

Weekly Updates on the **#EndSARS Judicial Panels of Inquiry – No. 16**



1st - 7th 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, Benue, Delta, Ekiti, Enugu, Gombe, Kaduna, Lagos, 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 eventual recommendations of the Panels.

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 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 the recommendations.

In the first week of March 2021 the Edo (March 1st), Gombe (March 2nd) and Delta (March 4th) states concluded sittings/hearings on cases of police brutality and extra-judicial killings by officers and men of the defunct Special Anti-Robbery Squad (SARS) as well as other police units and security forces.

Yiaga Africa and EiE Nigeria previously recommended that the Lagos and Anambra Judicial Panels of Inquiry respond immediately following the resignation of the youth representatives on their Panels and take appropriate action towards restoring citizens' confidence in the Panels to deliver justice. In the week under review, members of the Anambra State Judicial Panel of Inquiry were paid their outstanding entitlements for carrying out their assignment in October, November and December 2020. Consequently, the Panel is scheduled to resume sittings on Tuesday, March 9th, 2021. However, the youth representatives will not be rejoining the Panel.

On Tuesday, March 2nd, 2021, the FCT Judicial Panel of Inquiry suspended its sitting for 10 days. The reason for the suspension is unknown. While on Friday, March 5th, 2021, the Taraba State Judicial Panel of Inquiry suspended its sittings/hearings until all outstanding allowances for the Panel are paid. The secretary of the Panel disclosed that the Panel needs funds to summon witnesses from various local government areas in the state and despite approvals being granted, the funds for the Panel's assignment have not been released.

Yiaga Africa and EiE Nigeria note that the provision of adequate resources will enable the Panels to effectively carry out their assignment without interference. This will ensure the independence of these Panels and build public trust in the process.

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 8 States Complete Panel Hearings; 2 States Submit and Publicly Present Judicial Panel of Inquiry Reports:

In the eight (8) states where the Panels have completed the hearings - Adamawa, Delta, Edo, Gombe, Katsina, Kwara, Niger, and Rivers, our findings indicate that 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, lack of public access to the report of the Panels could potentially prevent citizens from engaging with relevant stakeholders towards the implementation of the recommendations.

2 7 States Continue with Submission of Petitions; 13 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 13 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 and Conclusion of Sittings:

Data from the Panels show the following number of petitions submitted across the states and the FCT, while observer reports indicate that 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 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.

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	159	Ongoing	Undecided
Anambra State	310	November 26, 2020	Undecided
Bauchi State	19	January 31, 2020	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	75	February 8, 2021	Undecided
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

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 the inconsistency in the response to the 5 for 5 demands of the #EndSARS Protest Movement. Media reports in the week under review indicate that Gov. David Umahi of Ebonyi State has earmarked N3 billion for the #EndSARS youth empowerment scheme. While the intentions of the Ebonyi State government to empower the youth in the state is laudable, this is a clear departure from 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 in remuneration for police officers so that they are adequately compensated for protecting lives and property of citizens.** We recommend that the N3 billion that has been earmarked for the alleged #EndSARS youth empowerment scheme should be channeled to the full implementation of the 5 for 5 demands of the #EndSARS Protest Movement.
- 2. Support and Welfare for Judicial Panels of Inquiry:** Yiaga Africa and EiE Nigeria note the worrying trend in Anambra and Taraba states with a lack of support for the Judicial Panels of Inquiry being demonstrated by the state government. Federal and state governments must provide adequate support and resources needed to ensure that the Panels in the FCT and across the states function optimally. The lack of support and welfare for members of the Panels further prevents the Panels carrying out their assignment within the allocated time in line with their terms of reference.
- 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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