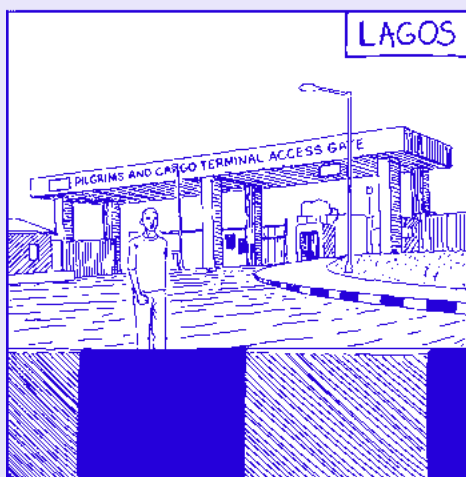


REINTEGRATE STORIES



RETURN MIGRANTS' EXPERIENCES IN NIGERIA



RETURN MIGRANTS' EXPERIENCES IN NIGERIA

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European Research Council
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Reintegrate Project and Reintegration Governance

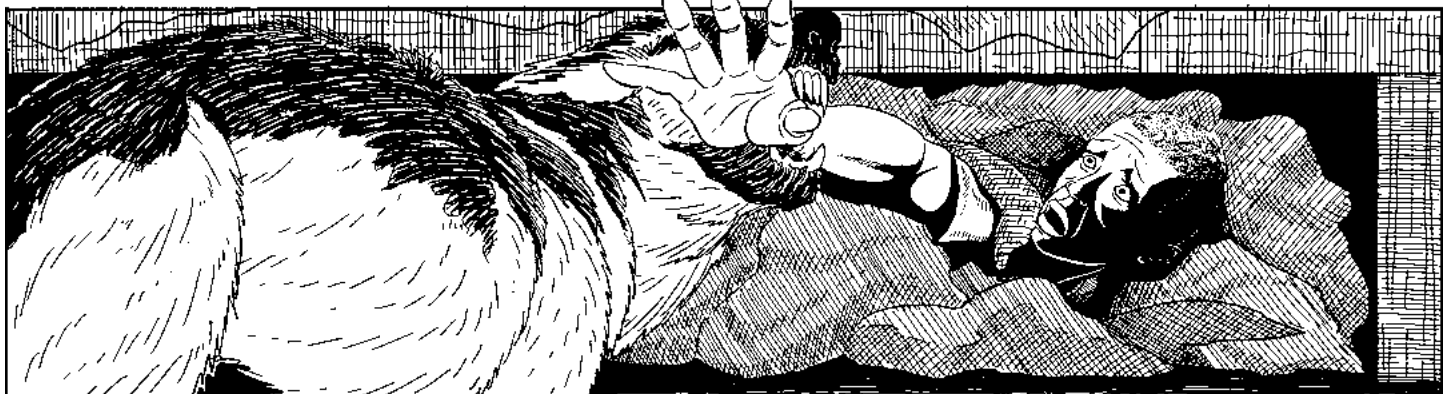
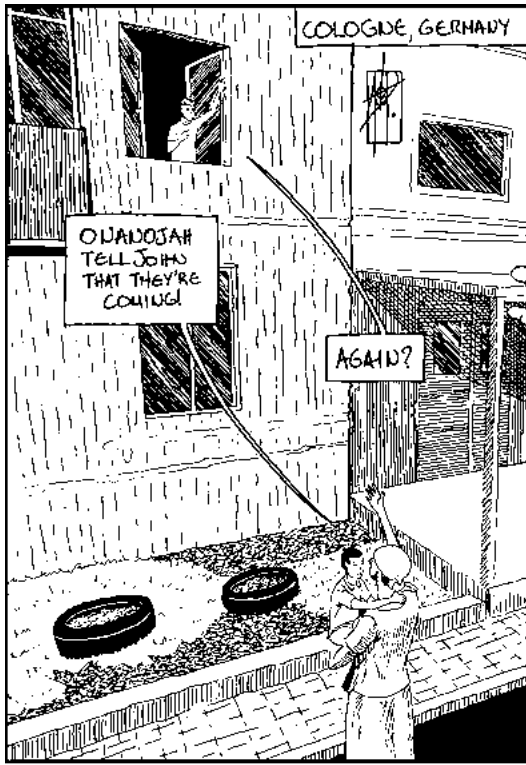
The Reintegrate Project aims to understand how reintegration is governed and how reintegration governance influences returnees' experiences. Many people do not have the right to stay in countries of migration and return to their countries of origin through different types of programmes and policies; this return can be chosen, or it can be forced. Little is known about how different countries govern the process of reintegration once people return and how return migrants experience their return and reintegration process. This study presents stakeholders' perspectives, alongside return migrants' experiences of return and reintegration in a comparative analysis across four case studies of Nepal, Nigeria, Serbia, and the Philippines.

