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## From Peaceful Protest to Bloodbath: An Interrogation of the Link between the #EndSARS Protest and Policing Strategies in Nigeria

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### Abstract

The #EndSARS protest by the Nigerian youths was against police brutality. It started peacefully but ended in violence and bloodbath. This study investigates the link between the #EndSARS protest and policing strategies in Nigeria. Structured questionnaires were used to collect primary data from 194 randomly selected respondents from a population of Police officers. Secondary data was sourced from library materials such as textbooks, journals, newspapers and websites. SPSS was used to analyse the primary data collected for the study. Findings from the study revealed that there is a significant relationship between the #EndSARS protest and policing strategies in Nigeria. The study therefore suggests people friendly policing strategies that would promote effective civil-police relationship and collaboration in the country.

**Keywords:** #EndSARS, Protest, Policing, Nigeria, #SDG10, #SDG16.

### Introduction

Nigeria is faced with many economic challenges, including the problem of youth unemployment. As a part of the Nigerian society, the Nigerian Police Force (NPF) also faces these challenges that often push officers to engage in indecorous behaviours (Igba, 2023). Over the years, the challenges confronting the NPF have left the masses at the receiving end. Weak policing strategy appears to have left many Nigerians vulnerable amidst security threats in the country and violent policing approach remains unabated, and poses danger to lives and property.

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No doubt, the security of lives and property is the bedrock of socio-economic and political stability of any nation. National governments are saddled with the responsibility of internal security through established agencies empowered by law. This duty is distilled into standard policing to enforce law and order. The standard of policing in a nation has a bearing on its level of development. Although the United Nations refers to Nigeria as having surpassed the threshold of one police officer to every 450 citizens, insecurity continues to be a major crisis (Igba, 2023). The Nigeria police have not been able to live up to expectation in providing adequate security to the nation. Several factors are responsible for police inefficiency and ineffectiveness, which include corruption, poor funding by government and lack of public confidence.

According to the 2017 National Corruption Survey, 46.4% of Nigerian citizens have had ‘bribery contact’ with police officers (Khalid, Abubakar, Ibrahim & Baba, 2020, p. 320). The survey also identified the police amongst top public officers to have the highest number of bribes paid. Based on the survey, 29.7% of all bribes are paid to police officers upon a direct request before providing service (Khalid et al., 2020). The prevailing culture of bribe collection by the Nigerian police has eroded public confidence and trust. The action of the police may have also been triggered by frustration following poor remuneration and conditions of service. Unfortunately, the youths are often at the receiving end of police frustration. Just like the police, Nigerian and African youths are confronted with economic predicaments such as high rate of unemployment. United Nations (2018) reports that nearly 16 million young Africans between the ages of 15 and 24 are unemployed, which amounts to 13.4% of the youth population. As a result, ‘many young people are expressing their dissatisfaction and advocating for socio-political liberation through various means’, including youth movements and protests (Fabiya, 2023, p. 2). From the Arab Spring and anti-dictatorship demonstrations in Tunisia, Egypt, Burkina Faso, Senegal, and Sudan (Earl et al., 2017) to #EndSARS protest in Nigeria, youth movements have expressed themselves as a powerful tool for shaping narratives.

According to Fabiyi (2023, p. 2-3), ‘numerous young people have demonstrated against dictatorships, the extension of presidential term limits, elections without transparency, and unpopular socio-economic policies in various African nations’ as well as against police brutality in Nigeria, as seen in the #EndSARS protest. According to Laketu (2023), the #EndSARS protest sought to denounce police brutality in Nigeria. The protest was not without impact, as it led to increase in youth participation in Nigeria’s politics and governance and a renewed believe in their abilities to influence government decision-making through civil disobedience (Igba, 2023; Frimpong and Commodore, 2021). The wave of the protest, which commenced peacefully but ended in violent bloodbath following brutal attack by the security agents, left tears and blood on its path; and called attention to policing strategy and approach deployed against the

protesters. It is against this backdrop that this study interrogates the nexus between the #EndSARS protest and policing strategies in Nigeria.

