first approached my uncle and told him about bringing me to Europe, which my parents were never in support of. I shared with Beatrice how my madam tried to force me into prostitution and because I refused, and also couldn't pay her the money, she had been terrorizing my family back home and even sent tugs who made assassination attempt on my uncle because it was he who took me to her place. I even told her how my madam then called me and said, 'this is just the beginning. I have not even started dealing with you yet'. With tears all over my eye, I said, 'Beatrice, why did this woman want to kill my uncle? Miss Beatrice kept consoling me and heaping all sorts of insults on my madam. Little did I know that she was a bundle of pretence who was up to something.

I never knew that my madam had given her a poisonous substance to put on my drink. While I was still in her place crying, she offered me some tea to drink, which I drank innocently. About five minutes later, I started bleeding from my private part. I complained to her immediately, but she said it was my monthly circle. I told her it was not yet time for my circle. She then said it must be as a result of stress. That was how I had a severe flow for good five months. I realized everything when I eventually went to the hospital and the doctor, after running tests on me, said that I took some poison which has affected my system. He placed me on some special tablets for months before I recovered. I trusted Beatrice so much that it was difficult for me to keep friends again after that ugly incident because I didn't know who to trust as I continually faced rejection everywhere I went because I said no to prostitution, since that was what everybody was doing.

There were series of conspiracies and lies against me. I remember a young man named Chike who was coming close to me probably because he had interest in me. They lied to him that my madam had placed a curse on me for not paying her the money she used to bring me to Europe and that anyone that associated with me would equally be cursed. As a result, he ran away because he became afraid.

CHAPTER SIX

UNTOLD STORY OF VICTIMS

She Completely Lost her Dignity

I just remember the story of another victim. I have actually forgot her name now. She was subjected to sleep with different men multiple times virtually round the clock. She was made to work day and night as a sex worker without a break even when she was on her monthly circle. She said the most cruel thing was that, the oga, that's the man who brought her to Europe, would naked her and even check her private part just to see if she was hiding some money in there. According to her, she also said that she was mandated to take an oath and was given a raw chicken heart to eat while the oga added his blood on a cup, mixed it with something and gave her to drink. That girl was treated like a nonentity and was completely ripped of her woman pride and dignity. She said whenever his oga's friends were around; she would be forced to entertain them with sex.

She Was Raped and Stabbed

In fact, there's one experience she shared that's so mind blowing. She said, 'One time, I was standing on the street as usual waiting for customers to come by, when a certain young man came and then picked me up with his car. He said he would pay me any amount. So, I was even happy, but I never knew that my life was in great danger. I was surprised as he suddenly drove to a relatively remote place and stopped the car abruptly. 'You can't believe it', she said tearfully and continued,' the man raped me, beat the hell out of me and even forced his sperm into my mount. He then stabbed me straight on my womb. I passed out and later regained my consciousness at the hospital not knowing how I got there. As the team of doctors battled to save my life, the only option was to remove my womb, which they eventually did.'

She said, 'can you imagine! When I got home after spending several days in the hospital; still trying to recuperate, my oga started to beat me up again. As I tried to

explain the incident to him, he said it would have been better if the man had killed me. He then went ahead and had sex with me not minding the fresh injury, nor the bandage on my womb. The next day, he still sent me out to the street.'

Sex with a Dog for 2,000 Euro

That girl's story still beats my imagination each time I remember. She was not done yet, 'I was still out on the street, he called me on phone to come back home immediately. I thought he wanted me to come back and rest. But on getting home, I got the greatest shock of my life as soon as I realized why he asked me to come back home. My oga told me that a white man urgently needed a girl that could have sex with his dog for just 30 minutes and he was willing to pay the sum of 20, 000 euro. He said I should rush there immediately and close the deal. I replied him okay sir. That's when I ran for my dear life and never returned.

Like a Piece of Meat up Forsale

Jane's story was one that has remained an indelible memory on my mind. She made her way from Africa to Europe with so much hope and optimism believing that she had come to experience the riches and prosperous life her oga had promised her. No sooner had Jane got to Europe than her dream became shattered! Jane said she's not different from a piece of meat up for sale.

