

Weekly Updates on the **#EndSARS Judicial Panels of Inquiry – No. 17**



7th - 14th March 2021

The Judicial Panels of Inquiry set up across Nigeria to investigate the excesses of the Nigeria Police Force and other security agencies have continued sittings in the FCT and these 11 states in the week under review: Akwa Ibom, Anambra, Bayelsa, Benue, Enugu, Imo, Lagos, Nasarawa, Ogun, Oyo and Plateau.

The ongoing Judicial Panels of Inquiry provide an opportunity for the Nigerian government at the federal and state levels to meet major yearnings of Nigerians, which is justice for all victims and survivors of police brutality and implementation of the recommendations of the Judicial Panels. The Judicial Panels of Inquiry are a response to the 5 for 5 demands of the #EndSARS Movement for accountability; end impunity for police violence in Nigeria and justice for all deceased victims of police brutality and appropriate compensation for their families.

On Wednesday, March 3, 2021, the Ondo State Panel ended its public hearing and officially closed the Panel's assignment. The Panel is expected to submit its Final Report and recommendations to the state government for implementation.

In the FCT and 18 states, the Judicial Panels of Inquiry have closed submission of petitions, while the Panels in Adamawa, Delta, Edo, Gombe, Niger, Katsina, Kwara, Ondo and Rivers states have concluded sittings/hearings. The Judicial Panels of Inquiry in Niger and Kwara have submitted their recommendations to the government for implementation. The Governor of Kwara State, while receiving the report promised to set up an implementation committee on its recommendations. The reports of the Panels in Adamawa, Delta, Edo, Gombe, Katsina and Rivers states are yet to be submitted to the various state governments for implementation.

On Monday, March 8th, 2021, the Kaduna State Judicial Panel of Inquiry suspended its sitting for 7 days, while the Anambra State Panel resumed sitting on Tuesday, March 9th, 2021 following the suspension of the sittings over unpaid allowances to Panel members. The Chairman of the Panel, Hon. Justice Vero Ngozi Umeh (Rtd.), announced that the Anambra State Government approved 16 (sixteen) additional sittings for the Panel. However, out of 310 cases before the Panel, over 270 are yet to be concluded. The number of approved additional sittings are grossly inadequate compared to the number of petitions yet to be concluded. The Panel is required to thoroughly investigate all the petitions that have been submitted in the interest of fairness and justice.

In Enugu State, the Panel is seeking an extension of the timeframe for the Panel in order to thoroughly investigate all the petitions submitted to the Panel.

Yiaga Africa and EiE Nigeria's observation of the Panels of Inquiry will continue to provide information to promote transparency and accountability and build citizens' confidence in the process.

Findings from the period under review include:

1 6 States Complete Panel Hearings, Fail to Present Judicial Panel of Inquiry Reports:

In the nine (9) states where the Panels have completed their hearings - **Adamawa, Delta, Edo, Gombe, Katsina, Kwara, Niger, Ondo and Rivers**, our findings indicate that **ONLY** two (2) states, namely Niger and Kwara states have submitted and publicly presented the report of the Panel to the state government for implementation of their recommendations.

2 7 States Continue with Submission of Petitions; 12 States and the FCT Remain Undecided on End Date for Panel Sittings:

Reports from independent citizen observers deployed by Yiaga Africa and EiE Nigeria indicate that seven (7) states, namely Akwa Ibom, Bayelsa, Benue, Ebonyi, Enugu, Kaduna and Osun States continue with the submission of petitions at the Panels, while 12 states and the FCT remain undecided on the end date for Panel sittings. Yiaga Africa and EiE Nigeria findings indicate lack of information and official updates from the Panels in the states in relation to the number of petitions submitted, number of cases heard, deadlines for submission of petitions and expected date which the Panels are to complete their assignments. We call on the Panels to proactively engage with the media to ensure citizens are informed of the work done by the Panels since their establishment. **Borno, Jigawa, Kano, Kebbi, Sokoto, Yobe, and Zamfara** have consistently refused to constitute Judicial Panels of Inquiry, while **Kogi State**, is yet to hold an inaugural sitting despite the constitution of the Panel.