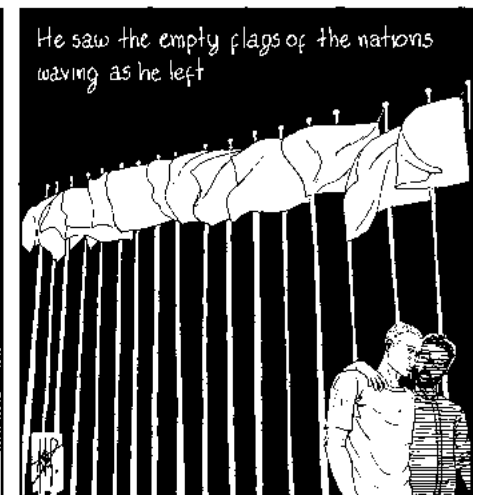
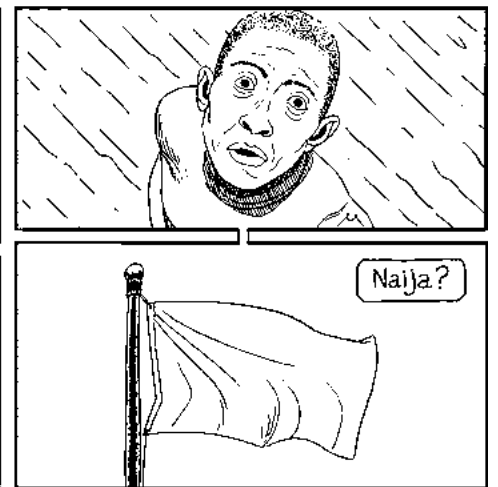
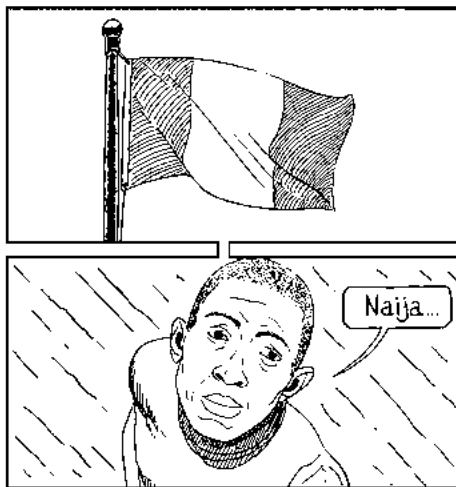
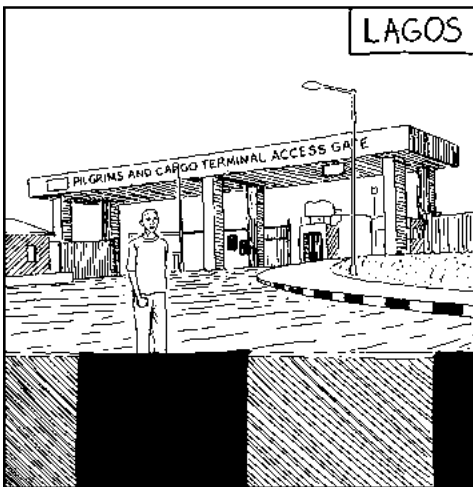
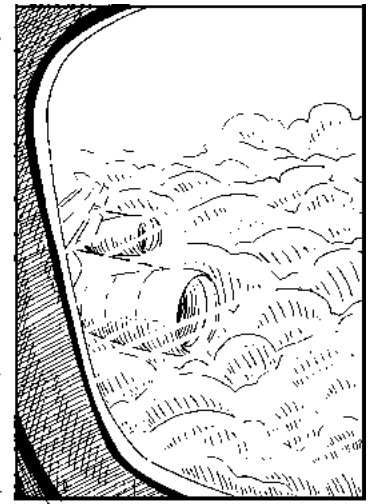
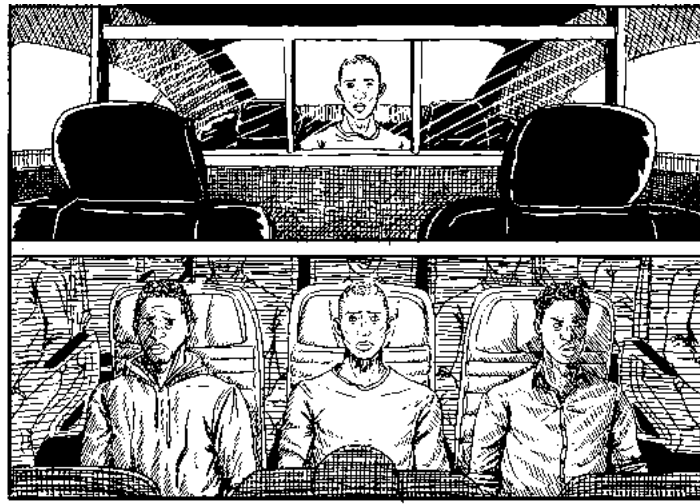
Reintegration is defined in this study as *"the process in which return migrants are supported in maintaining their cultural and social identities by the host society and the whole population acquires equal civil, social, political, human, and cultural rights"*. (Kuschminder, 2017, p.43). This definition considers various domains of reintegration and places emphasis on the duality of responsibility between both returnees and the receiving society in facilitating reintegration.

