PROMINENCE OF POLICE BRUTALITY AMONGST YOUTHS IN NIGERIA

Protesters across Nigeria rallied to demand police reform and also alert the government on the recurrent police brutality happening across the Nation. This was as a result of years of repressed anger over the Special Anti-Robbery Squad (SARS), a Nigerian police tactical unit whose officers have been accused of kidnapping, harassing and extorting people especially the youth across the Country.

This year alone, from January and October 2020 the number of force brutality incidents, and these include the Nigerian Armed Forces, the Nigeria Police Force, the Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps, and the Nigeria Customer Service, stands at 88. About 116 people have been killed in these 88 incidents. Of the 88 incidents, at least 51% of cases (46) were attributed to police brutality[[1]](#footnote-1). Also in June, Amnesty International issued a report that had documented at least 82 cases of torture, ill-treatment and extrajudicial executions by SARS officers between January 2017 and May 2020. The victims were mostly men aged 18 to 25, from poor backgrounds and vulnerable groups.[[2]](#footnote-2)

These human rights abuses perpetrated by the SARS unit have plagued the youth populace mainly because of their naivety and lack of knowledge of their rights as citizens. Until recent times, the youths have showed minimal interest in politics and governance, this has further aided in their ineptitude of their basic rights as citizens of the federal republic of Nigeria. Also the police officers hold outrageous stereotypes against the youths and tag them as criminals using these stereotypes, they are often accused of being internet fraudsters and/or armed robber because of dreadlocks, ripped jeans, tattoos, flashy cars or expensive gadgets.

In conclusion, police brutality would be reduced drastically if both parties (Youths and Police officers) could be educated through sensitization campaigns which would be aimed at elucidating the Youths on their rights as citizens within the provisions of the law and also enlightening the police officers on the dangers of stereotyping and that the influx of ripped jeans, dreadlocks, expensive gadgets are due to the effects of globalization and does not necessarily make an individual a criminal.

Article written by Tobiloba Adekunle

1. [https://www.sbmintel.com/2020/10/the-economics-of-police-brutality-in-nigeria/](about:blank) [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. [https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2020/06/nigeria-horrific-reign-of-impunity-by-sars-makes-mockery-of-anti-torture-law/](about:blank) [↑](#footnote-ref-2)