

#EndSARS Protesters Hold All-Night Carnivals

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TENS of thousands of protesters paralysed activities in several state capitals and major towns across Nigeria as the #ENDSARS protests continued on Friday.

The protests which remained largely peaceful halted movements on major highways and later in the evening became carnival-like all night events with popular musicians on band stands.

In Lagos, Ibadan and Benin, the night events witnessed crowds of defiant youths who spent the whole of the day venting their spleen on the Nigerian state over its handling of police brutality and poor governance.

To forestall having another day of attacks on protesters by thugs, the organisers of the protests hired private guards to man their key events.

One of the organisers tweeted Friday morning that: “Today, we have deployed, 260 security men to every protest location in Lagos and Abuja. Security officials for Osogbo, following yesterday’s attacks. Ambulance to every protest location in Lagos, Abuja, Jos, Benin and Ibadan.”

Lagos

In Lagos, the protesting youths took over major roads including the Lagos Ibadan Expressway, Lekki Toll Gate, Awolowo Way, Alausa Secretariat, Ikeja, Ikorodu Road, Ago- Palace Way, Iyana-Ipaja, Apple Junction, Festac - Town, among others and prevented motorists access as they barricaded the road.

They also blocked Obafemi Awolowo way, from Allen junction inward Lagos State Secretariat in Alausa, paralyzing commercial activities.

Inter-state movement was attacked too as they blocked Lagos-Ibadan Expressway from 7 Up and Otedola Bridge.

The protesters turned the protest to carnival as they blared music from car stereos.

In the evening, the protesters massed in thousands at the Lekki Toll Gate and all through Friday night partied, sang and danced in furtherance of the protests.

Abuja

Traffic on the Yar 'Adua Expressway in the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) was paralysed for about six hours on Friday as members of the #ENDSARS movement returned to the street to continue their protest demanding for good governance in all ramifications.

The ENDSARS activists began their protest on foot and on motorcade from the usual take off point, the Unity Fountain, at the Maitama District, Abuja where they also held Jumat services.

The number of protesters increased as the procession continued, many tired persons boarded vehicles at various intervals to enable them to continue the protests.

Commuters from various parts of the city experienced a total lockdown when the protesters took over Dantata bridge, the major interchange linking all parts of the city from the Airport road.

Many passengers who were lucky to have reached points close to their communities in the Airport road resorted to trekking as they abandoned their vehicles and walked several kilometres to their various bus stops leading to their respective bus stops from which they took bikes home.

The protesters followed the Shehu Shagari Way by the National Secretariat and branches off on Ahmadu Bello way and took possession of one lane of the Constitution Avenue which leads to the Umaru Musa Yar'Adua Way, otherwise known as Airport road.

The move, the youth said was to make many Nigerian leaders and politicians who usually jet out of the city for their respective hometown miss their flights.

An official of NIWA aboard an Innoson truck with number plate 19E- 129FG attempted to beat the blockade at Dantata bridge announcing she had made donation of water to the protesters in support of their move.

The youths were irked by the comment and demanded to know how much water she offered so the amount could be refunded.

They maintained that her action was typical of Nigerian privileged few who believed that with their money anything can be achieved.

They said they were not on the street to extort but to demand correction of the entire political system so that good governance would permeate the Nigerian national life.

Aliyi Inuwa a protester said let them experience this slight discomfort and put it side by side our experience as youth who suffer daily in one form of denial or the other.

Five exotic cars belonging to the ENDSARS protesters at the Lekki Toll Gate were destroyed by a trailer in the early hours of Friday morning.

Nigerian Tribune gathered that the damaged vehicles included a Range Rover Sport, Lexus and three other exotic cars.

One of the protesters, Tobiloba said that the unfortunate event was a way to discourage them from protesting. The protester said that they would not back out from their agitations until their demands were properly and urgently attended to.

He explained further that they were all out to make Nigeria better and worth living for everyone including the political class and their children.

Tension in Osogbo

The atmosphere of Osogbo, Osun state capital Friday morning was tense as ENDSARS protesters threatened to face sponsored armed thugs war for war and fire for fire if they showed up today as they did on Thursday.

The EndSARS protesters took over strategic places of the town with the affirmation that there would be ‘no retreat no surrender,’ warning thugs to stay off.

A 16- seated bus believed to belong to the thugs was given a hot chase by the protesters leading to the detouring of the vehicle to an unknown place.

The angry protesting youths who threw stones and other objects at the bus to prevent it from coming closer to them also chased away some motorcyclists believed to be sponsored against the protests.

All commercial activities in the area were paralysed as vehicles plying Gbongan- Ibadan road could not move due to the gridlock.

Protest grinds Sapele to a halt

The ENDSARS protest by youths against Police brutality shifted to Sapele, grinding the home of African Timber and Plywood in Delta State to a halt on Friday.

Personnel of the Nigerian Army were however stationed at strategic spots to forestall breakdown of law and order.

The peaceful protest that was championed by legal practitioners and human right activists including Mr Kingsley Akpederi, Mr Owin Orhomonokpaye, and others, started from Okirighrwe as early as 8.30 am and as of 4.00 pm, the protest was yet to abate.

A similar protest ground Asaba and Agbor on Thursday as traffic came to a standstill for several hours.

The Sapele protesters moved round town with placards asking the government to address the issue of inhuman treatment of youths by policemen.

