

October 2020



NIGERIA: #ENDSARS Campaign Action Toolkit



Demonstrators protest police brutality at the Lekki toll gate on October 20, 2020 in Lagos, Nigeria.

Huge protests tagged #ENDSARS are happening across Nigeria. Since 8 October, young people have taken to the streets, peacefully demanding for an end to police brutality. The protests which began as a response to a viral video of the Special Anti-Robbery Squad unit of Nigeria Police operatives shooting a young man has transformed into

nationwide agitations for true police reforms. They organized nationwide street protests, singing the national anthem and holding up Nigeria's flag. Their main demands – an end to police brutality, accountability for extrajudicial killings, rape, torture and extortion by SARS officers and policing reforms. On Tuesday 10 October, Nigeria's military forces opened fire at peaceful protesters at two locations in Lagos, south west Nigeria killing at least 12 people and leaving hundreds injured. The killings took place in Lekki and Alausa, where thousands were protesting police brutality as part of the #EndSars movement. The United Nations and the African Union have both condemned the use of lethal force on peaceful protesters by Nigeria authorities.

SARS, Policing and Human Rights in Nigeria



In late 2017, Nigerian human rights defenders and activists launched a massive campaign tagged #EndSARS. The campaign was aimed at drawing attention to human rights violations committed by the Special Anti-Robbery Squad (SARS), a unit of the Nigerian police tasked with fighting violent crimes such as robbery and kidnapping.

Since 2014, Amnesty International has documented widespread human rights violations including extrajudicial executions, torture, and other ill-treatment, rape and extortion by officers of the SARS. Nigerians in their hundreds marched across major cities in the country, calling on the government to disband SARS, as well as to prosecute SARS officers who have perpetrated human rights violations. Through videos and photos on social media, others shared horrendous stories of SARS officers abusing their victims. The Nigerian police - after initially resorting to denial and threats towards the promoters of the campaign - finally admitted that SARS was involved in human rights violations and consequently promised reforms.



In June 2020, Amnesty International released a report documents cases of extortion, torture and ill treatment by SARS between January 2017 and May 2020. It reveals a pattern of abuse of power by SARS officers and the consistent failure by the Nigerian authorities to bring perpetrators to justice. The report highlighted the deficiencies in Nigerian police accountability that contribute to and exacerbate these violations. All documented cases where detainees in SARS custody were subjected to a variety of methods of torture including hanging, mock execution, beating, punching and kicking, burning with cigarettes, waterboarding, near-asphyxiation with plastic bags, forcing detainees to assume stressful bodily positions and sexual violence. Findings from our research indicate that few cases are investigated and hardly any officers are brought to justice on account of torture and other ill-treatment. In few instances where cases became public knowledge, the police authorities usually promised investigations. However, Amnesty International has found that no investigation or prosecution of perpetrators took place in any of the cases documented in this report.

The Buhari administration has repeatedly promised to reform SARS. On 14 August 2018, the Nigerian Vice-President ordered an immediate reform of SARS, citing the widespread public outcry against their conduct, as the basis for the order. He also directed the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) to set up a judicial panel to investigate SARS alleged unlawful activities. Hours later, the police authority announced a list of reform measures aimed at increasing SARS' public accountability for its actions. The measures include the change of name from Special Anti-Robbery Squad (SARS) to Federal Special Anti-Robbery Squad (FSARS), the appointment of high-ranking police officer to supervise the operation of FSARS and the restriction of FSARS operations to the prevention of armed robbery and kidnapping. Despite these promises of reform and accountability for violations, this report shows that SARS officers continue to subject detainees in their custody to torture and other forms of ill-treatment with total impunity.



Amnesty International believes that the ongoing impunity enjoyed by SARS officers for human rights violations points to deficiencies in policing practice and the absence of an effective police accountability system. The Nigerian government adopted a law criminalizing torture in December 2017. However, to date, no SARS officer has been convicted of torture in a Nigerian court. Perpetrators of torture continue to act with impunity, as if they are above the law.

Nigeria is a state party to various international treaties, including the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), the UN Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (UNCAT) and the African Charter on Human and Peoples Rights. The country is obliged under these international treaties to take a wide array of measures against torture and other ill-treatment, including its prohibition in law, ensuring that complaints are investigated, bringing perpetrators to justice and providing reparations to victims.

Our Demands

1. Call for an immediate end to the killing of peaceful protesters across the country by security agents and the military.
2. Call for a prompt, thorough, impartial, and effective investigation into the the killing of peaceful protesters at Lekki Toll Gate and other parts of the country and bring to justice anyone suspected to be responsible for the killings and attacks on protesters.
3. Publicly instruct security agents and the military to stop using excessive force against peaceful protesters across the country.
4. Ensure access to justice and effective remedies for victims and their families, including adequate compensation, reparation, restitution, satisfaction and guarantee of non-repetition.
5. Call on Nigerian government officials both in Nigeria and abroad to publicly commit to implement the demands of the protesters including: an end to police brutality, accountability for extrajudicial killings, rape, torture and extortion by SARS officers and policing reforms.



Nigerian youths seen waving the Nigerian national flag in front of a crowd in support of the ongoing protest against the unjust brutality of The Nigerian Police Force Unit named Special Anti-Robbery Squad (SARS) in Lagos on October 13, 2020.

Take Action

Reach out to Nigerians in the diaspora and collaborate with them in our effort to end police brutality Nigeria.

Inform and engage the U.S. Congress, your locally elected officials, the media about the situation in Nigeria through social media, actions, on and offline meetings, vigils briefings press releases.

