

#EndSARS: Day of rage, deaths in Edo, Lagos, Abuja, Ekiti, others

•20 shot dead, protesters break into prisons, free inmates •Torch police stations, patrol van, destroy high court building •Edo declares 24-hour curfew

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Tony Osauzo, Ighomuaye Lucky, Benin, Romanus Ugwu and Juliana Taiwo-Obalonye,

Abuja, **Chijioke Agwu**, Abakaliki, **Okey Sampson**, Umuahia

There was pandemonium across the country, yesterday as the 13-day-old demonstration against police brutality took a violent twist.

The #EndSARS protest started on October 8 with protesters taking to the streets in different parts of the country, calling for a reform of the Police force and disbandment of the Special Anti-Robbery Squad (SARS) for alleged brutality on citizens.

In Benin City, the Edo State capital, it was a day of rage, blood and death as hoodlums stormed two prisons, set free inmates including 120 condemned criminals at the Oko Correctional facility.

In the process, at least nine inmates were reportedly killed while trying to escape, just as others escaped with gunshot injuries.

Four people were also reportedly shot dead in Auchi, Etsako West Local Government Area. The protesters were said to have beaten up a military man, forcing soldiers to react leading to the killings.

This came as two persons were feared killed when hoodlums broke into the Benin Prison along Sapele road and freed several inmates in one of the cells.

The casualty was said to have been recorded at Oko Prison when armed squad of prison officials engaged the hoodlums in gun fire. According to sources, immediately after the attack on Benin Prison along Sapele road, security was alerted in Oko but calls to the Army and the Police for reinforcement were not heeded hence the ease with which the hoodlums overpowered the prison guards.

“They came in their thousands and their mission was to free inmates. They have been communicating with the inmates because even before they broke into the facility, the inmates were already rioting inside the place,” a prison source said.

The hoodlums were also said to have torched no fewer than five police stations and vandalised the High Court 4 beside the prison.

They were said to have started gathering along Sapele Road beside the prison as early as 7 am setting bonfires and turning back motorists and other road users.

They launched their attack when their number had increased considerably, broke a part of the wall while some climbed the fence into the prison yard. Some of the inmates escaped with gunshots while an elderly man was recaptured.

2 feared killed, others injured in cult clash in Edo

No fewer than two persons were killed in a rival cult clash that followed the protest in another party of the city.

A source, however, said the figure could be higher as the clash spread from Okhoro area to Medical Store Road, Eweka and Upper Mission and its environs.

The rival cult groups, Aiye and Eiye, had taken advantage of the protest to settle scores.

Several others were said to have also sustained gunshot injuries of varying degrees in the shootings.

“I can confirm to you that one of those injured, a young man, was rushed to the clinic along Okhoro road, close to Oransaye junction.

“We can only pray and hope that the curfew declared by the government will calm the warring cult groups home,” the source said.

3 dead, many injured in Abuja

At least two persons died at the Mobile Barracks entrance road to Kuje Area Council, FCT, Abuja.

The peaceful protest which started in the early hours degenerated into bloody scene around 4pm when boys suspected to be Fulani stormed the venue of the protest in three buses with all manners of weapon and attacked the participants.

The protesters had in retaliation fought back and within 20 minutes, both camp lost one person each while several others sustained various

degrees of injuries before the police and detachment of the military intervened.

However, instead of normalcy returning, tension heightened again when the protesters narrowly lynched another Fulani boy, forcing the police to fire teargas.

In another development, one person was feared killed and a vehicle torched as soldiers, police personnel and a ProSARS clashed with #EndSARS group.

The deceased, Anthony Onome Unuode, was said to have died from multiple injuries he sustained during the protest that was believed to have been hijacked by hoodlums in the Federal Capital Territory (FCT).

The #EndSARS protest took a different dimension with the emergence of the PROSARS protesters who clashed with #EndSARS protesters at the Central Business District, where they had gathered.

While urging protesters to be law-abiding, remain peaceful in their conduct and shun all forms of violence, Commissioner of Police FCT, CP. Bala Ciroma, reassured residents of his unflinching commitment to the protection of lives and property.

