

#EndSARS protests: Policeman shot dead in Delta, youths demand meeting with IG

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Protesters in Abuja

• Falz, Runtown lead protesters in Lagos

Adelani Adepegba, Deji Lambo, Dele Ogunyemi, Gibson Achonu and Adeyinka Adedipe

A police Corporal, simply identified as Stanley, attached to the Ughelli Police Area Command, Ughelli, Delta State, was on Thursday shot dead by suspected hoodlums, who hijacked the #EndSARS protest, which began peacefully in the town.

The deceased was reportedly shot by one of the protesters at Otuvwodo area of the town.

Sources said that the incident also caused gridlock and the destruction of several vehicles as commuters on the East-West Road area of Otovwodo junction ran helter-skelter following gunshots that followed the melee.

Security operatives had to fire warning shots before taking the corpse of to the policeman to the station.

Hundreds of youths had earlier taken to major streets of Ughelli in a solidarity protest to call for the scrapping of the Special Anti-Robbery Squad of the Nigeria Police Force.

It was gathered that some of the protesters met a team of policemen at Otovwodo junction, where the protest walk was supposed to end, and a clash ensued leading to sporadic gunfire between them and the police.

Speaking on behalf of the protesters, one of their leaders, who gave his name simply as Ochuko, said they organised the march in solidarity with other protesters and victims of SARS brutality across the country.

Efforts by one of our correspondents to confirm the incident from the Police Public Relations Officer in the state, DSP Onome Onovwakpoyeya, were unsuccessful as of the time of filing this report.

In Lagos, hundreds of residents, including celebrities, Folarin Falana, aka Falz, and Douglas Agu, aka, Runtown, took to the street on Thursday to demand the scrapping of SARS.

The demonstration, which started around 10.10am, saw the protesters converging on the Lekki tollgate area of the Lekki-Epe Expressway, from where they marched to the Zone 2 Command headquarters in Onikan.

Falana, who rejected the Inspector-General of Police, Mohammed Adamu's reform of the operations of SARS, demanded that the unit should be scrapped.

He said, "I am in the protest to express what we are fighting for, which is *#EndSARS*. We do not want the Special Anti-Robbery Squad anymore; they have been killing us, killing innocent victims, harassing us, violating us every day; so, we need them to be completely abolished.

"We are not asking for reform; we have heard several stories when they said they were not allowed to do routine searches anymore, but they are still doing it, they are still harassing innocent citizens and people are losing their lives.

“We are submitting a petition signed by all of us and addressed to the IG, through the AIG, and all our intentions are expressed in there. We want SARS completely abolished; we don’t reform; we don’t want them to change what they are allowed to do or not to do.”

Another protester, Akintunde Blaise, said SARS men had made looking good a criminal offence, adding that the protest was to demand their freedom.

The spokesperson for the Zone 2 Command, Hauwa Idris, said, “The command knows why they came; they came on the issue of #EndSARS; most of their outcry was that we are in the office and don’t know what SARS men do out there and we should try as much as possible to know what they are doing. But the Deputy Commissioner of Police, admin, Adegoke Fayoadé, on behalf of the AIG addressed the protesters.”

In Owerri, Imo State, some protesters blocked the popular Okigwe Road from the Imo State University campus junction.

The youth said SARS personnel were terrorising innocent young people who they often tagged as ‘Yahoo boys’.

In Benin, Edo State, the protest nearly turned bloody when protesters, who tried to prevent a police van from entering the state police command headquarters, were nearly ran over.

The incident led to some of the protesters jumping into the drainage channel and sustaining injuries in the process.

Vehicular and human traffic was disrupted for several hours on the Ring Road and adjoining streets, including Akpakpava Road, Airport Road, Sokponba Road and Sapele Road following the protest by youths under the aegis of the National Association of Edo Students and coalition of civil society organisations.

Speaking to newsmen on behalf of the youths, Okunbo Omokaro, stated that if SARS must exist in the country, it must operate within the ambit of the law that set it up.

While receiving the protesters, the Deputy Commissioner of Police, Finance and Administration, Kanayo Valentine, said their grievances would be addressed.

In Abuja, protesters besieged the Force headquarters and demanded a meeting with the IG, who drove into the premises some minutes after 9am, while the protesters were at the gate of the Louis Edet House.

The *#EndSARS* campaigners sat on the Shehu Shagari Way, shouting ‘EndSARS’, and caused vehicular traffic.

Armed policemen watched as the activists, including *#RevolutionNow* protest convener, Omoyele Sowore; *#BringBackOurGirls* member, Aisha Yesufu; Deji Adeyanju of the Concerned Nigerians, and others chanted anti-government slogans, while calling for the scrapping of the tactical squad.

Addressing the protesters, the Force spokesman, DCP Frank Mba, said the police authorities had initiated necessary reforms to curb the illegal activities of the F-SARS operatives.

But Sowore insisted that the IG as a public servant must address the protesters, noting that his refusal to meet with them “is part of the impunity and disrespect for the Nigerian people displayed by officials at the highest levels.”

Yesufu similarly carpented the IG, saying “he is not doing his job.”