3 Petitions Submitted across the Country:

Data from the Panels show the following number of petitions submitted across the states and the FCT, while observer reports indicate that Judicial Panels of Inquiry have closed submission of petitions in 21 states and the FCT.

State	No. of Petitions Submitted	End Date for Submission of Petitions	End Date for Panel Sittings/Hearings
Abia State	87	December 9, 2020	May 10, 2021
Adamawa State	14	December 11, 2020	January 27, 2021
Akwa Ibom State	159	Ongoing	Undecided
Anambra State	310	November 26, 2020	Undecided
Bauchi State	19	January 31, 2021	Undecided
Bayelsa State	41	Ongoing	April 2021
Benue State	51	Ongoing	Undecided
Cross River State	75	December 22, 2020	April 30, 2021
Delta State	85	November 26, 2020	March 4, 2021

Ebonyi State	55	Ongoing	May 2021
Edo State	168	November 27, 2020	March 1, 2021
Ekiti State	85	November 30, 2020	Undecided
Enugu State	137	Ongoing	Undecided
FCT Abuja	285	December 31, 2020	Undecided
Gombe State	15	February 2, 2021	March 2, 2021
Imo State	144	December 14, 2020	Undecided
Kaduna State	49	Ongoing	Undecided
Katsina State	61	December 2020	January 6, 2021
Kwara State	24	December 1, 2020	January 27, 2021
Lagos State	230	December 22, 2020	Undecided
Nasarawa State	47	December 31, 2020	Undecided
Niger State	18	December 2020	December 22, 2020
Ondo State	75	February 8, 2021	March 3, 2021
Ogun State	105	November 30, 2020	Undecided
Osun State	34	Ongoing	May 2021
Oyo State	85	March 5, 2021	Undecided
Plateau State	63	November 26, 2020	April 2021
Rivers State	188	January 13, 2021	January 26, 2021
Taraba State	31	March 7, 2021	March 29, 2021

■ States that have completed their panel sittings
 ■ States with undecided end date
 States with decided end date

Yiaga Africa and EiE Nigeria note and recommend the following:

- 1. Disruption of Panel Sittings Affect Completion of Panel Hearings:** Yiaga Africa and EiE Nigeria note that the disruption of Panel sittings despite the number of petitions yet to be considered especially in Anambra State has affected the timely completion of Panel hearings. We recommend that the Panels provide timely information to the petitioners, media, observers, civil society groups and security agencies in the event of the Panels' inability to sit on its set dates. Reports from independent citizen observers emphasize the importance of allocating a fair amount of time to each case in order to ensure transparency and fairness towards delivering justice to all aggrieved parties. Panels should be consistent with their sittings, and be more open to the media and observers in order to ensure transparent processes and timely completion of their duties.

- 2. Citizen Engagement and Advocacy Towards Implementation of Panel Recommendations:** It is important citizens remain active, engaged and advocate to the government to implement the recommendations from the panels in line with the #5for5 demands of the Nigerian youth. We encourage citizens and organizations focused on good governance, justice, and police reform in the states where hearings have been completed to write to the Panels for a summary of its activities. They should also follow the actions of the state governments in response to the recommendations of the Panels.
- 3. Public Access to Final Reports and Implementation of Recommendations:** In the eight (8) states where the Panels have completed the hearings - Adamawa, Delta, Edo, Gombe, Katsina, Kwara, Niger, and Rivers, only two (2) states, namely Niger and Kwara States have submitted and publicly presented the Final Report to the state government for implementation of their recommendations. None of the Reports are publicly accessible and this situation could potentially prevent citizens from engaging with relevant stakeholders towards the implementation of the recommendations of the Panels. We recommend that the Final Report of each Panel is available for citizen engagement and monitoring of the implementation of the Panel's recommendations.

Signed

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