### **The Evolution of the Nigerian Police and Public Perception**

The evolution of the police in Nigeria is traced to almost a century ago from the Hausa Constabulary of thirty ex-slaves from Sierra Leone (Alemika, 2010). The major function of the constabulary then was enforcing colonial laws and extracting resources. They mainly protected the colonial interest in the Lagos colony and were not to serve the Nigerian people (Edet, 2017). The traditional values, integrity and customs of the local Nigerian people were strange to the police then, as they were mainly Hausa-speaking slaves brought from Sierra Leone with foreigners who were neither inhabitants of the Lagos colony (Oluwaniyi, 2011). Thus, the policing foundation in Nigeria was one that could not be relied upon to safeguard the interests of the Nigerian people (Alemika, 2010). The challenge with the colonial policing was the displacement of the cultural values of the people in satisfying the political and socio-economic interests of the colonialists. The strategies then principally included raids, armed patrols, arrest, and detention without trial of those opposed to the colonial establishments (Otu, 2012). As the people had no control over these arbitrary and ruthless strategies, they were careful to avoid any contact with the police or the colonialists (Micah, 2017).

With the attainment of political independence in 1960, Nigerians anticipated a national police force that would provide just, universal, and effective protection for the citizens (Onyeozili, 2005; Hills, 2008). Unfortunately, after many years of independence, the Nigerian successive administrations have not been able to provide credible policing to the citizens. They have simply chosen narrow sectional interests and regime stability over police reforms. The post independent Nigerian State, or even broadly the African post-independence states serve as weapons of police brutality, intimidation, murder, crime against humanity, repression and excessive abuse rather than agents for the protection of citizens and the facilitation of development (Ihonvbere, 2001). Many across Africa, especially Nigerians, hold this perception of the police. According to Nwabuoku, Esavwede, and Mrabure (2023, p. 640) ‘the Nigerian state enforces rules and orders that benefit the ruling elites rather than the people, using coercive authorities such as the military and police force’. In the argument of Abati (2020), the prevalence of police brutality in Africa is a result of political leadership failure rather than colonial legacy.

Many Nigerians do not see the police as a friendly or service-oriented organization that works on their behalf. This is because of the constant harassment, brutalizing of trade unionists and other citizens, and the torture of persons accused of

criminal offenses (Ajayi, 2014; Bello and Anigbogu, 2018). As a result, many Nigerians do not want to have anything to do with the police (Ajayi and Ojo, 2014; Bello and Anigbogu, 2018), thereby creating a communication and relationship gap between the police and the public. Ajayi and Ojo (2014) stressed further that this mutual distrust, rather than disappear, continues to grow wider. Therefore, the public continues to perceive the police as unfriendly, untrustworthy, corrupt, and brutal, and these have created grave problems for police-public relations in crime prevention.

Baker (2010) noted that when the reformation of the police was being discussed and deliberated upon, it was mostly to be on its importance to the government in relation to increasing its international human right rating and winning media and political criticism. Successive governmental administrations in Nigeria are guilty of continuous neglect of the police institution (Smith, 2007; Akinlabi, 2017). People have become cynical about the morality of the law and the police enforcing it (Bradford, 2012). When there is cynicism towards the law or people do not believe in the capacity of the existing policing system to address their problems, they tend to seek alternative measures to resolve their crises (Baker, 2010; Tankebe, 2009). As a result, many Nigerians have continued to clamour for community policing.

### **Studies on Police Corruption**

There are a number of studies conducted to investigate how the public perceive the law enforcement agency (Abubakar, Othman & Mustafa, 2017). The Human Right Watch (2010) concluded in their findings that some Nigerians see the police as indigent, despicable, and devilish based on testimonies of some citizens. For instance, a trader in Lagos lamented that when you have a problem, you would expect the police to help. Unfortunately, the police would look the other way. A similar study was carried out in Pretoria Central, South Africa, by Vilakazi (2015), who found that corruption in the police force results in inadequate service delivery and lessened people's morale towards the police. Unabated corruption in the police therefore degrades social conscience, worsens police performance, increases crime, and keeps anti-corruption policies ineffective. In the same vein, the mixed method study by Bello and Anigbogu (2018) evaluated the perceived institutionalization of corruption in the Nigeria Police, focusing on Anambra State Police Command. Respondents revealed that corruption had been a dominant culture in the police system, which resulted in the public loss of confidence and trust in the agency. It was also disclosed that the established anti-corruption schemes to curb police malpractices are not effective in checking corruption.

