



NEWS SITUATION TRACKING - NIGERIA

NATIONWIDE YOUTH PROTEST AGAINST BRUTALITIES BY THE SPECIAL ANTI-ROBBERY SQUAD (SARS) IN NIGERIA

Vol. 10

Location: NIGERIA

Issue: Protest Against SARS brutality and Extra-judicial killings in Nigeria: 78 people shot dead and over 73 others injured between October 17-21, 2020

Date: October 17- 21, 2020

COMMUNITY PROFILING

Population: Nigeria has a population of over 206,139,589².

Basic Demography and Geography of Hotspots:

Nigeria shares land borders with the Republic of Benin, Chad, Cameroun, Niger and the Gulf of Guinea of the Atlantic Ocean. The country has 36 States and the Federal Capital Territory (FCT). There are 774 Local Government Areas (LGA's) divided across six (6) geo-political zones.

Ethnicity: Nigeria has over 250 ethnic groups with Hausa-Fulani, Igbo, Yoruba³ in the majority.

Special Anti-Robbery Squad (SARS) of the Nigeria Police Force: The SARS created as a branch of the Nigeria Police Force (NPF) under the Force Criminal Investigation and Intelligence Department in 1992 was established to detain, investigate and prosecute people involved in crimes associated with armed robbery, kidnapping and other crimes associated with firearms.⁴

CRITICAL STAKEHOLDERS

Direct Actors:

Nigerians (especially youths), Human Rights Activists, Lawyers.

Affected Persons:

Nigerian youths, officers of the Nigeria Police Force (NPF).

Interested Actors:

Federal and State Governments, Amnesty International, Nigeria Bar Association, Civil Society Organisations, International Agencies, National/State House of Assembly, House of Representative, National Human Rights Commission, Ministry of Police Affairs, Police Service Commission,

INCIDENT PROFILING

The nationwide demonstrations against Police officers of the Special Anti-Robbery Squad (SARS) continue to gain momentum across States. These demonstrations have generated increased conversations on the prevalence of human rights abuses perpetrated by security operatives and the inadequacies of law enforcement agencies to bring the perpetrators of abuses to justice.

Since the commencement of a national protest against SARS brutalities and extra-judicial killings on October 8, 2020 in Nigeria, the country continue to record series of protests across States. The protest has resulted in violence that has led to the death of 92 people, 87 injuries¹⁰ and destruction of properties and livelihoods. Suspected hoodlums and cult gangs have exploited the protests to increase their criminal activities as recorded in Ogun, Kwara, Edo, Ondo, Lagos, Abuja-FCT, Gombe, Kano, Delta, Oyo, Abia, Ogun, Ekiti and Plateau States¹¹.

Also, incidents of shoot-outs between security operatives and suspected hoodlums who have exploited the insecurity created by the protest to carry out illegal activities including jailbreak, robbery, extortion and physical assaults of commuters/motorists by hoodlums, arson and rape were recorded. WANEP NEWS recorded cases of police clampdown on protesters in Lagos, Rivers and Abuja-FCT as well as violent attacks on police officers and other security operatives by suspected hoodlums in Oyo, Ekiti, Ogun, Lagos, Edo States¹². There are also alleged claims by protesters of state sponsorship of thugs to cause chaos and disrupt peaceful demonstrations in Lagos, Edo and Abuja-FCT as monitored by WANEP NEWS.¹³

Between October 17 and 20, 2020, 78 people were reported dead (including 6 police officers) with over 73 others injured in police shootings, attack by hoodlums and road accidents in the affected States¹⁴. Out of the 78 deaths, 4 deaths were accident-related during the EndSARS protest¹⁵. As recorded in WANEP NEWS, 16 police stations in Edo (6), Lagos (4), Oyo (1), Ekiti (1), Abia (2), Osun (1) and Abuja-FCT (1) were burnt down and vandalised by hoodlums in the guise of EndSARS protests with weapons carted away in Abia, Edo and Oyo States¹⁶.

