

#EndSARS...#EndSARS...#EndSARS...#EndSARS...#EndSARS...#EndSARS...

3 die in Edo, Ondo as protesters defy ban in Abuja

Our Correspondents

1 Activities were grounded in parts of Benin, the Edo State capital, as two persons were feared dead during a violent clash between pro and anti-EndSARS protesters in the state.

2 Similarly, one of the protesters of #EndSARS in Akure, the Ondo State capital, was reportedly killed when a car rammed into the protesting youths.

While in Abuja, the #EndSARS protesters on Friday defied the ban on protest in the FCT, and blocked Abuja city gate to continue their demand for an end to police brutality and the reform of the force.

The Benin peaceful but coordinated protest by thousands of pro #EndSARS groups had turned sour when an anti-group suspected to be thugs emerged from nowhere and descended on the former with gunshots, cutlasses, bottles and other dangerous weapons.

The clash left two persons in their pool of blood and several others injured in the melee at the ever busy Ring Road aka Kings Square in the capital town.

This is as the State Governor, Mr. Godwin Obaseki, yesterday condemned the attack on #ENDSARS protesters in Benin City by unidentified hoodlums, noting that a thorough investigation would commence immediately to bring the culprits to justice. Obaseki in a statement made available to newsmen in Benin, charged the Edo State Police Command to come out in full force to provide adequate security to the protesters as they were exercising their rights as concerned citizens of Nigeria.

According to him, "I have just learnt that hoodlums have attacked #ENDSARS protesters, who have conducted themselves peacefully in Benin City.

"Extend condolences to the victims of the attacks, including those who lost their lives and others who were injured by the thugs."

Armed with a white coffin and placards of various shapes and inscriptions, the protesters moved from the Kings Square, major roads, streets and Osadebay Avenue Government House Benin City.

They also chanted anti-government slogans such as "Buhari Must Go and EndSARS".

Members of the anti-body suspected to be boys from popular quarters in the Oredo council area of the state were said to have been miffed by disruptive actions of the #EndSARS protesters, which according to them, disturb their daily businesses.

They were said to have hauled stones at the protesters and also shot into the air which reportedly left two dead and caused several of

them to sustain injuries in the process.

But irked by the ugly development, the protesters, in reprisal attack, took the fight back to where the suspected thugs converged at the National Museum ground at the King's Square (Ring Road) where they engaged in a bloody fight.

One of the victims, who were caught in the crossfire during the free-for-all, Godswill Abere, had his forehead broken and smeared with blood.

Addressing the protesters at the Kings Square in Benin City, Deputy Governor, Rt. Hon. Comrade Philip Shaibu, said the government will not fold its arms and watch harm come the way of young people exercising their rights as citizens of the country.

According to Shaibu, "I have given instructions to the security agencies to fish out those behind the attack.

"I have also ordered that the victim be taken to the morgue; we are going to give him a state burial because the martyrs of this struggle must be remembered.

"He will be remembered for being part of this struggle. He is a martyr already and by the grace of God, he will never be forgotten."

Ondo

In a similar vein, a Toyota Camry with number plate LND 778 GL, and two commercial motorcyclists said to have rammed into the protesting youths in Akure, killed one person whose identity was yet to be ascertained, while other injured persons were rushed to the hospital.

Confirming the incident, the PPRO, ASP Tee-Leo Ikoro, said the family of the deceased has agreed to accept their fate with a request for the body for burial.

Meanwhile, youths in their hundreds converged on Akure, the State capital to voice their displeasure against the activities of the men of the Special Anti-Robbery Squad.

While demanding the total and genuine scrapping of what was described as the most dreadful and deadly unit of the Nigeria Police, the protesters shut down vehicular movement in some parts of the State capital for hours.

The train of the protest moved through the popular Oba Adesida - Oyemekun road to Alagbaka axis of the state capital before routing it back to old garage and Cathedral junction with motorists stalked in the traffic snarl for hours while others were forced to trek long distance.

Abuja

In spite of the ban placed on street protests and rallies, some young Nigerians clamouring for comprehensive reforms of the Nigeria Police Force, yesterday returned to the streets and major roads of Abuja.

The protesters, who



resident Muhammadu Buhari (right) and Nigeria's Permanent Representative and immediate Past President of the 74th Session of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA), Prof. Tijani Muhammad-Bande, during a courtesy visit at the State House, Abuja, yesterday. PHOTO: TIMOTHY KUMENGAH

defied the ban, came out in their numbers and took over the Airport Road, the main arterial route leading to the city.

They camped at the City Gate and effectively blocked vehicular traffic into and out of the city.

As in previous days, the protesters brandished large banners and handbills with various inscriptions, denouncing police brutality and demanding justice for victims of torture and extra judicial killings.

The Federal Capital Territory Administration (FCTA) had on Thursday, banned street protest within the territory, ostensibly to forestall any further breakdown of law and order.

The ban came a day after #ENDSARS protesters were attacked by some armed hoodlums at the Berger Roundabout in Abuja.

The attack saw the hoodlums cutting some protesters with knives and machetes as well as destroying their cars.

Minister of the FCT, Mallam Mohammed Bello, said the ban was part of the resolutions reached at a security committee meeting of the FCTA, specifically convened to evaluate the security situation around the nation's capital.

An eyewitness to yesterday's protest said that commuters and motorists who were moving out of the city into the satellite towns along the Airport Road were forced to make a detour, having spent hours on a frustrating traffic gridlock caused by the protesters.

