JOURNAL OF POLITICAL DISCOURSE
ISSN Print: 2992-2763 - ISSN Online: 2992-4618. /vol 1, No 3 / September, 2023.
Https://www.jopd.com.ng

AN ASSESSMENT OF THE UNPROFESSIONAL AND UNETHICAL CONDUCTS OF THE NIGERIAN POLICE FORCE

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ABSTRACT

The Nigerian Police Force (NPF) is saddled with the responsibilities of the preservation of law and order, the preservation and detection of crimes, the apprehension of offenders, and the protection of lives and property in Nigeria. The study assessed the unprofessional and unethical conduct of the Nigerian Police Force. Thus, the study employed secondary source of data and contends that family and friend(s) pressure to make wealth, poor police funding, corrupt systems in Nigerian society, unpatrotism, excessive intake of drugs and alcohol, power, arms, and ammunition intoxication, enthusiasm for quick money and gratification, the godfather's protection, and obeying corrupt hierarchy orders and instructions, etc are the causes of the unprofessional and unethical conduct of the NPF. These unprofessional and unethical conducts of the NPF have led to unlawful and extrajudicial killings, illness, internal and external injuries, brutality, extortion, and torture of many Nigeria citizens outside and inside the police detentions. The integrity of the force is at stake, as many Nigerians have lost faith and trust in the NPF. The study concludes that to rejuvenate the NPF to professional and ethical conduct, urgent measures by the Federal Government of Nigeria and the NPF must be put in place to restore professional and ethical policing in Nigeria on the path of citizens trust, confidence, love, support, respectability, and lawfulness. By way of nipping this in the bud, the study made some recommendations; one such recommendation is that all unprofessional and unethical police officers (SARS inclusive) must be made accountable for their actions, as this will serve as a deterrent to others towing the same path.

Keywords: Extortion, Nigerian Police Force, Torture**,** Unethical, Unlawful Killing, Unprofessional

Introduction

The Nigerian Police Force (NPF) is saddled with the responsibilities of the preservation of law and order, the preservation and detection of crimes, the apprehension of offenders, and the protection of lives and property in Nigeria. According to Groenewald and Peake (2004) the Nigerian Police Force provides the requisite enabling environment for citizens to live and work towards the social, economic, and political development of society.

As a security institution, NPF personnel are deployed in every state that makes up the Nigerian nation plus the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja, for policing and a crime-free Nigeria.

Uhakeme (2006) noted that, in relation to their duties of ensuring a crime-free environment, police are stationed to enforce traffic rules on motorists, especially on the highway. More often than that, especially in the process of exercising their legal duties of checking vehicles and apprehension of non-compliance with the traffic laws, they are usually caught in an unprofessional and unethical act of extorting the motorists almost on a daily basis. The NPF officers, who are often charged with the responsibility of checking corruption, have been found to be deeply involved in corrupt practices. People referred to them as initiators and practitioners of corruption.

Many personnel of the NPF shamefully spotlight the force unprofessionally by their conduct, secretly and openly, thereby casting aspersion on the NPF and deviating from their constitutional role and functions. These unprofessional and unethical conducts of the police in the form of extortion have entered brutality, as several personnel have metamorphosed into methods of brutalization and torture of Nigerians who refuse to give them bribes. Several NPF brutalization's and tortures lead to severe injuries and illnesses, such as traumatic brain injuries, peripheral neuropathy, sexually transmitted infections, pregnancy via rape, chronic pain, tooth damage, sleep disturbance, traumatic stress, psychological anxiety, depression, and the deaths of some victims. Sardonically, the NPF has been found wanting for unlawful and extra-judicial killings in Nigeria. The integrity of the force is at stake, as many Nigerians have lost faith and trust in the NPF. While reminiscing on the above, the fulcrum of the study is to assess the unprofessional and unethical conduct of the Nigerian Police Force.

Conceptual Clarification

Police Brutality

According to Socyberty (2010) brutality is one of several forms of misconduct that involve undue violence by security officers against citizens in a society. This misdemeanour known as police brutality exists in many states and territories in the global system, most especially in the underdeveloped or developing ones. Police brutality refers to the intentional use of excessive force directed towards state citizens by a police officer or security agent.

Wallace (2010) noted that brutality is a form of police misconduct that may involve sexual abuse, corruption, indiscriminate shooting of innocent civilians, false arrests, racial profiling, and political repression in all senses.

Police brutality is defined as the unprofessional and unethical conduct of police personnel in inflicting pain, abuse, violence, and financial and sexual inducement on a citizen not yet declared guilty by a competent court of law of any crime in the state.

Police

Police is a constituted body of persons empowered by a state with the aim of enforcing laws, ensuring the safety, health, and protection of citizens, and preventing crime in society (http://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/police).