Heavy security presence was noticed around the Sapele Police Station, the local government secretariat, the Nigerian Correctional Custodian Centre and around the police barracks.

A protester who simply identified himself as Mr Fregene, said: “EndSars” was the name of the protest but the demand is for the government to put an end to police brutality.”

According to Mr Fregene, “Changing the name, from SARS to SWAT will change nothing. A change of approach by the police from inhuman to humane is what is being asked for.

“The police force should be our friend indeed and not extortionist, bully and a terror to society.”

A little girl of about 10 years old said she pleaded with her father to allow her skip school and partake in the protest because she was a witness to police brutality of her father this year before the lockdown.

Edo State

What was supposed to be a nationwide peaceful #End SARS Protest against police brutality in Edo State turned deadly yesterday afternoon as an unidentified young man was shot dead at downtown Ring Road, Benin City.

About four other persons which included the protest leader, Comrade Idowu Maleke were also injured in the shoot out right in front of the House of Assembly complex by unknown gunmen who ambushed the peaceful protesters at the city centre.

Armed with placards with different inscriptions, the protesters who crammed in vehicles railed against police brutality as people scamped for safety following the echoes of gunshots which could be heard as far away as Ugbague street, off Mission Road.

Angered by the fatal shot, the angry demonstrators who were led by Maleke carried the corpse in an ambulance to Government House, Benin to register their grievances.

The circumstance surrounding the killing could not be immediately ascertained but a source explained that the killing may not be unconnected with the activities of rival thugs who specialise in extorting money from drivers Ring Road.

It was however gathered that the protesters who besieged the Edo State House of Assembly at the popular Ring Road to lend their voices to the requests being made by youths across the country, were dispersed by the gun-toting and knife-wielding thugs.

Following the threats by the thugs, some of the protesters retaliated while others took flight for their lives while those injured were rushed to the nearest hospital.

The popular Ring Road, Mission Road, Oba Market, Airport Road, Sapele Road, Akpakpava Street and Sakpoba Road were deserted as banks and traders hurriedly close shops for business.

One of the victims who gave his name as Abere Godswill said he was on his way from the bank when the cutlasses wielding thugs alighted from a vehicle and descended on him as they thought he wanted to take a video shot of them.

He wailed: “I didn’t join the protest. I was coming from the bank when I met them on the road. Just because I held phone in my hand, they started beating me, saying I wanted to video them. They collected the phone and started hitting different parts of my body.”

One of the protesters, Dennis Osaretin said they joined the protest to call for a total overhaul of the nation’s security architecture.

“I am here to show solidarity to the Nigerian youths on their recent call for the end of SARS and not just the end of SARS but for a total overhaul and reform of the Nigeria Police and the entire Nigeria security architecture and to a larger extent, a total reform and overhaul of the Nigerian state.

“We want a state that works for all, a state that works for the youth, provides employment, provides safety and security for our people beyond lip service.”

Tension in Warri, environs over killing of mobile police by suspected armed robbers

There was tension in Warri and environs over Thursday night killing of a Squadron Mobile Police officer by suspected armed robbers. Being the third policeman to be so killed in a week in the state since the outbreak of the #ENDSARS protest, the deceased when was simply identified as Inspector Gbadura said to hail from Ondo State.

He was swooped on by a gang of rampaging gun-wielding hoodlums at a filling station located at Etuwewe in Warri, Warri South Local Government Area late Thursday.

He was said to be providing security for the filling station when he was hacked to death and his rifle carted away in a city now devoid of patrolling security operatives due to the dissolution of SARS and other anti-crime units of the Nigeria Police Force.

Earlier on Thursday, a member of a vigilance group was also reportedly shot along Ajamimogha in Warri by some gun-wielding hoodlums. Police Public Relations Officer (PPRO), Onome Onovwakpoyeya, a Deputy Superintendent of Police (DSP), in a sombre tone, confirmed the police killing late Thursday night to our correspondent via phone call.

Akeredolu identifies with protesters in Ondo

Governor Rotimi Akeredolu of Ondo State on Friday joined the protest against police brutality, extortion and extrajudicial killings in Akure, the state capital, just as he called for the total reform of the Nigeria Police Force.

The governor who commended the protesters for their peaceful conduct in bringing an end to SARS in the country, said a committee has been set up to receive complaints from members of the public on illegal detention, extortion and brutality by officers of the Nigeria Police Force in the state.

Akeredolu who disclosed this while addressing the #EndSars protesters in front of the Government House, Alagbaka, Akure, said the committee will be headed by a retired Chief Judge and would commence work next week. He appealed to the protesters to take advantage of the committee by bringing to their notice all complaints and issues around police brutality, extortion and harassment.

Akeredolu said:” I note your statement that you don’t have a problem with SARS in Ondo State. But no doubt, SARS has ended. But whether you have a problem with SARS or not, there is no longer SARS in Nigeria. Your struggle has brought an end to SARS and you should give kudos to yourselves. “Now, when you talk about police brutality it’s something not limited to youths alone. All of us know that several families have experienced this. People have lost their lives, people have lost their limbs. And the Police itself is aware of this. “So, right from the President to the Vice President, to the Inspector General of Police, all of us held a meeting yesterday at the National Executive Council and we made it clear that there must be a reform of the Nigeria Police. And it has to be reformed.

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