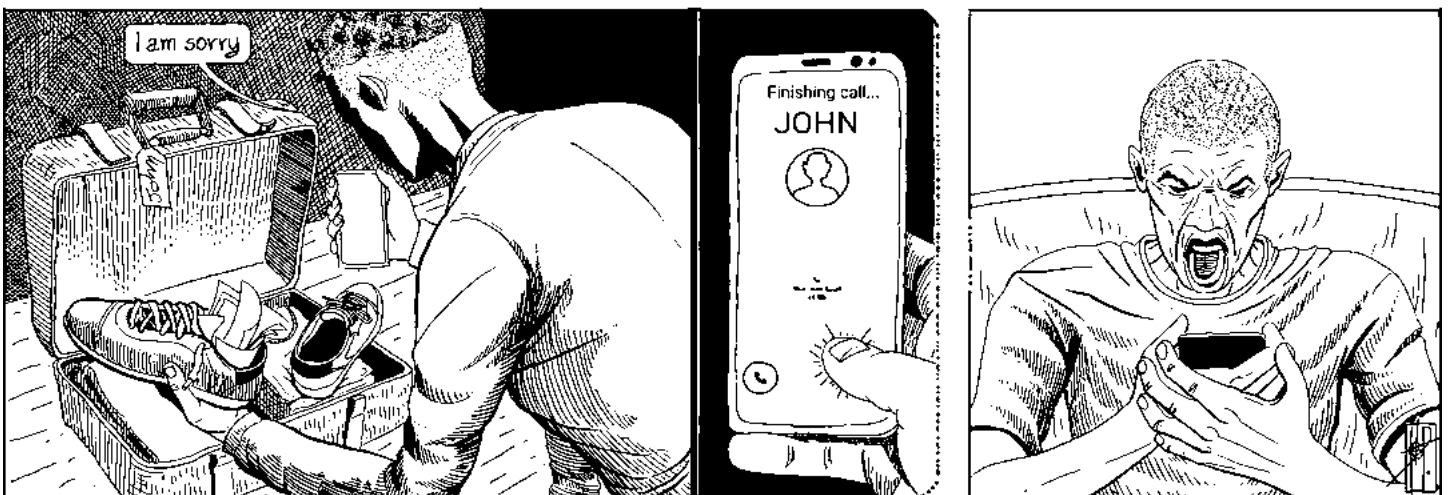
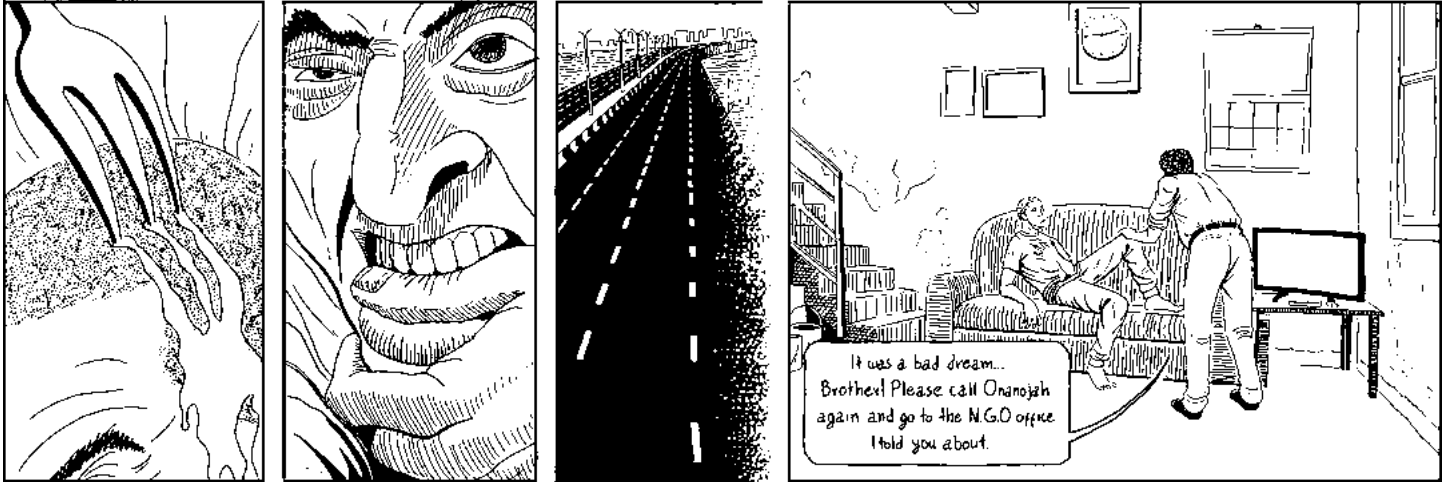
A **reintegration policy** is defined *"as instruments intended to address the social, economic, and political needs of returnees to facilitate their reintegration into society"* (Kuschminder and Saguin, forthcoming). Reintegration policies are widely considered as implemented by different actors, reflecting different intentions and designs, and showing trade-offs between migrant protection and migration management objectives. Reintegration governance refers to *"the policies, practices, and institutions involved in the design, delivery, funding, implementation, and/or evaluation of processes to manage or support the returnees transition into the household, community, and broader society of their country of origin"* (Kuschminder, 2024). Reintegration governance thus includes multiple actors and their associated policies to implement reintegration.