Ibrahim (2015) defined police as a legal institution or state agency charged primarily with the enforcement of criminal law and maintenance of order through monitoring, discharging, and destroying challenges to the existing order of things.

According to Cambridge dictionary (2022) police is the official organisation that is responsible for protecting people and property, making people obey the law, finding out about and solving crimes, and catching people who have committed crimes.

However, police are saddled with the responsibilities of preservation of law and order, preservation and detection of crimes, apprehension of offenders, and protection of lives and property in any state encompassed by the constitution of that state.

Be that as it may, the Nigerian Police Force is the principal law enforcement and lead security agency in Nigeria designated by the 1999 constitution as the national police of Nigeria with exclusive jurisdiction throughout the country (https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nigeria-police-force).

Unlawful and Extra Judicial Killing

Unlawful or extra-judicial killing is the killing of a person by governmental authorities without sanction from any legal process. The concept of unlawful killing includes extrajudicial executions of citizens

as well as other types of killing, such as those resulting from excessive use of force by law enforcement officials (Yahaya, 2021). Unlawful execution is noticed to be against the law of a state and unethical in all senses, pursuant to the fact that it is criminal and alien to the laws of such a state (Segun, 2016).

According to Wallace (2012) and Lawrence (2020) unlawful or extra judicial killings can be seen in the following:

1. Killings carried out by law enforcement officials or other security forces alleged criminals, during attempts to extort civilians, politically motivated killings and many more.
2. Killing carried out during state of armed conflicts in a country
3. Targeted killings of suspended criminals and terrorists during counter-terrorism operations
4. Killings by non-state actors which could include paramilitary group, vigilantes, gangs, private individuals and others
5. Demises of custody, resulting from torture, poor health care, inadequate food, killings of prisoners by guard, inter-prison violence and others.

Thus, unlawful or extrajudicial killing, as the name implies, is the killing of a person or persons by security personnel who have not been found guilty of the crime accused by a competent court of law in the state.

Torture

According to Amnesty International (2022) torture is when someone in an official capacity inflicts severe mental or physical pain or suffering on somebody else for a specific purpose. Security authorities torture a person to extract a confession from a crime or to get information from the person. Sometimes torture is simply used as a punishment that spreads fear in society. Under international law, torture and other forms of ill-treatment are always illegal. They have been outlawed internationally for decades.

Constanzo and Gerrity (2009) asserts that torture is one of the most extreme forms of violence, resulting in both psychological and physical consequences, and is sometimes considered an indispensable interrogation mechanism for gathering strategic intelligence. In addendum, torture is the deliberate infliction of severe pain or suffering on someone under the control of the perpetrator. The treatment must be inflicted for a specific purpose, such as punishment or forcing the victim to confess or provide information. It is the most devastating experience that a person can undergo, and it can also negatively affect the perpetrating individual and institution (https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/torture).

Torture is defined as the forceful imposition of discomforts and agonies by security personnel on a citizen for the purpose of extracting information, confession of a crime, interrogation, and punishment. Amnesty International (2022) noted that there are varieties of torture used by the Nigeria Police Force.

They are physical, psychological, and mixed method.

Physical Torture: This takes the form of severe beatings with sticks, iron bars, electric wires, canes, ropes, and spike batons. Also, rape and sexual assaults on the victims by the perpetrators, the use of electric shock to shock victims in detention, the shooting of suspects on the limbs, pepper spray, hot electric iron burning, the use of needles in the male victim's penis, and the use of cigarate fire to burn the victim.

Psychological Torture: This takes the form of sleep disturbance or deprivation, prolonged solitary confinement, traumatic stress, depression, suicide thoughts, denial of medical attention or treatment, poor or inhuman prison conditions, etc for the victims by the perpetrators.

Mixed Method: This takes the form of applying physical and psychological methods simultaneously to the victim by the perpetrators (the police officer). Here, a scientific approach is also included by using

technology to record the victim confession or information given under severe torture and duress to the perpetrator. The confession or information is used against the victim in subsequent torture and in court. Torture by the NPF often happens in secret in police interrogation rooms or cells. It can never be justified. It is barbaric, inhumane, and replaces the rule of law with terror. Also, torture undermines the criminal justice system and erodes public trust in public institutions and the states they represent. No one is safe when the government allows its use (Amnesty International, 2022).

The Nigerian Constitution of 1999, as amended together with the Administration of Criminal Justice Act (ACJA) 2015, prohibits torture but does not criminalise it. Section 34 (1) of the Nigeria constitution states that "every individual is entitled to respect for the dignity of his person, and accordingly (a) no person shall be subjected to torture or to inhuman or degrading treatment". Section 17 (2) (b) adds that "human dignity shall be maintained and enhanced". ACJA addresses some of the concerns about the ill-treatment of detainees by police during detention and interviews. For example, Section 8 (1) provides that criminal suspects must be accorded humane treatment, having regard to the dignity of the person, and they must not be subjected to any form of torture. The ACJA also states that the statement must be made in the presence of a legal practitioner of the suspect's choice. This echoes international law and standards. However, the ACJA must be adopted by the state legislature before it can take full effect in each of Nigeria's states. 25 out of the 36 Nigerian states have adopted the ACJA (Amnesty International, 2022; Human Rights Committee against Torture, 2010 and https://www.partnersnigeria.org/acji-tracker/).