5 police stations attacked, suspects freed

The Edo Police command has confirmed attacks on its facilities at Oba Market, Idogbo and other areas.

A statement on its official Twitter page said they carted away arms and ammunition and freed suspects in custody.

The tweet read: “@policeNG regrettably confirms the unfortunate attacks on police facilities – Ugbekun Police Station, Oba Market Police Station

and Idogbo Police Post by persons posing as #ENDSARS protesters in Benin, Edo State, today, Monday, 19th October, 2020.

“The extent of damage cannot be ascertained at the moment but report indicates that the protesters carted away arms and ammunition from the armoury and freed the suspects in custody before setting some of the facilities ablaze.

“The Force is doing everything possible at the moment to bring the situation under control, protect lives of innocent citizens and prevent further attacks on any other critical infrastructure in the state.”

The hoodlums also reportedly torched the St. Saviour’s and Textile Mill road police stations.

Edo declares 24-hour curfew, sets up 12-man Judicial Panel of Inquiry

Following the violence, Edo Government has imposed a 24-hour curfew across the state till further notice.

A statement by Osarodion Ogie, Secretary to the State Government, said the decision became necessary because of the 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 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 would be dealt with according to the law.”

The government also announced the setting up a 12-man Judicial Panel of Inquiry into circumstances surrounding the #EndSARS protests in the state.

Mr Ogie disclosed in a statement that the panel has 90 days to complete the assignment.

The panel is chaired by Hon. Justice Ada Ehigiamusoe, while Mrs. Joyce Ugbodaga is the Secretary to the Committee.

PDP claimed infiltration by vagabonds

The Edo State chapter of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), yesterday, alleged infiltration of protest by “vagabonds” and called on residents to comply with government directive on curfew.

The party in a statement by its publicity secretary, Chris Nehikhare, said: “No responsible Nigerian or political party will ignore the infiltration of a peaceful and legitimate protest by hoodlums who have become so brazen to start robbing citizens even in broad daylight, harassing, looting, destroying property and even masterminding an attack on the Benin prison and forcing a jailbreak. We have no doubt that the people, who invaded the prison are not genuine #EndSARS protesters but criminal opportunists who used the freedom afforded the protesters, by their inalienable fundamental human rights as enshrined in the constitution, to cause havoc and create mayhem.”

Protesters barricade Ebonyi govt house

Protesters also blocked the Ebonyi Government House, Abakaliki and demanded probe of police brutality and extrajudicial killings in the state.

While chanting different songs and carrying placards with different inscriptions such as , “SARSMustEnd”, “We Demand Probe of Police Brutality in Ebonyi” and “Our Governor De Run”, the protesters’ action impeded vehicular movements in and out of the Government House, for six hours.

This equally forced motorists were forced to take other adjourning roads to their destinations, out of the Ogoja Road, location of the Government House.

Presenting their demands, their spokesperson, Barr. Steven Ugama, called on Governor David Umahi to set up Judicial Panel of Inquiry to look into the illegal activities of the SARS, compensate victims of Police brutality and release all those illegally detained in Police custody.

They also asked the governor to investigate the activities of of Local Government tax collectors and that of Policemen operating at Eke-Aba Police Station, in the capital city.

Governor Umahi, who described their action as constitutional, assured them that nobody would molest them in the course of their protest.

Ground Umuahia, turn back military truck

Thousands of youths grounded Umuahia, Abia State as they joined their counterparts in other parts of the country to protest for SARS disbandment.

They were reported to have turned back a military truck in the city center.

Led by some popular artists including Labister, Dauda (Uchenna Egbochuo), and Victor Osuagwu of the Dynamites Band, the protesters took off from Abia Tower of Peace, along the Enugu/Port Harcourt Express Way and matched into the city centre, where major roads were blocked.

Moving through Okpara Square, the protesters matched to the Government House to see the state Governor, Okezie Ikpeazu who did not address them.

Angered by this, the youths blocked the Government House – Federal Medical Centre – Aba road – Ikot Ekpene road junction and said they would be there for three days if the governor did not address them.



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