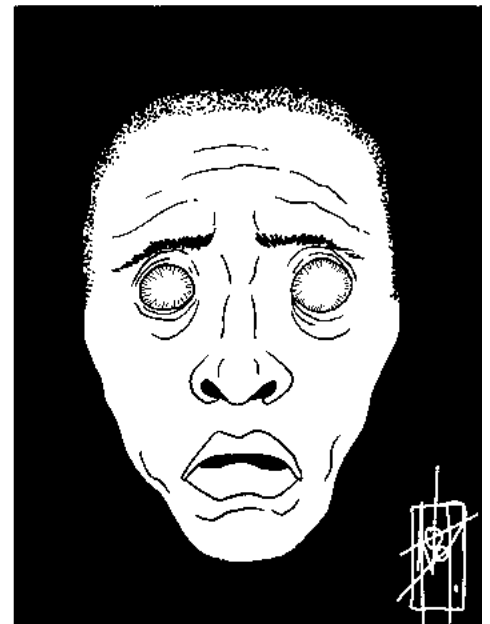
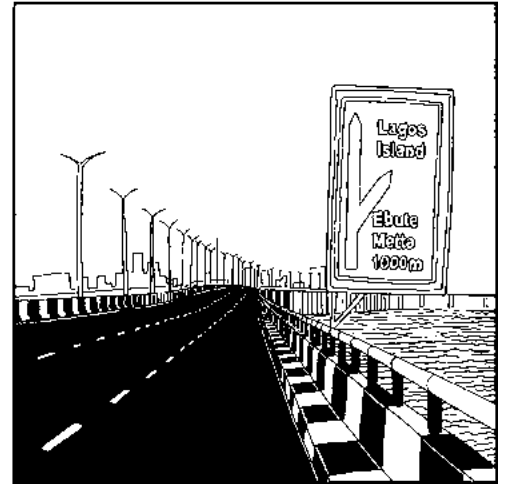
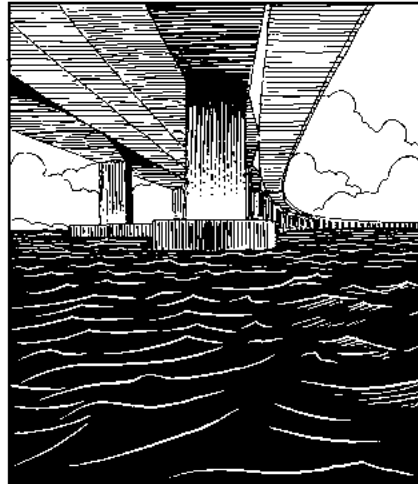
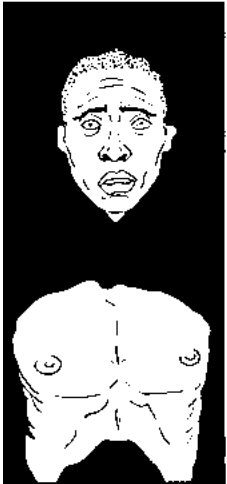
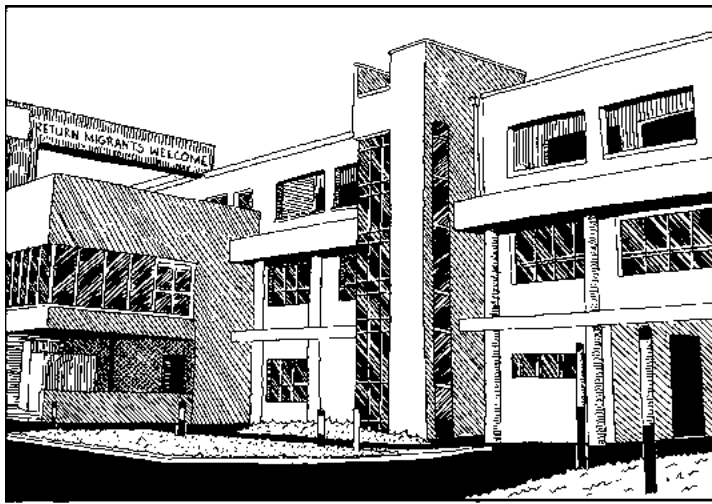
STORY 1

JOHN









Key Messages:

This highlights how reintegration governance (RG) fails deportees like John. He faces shame associated with deportation and is often criminalized and stigmatized as a deportee, leading to being deemed 'undeserving' of formal reintegration assistance. Despite this, John received crucial social and financial support from his brother, including a place to stay. However, his situation underscores the ongoing need for both economic and psychosocial support during reintegration.

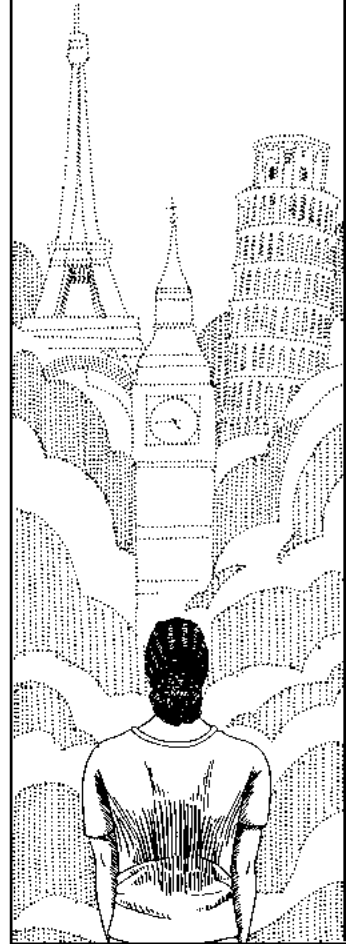
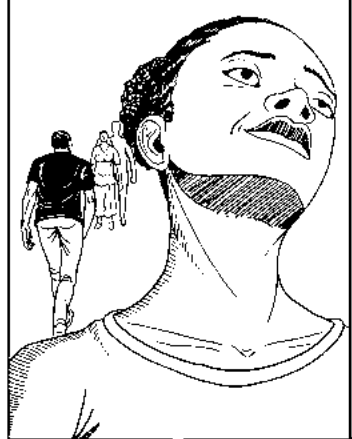
STORY 2