The above findings corroborate the empirical study by Nte (2011), which revealed that the network of corruption in the larger society influences police

corruption in many societies, including Nigeria. Another qualitative research by Ahmadu (2015) on police corruption and the state showed that the police represents the most corrupt and dishonest institution in Nigeria. The study further established that police corruption has shattered police efficiency in maintaining law and order. More so, Onyango (2018) carried out a qualitative study in Kenya to examine the transactional relationships of corruption between motorists and police at checkpoints. The police checking-points promoted bribery transactions between motorists and the police in a mutual sense. Findings further exposed that motorists offer to pay bribes to bypass traffic regulations or establish a cordial relationship with corrupt police officers, while the members of the police are fixated on exploiting the opportunity to accrue illegitimate revenues. The study concluded that police criminal behaviour is a systemic and organizational problem and dereliction of collective values.

Similar to the above finding, the qualitative review by Aborisade and Fayemi (2015) on the nature and control of police corruption also revealed that police corruption is encouraged by social structures and attitudes ingrained in the natural ways of life of the people. The study further established that checking police corruption is difficult because corruption ominously obstructs the rule of law. In the study conducted by Oluwaniyi (2011) on the police and the institution of corruption in Lagos State, Nigeria, corrupt police practices are not unrepeatable occurrences. Instead, they are a network of organizational and accentuating issues evaluated better in the cultural, social, economic, and political backgrounds.

### **The Special Anti-Robbery Squad (SARS)**

SARS was one of the 14 units that make up the Force Criminal Investigation and Intelligence Department (FCIID), and its leader was a Deputy Inspector-General of Police. Its functions were to arrest, investigate, and prosecute suspected armed robbers, killers, kidnappers, hired killers/assassins, and other violent offenders, among others (Dami, 2021). Simeon Danladi Midenda, a former commissioner of police, established the unit in 1992 in response to the rising tide of criminal activities in Lagos State (Usman, 2020).

Nigeria has been experiencing a significant increase in violence targeting civilians by some police officers. The failure of the Nigerian government to bring perpetrators to justice - despite promises of police reform - continued to embolden the defunct SARS officials and other security personnel to operate with impunity until after the shooting of an unarmed man on October 3, 2020. Although, police sources denied the incident despite video evidence to the contrary, and reported instead that the victim was arrested, and sustained injuries that led to his death when he jumped out of a police patrol car (Concise, 5 October 2020).

## **#EndSARS: The Movement against Police Brutality in Nigeria**

The #EndSARS movement started as a public outcry for the disbandment of Nigeria's Special Anti-Robbery Squad (SARS). The now disbanded unit of the Nigerian Police earned popularity for its brutality and human rights violations (Adepegba, 2020). The term was first used in 2018 to call attention to police brutality in Nigeria. The government announced structural changes to SARS, but the alleged human rights violations and exploitation continued. In October 2020, reports of an unprovoked shooting of a boy in the streets of Warri, Delta State by SARS operatives were shared on social media. Although the Nigerian Police denied the shooting in this particular case, it was not enough to end public anger, as more videos of police brutality began to emerge across social media platforms.

Youths and celebrities rallied for support on Twitter, Instagram, and Facebook and, in a matter of days, protesters lined the streets of Lagos and Abuja and other parts of Nigeria demanding an end to SARS (Uwazuruike, 2023; Tribune October 5, 2020). Pressured by the publicity that the protests had generated, the Nigerian government swiftly announced the disbandment of SARS. This move, however, was not enough to appease the protesters in light of similar pronouncements made in the past by the government. Among the key causes of the #EndSARS protest were unlawful killings, assaults, bad governance and police brutality as well as human rights violations.

