

# Mob chases SARS operatives for shooting Lagos youth

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SARS

**Afeez Hanafi**

There has been uproar on the social media after some operatives of the Special Anti-Robbery Squad, Lagos State Command, allegedly shot a youth in the Yaba area of the state.

The criticism followed a viral video which showed an angry mob chasing a black bus used by the operatives.

A *Twitter* user, Charley, had posted about the shooting on his handle @yabakid, but did not indicate the exact location in Yaba or the identity of the victim.

He wrote, “A SARS officer just shot a boy in the head right in front of me WTF! I’m so shocked!

“This happened in Yaba on Thursday right in my hood. They (SARS men) stole the phone of a ‘yahoo boy’ and shot another boy in the arm. The youth in the area mobilised and gave them a chase.”

Many Nigerians had taken to the Internet, expressing their experiences and those of their relations and friends in the hands of SARS across the country.

The protest was hinged on the #EndSARS campaign, an online petition to the National Assembly which had almost reached its 10,000 signatory targets as of 2pm on Sunday.

A poster, with the identification, Ayo FBI @PureMind, said a student of the Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile Ife, Osun State, who was the only son of his parents, was killed by SARS men.

He wrote, “In 2009, my mom’s friend’s son, Biodun, who was a student of OAU was going to Ibadan (Oyo State) from Ile Ife on the June 23 and was killed by SARS because they wanted to take him away and he resisted because he didn’t do anything. He was his mother’s only child. #EndSARS.”

A Twitter user, identified as Negro boss, @pmjovie, lamented that he was unlawfully detained for six months.

“Some years back, a popular artiste was killed by cultists in LASU and SARS packed all of us at a bar. We were released six months later. #EndSARS,” he said.

One Tessyama, @tescool, said he and his friends were robbed by SARS operatives about two years ago in a bar.

“Was it not SARS that robbed me and some friends in a bar two years ago? We thought they were robbers until the bar owner told us it’s SARS men and that’s how they frustrate them there (at the bar). #EndSARS,” he tweeted.

Another Nigerian, Moshood Alli, explained how he coughed up N40,000 for no offence.

He said, “SARS at Lagos VI intercepted my motorcycle, searched me, found nothing but school ID, claimed it was fake, accompanied me to my hotel room, found my phones and received N40,000 in payment via ATM. #EndSARS.”

Ali Haruna Babatunde wrote, “#EndSARS. They came to my neighbourhood, drank and didn’t pay, when the seller threatened to report them, they started shooting into the air.”

A user identified as Cross, @Elcrucifixio, said he was taken for a suspect because he looked good.

“Your civil rights disappear the moment SARS holds you. I am not even a yahoo boy, but I kept begging them when they held me at Ikeja. I was running late for a business pitch, and my offence was ‘dressing too fine, but not be into fraud’. Sigh,” he posted.

A woman, *Pets for Sale*, @owhreoluwa, also joined in the campaign, saying, “Even as a woman, you are not safe from SARS and their *wahala* (trouble). I’ve been manhandled by one on the road before because ‘*Wetin small girl like you dey carry two phones do.*’”

Somto Ronald explained that SARS operatives extorted N40,000 each from him and 23 others over a fight they were not involved in.

He wrote, “Early this year, SARS entered my lodge by 1am, a student lodge, and arrested all the boys (24 boys) just because one guy in my lodge allegedly fought with another guy. None of us was bailed with less than N40,000. #EndSARS.”

@UnitedAyodejiEmpire also posted about the alleged uncivil conduct of some SARS operatives in Abuja.

He wrote, “The SARS officers here in Abuja are actually criminals legally carrying guns. You see them at Area 1, Durumi, Garki Village, smoking weed, sniffing all sorts of dangerous drugs among criminals with guns in their hands. I see them and just shake my head. #EndSARS#EndSARSBrutality.”

Reacting to the shooting of a youth in the Yaba area, the Lagos State Police Public Relations Officer, SP Chike Oti, said the incident had not been reported to the police.

He stated that the authenticity of the video was in doubt.

Oti, however, in a statement on Sunday, said the command was investigating an assault perpetrated by some SARS men in a yet-to-be ascertained location.

He said, “It has come to the knowledge of the acting Commissioner of Police, Lagos State, Ag.Cp Edgal Imohimi, that some policemen attached to the Special Anti-Robbery Squad, in a yet-to-be ascertained location, brutalised an innocent resident.

“In view of the above, the Acting Commissioner of Police wishes to encourage all residents of Lagos State who have complaints against police action or on any issue, to report to any of the police patrol vehicles which now serve as mini police stations and are parked conspicuously at vantage points across the state or call on the Citizen Complaint Centre established by the present Commissioner of Police through the following cellular phone numbers: 08067945296, 08063025274, 08113615350, 08113683077, 08096283148, 08096283183, 08089781657, 08126404930, 08081426895.”