JOY

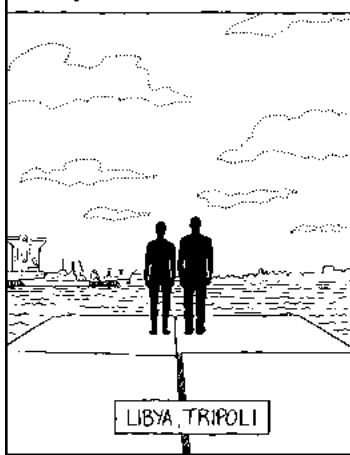
He brought his cousin from Nigeria to Libya on a smuggler's truck with the promise of



You are going to Europe Joy!



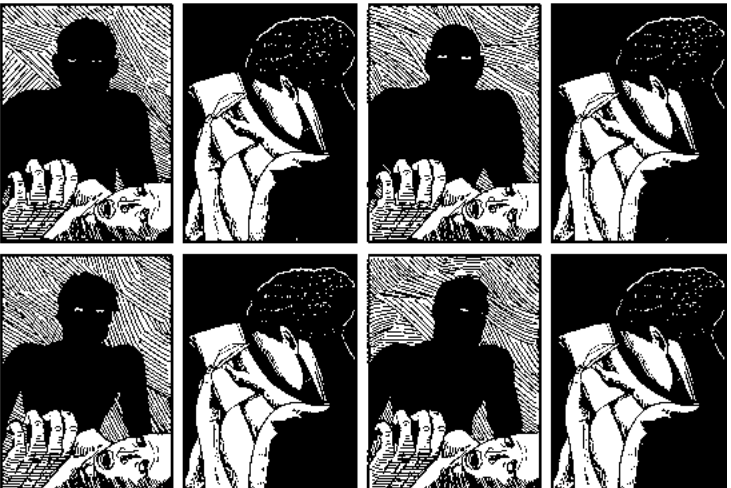
...sending her to Europe to work in a hospital.

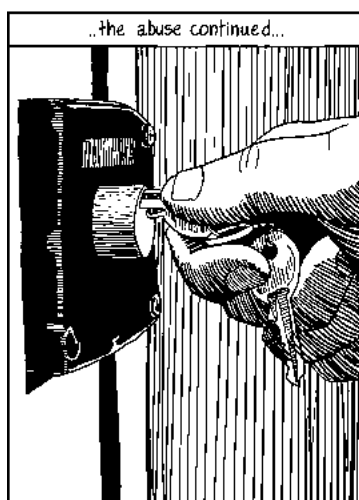
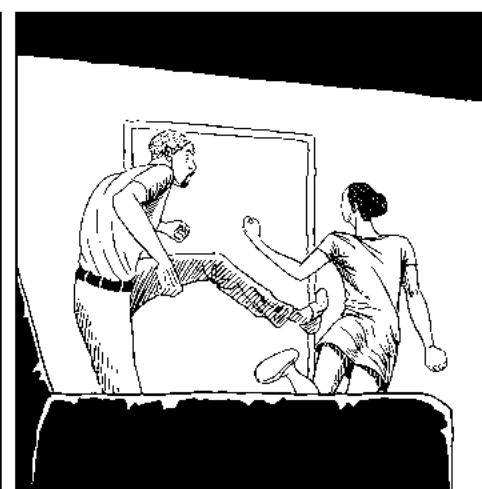
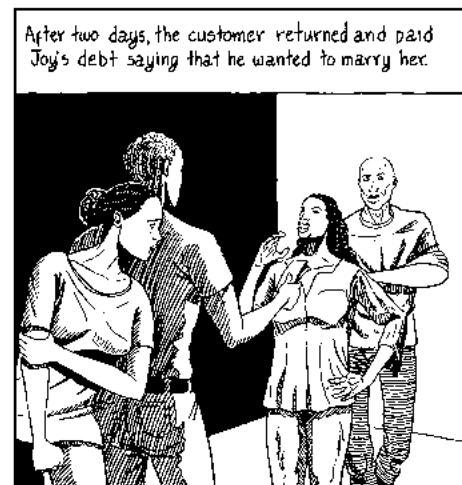


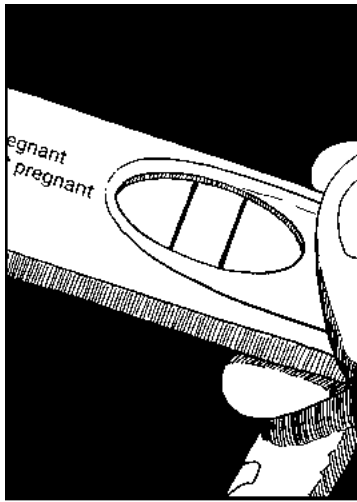
Her cousin sold her to a Nigerian madam in Libya who said that she must work in brothel and repay the cost of the journey so far before she could go to Europe.