The #EndSARS demonstration started in southern Nigerian states before spreading to other parts of the country. Some northern politicians and supporters of the government at the time framed the movement as a southern agenda to topple the northern political administration of President Buhari (Vanguard, 23 October 2020). However, such rhetoric discredited the legitimate grievances of the #EndSARS supporters. Many believed that framing the movement along northern-southern divide could limit the opportunities for the Nigerian government to end the impunity against the masses by some police officers, and to take steps to rebuilding confidence and trust. Because the philosophy behind the #EndSARS movement transcended traditional geopolitical barriers, demonstration events later held in Kano and some other parts of northern Nigeria.

Young Nigerians in all the six geopolitical zones became united around a common goal to end police intimidation, oppression and brutality. Demonstrations were held in at least 25 of the country's states with events recorded in Lagos, Abuja, Rivers, Enugu, Kano, and Plateau, among others. Women's groups, such as feminist coalition formed in July 2020 with a mission to advocate for women's equality, offered their platform to fundraise and disburse funds towards social services such as food, shelter, healthcare, physical security and legal aid to sustain the #EndSARS

demonstrations across the country (Nwankwor & Nkereuwem, 2020). With about half of the registered voters in Nigeria aged between 18-35, the movement highlighted the need for more young people to exercise their civil and political rights, to speak out against injustices and to demand change from state leaders elected to serve the needs of the populace (Akwagyiram, 2019; Oyero, 2020).

The divide between Nigeria's youth population and the government became widened as a result of government's response to the public outcry over police brutality and the use of excessive force against protesters. The #EndSARS protest affected people in many ways, including the killing of protesters, destruction of private and public properties, disruption of movement, looting and vandalism of shops. The negative impact of the #EndSARS manifested seriously on economic and business activities in the country, especially in most parts of Lagos - the commercial capital of Nigeria. This was because businesses were still battling the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic when the #EndSARS protest occurred. The protest was damaging to the economic sector, as many small-scale business owners and large organisations lost resources due to looting and vandalism of business premises and shops. These resources went into the hands of miscreants who hijacked the #EndSARS protest (Adepegba, 2020).

### Research Methodology

Quantitative survey research method was employed for this study. Hardy and Bryman (2004) notes that survey research design is good for observing the social and behavioural characteristics, attitudes, values, and beliefs of a large population, relying only on a few people or items considered to be representative of the entire group. Survey research design is advantageous in this kind of study because it allowed the researcher to select a representative sample to be studied. The primary data for the study were generated using questionnaires. Questions were structured and both close and open ended. The instrument was developed and modified to the need of this study with reference to the research questions. The sample was drawn from the Nigerian Police force. The participants were only police personnel with more than two years of experience in policing strategies and were 25 years old and above. They were both male and female officers. The random sampling technique was employed in the study. While 194 questionnaires were administered, 105 were returned. In order to get a representative sample for the study, the researcher adopted the Cochran's sampling criteria to determine the sample size.

$$n_0 = \frac{Z^2 pq}{e^2}$$

Where:

- e is the desired level of precision (i.e. the margin of error),
- p is the (estimated) proportion of the population, which has the attribute in question,
- q is 1 - p.

The z-value is found in a Z table.

However, using Cochran's sampling formula; the researcher assumes that at least half of the population of study was targeted. This gives us maximum variability. So,  $p = 0.5$ . Thus, using 95% confidence or risk level, and at least 5 percent - plus or minus - precision or sampling error, a 95 % confidence level gives us Z values of 1.96, from the normal tables, so we get

$$((1.96)^2 (0.5) (0.5)) / (0.05)^2 = 385.$$

To get the sample size from our population,

$$n = \frac{n_0}{1 + \frac{(n_0 - 1)}{N}}$$

Here  $n_0$  is Cochran's sample size recommendation, N is the population size, and n is the new, adjusted sample size. Since the study's target population is 393, we would calculate

$$385 / (1 + (384 / 393)) = 194.$$

Therefore, a representative sample of 194 police officers at the study area constituted the study's participants.