Her story begins:

'I arrived in Europe since 2006 with the help of my oga who wanted me to pay the sum of 40,000 euro. In order for me to meet up with the payment on time, my oga forced me to combine prostitution with selling of drugs. I would even hide some drug on my hair, some in my mouth and some in my private part. So every day, I would go out to sell drug while night was for prostitution. I had to do this on daily basis. Even during my monthly circle, I would use a special condom so that those men wouldn't notice it much. My life was as good as useless. My oga intentionally influenced me and lured me into taking alcohol and other hard drugs. I became so addicted to marijuana that I

would always take some dosage every day before going out even on empty stomach. This my horrible lifestyle continued for two full years that I stayed with that my oga. I was virtually reduced to nothing and treated like garbage. Never for once did I sleep on the bed in that house; instead, I would sit in the corner of the kitchen to sleep.'

Just imagine what someone's child goes true in the hands of those traffickers! Anyone can become a victim tomorrow. Human traffickers don't respect anybody and that's why we all must become advocates in this sensitization mission. Let's continue with Jane's story as she concludes her narration:

My Oga Vowed to Kill Me

'So one day, I got drunk while carrying a lot of drug and completely lost control. Consequently, I got caught by the police. Later, when I realized what had happened, I immediately put a call across to my oga and informed him about it. He warned me sternly not to tell the police anything about him, because if I did, they would deport me back to Nigeria and if that happened he wouldn't hesitate to kill me. I was really scared and so I never mentioned his name to the police. So, the police took me to a deportation camp and I was there for 8 weeks; my so called oga never called me for once. For one month, I was on a hunger strike. I starved to the extent that I began to vomit blood. When I eventually got released I had developed chronic stomach ulcer. Looking back now, I thank God for that police incident because that's what separated me from my oga. Probably; he would have ended up taking my life', Jane took a deep breath as she concluded her story.

CHAPTER SEVEN

NO VALUE FOR HUMAN LIVES

Innocent Blood Shed on Libya Route

Mabel's story was the one I couldn't stand. Mabel was made to believe that she was travelling to Europe by air, when actually it's through land. Before she realized it, it's already too late and the people started threatening her that if she didn't behave herself, they would beat her up. Mabel said she was joined with other 18 girls together with the madam as they embarked on that 'Israelite journey' to Europe. She said, 'while on that fateful trip, some of the girls died on the way; they couldn't withstand the starvation, hunger and thirst because there was no food, nor water.

Mabel also disclosed how her madam killed some of the girls who tried to escape or proved to be obstinate on the journey. 'The journey was so terrifying and horrific. That's my first time to see a beast in a human flesh; my madam is wickedness personified. I thought I wouldn't make it to Europe, now I know that it's God's mercy that kept me alive', said Mabel.

'At the end of that whole journey, six girls died of starvation while six others were murdered by my mother. It was only six of us that eventually made it to Europe. My madam phoned the parents of the late girls and asked us to speak to them pretentiously as their daughters ', Mabel said.

A Higher Phase of Abuse

She continued, 'Getting to Europe was another phase of maltreatment. I kept paying dept to different madams up to forth generations of my madam's madams. I was really depressed and frustrated as I had to sell my body for money just as they sell meat in a commodity market, so I could meet up with my madam's target. I was living in absolute fear and was ready to do her bids having known how destructive she was; she had no atom of value for human lives'.

Mabel said she was only allowed to eat once a day by her madam. She said the most heinous thing that happened to her was when her madam began to sleep with her and asked her to feel the same way she felt when those men were on top of her. She said sometimes, the men would come and sleep with her even in open places. One of such days according to her, one man was sleeping with her under a particular building and that's how someone poured hot water on her from the upstairs. She said she didn't know when she ran into the street naked with burns all over her body and people thought she was mad. So, she took advantage of that situation to escape from her madam.