Criminalization of torture was only achieved on the 29th December 2017, when the Anti-Torture Act (ATA) came into force after President Muhammadu Buhari finally signed the bill into law, following several years of sustained campaigning by Amnesty International and other domestic and international human right organizations. Section 4 of that act states: Any person who commits the offence of torture as defined in Section 4 is guilty of an offence and is liable on conviction to imprisonment for a term not exceeding twenty-five years (Amnesty International, 2020).

The Anti-Torture Act establishes far-reaching safeguards to avoid torture by law enforcement personnel. Since the enactment of the act, little has changed, as Amnesty International and other research shows that the NPF Special Anti-Robbery Squad (SARS) and other operational squads and unit's officers continue to use torture as a means of punishment as well as a tool for extracting information from suspects and detainees.

Extortion

Extortion is an illegal act in which one coerces another into providing money or something else of value (Financial Dictionary cited by Asanebi, 2018).

Ibrahim, Isiaka, Salihu, Balogun and Akangbe (2018) assert that extortion is the act of obtaining money, property, or services from an individual or institution via coercion. Most officers engage in the unprofessional and unethical act of extorting money from Nigerians. This extortion is usually perpetrated in the open glare of the public, using both threats and flattery, depending on who happens to be the victim at the moment.

Thus, extortion can be seen as financial and valuable coercion from one person to another. It is caused by greed, unpatrotism, selfishness, poor welfare, corruption, and the fear of poverty by the individual. In the NPF, extortion is becoming the norm, which is unprofessional and unethical. It is against the norms and ethics of the noble profession, but many officers engage in extortion for personal gains and gratification.

The History of Nigerian Police Force

Historically, the Nigeria Police Force was the brainchild of the British Colonial Government and dates back to 1861, following the annexation of Lagos (Newswatch, 1986; Okonkwo, 1966, and Tamuno,

1978). The British Consul charged with the administration of Lagos established a Consular Guard in Lagos under the Police Act of 1861 to help maintain law and order.

In 1863, the 30-member Consular Guard was renamed the Hausa Guard after the ethnicity of the men recruited into the unit. It was further regularised in 1879 by an ordinance creating the colony of Lagos. The Hausa Guard became known as the Hausa Constabulary, while on January 1, 1896, the Lagos Police Force was created and armed like the Hausa Constabulary (Ogaga, 2014). With the passing of time, the present south-south region was declared an Oil Rivers protectorate in 1891, which saw the birth of an armed constabulary in Calabar as its headquarters. The constabulary was modelled on that of the Hausa constabulary in 1893, when the area was proclaimed the Niger Delta Coast. There was also development in the northern part. The Royal Niger Company, which was granted a royal charter in 1886 by the British government, set up the Royal Niger Constabulary in 1888 with headquarters at Lokoja to protect its installations along the banks of the River Niger (Ibid).

The Royal Niger Constabulary splintered into two, namely, the Northern Nigeria Police Force and the Northern Nigeria Regiment. In the south, the Lagos Police Force and part of the Niger Coast Constabulary became the Southern Nigeria Police in 1906, while the bulk of the Niger Coast Constabulary formed the Southern Nigeria Regiments. Following these developments, the new police forces operated separately, even after the amalgamation in 1914, until 1930, when they were merged to form the present Nigeria Police Force (NPF), with headquarters in Lagos (Ibid). NPF current headquarters is located in Edet House in Federal Capital Territory, Abuja.

The Nigerian Police Force Structure

The structure of the Nigeria Police Force is provided for in sections 214 (2) (a) and 215 (2) of the 1999 Constitution as amended. These sections provide inter-area Section 214 (a) states that:

Subject to the provisions of the constitution, the NPF shall be organised and administered in accordance with such provisions as may be prescribed by an act of the National Assembly (https://nairametrics.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/10-the-structure-of-the-Nigeria-Police).