The questionnaire developed was titled 'Influence of the #EndSARS Violent Protest on Policing Strategies Questionnaire (IESVPPSQ)'. The questionnaire was divided into four sections. Section A described the socio-demographic characteristics of the study participants. Section B investigated policies that were in place in curbing corruption and brutality in the Police force and maintaining good policing strategies. Section C ascertained the implications the #EndSARS protest could pose to national peace and security, while Section D examined how the Nigerian public or society viewed or perceived the Police force. Questionnaire items were rated on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 'strongly disagree' to 'strongly agree' on a response scale of one (1) to five (5), a dichotomous yes and no scale, and some needed the Police officers to think deeply before putting down their opinions. Participants were given copies of the questionnaires and assured of the confidentiality of their responses. After administering the questionnaires, those returned were collated and processed.



The data collected for the study using questionnaires were analysed through frequency distribution using percentages. Tables were constructed to identify and analyse the views of police officers on the influence of the #EndSARS protest on policing strategies, as reported by the study participants. Statistical testing was carried out in connection with the research hypothesis. Reliability was also an important consideration in this study. Reliability is a measure of degree to which a researcher's instruments yield consistent results after repeated trials. This is influenced by random errors (Cooper and Schindler, 2020). Random errors may arise from unclear instruction to the respondents during piloting. This may be addressed by giving clear instructions to the respondents and asking for clarification on any question. The researcher also gave attention to validity in the study. Validity is the extent to which results can be accurately interpreted and generalised to another population. It is the extent to which the researcher's instruments measure what they are intended to measure (Saunders et al., 2009). The instrument was validated through pilot study and a senior researcher (in the field of peace and conflict studies) supervised the study. This helped to check the clarity of the questionnaire items, thereby eliminating any ambiguous wording or misunderstood clauses. This instrument helped to modify the questionnaires before the actual data collection.

### Data Analysis

For this study, 194 copies of questionnaire were administered, while 105 copies were retrieved.

#### *Percentage Distribution of the Respondents' Socio-Demographic Characteristic*

This section deals with the percentage distribution of the socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents. This is shown in the table below.

**Table 1:** *Respondents' Demographic Characteristics*

Variables	Respondents	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Age	20-29 years	37	35.2
	30-39years	48	45.7
	40 years and above	20	19.0
Gender	Male	68	64.8
	Female	37	35.2
Religion	Christianity	68	64.8
	Islam	32	30.5
	Traditional	5	4.8
Marital Status	Single	28	26.7
	Married	71	67.6
	Divorced/Separated	6	5.7
Ethnicity	Yoruba	83	79.0

	Igbo	13	12.4
	Hausa	9	8.6
Years in Police Service	0-10 years	55	52.4
	11-20 years	35	33.3
	21 years and above	15	14.3

**Source:** Field Survey (2022)

The above table shows that majority of the respondents were male (64.8%), while females represented 35.2% of the respondents. The majority were within the age bracket of 30-39 years accounting for 45.7% of research participants. 35.2% of the respondents were in the age bracket of 20-29 years, while 19% were 40 years and above. Most of the research participants were Christians accounting for 64.8%, while Muslims were 30.5% and traditional worshippers were 4.8%. In terms of marital status, 67.6% were married, 26.7% were single, and 5.7% were either divorced or separated. 79% of the respondents belonged to the Yoruba tribe, 12.4% were from the Igbo tribe, and 8.6% were from the Hausa tribe. Most of the respondents reported they have spent between 0 and 10 years in the police, accounting for 52.4%. 33.3% had 11-20 years' experience in the police service and 14.3% had 21 years of experience and above.

### *Presentation of Research Questions*

Four (4) research questions were formulated for this study. They include:

- i. What were the causes of the #EndSARS protest?
- ii. What is the impact of the #EndSARS protest on policing strategies?
- iii. What future implications does the #EndSARS protest pose to national peace and security?
- iv. How does the Nigerian public view the Police force?