She Thought She Was Dead

Another lady as well told me how she was working on the street during a concentrated winter season and the police came to drive them out because the weather was very cold. She said when she got home that day, her madam asked her to go back because it was not yet time for her to return. Even in spite of her explanation, the madam still insisted that she must go back to the street to meet up with her target, but she refused. After sometime, the madam asked her to come inside then. So, she thought everything was over, not knowing that the madam had another plan. As soon as she entered inside, the madam broke bottle on her head. She said, 'at that point, I thought I would die as I beheld an ocean of blood gushed out of my head and covered my body. I screamed with what I thought was my last breath. Then, my madam took to her heels. So the neighbours who heard my loud shout for help called the police and the police came with an ambulance and I was rushed to the hospital. There were multiple tears and as a result my head was stitched in over five different spots'.

They All Have the Same Nature

That was that lady's version of her experience in the hands of a trafficker. Even up till now, she can't go anywhere without wearing wig on her head in order to cover the huge and indelible marks all over her head. Such is the evil of these traffickers; they all possess similar nature: wickedness, brutality and violence. Anyone under them is

treated like a slave who has no choice because they will force you to do whatever they think. As a result, it's not everyone that is able to survive their mistreatment; some die in the process, others may contract terrible sickness while some end up with disabilities. Yet, they're unmoved!

CHAPTER EIGHT

UNBILIEVABLE REALITIES

At times, when I hear some of these stories, they sound so ridiculously incredible. The fact is it's not a fiction; no matter how unbelievable they sound, they're true life experiences. Everything I'm sharing here is a true life experience. I recall one particular young and quite pretty looking lady, Rita. She told me how she had imagined the clean streets and white snow in Europe and how she would pack euro to Africa based on the things she was told about Europe. But on getting to Europe, there's a huge difference between what she heard and what she saw. According to Rita, 'from my very first one week in Europe, I had to beg to survive because I almost died of starvation as my madam refused to give me food, but told me that I couldn't eat until I started working', she said.

Harlot in a Show Glass

Rita said her madam eventually secured a certain bar for her where she could work as a prostitute. 'In that bar, we had a dressing code and I was working both day and night. I would wear red bra that had gullet and G-string with boots up to my thighs and stayed in a glass so passersby could notice me and that strategy really attracted a lot of customers to me because I was nothing, but a harlot in a show glass displaying nudity. At night, I had to literally go naked. As long as I was in that bar, I was always chewing gum until it became a habit that even while I slept, there must be gum in my mouth. But am glad now that I'm finally free, but my experience is something I don't like to remember.' Said Rita.

Traffickers Derive Pleasure in Ill-treatment

Another victim I came in contact with told me how her madam derived pleasure in maltreating them. She said they're ten girls in number and their madam would ask them to get the food stuff and cook once they returned from their prostitution work.

But after preparing the food, their madam would take the larger portion and dilute the left over before asking them to eat.

'I couldn't even buy a good phone even though I was working; my madam wouldn't let me. I had to use a rubber band to tie one small phone that I was using. In fact, one of my colleagues was beaten to a state of stupor and her face was disfigured with a razor blade the moment our madam learnt that she sent 30 euro to her parents back home in Nigeria while another had her tooth removed due to serious beating by our madam', she said to me.

One good friend of mine, Omon relayed to me her own experience with human traffickers. She said her oga's wife was always beating her every morning with moping stick. She said her greatest surprise was when her oga's wife informed her that it gave her joy each time she used moping stick on her. Omon said they wouldn't allow anyone in their house go to church, but one day she decided to sneak out to attend a cross over church service on December 31st.

Just Like a Slave

'When my madam, oga's wife learnt of it because one of her friends saw me there and immediately phoned to inform her, it was as though the whole world had been let loosed. As soon as I got home, my madam used a very hot knife which she had been heating up on her cooking gas to burn my stomach. I was in pains for several days. Although I was in Europe, I was suffering more than the people I left back home in Africa. It's a 'Ghana must go bag' (the cheapest affordable bag in Nigeria) I brought from Nigeria that I was using to keep my clothes in Europe because I couldn't afford any bag'. Omon narrated.