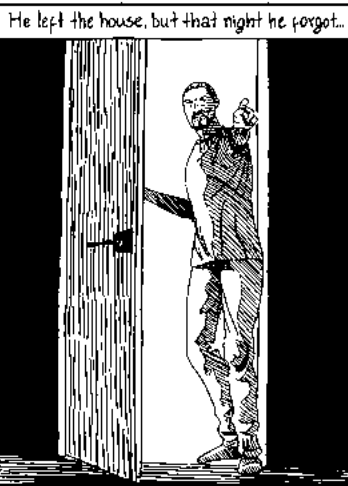
The customers paid the madam directly, so Joy recorded her sexual activities in a small book to calculate how much debt she had 'worked' off.







She tried to convince him to stop...



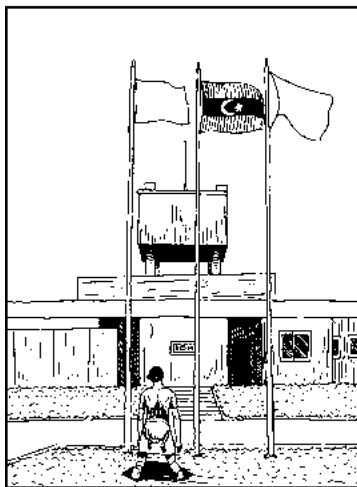
He left the house, but that night he forgot...



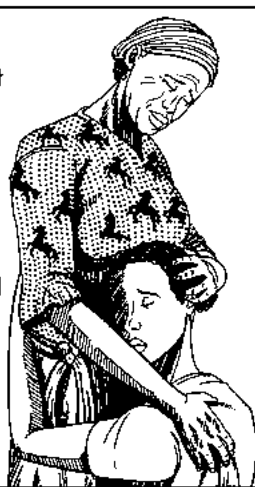
...to lock her in...



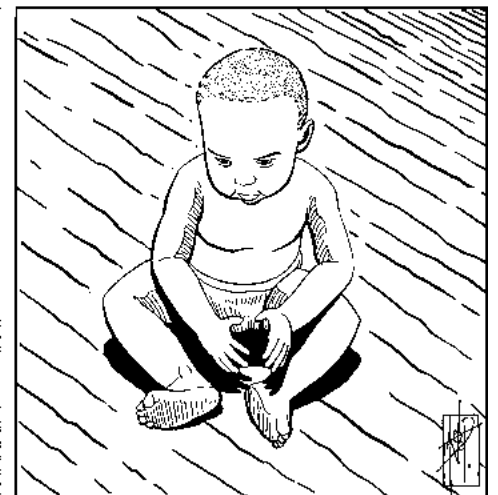
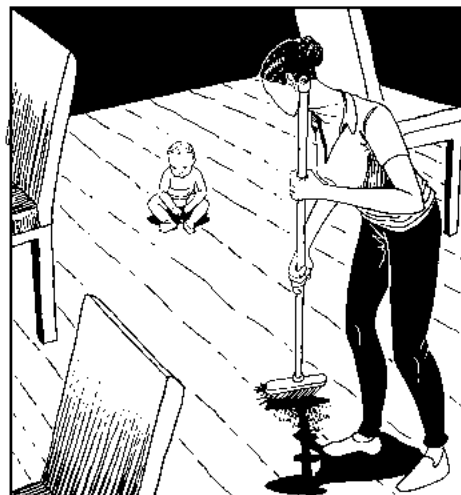
She finally managed to escape!

