

#Endsars: Death toll rises to 12, many injured



Thousands of #EndSARS protesters yesterday paralyzed commercial activities in further demonstration against police brutality in Nigeria

Taiwo Adeniyi, Maureen Onochie, Abbas Jimoh (Abuja), Usman A. Bello (Benin), Raphael Ogbonnaiye (Ado-Ekiti), Hope Abah Emmanuel (Makurdi), Sani Ibrahim Paki (Kano), Peter Moses (Abeokuta) & Victor Sorokwu, Asaba

Twelve people have been killed since protests against police brutality started in Nigeria about 10 days ago.

Youths in states across the geopolitical zones in the country have been voicing their displeasure at police brutality and corruption.

Protesters observed the Friday Jumma't prayers on the road while there was a large turnout of protesters at Lekki Toll Plaza, Lagos and Unity Fountain Maitama, Abuja, where a candlelight was observed in the memory of those that had died from police brutality.

Amnesty International said on Thursday that 10 people were killed and hundreds injured during the ongoing nationwide protests demanding an end to police brutality and corruption.

"Since October 8, Nigerians have been occupying the streets of major towns and cities across 21 states in the country, demanding an end to police brutality, extrajudicial executions and extortion by the Special Anti-Robbery Squad (SARS), a unit of the Nigerian police tasked with fighting violent crimes," Amnesty International said in a statement.

Daily Trust Saturday learned that two protesters were killed in Edo yesterday and several others injured while the spokesperson of the Lagos police command, Olumuyiwa Adejobi, said one of the protesters drove recklessly and killed two people at Ikola Road, Alagbado, Lagos.

The protests have also led to the death of a police officer in Delta State while three others were injured in Lagos. In each of these states a protester was killed in Surulere, Lagos, Ogbomoso Oyo State, Ughelli Delta State, amongst scores of injuries recorded across the states.

The protests turned violent in Lagos, Edo, Abuja, Osun, Delta, Anambra and Oyo states. The protesters clashed with hoodlums at Berger roundabout in the nation's

capital on Wednesday, which led to the damage of some cars. Hoodlums also attacked protesters in Lagos, Osun and Edo states, while there are viral videos on the social media depicting the protesters being shot at in Anambra.

The police in Delta State said following the violence that ensued, nine suspects were arrested and seven vehicles impounded.

Also, the protests led to traffic gridlocks across major cities in Abuja, Ekiti, Benin, Osogbo, Ogun and Lagos yesterday, trapping motorists for several hours.

Hajiya Khadija Bala, a motorist who was trapped along airport road shared her experience with Daily Trust Saturday. "I left the office by 5pm hoping to get home (Lugbe) in 30 to 35 minutes time, but unfortunately, I am still in this terrible traffic by 8:45pm. And it looks as if we would be here for another two hours as everywhere is locked down. Some people who had their drivers with them had no option than to pick a bike and leave their drivers behind in the traffic. It doesn't look good for us here."

Ayodimeji Adeniyi said he left Ibadan about 5am yesterday but was yet to get to Lagos at 5pm during a phone conversation with one of the correspondents.

In Ekiti, the #EndSARS protesters converged on the popular Fujiy Park in the state capital early in the morning and barricaded the major road, thereby causing traffic gridlock on the road.

Governor Kayode Fayemi of Ekiti State, who was on his way to the State House of Assembly for a function, appealed to them to continue their demonstration in a peaceful manner and avoid letting it hijacked by hoodlums.

Abuja residents leaving the City Centre were stranded yesterday night as the protesters blocked the exit from the City Gate on Umaru Musa Yar'Adua expressway.

The protest was in continuation of the nationwide demonstration and have received international supports, with Twitter creating a special emoji for #ENDSARS, which has been trending for more than five days.

Also, many celebrities, social media influencers and dignitaries continued to put their weight behind the protesters, who are defying ban

in the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) and not heeding to appeals from Ahmed Lawan, Nigeria's Senate President, and other dignitaries.

Governor sacks aide, PSC to prosecute 24 others

Following public outcry, Governor Willie Obiano of Anambra State has sacked his senior special assistant on security, James Nwafor. He was a commander of SARS in the state.

Also, the Police Service Commission (PSC) said it would order the prosecution of 24 ex-SARS operatives for various acts of professional misconduct.

The spokesman of the PSC, Ikechukwu Ani, said the decision of the commission came after it received the report of the Presidential Investigation Panel on Special Anti-Robbery Squad (SARS) on the Nigerian Police.

According to a statement by Ani, the PSC has all it takes to deal appropriately with the report of the panel. He stated that the panel received 113 complaints on alleged human rights violations and recommended 37 police officers for dismissal and 24 others for prosecution. It also urged the Inspector-General of Police to unravel the identity of 22 officers involved in the violation of human rights.

Protests ground Abuja, Ekiti, Lagos, Ogun

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The #EndSARS protesters converged on the popular Fujiy Park in the state capital early in the morning and barricaded the major road, thereby causing traffic gridlock on the road.

Before the violence, Edo State Governor Godwin Obaseki charged the police command in the state to provide adequate security for youths expressing their displeasure against police brutality through the EndSARS protests.