She said the oga's wife even told her that she could treat her the way she liked because she was their slave. Meanwhile, when these traffickers are bringing these girls to Europe they would appear as saints and pretentiously treat them as royalties when in realities, are wolves in sheep clothing.

CHAPTER NINE

EFFECTS OF TRAFFICKING

Victims of human trafficking often experience devastating effects due to the physical and psychological abuses they pass through in the hands of traffickers. In fact, it has the power to impact and impair the victim's life forever. The fact is that the lives of most of them never remain the same again. I noticed some common characteristics among the ones I have met so far. A lot of them have developed stealing habit, which they have found difficult to overcome long after they've been freed from traffickers. Usually, they steal from their male customers who often come to them drunk. Moreover, majority of them cultivate an abnormal behavior; they do shameless things as they have completely lost a sense of dignity and significance. While others become arrogant and disrespectful. Victims of human trafficking are very aggressive and violent. This is as a result of the maltreatment they have undergone.

There's this girl I met in a salon named Favour. She had become so violent that she flares up like a flame of fire with any little provocation. Favour said she used to be a very calm person before she became a victim of human trafficking. However, she suddenly became a short- tempered person during her awful encounter with human traffickers. Favour said, 'Whenever I dressed half-naked as a street worker, I would become so exasperated with my life. At that moment, I wouldn't mind killing somebody. I just thought that the whole world was my enemy'. Favour's story continued thus: 'I would never forget the most tragic thing that happened to me on that fateful day. A particular man came and wasn't' willing to use condom. I tried to resist him, but the man brought out a gun and he threatened me to choose between life and death. I had to choose life and allowed him to sleep with me without protection. Consequently, I got pregnant and decided to inform my madam. She said it was a small thing that I didn't need to go to the hospital for abortion since she could handle it by herself. My madam then gave me some tablets to terminate the pregnancy. After taking the tablets, I

suddenly became very week and later, I was in a pool of blood. I almost bled to death. It was God who saved me', Favour concluded.

Human trafficking is such a ruthless and brutal experience that anyone unfortunate to encounter will not be the same again. It only takes the grace of God for someone to pass through it and still leave a normal life. Many of them end up as hardened criminal, drug addict and unrepentant prostitutes. While some also graduates to become human trafficking themselves. Most are usually psychologically disoriented and develop a very low self esteem, except those who are courageous enough to open up and seek counsel and rehabilitation. Most, however, prefer to live and deal with it themselves and remain silent for fear of being stigmatized. There're thousands of them out there who are living with the guilt and stigma of human trafficking and dying in silence. So, it's the responsibility of every individual, the government and humanitarian organizations to become more sensitive and proactive to the plights of the innocent and unfortunate victims of human trafficking.

CHAPTER TEN

MY UNFORGETABLE EXPERIENCE

Experience Is the Worst Teacher

I have heard about human trafficking before, but I would never have believed that it was such a horrible and inhuman experience had I not become a victim myself. Experience is not only the best teacher like they say; it's also the worst teacher. Imagine a driver who wants to experience accident to learn a lesson; he might not even survive the accident to learn the lesson. So, what benefit is such a lesson? I'd rather learn from other people's mistake and experience than mine especially such that are not inevitable.

Reduced to a Vagabond

My personal experience was unbearable for me. I was reduced to a vagabond. My entire life was so disoriented as I jumped from pillar to post struggling to survive after my madam had declared me wanted and was hunting me down all over the place. That's because I refused to work as a prostitute! The time came I had to go back to the refugee camp. On getting there, they gave me a room to stay, but for over two and a half months, I wasn't interviewed. So I had to remain there; I became very frustrated again. Then I met with a Rev. Father who always came to celebrate mass in the camp. I narrated my story to him; he showed me so much kindness and kept encouraging me not to give in. The condition of life over there was really terrible. Two persons were given a small-sized room, with one little bathroom, toilet and kitchen. Two of us were to use one little gas cooker as well. I was given 40 euro monthly, which can't even sustain someone for a day in Euro. It's so miserable! I had to live and survive at other people's mercy; something I never wished for my life.