Therefore, the main research hypothesis for the study is:

H<sub>0</sub>: There is no significant relationship between the #EndSARS protest and policing strategies in Nigeria

The table below addresses the research questions on the causes and implications of the #EndSARS protest.

**Table 2:** *The #EndSARS Protest, Causes, and Implications*

S/N	Statements	Yes	No
1	SARS as a squad in police organisation adopted illegitimate strategy and this led to public complaints against the squad	66 (62.9%)	39 (37.1%)
2	Many of the allegations against the members of SARS were true	26 (24.8%)	79 (75.2%)
3	The protest caused a lot of chaos in society and caused great security challenges during and shortly after the period of the protest	85 (81.0%)	20 (19.0%)
4	#EndSARS protest was one the greatest violent protests Nigeria has ever experienced	85 (81.0%)	20 (19.0%)
5	There were warnings from the police force against the protest	93 (88.6%)	12 (11.4%)
6	The #EndSARS protesters gave notice to the police force before the commencement of the protest	47 (44.8%)	58 (55.2%)
7	The action of the then SARS officers in providing false evidence instigated the #EndSARS protest	17 (16.2%)	88 (83.8%)
8	The failure to investigate, arrest, or prosecute people because they were related to police officers caused the #EndSARS protest	51 (48.6%)	54 (51.4%)
9	Police brutality was one of the causes of the #EndSARS protest	26 (24.8%)	79 (75.2%)
10	SARS officials accepting bribe to overlook unlawful behaviour and challenging citizens influenced the #EndSARS protest.	27 (25.7%)	78 (74.3%)
11	SARS' subjection of the Nigerian youths to harsh treatment led to the #EndSARS protest	22 (21.0%)	83 (79.0%)
12	Police unlawful demands for bribes from Nigerian citizens caused the #EndSARS protest.	36 (34.3%)	69 (65.7%)
13	Default in policing strategies led to the #EndSARS protest.	31 (29.5%)	74 (70.5%)
14	Lack of reformation in the Nigerian police ethical conduct of work led to the #EndSARS protest.	47 (44.8%)	58 (55.2%)
15	The non-disbandment of the SARS unit of the police caused the #EndSARS protest.	53 (50.5%)	52 (49.5%)
16	Frequent killings of the youths by the police led to the #EndSARS protest.	20 (19.0%)	85 (81.0%)

**Source:** Field Survey (2022)

The above table shows the opinions of the Nigerian police on the causes and implications of the #EndSARS protest. Majority of the respondents (88.6%) agreed and indicated that there were warnings from the Police force against the commencement of the protest. 85(81.0%) of the respondents revealed that the protest caused a lot of chaos in society and led to great security challenges during and shortly after the period of the protest. 81.0% of the respondents indicated that the #EndSARS protest was one of the greatest violent protests Nigeria has ever experienced. 62.9% of respondents approved that SARS as a squad in police organisation adopted illegitimate strategy and this caused public complaints against the squad. However, 83.8% of respondents disapproved that the action of the then SARS officers in providing false

evidence instigated the #EndSARS protest. 81.0% of the respondents disagreed that the frequent killings of the youths by the Police led to the #EndSARS protest. 79.0% of the respondents disagreed that the SARS subsection of the Nigerian youths to harsh treatment led to the #EndSARS protest. 75.2% of the respondents disapproved that Police brutality was one of the causes of the #EndSARS protest.

The table below addresses the research question on the impact of the #EndSARS protest on policing strategies in Nigeria.