In a statement through his spokesperson, the governor urged the youths to comport themselves properly, reassuring that consultation was ongoing to ensure that their yearnings are conclusively addressed.

In Abeokuta, the angry youths laid siege at strategic locations as early as 6am and halted the free flow of vehicular movement in the state capital.

The popular NNPC under bridge leading to Kuto and Okemosan was completely shut down as protesting youths took over the road, singing solidarity songs.

A hip-hop artiste, Kizz Daniel, among other celebrities, participated in the protest.

Our correspondent observed that apart from some operatives of the Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC), police officers were conspicuously missing at the locations.

Other locations taken over by the protesters are Panseke in Abeokuta, Sagamu, Sango-Ota, and Ijebu-Ode.

Some of the inscriptions on their placards read, "Our voices must be heard, SARS Na Fraudster #EndSARS, No More Audio Ban, Say No to Police Brutality, iPhone no be gun."

Speaking with Daily Trust Saturday, one of the protesters, Wisdom Ogbonna said, "It is something that is well known now that the excesses of these officers have become too much. We can't even walk as freemen in the street. Everybody tends to be a criminal and it shouldn't be that way. The youths are tired of this. We have been tagged lazy Nigerian youths, but all we want now is to live our lives."

A veteran Nollywood actor, Yemi Sodium said, "What we are seeing today, and indeed for the past few days, is the result of not paying attention to a whole generation. You cannot continue to do the same thing the same way over a long period of time and expect a different result. These young ones are asking for a paradigm shift, and whether we like it or not, we have to listen to them."

Protests take different shades across states

The protests, which started as #ENDSARS, has taken several shades across the country. Youths took to the streets to demand an end to injustice, banditry, insecurity and call to sack the country's service chiefs.

A Coalition of Northern Groups (CNG) in Benue State on Friday protested against insecurity in northern parts of the country. The group called on the Federal Government to put an end to insecurity challenges bedeviling northern states of the federation, including Benue.

CNG's national executive from Benue State, Comrade Ben Idoko, who led the peaceful protest to the premises of the Nigeria Union of Journalists (NUJ) secretariat in Makurdi stressed the need for the government to empower the newly established SWAT in order to curb insecurity across the country.

The group vowed to sustain the protest until their demands are met, even as they urged the Federal Government and the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) to reach an agreement by ending the prolonged strike so that students will go back to school.

Members of the groups in Kano also said there was no going on the protest despite an attack on their members on Thursday. The national chairman of the coalition, Balarabe Rufai, who confirmed this on Friday during a press briefing, also said they had lost confidence in the political elites of the region over what they described as their indifference to the demands of the protesters.

"Despite these odds, the CNG hereby reassures the northern public and other northern regional organisations that have shown a decent level of patriotism and love for

their region and fellow citizens that we are more than ever committed to the noble protest across all the 19 northern states.

We, therefore, for the avoidance of doubt, categorically declare that the protests would resume in Kano on Saturday, October 17, 2020, and shall persist across northern Nigeria until all symptoms of the general and pervasive insecurity being experienced is completely ended," the CNG said.

The group also alleged that the thugs were hired by the state government and national secret security outfits to provoke them, adding that more than 40 innocent protesters, including journalists, were attacked by heavily armed hoodlums midway into their processions.

The National Youths Council of Nigeria (NYCN), Kannywood celebrities and other Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) in the state have faulted the protests as unnecessary.

States set up panels to probe police brutality

Some states have set up panels to probe police brutality. This is coming on the heels of the resolution at the end of the monthly meeting of the National Economic Council (NEC), which directed the immediate establishment of state-based judicial panels of inquiry across the country to receive and investigate complaints on police brutality or related extrajudicial killings, with a view to delivering justice for all victims of the dissolved SARS and other police units.

Lagos State

The Lagos State Government said it had set up a seven-member panel to look into cases of police brutality and compensation for victims with verifiable cases. The state government also created a N200million trust fund to be managed by the panel created to compensate victims. Governor Babajide Sanwo-Olu disclosed this during a press briefing on Thursday.

Kwara

Governor Abdulrahman Abdulrazaq of Kwara State also announced the setting up of an ombudsman, through which people of the state can channel their grievances.

The governor said the ombudsman would be the go-between for aggrieved citizens and security agencies.

Kaduna

The Kaduna State Government also said it had constituted a judicial panel of inquiry into acts of police brutality in the state.

The commission of inquiry will be inaugurated on Monday.

"Further to the resolutions of the meeting of the National Economic Council held on Thursday, October 15, 2020, Malam Nasir el-Rufai has approved the constitution of a judicial commission of inquiry into acts of police brutality in Kaduna State."

Ekiti

Governor Kayode Fayemi of Ekiti State said he had set up a panel of inquiry and restitution for victims of SARS and related abuses in the state.

The governor said membership of the panel would include a retired judge of the State High Court as chairperson and representation from Civil Society Organisations, including youth groups.

He spoke on Friday while presenting an address on the floor of the state House of Assembly, Ado-Ekiti, as part of activities marking his two years in office.

Other states that reportedly set up panels of inquiry are Anambra and Cross River.