My Court Case

After I had spent about one year and 3 months in Europe, the AYSL Court sent me a letter that they're rejecting my case because they didn't believe the story I told them the first time I came. So the SOS organization lawyer had to appear before the AYSL Court after 3 months, but still, the court rejected it again. I then decided to take the case to a private lawyer whom I had to pay a lot of money. The lawyer collected 300 euro from me and wrote the AYSL court, they rejected the appeal but he never told me anything about it and for that reason I was then declared an illegal immigrant in the country. Some months later, the court sent me a letter to leave the country. At that point, I felt like giving up and even contemplated suicide because that court case coupled with my madam's issue was just too much for me to bear.

How EXIT Stopped my Deportation

Someone invited me to one church. I fell in love with the ministry and started fellowshipping in that place since my former church was full of ogas and madams who instigated all the blacks in the church to hate me with so much passion. They even told their girls not to come close to me because my madam had placed a curse on. I was living like an outcast in the midst of my fellow Nigerians. They would gossip and even call me all sorts of names. It got so bad to the extent that I had to take some sleeping tablets before I could sleep at night. Every morning, my pillow was soaked with tears due to the heavy burden in my heart.

One certain time, my new church had a three day programme in my madam's city, which I attended secretly. I never knew that she had positioned informants everywhere, who notified her that I was in town. After the day's programme, I was on my way home with a Cameroonian woman, who agreed that I stayed in her place for the duration of the programme. That's how my madam came with her friends to attack me and sprayed peppery substance on my eyes with the intention to blindfold me. It was my scream that attracted passersby who then called an ambulance to rescue me. When the pastor

got to know what happened through the Cameroonian woman she informed the police about it.

After that incident, I couldn't see with my eyes for several weeks. Later, the police invited me and I issued my statement on what happened and how I was trafficked to Europe; they said they would get back to me. I then went back to my city. The pastor also promised me that she was going to take up the case. That really lighted up my hope, but she never turned up again. Instead, the branch pastor in my city asked me to go and answer the police. That was when the refugee organization decided to contact EXIT (an NGO) for me; but I was quite skeptical and didn't want to go, the moment I learnt that the person in charge was a Nigerian. I was told that she was different. I then decided to give her a try.

An appointment was booked and we met for the first time for counseling. After that, she took me to the police. So the moment my madam was aware that I had gone to the police, she informed her parents who then went to my parents and started fighting with them again in Nigeria. Her lawyer in Nigeria also called me and told me that since I had involved the police, I shouldn't think of coming to Nigeria ever again. The threats were just so much that my family had to run away from home and gone into hiding for several months.

Meanwhile, EXIT was working hard for me to have my resident permit; however, the more the lady tried the more difficulties she faced. After two and a half months, I was posted to another camp. Sometimes, EXIT would supply us some basic things like food, clothes etc. At that point in time, I was somehow stuck not knowing what I should do. I couldn't go back to my madam, I couldn't return to my home country Nigeria either. I was then an illegal migrant in Austria. Ultimately, I got a call from the boss of SOS who informed me that some officers were looking for me to depot me to Nigeria. Immediately, I phoned the EXIT lady and she asked me to come to her place immediately, which I did. So, when the officers got to the camp, I was nowhere to be found. As a result, I was publicly declared wanted for deportation. Therefore, I couldn't

go back to the camp; meaning I had no where to stay. For several days, I slept at the train station in a terrible winter season, without bathing and no food to eat.

Back to Square One

I continued like that until one day, the EXIT lady called me and advised me to go back and seek asylum afresh. 'That means I will have to go through all those stages all over again? That's back to square one. 'I asked reluctantly. 'You see my dear, that's the only option you have to stay in Europe', she said to me. Hearing that, I became so devastated and thought of given up about everything. However, we both went to the place I would seek another Asylum. At that time, I had to tell them the truth that I was trafficked from Nigeria to Europe. They asked me a few questions, which I answered with honesty. I was told to go and that they would get back to me in due course.