It was also learnt that the protesters vowed to remain on the roads despite the presence of security personnel, who arrived at the scene in droves to maintain law and order.

Lagos

Meanwhile, there is anger and lamentation as #EndSARS protesters continue in Lagos on Friday with demonstrators observing Jumaat prayers on the roads.

The campaigners also resumed blockades of major highways and observed their Jumaat prayers on roads at the Lagos State Secretariat and Lekki Toll Plaza to express their agitations against police brutality.

For hours, they occupied the major highways by turning other roads to venues of carnival-like protests, chant-

ing #EndSARS slogans and other songs, while calling for a total overhaul of the policing system in the country and a more serious government that would address myriads of problems confronting the nation.

While some called for immediate implementation of the reforms promised by the President Muhammadu Buhari and the Inspector-General of Police, Muhammad Adamu, others were demanding reduction in the salaries of the lawmakers and elected officials in order to create jobs for the teeming jobless youths.

Food items such as breads, soft drinks and other snacks were brought to the venues of the protests in different vehicles as the protesting youths played a variety of music, dancing and lamenting over the challenges confronting the youths in the country.

However, commuters in Lagos and travelers in and out of the state groaned in the hours of endless traffic occasioned by the road blockades mounted on the Lagos-Ibadan Expressway and the Lekki-Epe Expressway.

The protests gained momentum later in the night as they observed a candle light procession in their hundreds on the Lekki tollgate yesterday.

Many commuters spent over eight hours via Mowe ends of Lagos-Ibadan Expressway to Lagos as the protesters blocked the road from the Lagos State secretariat axis of the ever-busy highways thereby preventing inbound and outbound vehicles to Lagos.

Meanwhile, Governor Babajide Sanwo-Olu of Lagos State had continued to appeal to the protesting youths to sheath their swords, and give both the Federal and State Governments the chance to consolidate on the actions being promptly taken to address their concerns.

According to the governor, most Lagosians are unable to go to their workplaces or earn a legitimate living because of the collateral impact of protest gatherings.

Ogun

Thousands of #EndSARS protesters yesterday also shut down major cities in Ogun State in continuation of their protest against police brutality by operatives of the

SARS squad.

In Abeokuta, the state capital, the angry protesters as early as 6am laid siege to strategic locations and paralysed commercial activities in the major parts of the city.

The protesters blocked the IBB Boulevard Road that leads to the governor's office and halted free flow of vehicular movement along the axis.

The Muslims among the protesters were also seen observing their Friday Jumaat prayer in the middle of the road.

The protest rocked Sagamu, Sango-Ota, Ijebu-Ode and Ifo areas of the state also.

Some of the inscriptions on their placards read: "Our voices must be heard"; "SARS Na Fraudsters #EndSARS"; "No More Audio Ban"; "Say No to Police Brutality"; "Iphone no be gun."

Popular hip hop artiste, Daniel Tobiloba Anidugbe popularly known as Kizz Daniel, and a veteran Nollywood actor, Yemi Soladimu, among other celebrities were among those who participated in the protest.

Cross River

In Calabar, protest continued as youths from every part of the capital city marched through major streets, carrying placards and demanding reforms in the Police.

As early as 8.30 am, they had gathered at the usual muster point at Millennium Park along Mary Slessor, and marched to Eleven Eleven Roundabout along Murtala Mohammed way.

Speaking to our correspondent, one of the leaders of the group, who gave his name as Hanson Peter, explained that he had been a victim of SARS in the past, noting that so many Nigerians may have been killed or even maimed by the outfit.

However, the Special Adviser to Governor Ben Ayade on Media and Publicity, Mr. Christian Ita, said the governor was ready to address the protesters "but they have not come to him and he cannot go to them."

Ekiti

Several Youths in Ekiti State on Friday also trooped out en masse to join their counterparts across the country in pressing home the demands to the Federal Government.

The youth expressed

grievances over prolonged habits of SARS in encroaching beyond their boundaries by molesting the innocent youths.

The protest paralyzed activities in Ado-Ekiti, the Ekiti State capital, as the #EndSARS protesters converged at the popular Fajuyi Park in the state capital in the early hours of the morning, barricaded the major road thereby causing traffic gridlock at the busy area.

Motorists heading to areas such as Bank Road, Adebayo Road and Basiri areas in Ado-Ekiti were stranded for hours and were forced to find alternative routes to their destination.

The state governor, Dr. Kayode Fayemi, who was on his way to the State House of Assembly for a State of the State address to mark his second anniversary as governor was forced to stop and speak to the protesters.

Fayemi declared that the youth had genuine agitation for holistic reforms in the police, and appealed to them to continue their demonstration in a peaceful manner to avoid it being hijacked by hoodlums.

Abia

In Umuahia, the Abia State capital, a Methodist Bishop and Co-chair, Interfaith Dialogue Forum, Bishop Sunday Onuoha, has warned that the #EndSARS protests currently sweeping across the country may degenerate into anarchy unless the Federal Government takes steps to end the inhuman treatment meted out to the youth.

Onuoha, who is also the President, Vision Africa International, expressed worry over the development and called on governments of the 36 states of the Federation to guard against a possible ugly backlash.

The 2013 Global Peace Award Winner, also said he was heartbroken and devastated watching the youth, who are the hope of the country being subjected to various degrees of humiliation because they want to chart a new course.

He advised that the already tensed situation may turn into anger and frustration likely to push the country to the precipice.

He decried the level of debasement the youth have been subjected to over time but more pronounced dur-