¹ <https://www.google.com/search?xsrf=ALeKk024WZQdV9kevtu8o3POhTqEE6kSdQ:1602836211476&source=univ&tbm=isch&q=map+of+Nigeria&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEWjQ-SGYlrjsAhURCWMbHXBQDDQQA16BAGBEHE&biw=899&bih=578>

² <https://www.statista.com/statistics/1122838/population-of-nigeria/>

³ <https://photos.state.gov/libraries/nigeria/487468/pdfs/Nigeria%2030overview%20Fact%20Sheet.pdf>

⁴ <http://snisnet.net/MFLDSS/MFLDSS.php?source=4&snu=0&factype=&owner=0&country=NG>

⁵ <https://www.premiumtimesng.com/health/health-features/361373-nigeria-budgets-n2000-for-the-healthcare-of-each-citizen-in-2020.html>

⁶ <https://www.hrw.org/news/2020/03/25/nigeria-covid-19-cases-rise>

⁷ <https://www.ncdc.gov.ng/themes/common/files/sites/default/files/bfd8f02878f5ded5edc9c25308fdad.pdf>

⁸ <https://www.ecowas.int/institutions/west-african-health-organisation-wahoc/>

⁹ Paquette, Danielle, "Nigeria abolishes special police squad after nationwide protests", *Washington Post*, ISSN 0190-8286, Retrieved October 12, 2020

¹⁰ See Situation Tracking on EndSARS protest by WANEP-Nigeria, October 3-16, 2020. <http://www.wanepnigeria.org/phocadownload/SituationTracking/endsars%20protest%20in%20nigeria.pdf>

¹¹ www.wanep.org/news

¹² *ibid*

¹³ www.wanep.org/news

¹⁴ <https://www.premiumtimesng.com/news/top-news/422061-just-in-one-shot-as-police-attack-endsars-protesters-in-ondo.html>

¹⁵ www.wanep.org/news

¹⁶ www.wanep.org/news

Federal Ministry of Justice, media.

Despite its impact in tackling human security threats in the country, the SARS has often been indicted for cases of torture, misuse of weapons, extra-judicial killing, physical and sexual assaults, unlawful arrest and detention, extortion, illegal stop and search, amongst other cases. This raises concerns regarding the efficacy of the Government's policies especially, the Anti-Torture Act (2017), which criminalises the use of torture by law enforcement agencies.⁵

There have been previous agitations and concerns over SARS illegality and attempts to police reform the Police Force by the Federal Government. For example, between 2006 and 2012, three high-level Presidential Committees were constituted to recommend measures for the reform of the Nigeria Police Force (NPF)⁶. Also, on August 14, 2018⁷, the Vice-President (VP) of Nigeria, Yemi Osibanjo made a pronouncement on SARS reform. Yet, the impact of the recommendations within the police force has not produced the desired results.

The President Muhammadu Buhari's administration has also made efforts to improve police welfare and technical expertise.

On April 2019, the President assented the Police Trust Fund Act⁸, which focuses on training of police officers, procurement of operational equipment, maintenance of police stations as well as improvement in the welfare and wellbeing of the Police Force.

Also, on September 17, 2020, President Muhammadu Buhari signed into law the Nigeria Police Act, 2020. The new law provides for a more effective and well-organised police force driven by the principles of transparency and accountability in its

In addition, several public and private facilities including three commercial banks, Local Government Secretariat, Nigerian Ports Authority, Lagos State Television (LTV)¹⁷, the Palace of the Oba of Lagos State¹⁸ and over 100 Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) in Lagos State¹⁹; a warehouse belonging to the Nigeria Customs Service (NCS) in Edo State; and shopping malls were damaged in Abuja, Lagos, Osun States respectively. Ekiti and Edo States also recorded cases of gang-rape of 6 female victims by hoodlums during the EndSARS protest²⁰.

The geographical dynamics of the EndSARS protests as recorded by WANEP NEWS²¹:

- **On October 17, 2020 in Osun State**, 2 people were reported dead with several others injured in attacks by suspected hoodlums on the State Governor's convoy and on EndSars protesters at Olaiya, Ayepe and Old Fakunle axis in Osogbo LGA²². Several shops and a police station were reportedly looted and vandalised respectively.
- **Between October 17 and 20 in Abuja-FCT**, 8 people were reported dead with several others injured in Kubwa, Apo and Central Business axis²³. A police station with 15 vehicles were burnt down and vandalised by suspected hoodlums.
- **On October 17 in Ekiti State**, suspected hoodlums attacked a police station, destroying 4 vehicles with 40 glasses of windows damaged at Ikere-Ekiti²⁴.
- **Between October 17 and 21 in Lagos State**, 33 people were reported dead (including 2 police officers) with over 49 injuries (including 19 police officers)²⁵ at Ikorodu, Yaba, Mushin, Ketu, Oyingbo, Orile, Apape, Adekunle, Fagba and Lekki tollgate areas²⁶. Three (4) police stations and patrol vehicles were reportedly burnt down in Layeni, Cele outpost, Orile and Amukoko²⁷ areas in the State. In addition, the Ajeromi-Ifelodun LGA secretariat and 20 vehicles burnt down with security guards injured.
- **Between October 18-19 in Kwara State**, 2 people were reported dead with several others injured at Ilorin and Sabo-Oke areas²⁸. Several properties were also destroyed.
- **On October 19 in Delta State**, 3 people were reported dead with 8 others injured as suspected cult groups under the guise of EndSARS protest engaged in violence in Abraka community of Ethiope-East LGA²⁹.
- **Between October 19-20 in Edo State**, 9 people were reported dead in Benin City. Also, suspected hoodlums vandalised Benin Correctional Centre and Oko Medium Security Centre while over 1,993 inmates escaped³⁰. 6 police stations were vandalised and burnt down with several arms/ammunition carted away at Ugbekun, Oba Market, Saint Saviou, Textile mill, Evbuotobu, Ivbior and Idogbo axis in the State³¹.
- **Between October 19-20 in Abia State**, 2 police officers were reported dead with 2 police stations burnt down at Ogbor hill and Azikiwe road in Aba axis³².
- **On October 20 in Ogun State**, suspected hoodlums under the guise of EndSARS protest killed 1 officer of the Nigeria Customs Service (NCS) and injured one other³³.
- **On October 20 in Oyo State**, 5 people (including 2 police officers) were reported dead, 6 injured with 2 police officers missing during an attack on Ojoo police station along Sango-Ojoo road in Ibadan. The police station was burnt down with 10 vehicles destroyed.
- **On October 20 in Plateau State**, 3 people were reported dead with 4 others injured in Jos-North and South LGAs. Several properties were destroyed in the areas.
- **On October 20 in Kano State**, 4 people were reported dead with several others injured along Airport road and Sabon Gari areas³⁴. Over 15 vehicles and a church were vandalised and set ablaze. Also in the State, the death of a 17-year-old boy in police custody triggered violent demonstrations which resulted in the death of 1 person with 1 police officer injured on October 19, 2020³⁵.
- **On October 20 in Gombe State**, 3 people including a journalist were reported injured in Gombe metropolis³⁶.

⁵ Police Reform in Nigeria: The Devolution Debate, 2018 (by Cleen Foundation) : <https://cleen.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Police-Reform-in-Nigeria-The-Devolution-Debate.pdf>

⁶ Police Reform in Nigeria: The Devolution Debate, 2018 (by Cleen Foundation) : <https://cleen.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Police-Reform-in-Nigeria-The-Devolution-Debate.pdf>

⁷ <https://dailytrust.com/-endsars-nigerians-react-to-sars-overhaul-265751>

⁸ <https://businessday.ng/news/article/sars-experts-task-fg-on-police-trust-fund/#:~:text=On%20the%20Nigeria%20Police%20Force,%E2%80%9D>

¹⁷ <https://affairstv.com/2020/10/21/1tv-shut-down-after-hoodlums-attack/>

¹⁸ <https://punchng.com/hoodlums-burn-nigerian-ports-authority-building-in-lagos/>

¹⁹ <https://punchng.com/breaking-heavy-gunshots-as-hoodlums-set-ablaze-brt-terminal-buses-in-lagos/>

²⁰ <https://www.vanguardngr.com/2020/10/endsars-protest-police-confirm-burning-of-3-trucks-rape-of-3-girls-in-ekiti/>; <https://thecable.ng/three-endsars-protesters-were-raped-in-edo-says-deputy-gov>

²¹ www.wanep.org/news

²² *ibid*

²³ www.wanep.org/news

²⁴ <https://thenationonlineng.net/video-hoodlums-attack-police-station-in-ekiti/>

²⁵ <https://www.channelsstv.com/2020/10/20/breaking-security-operatives-fire-gunshots-to-disperse-endsars-protesters-in-lekki/>

