

METRO PLUS

Edo imposes 24-hour curfew after hoodlums attack prison, free inmates

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FILE

...RRS operatives attacked in Lagos

Our Correspondents

The Edo State Government, on Monday imposed a 24-hour curfew on the state till further notice following attacks on two custodial centres in the state, which led to setting free of inmates by hoodlums.

According to a statement by the Secretary to the State Government, Osarodion Ogie, the curfew takes effect from 4pm on Monday.

Ogie said, “This decision becomes necessary because of the very disturbing incidents of vandalism and attacks on private individuals and institutions by hoodlums in the guise of *#EndSARS* protesters.

“While the government of Edo State respects the rights of its citizens to undertake legitimate protests, it cannot sit idly when hoodlums have taken laws into their hands to cause mayhem on innocent citizens and the state.

“By the directive, schools and businesses are to shut down activities accordingly. Those who cannot move safely are to stay put between now and 4pm till calmness is restored.

“Parents are advised to rein in their children, youths and wards to forestall a further breakdown of law and order.

“The responsibility of government is to protect lives and property and maintain law and order; therefore, anyone found outside in violation of the curfew will be dealt with according to the law.”

The protests turned violent on Monday after hoodlums invaded two custodial centres in Edo State and freed the inmates, while others attacked officers of the Rapid Response Squad in Lagos and other parts of the country.

Kano residents also joined the protests following the death of a 17-year-old boy in police custody.

In Benin, the Edo State capital, six persons were feared killed when hoodlums hiding under the guise of the protest broke into the Benin Correctional Centre and the Oko Medium Security Centre, and released inmates at the facilities.

The armed squad of the prisons reportedly engaged the thugs in a gunfire, which resulted in the death of six persons, while several others sustained injuries.

Four of the dead were confirmed inmates, while the identities of the two others were unknown, but were believed to be among the hoodlums.

Also destroyed was the High Court 4 beside the prison, which the hoodlums vandalised.

PUNCH Metro learnt that the hoodlums started gathering on the Sapele Road beside the prison as early as 7am, setting bonfires and sending back motorists and other road users.

They launched an attack when their number had swelled considerably and broke a part of the wall, while some climbed the fence into the prison yard.

A few of the inmates escaped with gunshot wounds, while an elderly man was recaptured while walking away like a passer-by.

At Oko, the hoodlums were said to have overpowered the five armed guards at the facility and had a free day looting shops by the road leading to the prison and carting away valuables from the prison officials' offices.

It was gathered that immediately after the attack in Benin, security was alerted in Oko, but calls to the Nigerian Army and the police for reinforcement were not heeded, hence the ease with which the hoodlums overpowered the prison guards.

The Oko facility has the capacity to accommodate 1,300 inmates.

Before the attack on the Oko Correctional Centre, the hoodlums were reported to have ransacked the Oba Market Police Station, attacked its armoury and stole guns.

Benin was also shut down by protesters fighting against police brutality and bad governance in the country. As early as 7am on Monday, all the major roads leading to the city were blocked.

The entire city was on complete lockdown, as protest points were set up on the various roads such as Airport, Akenzua/Plymouth, Ring, Siluoko, Akpakpava by First, Second and Third East roads.

Some protesting youths in the communities seized the opportunity to extort money from motorists using the routes by demanding between N200 and N1,000 before allowing them to pass.

Reactions greet jailbreak

The Coordinator of the Masses Eye in Edo State, Samson Momorin, tasked both the state government and state Commissioner of Police, Mr Johnson Kokumo, not to allow anyone to sweep the issues surrounding the correctional centres' attack and release of the inmates under the carpet.

He advised the government to seriously look into all the demands of the *#EndSARS* protesters and for sincere reforms of all sections of the nation's economy for a better society.

“The names of the SARS personnel found guilty in the 36 states and the Federal Capital Territory should be published and they should be prosecuted accordingly without fear or favour,” Momorin said.

On its part, the Peoples Democratic Party in Edo State urged all residents to comply with the directive of the government and support the security agencies as they rid the streets of those responsible for the mayhem visited on the state.

The Publicity Secretary of the PDP in the state, Chris Nehikhare, said in a statement, “As a responsible and compassionate political party, we did not only support the *#EndSARS* protests, but encouraged our supporters and members to join in the legitimate protest.”

He commended the resolve of the protesters to continue the protest despite the attack on them last week by hoodlums, who killed and wounded some of them.

“Having failed to stop the protesters, it appears that the thugs and hoodlums have changed tactics and have infiltrated the ranks of the genuine protesters. We watched as a peaceful protest degenerated into a killing field. This is unacceptable,” he added.

Also, a member of the House of Representatives representing the Ovia Federal Constituency, Dennis Idahosa, condemned the jailbreak.

Idahosa, who spoke through his media aide, Mr Osaro Aghedo, said the protest had been hijacked by hoodlums and called on the state

Commissioner of Police to urgently see to it that law and order was restored.