Share and Sign Our #ENDSARS petition

In Nigeria, civilians have been extorted, raped, tortured, and killed by police officers from the Special Anti-Robbery Squad – SARS. Protests forced the Nigerian government to finally put an end to SARS. But it's not enough. Victims of these crimes are still waiting for justice. Take [action](#) here to end the impunity of SARS in Nigeria.

Tweet

Online actions: Share suggested tweets below on social media tagging @AmnestyNigeria, using these handles:

@Mbuhari for Twitter

@MuhammaduBuhari for Facebook

Muhammadubuhari for Instagram

Sample Tweets

1. [@MBuhari](#) must investigate the killing of #ENDSARS protesters in #Nigeria.
2. [@MBuhari](#), stop @HQNigerianArmy and @PoliceNG from killing #ENDSARS protesters. Protest is a human right.
3. [.@MBuhari](#) opening fire on peaceful #ENDSARS protesters is a blatant violation of people's rights to life, dignity, freedom of expression and peaceful assembly.
4. For years the Special Anti-Robbery Squad (SARS) continued to use torture, and other cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment to extort, punish and extract information from suspects, leaving a tragic trail of victims awaiting justice. (ADD LINK TO PR+VIDEO)
5. @MBuhari must ensure that there is real reform within @PoliceNG
8. Reform within @PoliceNG must translate into ending torture, unlawful detention, extortion, extrajudicial execution and other human rights violations that SARS officers have been committing for years across Nigeria.

Send Letters to the Nigerian Ambassador to the United States

(Copy the US Ambassador to Nigeria)

His Excellency Sylvanus Adiewere Nsofor

Ambassador

Embassy of the Federal Republic of Nigeria

3519 International Court, NW

Washington, DC 20008

Tel: (202) 800 7201 (Ext.100)

Email: info@nigeriaembassyusa.org

ambassadoronsofor@nigeriaembassyusa.org

Engage your local elected leaders

Have your town Council pass a resolution calling for President Buhari of Nigeria to #ENDSARS, ensure full demand accountability for human rights violation committed by the SARS unit and the Nigerian police and implement, credible, comprehensive and transparent reform of the police taking involving Nigerian people and Civil society organizations

(Model Resolution)

A Resolution in Support of the Nigerian People and their efforts to secure Police Reform and ensure the respect of the fundamental Human Rights of All Nigerian

Whereas On 8 October, Nigerian youth organized protests throughout Nigeria after a video of an unarmed man in Delta State being shot by Special Anti-Robbery Squad (SARS) officers surfaced.

Whereas #EndSARS protesters have remained peaceful but despite this, have been met with state-sanctioned violence including on October 20, 2020 when the Nigerian army shot and killed unarmed protesters singing the national anthem and holding the Nigerian flag while over 120,000 people worldwide watched on a protester's Instagram live feed.

Whereas the "Lekki Toll Gate Massacre" or "Black Tuesday," has been followed by other incidents of peaceful protestors being killed and injured since the protests began, require the immediate attention of the international community.

Whereas in late 2017, Nigerian human rights defenders and activists launched a massive campaign tagged #EndSARS, aimed at drawing attention to human rights violations committed by the Special Anti-Robbery Squad (SARS), a unit of the Nigerian police tasked with fighting violent crimes such as robbery and kidnapping.

Whereas, SARS has been linked to widespread human rights violations including extrajudicial executions, torture, and other ill-treatment, rape and extortion by officers of the SARS.

Whereas Nigerians in their hundreds, marched across major cities in the country, calling on the government to disband SARS, as well as to prosecute SARS officers who have perpetrated human rights violations.

Whereas the Nigerian police - after initially resorting to denial and threats towards the promoters of the campaign - finally admitted that SARS was involved in human rights violations and consequently promised reforms which were never implemented

Whereas the Buhari administration has repeatedly promised to reform SARS including on August 14 2018 when the Nigerian Vice-President ordered an immediate reform of SARS and directed the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) to set up a judicial panel to investigate SARS alleged unlawful activities. And which just hours later,

resulted in the police authority announcing a list of reform measures aimed at increasing SARS' public accountability for its actions.

Whereas these measures included nothing more than changing of name from Special Anti-Robbery Squad (SARS) to Federal Special Anti-Robbery Squad (FSARS), the appointment of high-ranking police officer to supervise the operation of FSARS and the restriction of FSARS operations to the prevention of armed robbery and kidnapping.

Whereas even these measures were never implemented perpetuating the culture of impunity within SARS and the police in general.

Whereas on October 11 , 2020 President Buhari announced the disbanding of SARS and the redeployment of its members to other units ignoring all calls for accountability and reform.

Whereas Nigeria is a state party to various international treaties, including the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), the UN Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (UNCAT) and the African Charter on Human and Peoples Rights and that the Buhari administration and elected officials at the State level are obliged under these international treaties to take a wide array of measures against torture and other ill-treatment, including its prohibition in law, ensuring that complaints are investigated, bringing perpetrators to justice and providing reparations to victims.

Therefore Let It Be Resolved

We join the Nigerian people in calling on President Buhari to

Immediately end to the killing of peaceful protesters across the country by security agents and the military.

Initiate prompt, thorough, impartial, and effective investigation into the killing of peaceful protesters at Lekki Toll Gate and other parts of the country and bring to justice anyone suspected to be responsible for the killings and attacks on protesters.

Publicly instruct security agents and the military to stop using excessive force against peaceful protesters across the country.

Ensure access to justice and effective remedies for victims and their families, including adequate compensation, reparation, restitution, satisfaction and guarantee of non-repetition.

Call on Nigerian government officials both in Nigeria and abroad to publicly commit to implement the demands of the protesters including: an end to police brutality, accountability for extrajudicial killings, rape, torture and extortion by SARS officers and policing reforms.