The NPF shall be under the command of the Inspector General of Police, and any contingent of the NPF stationed in the state shall be subject to the authority of the Inspector General of Police and be under the command of the commissioner of police of that state. From the provisions above, three different structures in the NPF can be identified:

1. Command (Authority) Structure
2. Administration Structure
3. Organization Structure

Command Structure

The command structure, also referred to as the authority structure of the NPF, is predicted by the regimental nature of the force and conducted along the force badges of ranks. In accordance with Section 215 (2) of the 1999 Constitution and Section 6 of the Police Act of 1990, the force shall be commanded by the Inspector General of Police (IG). This simply means that orders, directives, and instructions to perform or carry out duties with which the police are charged flow from the IG, through the chain of command, to any officer positioned to implement such an order. Disobedience or failure to carry out such instructions, directives, or orders attracts punitive sanctions. Every other rank in the force is legally provided for in Section 7(1) and Section 5 of the Police Act. The command structure of NPF is presented in order of hierarchy, as in the chain here under.

1. The Inspector General of Police (IG)
2. The Deputy Inspector General of Police (DIG)

3. The Assistant Inspector General of Police (AIG)
4. The Commissioner of Police (CP)
5. The Deputy Commissioner of Police (DCP)
6. The Assistant Commissioner of Police (ACP)
7. The Chief Superintendent of Police (CSP)
8. The Superintendent of Police (SP)
9. The Deputy Superintendent of Police (DSP)
10. The Assistant Superintendent of Police (ASP)
11. The Inspector of Police
12. Sergeant
13. Corporal
14. Constable (Ibid).

Administrative Structure

The administrative structure is the engine room of the police force. The NPF is structured in the following ways:

1. Administration
2. Operation
3. Logistics and Supply
4. Investigation and Intelligence
5. Training and Command
6. Department
7. ICT
8. Force Secretary

Organizational Structure

The organisational structure of the police force is represented as shown below:

1. Headquarters
2. Zonal Headquarters
3. State Commands Headquarters
4. Divisional Police Headquarters
5. Police Station
6. Police Post
7. Village Police Post

The weight of the power and duties of the Nigeria Police Force (NPF) is spread across the balance of these structures, and their personnel are present in all 36 states of Nigeria and the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja (Ibid).

Causes of Nigerian Police Force Unprofessional and Unethical Conducts in Nigeria

The following are the causes of the unprofessional and unethical conduct of the Nigerian Police Force:

1. Family and friends pressure to make wealth
2. Poor police funding
3. Poor welfare package for police personnel
4. Corrupt system in the Nigerian society
5. Poor weaponry
6. Godfather protection
7. Obeying corrupt hierarchy orders and instructions

8. Poor training and retraining
9. The enthusiasm for quick money and gratification
10. Power, arms and ammunitions intoxication
11. Unpatrotism
12. Excessive intake of drugs and alcohol
13. Poor laws and its implementation in Nigeria
14. Poor independent of the judiciary

Unprofessional and Unethical Conduct of Nigeria Police Force

The integrity of the NPF is eroding rapidly due to the unprofessional and unethical conduct of personnel of the force in the form of unlawful or extrajudicial killings, police brutality, extortion, torture, etc.

According to Adebayo and Ojo (2009) police institution has deviated from its constitutional role by engaging in behaviour that is eroding the integrity of the force. Ibidapo-Obe (1995) and Adeyemi (2001) reported that police corruption is common in the course of crime control, crowd control, management of protests and demonstrations, investigations, and at checkpoints. They further opined that police unprofessional conduct occurs in the form of extrajudicial killings, summary executions of suspects, and revenge killings.

These police unprofessional and unethical conduct via torture has resulted in severe injuries, illness, and the deaths of many Nigerian citizens in police detention. Consequently, the NPF suffers from a deficit of public legitimacy and support. The public regards the character and level of accountability of the police as grossly unsatisfactory. The NPF is generally feared but not respected, distrusted, and despised by the Nigerian public (Alemika, 2003 and Ibidapo-Obe, 2003).

Many personnel of the NPF have seen unprofessional and unethical conduct as a quick means to amass wealth for themselves. According to Ibrahim, et al. (2018) seeing the behaviour of police officers at checkpoints reinforces the feeling that extortion has a quasi-official status in Nigeria, or rather, is a fully institutionalised tax collected at toll gates. Corruption seems to have become institutionalised by policemen at checkpoints, where they collect money in the full glare of passengers and other road users. Every checkpoint became itself a toll gate, especially for commercial vehicles, with the difference that the proceeds went into the private pockets of the policemen. Motorists are forced to pay money or face detention through prolonged parking, provocative questioning, injury, or even death (Karimu, 2015).

Several names, such as white, roja, particulars, sky, anything for the boys, kola, roadger, ten percent, and offering have been used by NPF personnel to perpetuate this illegal collection of money from motorists. Motorists who comply with the payment are rewarded with jokes, brief discussions, prayers, and friendship by NPF personnel. Also, in many cases, these motorists who comply are given numbers by these corrupt police officers, thereby allowing them to move freely, as the money paid is an assurance that there will be no subsequent routine checks even if the vehicle documents are fake or loaded with illicit goods. Due to the unprofessional and unethical conduct, the NPF vaunted slogan the police is your friend has lost its true essence in the hearts of many Nigerians, as these Nigerians have lost trust and confidence in the Nigeria Police.