***#EndSARS* protesters released inmates, says NCoS**

Meanwhile, the Nigerian Correctional Service has said that it cannot ascertain the number of inmates who escaped from the Benin and Oko custodial centres in Edo State on Monday.

It alleged that the centres were attacked by suspected protesters “under the *#EndSARS* protest, freeing inmates legally interned by courts of competent jurisdiction in Edo State.”

A statement by the NCoS spokesman, DCI Austin Njoku, said efforts were underway to arrest the situation and restore normalcy back to the centres.

It stated, “This is to inform the general public that the Nigerian Correctional Service custodial centres at Benin and Oko in Benin City were attacked this morning (Monday) by suspected protesters under the *#EndSARS* protest, freeing inmates legally interned by courts of competent jurisdiction in Edo State.

“This is unfortunate as this does not portray the peaceful, no violence, no destruction mantra hitherto presented by the *#EndSARS* protesters.

“The exact figures of escapees and casualties are yet to be confirmed and will be communicated after preliminary investigations.”

The spokesman further disclosed that the armed squad personnel of the service were working tirelessly to bring the situation under control.

‘Protesters not responsible for jailbreak’

However, a leading member of the movement, Ralph Adebayo, stated, “The government is merely trying to discredit the #EndSARS movement by linking us to the jailbreak, but it has failed because the protests have been peaceful.”

Leftist, Dickson Johnson, told *PUNCH Metro* that those who attacked and freed the inmates were not #EndSARS protesters, but hoodlums who came to purposely free their colleagues either serving jail terms or awaiting trial.

He said, “Those who attacked the prison were not protesters. I can confirm to you that they were boys who came from Upper Sakpoba and took advantage of the protest to attack the prisons and free their people.

“They attacked the prisons from the back by scaling the fence. But the guards opened fire on them but they still found their way in, attacked the prison officials, freed the inmates and set the administrative office, where the records of the inmates are, on fire.

Hoodlums injure RRS officers in Lagos

Hoodlums on Monday attacked operatives of the Lagos State Rapid Response Squad on the Herbert Macaulay Way in the Yaba area of the state.

Footage trending online showed the hoodlums hurling stones and other objects at the patrol vehicles of the RRS.

The operatives were said to be plying the route to link the Lekki area of the state when the hoodlums attacked them.

The state Police Public Relations Officer, Muyiwa Adejobi, said 19 policemen were critically injured.

He stated, “The *#EndSARS* protest, which is gradually becoming violent, got heightened on Monday, October 19, 2020, when violent protesters descended on some policemen attached to the Rapid Response Squad of the Lagos State Command at Adekunle, Yaba, around 10am.

“The 97 policemen, who were being conveyed to their various beats on routine relief duties across the state, came across the violent protesters, who started shouting, ‘No police, No police,’ and stoned them. After the attacks, 19 of the policemen were critically injured, while four police vehicles were damaged.

“The policemen, who scampered for safety, were eventually rescued and rushed to the Police Clinic at Panti, Yaba, for medical attention. The state Commissioner of Police, Hakeem Odumosu, has condemned the attack and urged officers and men of the command to remain calm, while they continue to manage the situation professionally, as usual in the state.”

Protesters block Minna-Suleja road

Protesting youths under the aegis of the Coalition of Northern Youths Groups stopped vehicular movement along the Minna- Suleja road on Monday.

The youths who are mostly from Minna, Niger State paralysed activities for several hours on Monday.

Vehicles coming from the southern part of the country and going to Abuja could not continue their journey through the Minna City Gate while those travelling to Kontagora in the northern part of the state suffered similar fate.

Some parents, who had taken their wards to school earlier in the day, had to avoid the Minna City Gate area to return their children home due to the blockade.

The youths in hundreds carrying placards blocked the highways as early as early as 8am, creating panic among the residents and travellers.

Air passengers trek as protesters block Lagos airport roads

Passengers looking to board flights in Lagos were also subjected to trekking long distances in order to meet up with their flights.

All access routes to the airport were blocked as early as 9am.

The blockades mounted at different locations from the local wing of the airport down to the Murtala Mohammed International Airport caused gridlock and forced several passengers to opt for alternative means of transportation.

The only viable means of transportation were motorcycles as the protesters granted them access to the airport tollgate.

Riders, who took the opportunity of the protests, charged between N1,000 and N4,000 per passenger.

A passenger, Chibuna Analdi, who just returned from Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, said he spent N2,500 from the MMIA to the tollgate.

Another passenger, Iheoma Aaron, who also returned from Switzerland, said people were stranded at the terminal.

A septuagenarian, Mrs Wifa, who was running out of breath from pushing her luggage down to the airport from the tollgate, said she would have missed her flight save for her daughter.

A major clash was averted at the popular Unity Fountain in Abuja as government supporters, under the aegis of the Pro-SWAT Movement of Nigeria, tried to engage the #EndSARS campaigners in a supremacy battle.