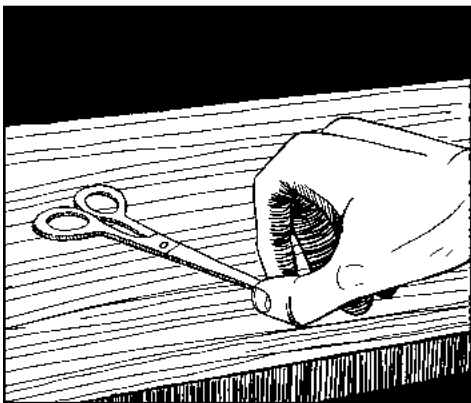
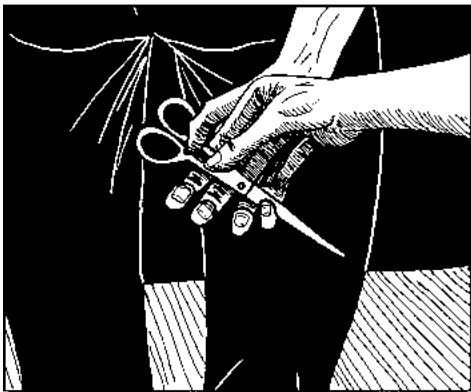
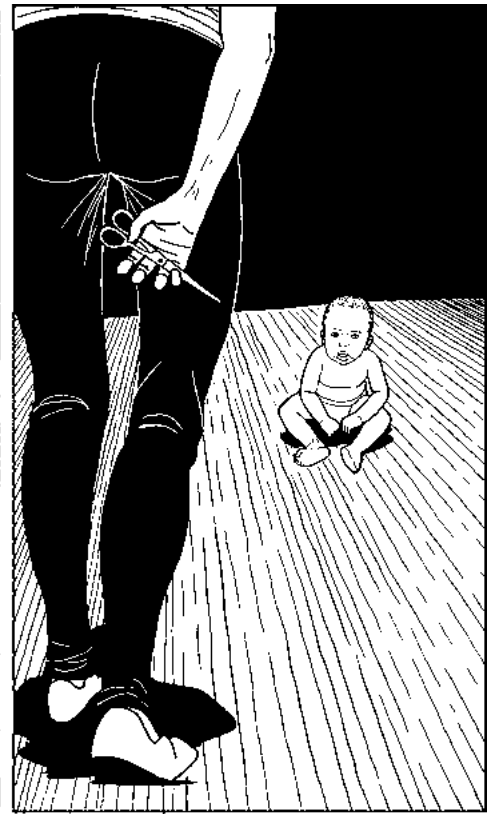
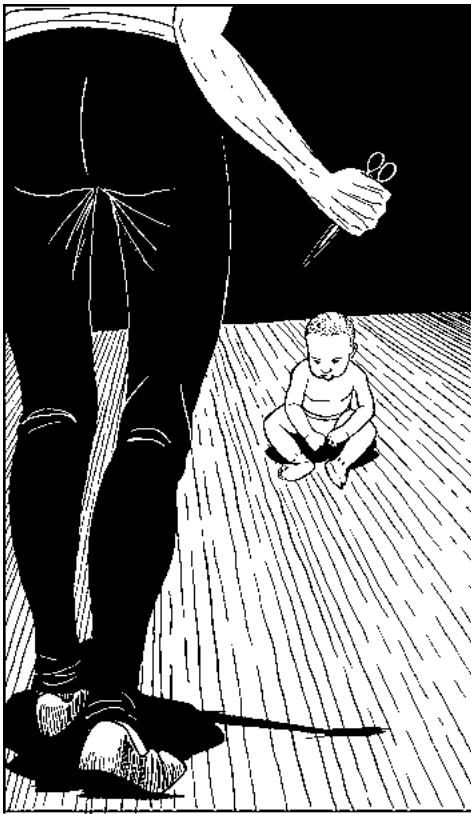


After she escaped she went to the Nigerian embassy. There she was connected with IOM and returned to Nigeria with the assistance of Voluntary Humanitarian Return. When she returned she called her mother who was thankful that her daughter returned home alive.



Joy had a baby boy within a few months after arriving back home. IOM supported her to receive business training and helped her set up a small hair salon. She also received assistance from GIZ in buying more goods for her business and is doing okay. Joy is settling back in, but some days...



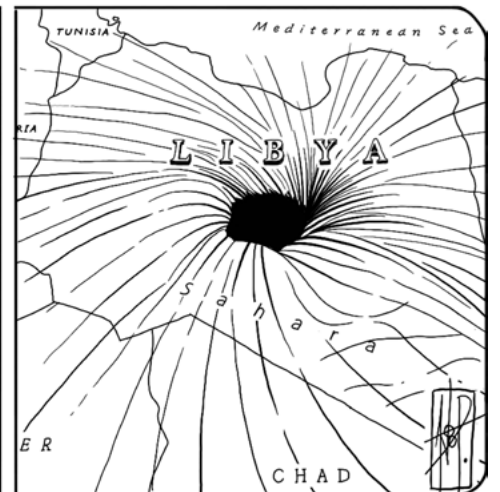
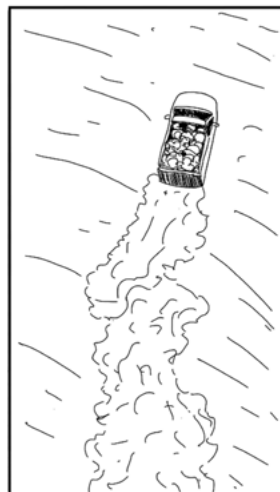
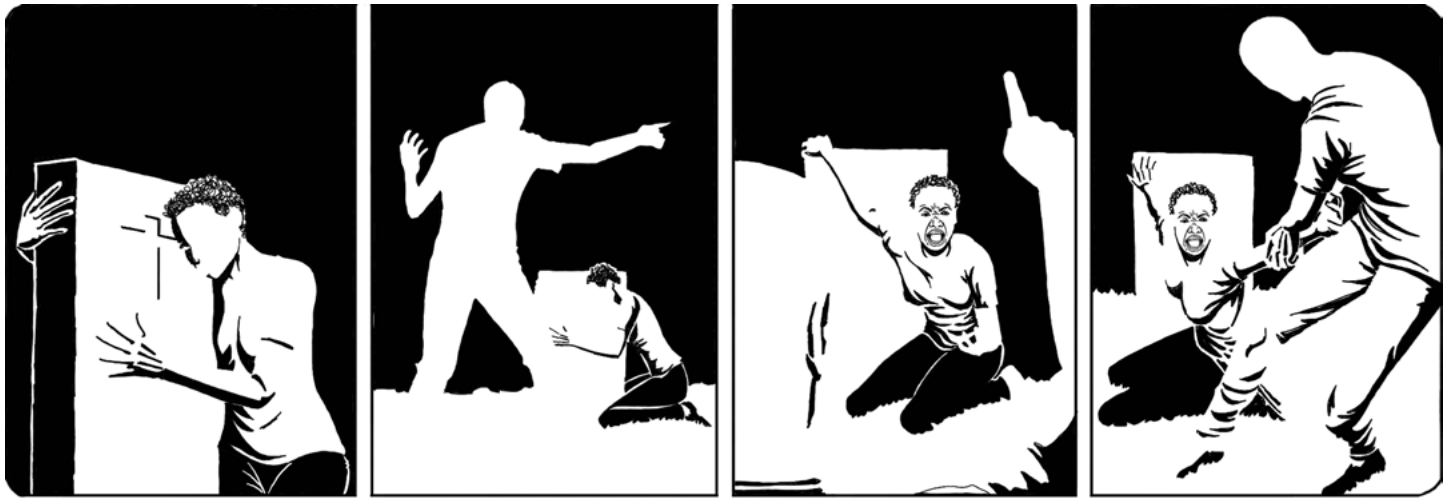