I called my pastor and explained my situation to her so she allowed me to stay with her on the condition that I would go into hiding whenever the church members were around so they wouldn't see me. So after church service, I had to make sure everybody in the church had gone home before I could go to the pastor's place. I literarily lived there as a servant. Each time they went out, I would have to stay outside till they returned. Sometimes, I would be outside for several hours and that was during winter season. Whenever the pastor had a visitor, I would hide in the bedroom until he/she was gone. No matter how pressed I was, I couldn't go to the rest room. It was such a hellish experience!

How My Pastor Betrayed Me

The most painful thing was that when I needed help the most, my pastor denied me. One particular day, it's still very early that morning when some police men invaded the pastor's house where I was staying and took me straight to the embassy. They requested that the embassy immediately issue a T.C. for my deportation. I quickly phoned the EXIT woman and she then asked me to give her card to them, which I did. I don't really know what transpired between them, but I'm pretty sure she must have

told them my story, because they decided to take me back to the refugee camp after they had spoken with her on the phone.

While in that place, I was told to provide a witness and that was the only thing that would help my case. So, the police went to interview my pastor; I was quite elated because she was very acquainted with my story. Believe you me, the pastor denied and claimed that she never knew anything about me or the case. That moment, I got the greatest shock of my life. It's really heartbreaking considering how committed I had become in that church up to the extent of singing in the choir.

The pastor actually denied me because she was scared that she would lose plenty of her members if she told the truth since many of the members were my madam's colleagues and also ogas who were involved in trafficking business as well. The whole thing became much more complicated. So, I had to hide from the police until the EXIT woman came and contacted a lawyer who then applied for my stay on the basis that I was a victim of human trafficking.

No Beacon of Hope

They were then waiting for the state lawyers to grant them the permit for me to have the stay since according to my case file, my country Nigeria was no longer safe for me due to the threats to life I had had. The state lawyer said my madam had a similar case before. So, the state lawyers decided to close the case and as a result the organization stopped paying me the 35 Euro stipend I used to get. And my lawyer never told me about it. Everything suddenly turned worst again for me as I soon learned of it. During my counseling session with the founder of the NGO- EXIT, she asked if I had a lawyer already and I said yes. She got the number from me and phoned her. To my greatest shock again, the lawyer surprisingly said that my case had been closed and that the government had already issued me a letter to leave the country. When the EXIT woman told me about it, I told her that I was never aware of such. So, my little hope was again dashed and there's no more beacon of hope left for me. My problem kept getting worse and I was jumping from frying pan to fire. I was no longer different from a mad person.

Subsequently, I became very aggressive as I thought about my life. I was living in much fear, in pains and total confusion. My situation was critically hopeless.

Suddenly, I Met an Angel

My suffering continued without any hope that it would alleviate soon. But I was resolute and determined I would never work as a prostitute come what may. In due course, help came for me out of the blue. God intervened and made a way for me when there seemed to be none and turned my desert to a pool of water. Miraculously, I met one Austrian couple who after listening to my story showed me a great deal of kindness and immeasurable favour. They catered so much for me and even helped me to register a little cleaning company since I didn't have a resident permit or any paper to work yet. By God's grace, almost immediately, I got the first contract to be cleaning the Baptist Church in Vienna Austria. Pretty soon, I was cleaning up to five other branches of Baptist. So, that's how I started making some money to survive until I was able to finally get my passport and everything gradually fell into place.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

LAST WORDS

What victims of human trafficking experience in Europe is inexplicable. Most of them don't usually speak out during and even after their experiences because of the dangerous oath they are usually subjected to take.

I had experienced it firsthand. I know a lot of books, articles and journals have been written on human trafficking before now, but most of them are written by mere activists and advocates who were told. So, reading this book is like hearing from the horse's mouth. I have decided to speak out so that you can learn from my experience and share with your sphere of contacts.