Corroborating similar view, Ibrahim, et al. (2018) noted that despite the NPF vaunted slogan "police is your friend," most Nigerians perceived the police as a dreaded foe that must be avoided by any means possible. While Alemika and Chukwuma (2000) submitted that the relationship between the Nigeria Police and the citizens is largely characterised by suspicion, prejudice, mutual disrespect, conflict, and violence. In

essence, the inability of the police to connect with the public as a result of their widely reported belligerent and criminal attitudes has alienated the public (Thomas and Hyman, 1977).

Alemika (1999) argues that police corruption elicits serious concern for three significant reasons. Firstly, the police are expected to be moral as well as law enforcement agents. If the police, who are employed to prevent and detect corruption and bring culprits to judgement, are themselves stinking corrupt, the society crusade against corruption is guaranteed to fail. Secondly, the police exercise powers that have profound implications for the lives, property, safety, and freedom of citizens. Where the exercise of such power is contaminated by corrupt motives, the citizens are exceedingly vulnerable, insecure, and powerless. Thirdly, police corruption is often related to extortion, a form of robbery, or demands made with force. These dimensions of police corruption explain why the public is threatened by such practices. Corrupt motives are also a source of police brutality. In many circumstances, police brutality is a means of coercing individuals to succumb to demands for bribes, and at other times, it is punishment for not cooperating with the police in their demand for gratification.

The Nigerian Police, in order to redeem its reputation and trust with Nigerians and due to the high crime rate in the nation, established several units. One such unit established by the police is police/civilian public relations in all divisional police stations, police posts, state commands, and zones across the nations and force headquarters, Abuja. Officers of these units embarked on training on how best to relate with Nigerian citizens for better synergy and information gathering to prevent and combat crimes. Thus, several police and civilian relations, crime prevention, and investigation gathering seminars and workshops have been organised by the NPF training and command arm in Nigeria.

Also, several state commands, divisional police officers, AIGs in charge of zones, and the IG of Police have organised workshops and seminars in the past as regards police and civilian relations, modern crime prevention, modern investigation gathering, and professional and unethical police conduct by personnel of the force. Another unit established in 1992 by the NPF to combat crimes such as armed robbery and kidnapping was the Special Anti-Robbery Squad (SARS). According to Clean (2003 and 2019) the formation of SARS in 1992 contributed to significant crime reduction in the period from 289,156 in 1993 to 241,091 and 167,492 in 1994. In the early years of SARS, officers under this special unit were committed to professional conduct as crime saw a reduction in the nation. With the passing of time, SARS officers began to act unprofessionally and unethically by diverting from the core mandates of the establishment. The NPF officers of SARS were accused of several cases of extortion, brutality, unlawful and extrajudicial killing in Nigeria. These unprofessional and unethical conducts by SARS (an NPF special squad) personnel sent another message of distrust and discredit to the NPF, whose aims were to prevent and fight crimes and not to perpetrate crime(s) in Nigeria.

In pursuance of the objective of checking service violations by the officers of SARS, several calls have been received for these acts in Nigeria. Based on the reports by Human Rights Activities and the National Assembly from 2016–2019, it has exposed several instances of extrajudicial killing perpetuated by NPF officers of SARS that went unpunished in different parts of the country. These reports have cited how Nigerian citizens are rough handled, mishandled, and brutalised in various ways through beating, shooting indiscriminately, maiming and killing of citizens, unnecessary restraints such as handcuffs and leg chains, unnecessary use of firearms against suspects and innocent members of the public, torture of suspects in order to forcefully extract confessions, and extortion of gratification (Amnesty International, 2019 and Yahaya, 2021).

In its report "you have signed your death warrant published in 2016, Amnesty International documented 58 cases of suspects who were tortured while in SARS custody. Despite these reports, growing public outcry and many promises to reform SARS, violations by SARS police officers still continue in Nigeria (http://thenationonlineng.net/were-giving-nigeria-an-improved-sars-say-police/). Torture is a routine and systemic part of police investigation in SARS; many NPF SARS stations use designated torture

chambers, special interrogation rooms commonly used for torturing suspects. These are often known by different names, such as "the temple or the theatre," and are in some cases in the charge of an officer known informally as an O/C torture (officer in charge of torture). In numerous cases, scars, bruises, and dried blood were seen on victim's bodies, as many of the victims subjected to brutality did not receive the medical care they required. Sadly, in some of the cases, the violations were allegedly ordered by high-ranking police officers (Amnesty International, 2020).