Key Messages:

Joy's story shows that IOM VHR can be successful in providing return and reintegration assistance. Successful collaboration between the Nigerian embassy and IOM led to support for Joy to have emergency shelter and VHR, and the support she received was lifesaving. However, despite the support she received, including a welcoming family, and a relatively successful business, the post-traumatic stress can still be crippling. Joy is in stark need of continued mental health support.

STORY 3

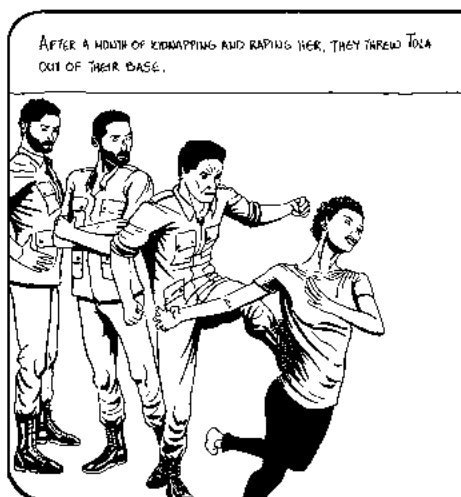
TOLA

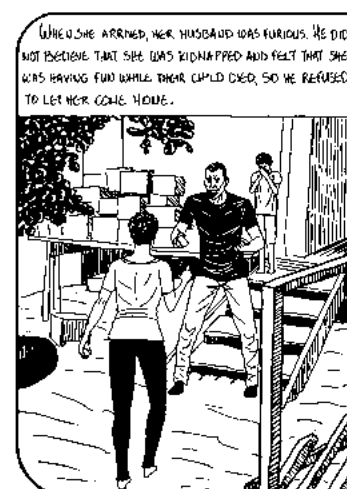
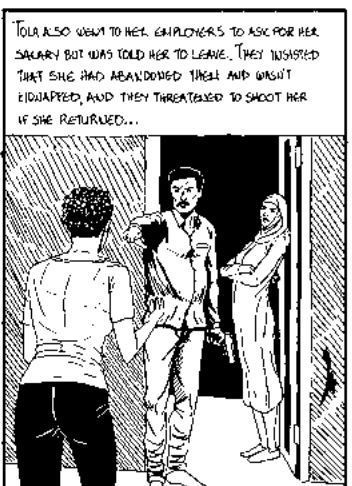


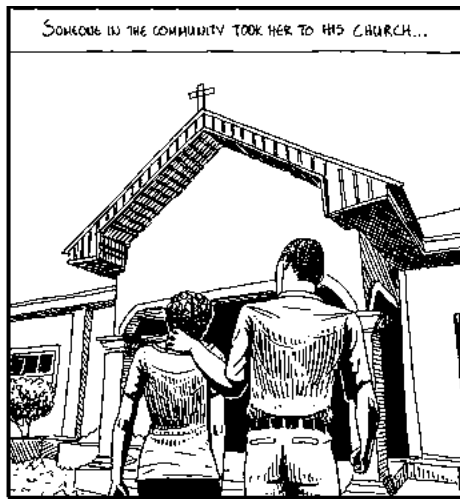
When Tola arrived in Lisha, she was received by her friend who was already working there.



Her friend found her a job as a live-in housemaid so that she could earn decent money.







Key Messages:

For Tola, Europe was never the intended destination; Libya was the goal to be able to send remittances and support her family. She probably could have received VHR if she waited, but Tola needed to return earlier, so her social network provided a self-funded repatriation via land. Despite her trials and efforts to return, she was shunned by her family upon return, who struggled to understand and accept the hardships she had faced. Tola was fortunate to receive support from the church and bottom-up Reintegration Governance from an NGO. Support from the church is the root of her survival, however, is it not enough to enable her to have a future.

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