

Weekly Updates on the #EndSARS Judicial Panels of Inquiry – No. 18



15th - 21st 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, Bayelsa, Ekiti, Enugu, Kaduna, Kogi, Lagos, Ogun, Osun, Oyo and Taraba.

The ongoing Judicial Panels of Inquiry provides 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 to impunity for police violence in Nigeria and justice for all deceased victims of police brutality and appropriate compensation for their families.

On Monday, March 15, 2021 the Governor of Ekiti State, Kayode Fayemi, presented cheques to victims of human rights violations totalling a sum of N7.4 million. The cheques were paid to petitioners who were awarded compensations by the Ekiti State Judicial Panel of Inquiry into cases of human rights abuses by the disbanded Special Anti-Robbery Squad (SARS). During the presentation, the Governor apologised to the victims of police brutality for the hurt and negative psychological effects of their experiences.

On Tuesday, March 16, 2021, The Akwa Ibom 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.

The Human Rights Special Intervention Group (HRSIG) in Kogi on Tuesday, March 16, 2021 at its inaugural sitting received six petitions and complaints on human right violations by law enforcement agencies in the state. The HRSIG functions as the Judicial Panel of Inquiry set up in the state. The Chairman of HRSIG in Kogi State, Barr. Ibrahim Alhassan, disclosed this at a Public Hearing on #EndSARS Protest, Complaints and Petitions on Human Rights Violations and Brutality By Law Enforcement Agencies. The HRSIG was constituted by the Kogi State Government through the office of the Public Defender and Citizens Rights Commission (PDCRC).

Borno, Jigawa, Kano, Kebbi, Sokoto, Yobe, and Zamfara States have consistently refused to constitute Judicial Panels of Inquiry in total disregard of the directive of the National Economic Council (NEC) to establish Judicial Panels of Inquiry by governors in Nigeria to investigate complaints of police brutality and extra-judicial killings

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 Lack of Public Access to Final Reports Hindering Implementation of Recommendations:

Ten (10) states from among the twenty-nine (29) states and the FCT where Judicial Panels of Inquiry have been established have completed their hearings - namely Adamawa, Akwa Ibom, Delta, Edo, Gombe, Katsina, Kwara, Niger, Ondo and Rivers. 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. However, none of the Reports are publicly accessible and this situation prevents citizens from engaging with relevant stakeholders towards the implementation of the recommendations of the Panels. Our findings indicate that eight (8) states, namely **Adamawa, Akwa Ibom, Delta, Edo, Gombe, Katsina, Ondo and Rivers** states have failed to submit/present their reports and recommendations to the various state governments for implementation.

2 Partial Implementation of the 5 for 5 Demands of the #EndSARS Movement:

The award of compensations by the Ekiti State Judicial Panel of Inquiry to victims of human rights abuses by the disbanded Special Anti-Robbery Squad (SARS) reflect a partial implementation of the demands of the #EndSARS Movement. In October 2020, following the #EndSARS Protests across Nigeria and the diaspora, the National Economic Council (NEC), directed the establishment of Judicial Panels of Inquiry by governors in Nigeria to investigate complaints of police brutality and extra-judicial killings. The NEC also decided that all state governors should set up a Victims' Fund to facilitate the payment of monetary compensation to survivors of police brutality. However, there is no evidence to suggest that a Victims' Fund has been opened by the governors.

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 27 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	March 11, 2021	March 16, 2021
Anambra State	310	November 26, 2020	Undecided
Bauchi State	19	January 31, 2020	Undecided
Bayelsa State	41	January 31, 2021	April 2021
Benue State	81	February 28, 2021	Undecided
Cross River State	75	December 22, 2020	April 30, 2021
Delta State	85	November 26, 2020	March 4, 2021

Ebonyi State	55	March 20, 2021	April 21, 2021
Edo State	168	November 27, 2020	March 1, 2021
Ekiti State	85	November 30, 2020	Undecided
Enugu State	137	February 28, 2021	April 2021
FCT	285	December 31, 2020	Undecided
Gombe State	15	February 2, 2021	March 2, 2021
Imo State	144	December 14, 2020	Undecided
Kaduna State	64	Ongoing	July 2021
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	February 9, 2021	March 26, 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. Implementation of the 5 for 5 Demands of the #EndSARS Protest Movement:** Yiaga Africa and EiE Nigeria note that the award of compensations by the Ekiti State Judicial Panel of Inquiry to victims of human rights abuses by the disbanded Special Anti-Robbery Squad (SARS) reflects a partial implementation of the demands of the #EndSARS Movement which include but are not limited to - **Justice for all deceased victims of police brutality and appropriate compensation for their families and Increase Police salary so that they are adequately compensated for protecting lives and property of citizens.** We recommend the full implementation of the demands of the #EndSARS Movement. The full implementation of the demands will promote transparency and accountability and build citizens' confidence in the actions of the government.

2. Public Presentation of Final Reports and Implementation of Recommendations:

Yiaga Africa and EiE Nigeria note that 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. These Reports are not publicly available for citizens to monitor the implementation of the Panels recommendations. In the other eight (8) states where the Panels have completed the hearings - Adamawa, Akwa Ibom, Delta, Edo, Gombe, Katsina, Ondo and Rivers, the Final Reports have not been publicly presented. The presentation and public access to the Reports are important towards citizen engagement and monitoring of the implementation of the Panels recommendations.

3. Extension of Panel Assignment for Completion of Hearings:

Yiaga Africa and EiE Nigeria note that the disruptions of Panel sittings and the number of petitions yet to be considered in various states including Anambra, Enugu, Lagos and Ogun States may affect the completion of fair hearings at the Panels. We recommend an extension of the timeline for the Panels' assignments in order to provide adequate time for fair hearings at the Panels. 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.

Signed

Cynthia Mbamalu
Yiaga Africa

'Yemi Adamolekun
Enough is Enough (EiE) Nigeria