But both parties missed each other by a whisker as the government supporters held their rally before the arrival of the #EndSARS youths.

During a press briefing hurriedly held before the arrival of the #EndSARS campaigners, the Convener of Pro-SWAT Movement of

Nigeria and Founder, Good Governance Initiative Coalition, Hussaini Saraki, said the *#EndSARS* protests had been hijacked.

According to him, the real protesters were no longer on the streets, adding that “as well-meaning Nigerians, we will not remain passive and allow this situation to further escalate and degenerate to what we presently have in Syria, Libya, Central African Republic and South Sudan.”

However, online videos showed the police shooting teargas canisters at protesters, while security agents were deployed in major protest grounds.

Soldiers were also seen brutalising some of the youth, who refused to sit grounds.

Protest rocks Kano over 17-year-old's death in police custody

Pandemonium broke out in Kano on Monday as youths took to the streets in a violent protest against the alleged killing of a 17-year-old boy, Saifullahi.

Saifullahi, of Kofar Mata Quarter, was said to have been arrested two days earlier by the police while watching movie on his phone.

He was said to be hale and hearty, while he was asleep at his family house.

His death provoked members of the public, who said he had no criminal record.

PUNCH Metro gathered that the victim had been released on bail, only for the police to re-arrest and detain him again.

He was then allegedly tortured to death.

It was also gathered that the police brought his corpse to the family house on Monday, a development that angered the people, who took to the streets and made bonfires in the process.

The state Police Public Relations Officer, DSP Abdullahi Haruna, in a statement said, “Today, October 19, 2020, around 1.40am, a report was received that some groups of thugs engaged in a fight at Kofar Mata Quarter, Kano.

“A patrol team attached to the Kano Central Area Command was immediately drafted to the scene. Two suspects were arrested with knives.

“They were handcuffed and put in the police patrol vehicle, with an officer guarding them. When the police team went inside the quarter for more arrest, the thugs dispersed.

“They later re-grouped and attacked the police officer inside the police vehicle and set free the two handcuffed suspects. When the team came back, they found the officer lying down in a pool of blood. He was stabbed in the chest, stomach and other parts of his body, and one other person was lying down. The victims were immediately rushed to the Murtala Muhammed Specialist Hospital Kano for treatment.

“Today, around 6pm, the other victim was confirmed dead by a medical doctor, whereas the police officer was admitted to the intensive care unit of the said hospital.”

Wike reacts as mothers protest police brutality, extrajudicial killings

In Port Harcourt, Rivers State, hundreds of women, mostly mothers, lend their voices to the *#EndSARS* protest and the fight against police brutality

In a protest themed, ‘Mothers’ Cry’, many of the women, who were dressed in black, mourned victims of SARS.

Numbering over 500, the protesters, who converged on the UTC junction on Azikiwe Road, marched to the state House of Assembly and the police command headquarters to register their displeasure.

The protesters were led by a Niger-Delta activist, Ms Ann Kio-Briggs, and a former Commissioner for Women Affairs in the state, Mrs Toru Ofili.

Governor Nyesom Wike, who was represented by his deputy, Dr Ipalibo Banigo, promised to address the issues.

He regretted that instead of stern disciplinary measures being taken against the errant officers, they were being rewarded.

“In fact, some who were caught on camera killing people, were even promoted, to tell you the level of impunity,” Wike added.

13-year-old boy falls off moving truck in Delta, dies

An unidentified 13-year-old boy, who allegedly took part in the *#EndSARS* protest in Sapele, Delta State, on Monday died from injuries he sustained after he fell off a moving inter-state truck.

PUNCH Metro gathered that the teenager joined teeming youths for the protest.

A source said the boy jumped on the moving truck that was heading outside the town, but later fell as the vehicle gathered speed after escaping the gridlock.

“Before we could rush him to a clinic, he had died,” the source said.

The corpse of the young boy was later wrapped with the Nigerian flag.

Kwara CP warns protesters

The Kwara State Commissioner of Police, Mr Kayode Egbetokun, warned the youth participating in the *#EndSARS* protest to watch out for criminal elements in their midst.

Egbetokun handed down the warning in a statement on Sunday by the state Police Public Relations Officer, Ajayi Okasanmi.

In a similar development, Governor AbdulRahman AbdulRazaq, on Sunday visited the victim of the violent attack on the *#EndSARS* protesters in the Challenge area of Ilorin, Sheriff Olawale, describing the attack as unfortunate.

A statement by his Chief Press Secretary, Rafiu Ajakaye, said the governor also offered to foot the hospital bill of the victim.

By Friday Olorok, Adelani Adepegba, Samson Folarin, Oladimeji Ramon, Deji Lambo, Adeyinka Adedipe, Dennis Naku, Edward Nnachi, Dele Ogunyemi, Tunde Oyekola, Daud Olatunji, Joseph Olaoluwa, Bola Bamigbola and Ted Odogwu

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EDO 24-HOUR CURFEW

HOODLUMS ATTACK EDO PRISON

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