**Table 3:** *Impact of the #EndSARS protest on policing strategies*

S/N	Statements	SA	A	U	D	SD
17	The #EndSARS protest has no implications for policing strategies	25 (23.8%)	21 (20.0%)	13 (12.4%)	15 (14.3%)	31 (29.5%)
18	The #EndSARS protest has no relationship with policing strategies	14 (13.3%)	18 (17.1%)	19 (18.1%)	33 (31.4%)	21 (20.0%)
19	Policing policy has no relationship with police brutality	17 (16.2%)	18 (17.1%)	23 (21.9%)	27 (25.7%)	20 (19.0%)
20	Policing policy has effect on police brutality	3 (2.9%)	20 (19.0%)	14 (13.3%)	29 (27.6%)	39 (37.1%)
21	Police refusal to investigate, arrest, or prosecute people because they knew influential people in the country promoted the #EndSARS protest	14 (13.3%)	21 (20.0%)	17 (16.2%)	20 (19.0%)	33 (31.4%)
22	Have there been changes in policing strategy or approach after the end of the #EndSARS protest	40 (38.1%)	26 (24.8%)	31 (29.5%)	4 (3.8%)	4 (3.8%)
23	The SARS squad of the police force has been totally proscribed by the Police Organization	4 (3.8%)	12 (11.4%)	11 (10.5%)	27 (25.2%)	51 (48.6%)

**Source:** Field Survey, 2022

The above table shows the opinions of the Nigerian Police on the impact of the #EndSARS protest on policing strategies. 23.8% of the respondents strongly agreed that the #EndSARS protest has no implications for policing strategies in Nigeria. 20.0% of the respondents agreed, 12.4% were undecided, 14.3% disagreed, and 29.5% strongly disagreed. 13.3% of the respondents strongly agreed that the #EndSARS protest has no relationship with policing strategies. 17.1% agreed, 18.1% were undecided, 31.4% disagreed, and 20.0% strongly disagreed. 16.2% of the respondents strongly agreed that policing policy has no relationship with Police brutality. 17.1% agreed, 21.9% were undecided, 25.7% disagreed, and 19.0% strongly disagreed. 2.9% strongly agreed that policing policy has effect on police brutality. 19.0% agreed, 13.3% were undecided, 27.6% disagreed, and 37.1% strongly disagreed. 13.3% strongly agreed that Police refusal to investigate, arrest, or prosecute people because they knew influential people in the country promoted the #EndSARS protest. 20.0% agreed,

16.2% were undecided, 19.0% disagreed, and 31.4% strongly disagreed. 38.1% of the respondents strongly agreed that there have been changes in policing strategy or approach after the end of the #EndSARS protest. 24.8% agreed, 29.5% were undecided, 3.8% disagreed, and 3.8% strongly disagreed. 3.8% of the respondents strongly agreed that the SARS squad of the Police force has been totally proscribed by the Police organisation. 11.4% agreed, 10.5% were undecided, 25.7% disagreed, and 48.6% strongly disagreed.

The table below addresses the research question on the future implications that the #EndSARS protest pose to national peace and security.

**Table 4:** *Future Implications of the #EndSARS Protest on National Peace and Security*

S/N	Statements	SA	A	U	D	SD
24	Events like the #EndSARS protest if not addressed could promote the development of terrorist organisations	29 (27.6%)	33 (31.4%)	21 (20.0%)	10 (9.5%)	12 (11.4%)
25	The #EndSARS protest will re-occur and lead to an escalation of conflicts between Nigerian citizens and the Police force	18 (17.1%)	14 (13.3%)	17 (16.2%)	25 (23.8%)	31 (29.5%)
26	Police officers and their families would become victims of massacre if frustration borne out of the #EndSARS protest continues	38 (36.2%)	22 (21.0%)	20 (19.0%)	15 (14.3%)	10 (9.5%)
27	Police officers would be seen as a threat to citizen’s daily routines	39 (37.1%)	26 (24.8%)	14 (13.3%)	15 (14.3%)	11 (10.5%)
28	Aggressive and revolutionary measures could disrupt the governing powers of the country.	43 (41.0%)	27 (25.7%)	13 (12.4%)	15 (14.3%)	7 (6.7%)