Unfortunately, SARS officers do not sympathise with the cries of Nigerians about their unprofessional and unethical conduct towards their victims. Many families have lost loved ones and breadwinners to the hands of death from SARS bullets, brutality, and unlawful and extrajudicial killings. SARS has extorted their victims financially, thereby leading to the financial collapse of many of them. For instance, Gift Ezenwa, a 32-year-old woman, told Amnesty International that her husband, Mr. Collins Ezenwa, was executed by SARS on January 27, 2018 in Owerri, Imo State, after being accused of kidnapping. Collins Ezenwa, a 35-year-old ex-police officer, was accused of armed robbery and kidnapping by the police on January 27, 2018, along with the dead bodies of three of his associates. The police announced that they were killed during gunfire with SARS officers at Owerri. Mrs. Gift Ezenwa's lawyer, however, told Amnesty International that the photo released by the SARS officers in Imo State suggested that the deceased persons were arrested at a police checkpoint and taken to the SARS station in Owerri, where they were executed (Amnesty International, 2020).

As if that were not enough, SARS police officers arrested four of Mr. Collins Ezenwa's relatives and extorted various sums of money from them two months after his death. One of the relatives narrated to Amnesty International that he had been ordered to pay 1 million naira only to the police before he was released (Ibid). Mrs. Gift Ezenwa, the wife of the deceased, told Amnesty International that the Intelligence Response Unit (IRT) of the Nigeria Police Force made elaborate plans to illegally confiscate family assets, including cash, buildings, and business assets. She noted that "all our vehicles have been unlawfully confiscated by the police and converted for their personnel use. I saw one policeman using my car and driving the sienna my husband gave his cousin. Our hotel has been taken over by the police. The hotel is currently managed by someone appointed by the police, and he renders account to the police. The hotel makes a cash turnover of about 12 million naira every month. I was informed that our Prado jeep is being used by SARS for patrols. To ensure that I have nothing, the police went to a furniture shop at New Heaven, where my husband made a cash deposit of 2,200,000 naira only for a set of houses furniture and retrieved the money from them. One of my brothers was arrested, and everything of value he had, including money, was taken by the police. The police have also stopped our tenants from paying the rent to me. I have absolutely nothing (Ibid).

The police investigation officer (IPO) warned me to cooperate with them and comply with their instructions, and not involve a lawyer in my discussion with them. He said that he knew that I was innocent, but my husband made billions within two months that I married him for his money, that my husband must have been a kidnapper or stumbled on money, but that men who stumble on money do not display wealth like he (my husband) had done. One policeman advised me to cooperate and work with the police so that the police would give me something (a token) from my late husband's estate; that when police kill men like my husband, they must collect (make money) or make sure that everything is wasted (Amnesty International, 2018).

Amnesty International confirmed that there was no judicial order authorising the police to confiscate late Collins Ezenwa's property until September 22, 2019, much later than the date on which the police had illegally confiscated it. Again, another court order rejecting the request of police to freeze the bank account of late Collins Ezenwa was seen by Amnesty International (Amnesty International, 2020). On January 14, 2019, a police officer attached to the Intelligence Response Unit (IRT) of the presidential investigation panel on SARS stated that he had supervised the confiscation of Ezenwa's properties in Enugu (Presidential

Panel on SARS, 2019). He, however, failed to produce any court documents authorising the police actions. With this information, Amnesty International wrote to the Inspector General of Police in November 2018 and requested further investigation in May 2020, indicating that the investigation was still ongoing on the case (Suit No: FHC/OW/CS/180/2018 and Amnesty International 2020).

In addendum, Sahara reporters published an extensive editorial report on July 27, 2010, detailing how SARS and other police units had made a profit of 9.35 billion naira ($60 million) from road blocks as a result of extortion from the hands of innocent civilians within 18 months (Taiwo, 2018). As if that was not enough, SARS officers in Lekki, Lagos State, allegedly kidnapped, tortured, and robbed Nigerian rapper Ikechukwu Onunaku for no reason. On September 5, 2019, according to Punch Nigeria, SARS operatives forced Onunaku to make ATM withdrawals (Lawrence, 2020).

SARS police officers were enjoying their unprofessional and unethical conduct, as one Ifeoma Abugu, a promising Nigerian, was allegedly raped and murdered by personnel of SARS while she was in SARS detention in Abuja. Again, a police officer attached to SARS in Ogun State command has allegedly caused the death of Remo Stars Football Club assistant captain Mr. Tiyamiyu Kazeem, according to the club's media officer, Mr. Oladimeji Oshode (Awe, et al, 2020).

After several years of operation, the Nigeria Police Force and her units grew from strength to strength numerically after several recruitments of personnel into the force by the Nigeria government. These strengths was again inserted unprofessional and unethically unabated by many personnel as the objectives of their recruitment were almost defeated.