²⁶ <https://punchng.com/black-tuesday-49-killed-as-protests-turn-bloody/>

²⁷ <https://punchng.com/breaking-armed-thugs-set-ablaze-amukoko-police-station-in-lagos/>

²⁸ www.wanep.org/news

²⁹ *ibid*

³⁰ <https://dailypost.ng/2020/10/20/breaking-1993-prisoners-escaped-in-edo-weapons-looted-fg/>

³¹ *ibid*

³² <https://punchng.com/black-tuesday-49-killed-as-protests-turn-bloody/>

³³ <https://punchng.com/black-tuesday-49-killed-as-protests-turn-bloody/>

³⁴ <https://punchng.com/black-tuesday-49-killed-as-protests-turn-bloody/>

³⁵ www.wanep.org/news

³⁶ *ibid*

operations and management of its resources, amongst others⁹.

- **On October 21 in Ondo State**, 1 person was reported injured when police operatives fired live ammunition to disperse prootesters in Ondo town.

Furthermore, accident-related incidents during the EndSARS protest In Delta, Ekiti and Lagos States resulted in 4 deaths with several others injured as recorded in WANEP NEWS³⁷.

To further prevent escalation of violence in some States, the State Governors of Edo, Lagos, Ekiti, Plateau, Abia, Osun and Ondo imposed a 24-hours curfew as part of the security measures to maintain public security. Despite this, the protests have continued unabated. This heightens risk of lawlessness in the affected areas. In addition, the Inspector General of Police (IGP), ordered a nationwide deployment of anti-riot police unit to protect lives and property and well as secure national infrastructure across the country. The defiance of the ban on protest and curfew by protesters in Abuja-FCT and Lagos³⁸ States, resulted in security clampdown on protesters with reports of live ammunition and tear gas canisters fired to disperse protesters.

RISK ANALYSIS

- The continued demonstrations and resort to lawlessness in some States amid the curfew and ban on protests in Edo, Lagos, Abia, Ekiti, Plateau and Ondo States is indicative of a deep-seated resentment for the State by citizenry. The consequences of this have manifested in violence and destruction of private and public structures, and other forms of criminalities in the States. This will further heighten increased fragility in the States and human security in the country especially considering the escape of 1,993 inmates in legal custody in Edo State and looting of arms and ammunition from police stations.
- Also, use of violence and acts of criminality by hoodlums against citizens and security agencies creates a potential avenue for youth radicalism and lawlessness.
- The curfew imposed by some State Governments to prevent breakdown of law and order and ensure public safety has created a disruption in academic activities, as schools have been shut down. Also, the continued violence by hoodlums in the guise of EndSARS protest hindered access and delivery of essential health care and social services in some affected States.
- The EndSARS protest has further created a disruption in the social and economic activities in the affected States. This has implication on vulnerable population and the livelihoods of the population. Business activities have been brought to a halt due to fear attacks. The negative impact of the protracted EndSARS protests has resulted in the loss of 700 billion naira by the Lagos Chamber of Commerce and Industry (LCIB) in Lagos State³⁹. This is in addition to the devastating effect of COVID-19 on the economy the country is still grappling with. This may likely increase economic hardship in the country.
- The insecurity in affected States arising from the violent hijack of peaceful demonstrations and release of convicted prisoners continue to heighten the risk of sexual and gender-based violence, especially rape in Ekiti and Edo States. This undermines women and girls security and fundamental human rights in the affected States.
- As the protest persist, the risk of an increase in actors and issues proliferation is imminent. Some parts of the North are supporting the disbandment of the SARS, while others with the hashtag EndInsecurity are protesting against issues of governance including, insecurity, unemployment, poor minimum wage and the deficit in infrastructural development, amongst others. This is likely to create competing demands along regional and ethnic lines with a ripple effect on social cohesion in the country.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- The Federal and State Governments should foster broader national collaboration with religious leaders, youth groups, traditional authorities, Civil Society Organisations (CSOs), and opinion leaders and other relevant groups to create space for broader dialogue with the protesters in order to reach consensus on ending the current protests and hostilities.

⁹ <https://allafrica.com/stories/202009230514.html>

³⁷ www.wanep.org/news

³⁸ <https://punchng.com/breaking-fire-guts-lekki-ikoyi-bridge/>

³⁹ <https://allafrica.com/stories/202010200267.html>