**Source:** Field Survey (2022)

The above table shows the opinions of the Nigerian Police on future implications of the #EndSARS protest on national peace and security. 27.6% of the respondents strongly agreed that actions of the #EndSARS protest, if not addressed, will promote the development of terrorist organisations. 31.4% agreed, 20.0% were undecided, 9.5% disagreed, and 11.4% strongly disagreed. 17.1% of the respondents strongly agreed that #EndSARS protest will re-occur and lead to an escalation of conflicts between Nigerian citizens and the Police force. 13.3% agreed, 16.2% were undecided, 23.8% disagreed, and 29.5% strongly disagreed. 36.2% of the respondents strongly agreed that Police officers and their families would become victims of massacre if frustration borne out of the #EndSARS protest continues. 21.0% agreed, 19.0% were undecided, 14.3% disagreed, and 9.5% strongly disagreed. 37.1% of the respondents strongly agreed that Police officers would be seen as a threat to citizen’s daily routines. 24.8% agreed, 13.3% were undecided, 14.3% disagreed, and 10.5% strongly disagreed. 41.0% of the respondents strongly agreed that aggressive and

revolutionary measures could disrupt the governing powers of the country. 25.7% agreed, 12.4% were undecided, 14.3% disagreed, and 6.7% strongly disagreed.

The table below addresses the research question on how the Nigerian public view the Police force.

**Table 5:** Nigerian Public View of the Police Force

S/N	Statements	Yes	No
29	The Nigerian Police always declare false and unreal information and evidence to law courts	43 (41.0%)	62 (59.0%)
30	The Nigerian Police are known to sabotage the process of investigation in arresting criminals	49 (46.7%)	56 (53.3%)
31	The Nigerian Police often forcefully and illegally arrest citizens without trials	59 (56.2%)	46 (43.8%)
32	The Nigerian Police are bribed not to prosecute unlawful and criminal behaviour	56 (53.3%)	49 (46.7%)
33	The Nigerian Police often resort to brutalizing innocent citizens in order to obtain bribe	65 (61.9%)	40 (38.1%)

**Source:** Field Survey (2022)

The above table shows the opinions of the Nigerian police on how the Nigerian public views them. 61.9% of the respondents agreed and indicated that the Nigerian Police often resort to brutalizing innocent citizens in order to obtain bribe. 56.2% of the respondents revealed that the Nigerian Police often forcefully and illegally arrest citizens without trials. 53.3% of respondents indicated that the Nigerian Police often receive bribe not to prosecute unlawful and criminal behaviour. 59.0% respondents disagree that the Nigerian Police always declare false and unreal information and evidence to law courts. 53.3% of the respondents disagreed that the Nigerian Police are known to sabotage the process of investigation.

### *Test of Hypothesis*

The study shows that there is a significant positive relationship between the #EndSARS protest and Policing strategies.

**Table 6:** Pearson Correlation between the #EndSARS Protest and Policing Strategies

	Policing Strategies
#EndSARS protest	
Pearson correlation	.245**
p-value	.006

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Source: *Field Survey, 2022*

The result in the above table reveals a significant outcome ( $r = .245$ ,  $P < 0.05$ ). This implies that there is a significant positive relationship between the #EndSARS protest and policing strategies/tactics at the 0.05 level.

### **Conclusion and Recommendations**

According to the study, the #EndSARS protest was initially a peaceful demonstration in response to police brutality. Before the protest, there were calls for the disbandment of SARS. Despite the numerous announcements by the relevant authorities, the disbandment was never carried out until the protest. In addition to achieving its original objective of getting SARS disbanded, the #EndSARS protest also had significant non-institutional effects. These effects included raising public awareness on the issue of police brutality in Nigeria and fostering a desire for good governance and accountability. The #EndSARS protest has a lasting impact not only on Nigerians and the country's economy, but also on the global community in terms of issues related to police brutality in Nigeria.

If policing strategies must be improved to prevent the re-occurrence of a similar protest in the future, the government must take some actions. The most imperative as revealed by this study include:

- a. the creation of a more conducive environment for officers to operate from;
- b. the introduction of better conditions of service and improved salary package to Police personnel to prevent all forms of indecorous behaviour;
- c. building effective measures that will checkmate erring personnel and bring them to justice;
- d. increased funding of the Nigerian Police force;
- e. regular training and reorientation programmes for police officers so they can be in tune with modern and advanced policing strategies, ethics and codes of conduct; and
- f. the introduction of people friendly policing strategies that would promote effective civil-police relationship and collaboration in the country.

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