Another victim of NPF was Mr. Miracle Onwe, who narrated his ordeal at the hands of SARS in Awkuzu and Neni of Anambra State in 2017. He told Amnesty International that he was arrested in February 2017, tortured, and hardly given any food during his 40 days in detention by SARS before he was charged and brought before a court. According to Mr. Miracle Onwe, at SARS Akwuzu, their leader directed them to hang me. They took me to the back of the hall and tied me up with ropes. They tied my hands behind me, tied my two legs together, and then tied the rope around my hands and my legs behind me, causing my chest to protrude. They had two already prepared iron stands where they handed out people. They passed an iron rod through the ropes and then lifted me up by the rod and hung me from the iron stand. Then they started to use all manner of items to beat me, including machetes and sticks, inflicting me with all manner of injuries. When the first officer came to check and saw that I was almost unconscious, he went to call their team leader, who then asked them to bring me down. They dumped me in the interrogation hall. The next day, I was taken from Akwuzu to a SARS detention center in Neni, where I was detained for 40 days. I managed to stay alive with the help of inmates who smuggled sachets of water into my cell at midnight since I was denied food and water by SARS police officers. During my period of detention by SARS, eight co-detainees lost their lives due to starvation (Amnesty International, 2020).

Mr. Miracle Onwe was taken to court on March 25 and charged with armed robbery but was discharged for lack of evidence. The lawyer for Miracle Onwe told Amnesty International that he wrote a letter to the Inspector General of Police in May 2017 asking for an investigation but failed to get any response from the police boss (Ibid).

On May 20, 2010, a Federal High Court in Enugu State ordered the then Inspector General of Police, Mr. Ogbonna Okechukwu Onovo, to produce a SARS officer who had shot dead a 15-year-old baby at his high school. According to the SARS officer, the teen was mistaken for a kidnapper. Happy drunk and trigger-freak police officers in different units and squads of the NPF have terminated a huge number of innocent civilian lives across Nigeria from 2005 to 2021. SARS alone has accounted for the highest extrajudicial killings in the country in this period.

A publication by the Nigerian new website pulse.ng, cited by Yahaya (2021), stated that what SARS became was a national scourge that used witch-hunt machinery against Nigerian youths with dreadlocks, piercings, cars, expensive phones, and risqué means of expression. In order to perform their unprofessional

and unethical conduct, SARS police officers mount illegal road blocks and checkpoints within the state and interstate roads, raid football viewing centers, beer parlours, and relaxation centers unauthorised, and effect unlawful arrests, claiming they are looking for armed robbers and kidnappers.

Also, many Nigerian universities host communities were massively raided on several occasions and unlawful arrests were affected by SARS officers claiming they were looking for internet fraudsters, popularly known as "Yahoo boys, in the society. Many Nigerian youths with luxuries cars and an expensive lifestyle were frequently arrested by police officers, be it SARS or not. Many of these youths were tortured, abused, and extorted financially by the NPF officers that arrested them. By these actions of NPF personnel, many families have been thrown into financial crisis, pain, agony, mourning, etc as a result of the injuries, illnesses, abuse, and deaths of their loved ones, husbands, wives, and children in different parts of the country (Ibid).

Nevertheless, Nigerian journalists were not left out, as several of them across the nation received the NPF unprofessional and unethical conduct. For instance, on January 1st, 2018, Mr. Tim Elombah, a journalist, and six members of his family were arrested by 15 armed SARS police officers at about 4. 00a.m at his residence in Nnewi, Anambra State. On August 14th, 2018, Mr. Samuel Ogundipe, Mr. Musikilu Mojeed, and Mr. Azeezat Adedigba, journalists with Premium Times were arrested by SARS police officers in Abuja. Mr. Azeezat Adedigba, Mr. Musikilu Mojeed, and the six family members of Mr. Tim Elombah were released on different days after interrogations. SARS officers accused Mr. Tim Elombah of publishing a defamatory article against the Inspector General of Police on a website, while Mr. Samuel Ogundipe was also accused of writing several articles in the past that the Inspector General of Police found embarrassing. These journalists were released by different courts. In May 2018, a High Court awarded the sum of $5 million ($13,070) against the Nigeria Police Force for infringing on the fundamental human rights of Mr. Tim Elombah and his family members, while on August 16, 2018, the Magistrate Court granted Mr. Samuel Ogundipe bail (Amnesty International, 2020).

Sardonically, Amnesty International has documented at least twelve other instances since 2016 when journalists and bloggers were either arbitrarily arrested or intimated by SARS police officers in Nigeria.

Attempt to Reform and Disbanding of SARS (An NPF Squad)

On August 14, 2018, with the continuous unprofessional and unethical conduct of NPF personnel coming more heavily from SARS than any other units or squads, the acting President of Nigeria, Professor Yemi Osinbajo, ordered the former Inspector General of Police, Mr. Ibrahim Kpotun Idris with immediate effect to overhaul and reform SARS and carry out an independent investigation after persistent human rights violations complaints and reports from the general public, international, and local non-governmental organizations. The then IGP immediately announced that SARS had been renamed the Federal Special Anti-Robbery Squad (FSARS), a new head of the unit had been appointed, and a human rights desk officer to check reports had also been created (Taiwo, 2018).

The presidential order for reform by the acting President of Nigeria did not yield any progressive results due to the continued and unabated human rights violations by NPF SARS officers in Nigeria. The 8th National Assembly was not comfortable with the conduct of the NPF with key emphases on SARS and backed the scrapping of SARS (Yahaya, 2021).

However, on January 21, 2019, the new Inspector General of Police, Mr. Mohammed Adamu, ordered the immediate decentralisation of SARS. Just as with his predecessor, the decentralisation of SARS did not yield progressive results, as SARS police officers continued their unprofessional and unethical conduct in Nigeria. Sadly, in October 2019, the extrajudicial killing of SARS got to its climax when a SARS police officer shot dead a young Nigerian youth in the Wetland Hotel, Ughelli, Delta State. Video of this sad event started trending on social media, leading to massive protests against SARS nationwide by Nigerians, mostly youths. These nationwide protests were embraced by many prominent Nigerians and celebrities across different states of Nigeria. As a result of the widespread protest, on October 11, 2019, the then

Inspector General of Police, Mr. Mohammed Adamu, announced the disbanding of SARS and said a new tactical team called Special Weapons and Tactics (SWAT) would replace SARS. This announcement provoked protestors who were concerned that SARS personnel would simply be drafted into the new SWAT team. Rather than ending the protests across Nigeria, the announcement intensified public demonstrations across several states of Nigeria (Ogunmodede, 2020).

The protest hashtags #Endswat and #Endsars went global as protestors in Nigeria and abroad called for the new unit to be scrapped, citing issues such as lack of professional training and re-integration of SARS police officers into the SWAT team, etc. The federal government of Nigeria couldn't handle the protestor's demands and decided to crack down on them. The crackdown was preceded by the declaration of curfews in nine states across Nigeria. One of these states was Lagos State, which had the strongest hold on the protestors across Nigeria. In the early hours of October 20th, 2020, the unprofessional handling of the protests by the Nigerian Police Force, the Lagos State government, and the Federal government of Nigeria saw the invitation of the Nigerian Army (NA) to Lekki during the protests, which exacerbated the issues, as the Nigerian Army acted like their Nigerian Police Force colleagues by opening sporadic gun fires, thereby injuring and terminating many lives of peaceful protestors in Lekki toll gate, the symbolic center of the Endsars protest in Nigeria.

These unprofessional and unethical conducts, as reiterated above, have resulted in extortion, torture, illness, human rights abuse, extrajudicial killings, etc for their victims, the Nigerian citizenry, as their image and reputation as a security institution have drastically reduced to nothing in Nigerian society. Many citizens no longer respect the NPF personnel; they only respect the guns police officers carry, which can terminate lives, as many NPF officers are trigger-freaks at any time and any day.

Conclusion

The foregoing discourse has critically assessed the Nigerian Police Force unprofessional and unethical conduct. Many citizens, due to the NPF unprofessional and unethical conduct, deny the force their cooperation and support in performing their police duties. The modus operandi of many personnel of the NPF is shameful, sad, unprofessional, and unethical, which has led to extrajudicial killings, illness, injuries, extortion, torture, etc. of police victims. These actions have consistently put Nigerian citizens at risk. SARS, a police tactical squad responsible for the prevention and detention of armed robbery and kidnapping, has been found lacking in professionalism and unethical conduct in Nigeria, thereby downplaying and exacerbated the integrity of the NPF.

To rejuvenate the NPF professional and ethical conduct, urgent measures by the Federal Government of Nigeria and the NPF must be put in place to restore professional and ethical policing in Nigeria on the path of citizens trust, confidence, love, support, respectability, and lawfulness. The NPF personnel should constantly bear in mind that without citizens, they do not exist, and as such, their professional and ethical conduct should not be compromised.

Recommendations

The following are recommendations to nip in the bud the unprofessional and unethical conduct of Nigerian police personnel. They are:

1. All unprofessional and unethical police officers (SARS inclusive) must be made accountable for their actions as this will serve as deterrent to others towing the same path.
2. Train and retraining of police personnel on professional and ethical conducts
3. Improve welfare and working conditions of police personnel
4. Reform the NPF to international standards
5. Enforce anti-torture act in Nigeria
6. Flushing of unpatriotic and unprofessional police officers from the force

7. Eradication of God-fatherism in NPF
8. It sounds funny, but it is the truth: the black uniform of the NPF symbolised death, sorrow, and mourning; it should be replaced with another colour that carries good meaning
9. Abrogation of SARS, other squads and units that portray the NPF in bad image
10. NPF officers should undergo medical check-up biannually to ascertain their health and mental stability.

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