

## HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS BY THE POLICE: THE NIGERIAN EXPERIENCE IN DEMOCRACY (2000-2006)

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### ABSTRACT

This study critically examines the experiences of Nigerians in the hands of the Nigerian police in its current democratic dispensation with regards to the violations of human rights, using the methods of triangulation in the collection and analysis of data. Findings of the study provide ample evidence of gross violations of the human rights of her citizen as perpetuated by the police. The government's lack of commitment to pursuing democratic ideals of human rights is identified to be a major setback of those fighting injustice in the nation. The study also found that majority of the victims of human rights violations by the police are innocent of the offences they were accused of committing. The study recommends viable ways of significantly reducing the on-going incidences of human rights violations in Nigeria so as to restore the confidence of the citizens in the police force.

KEY WORDS: Democracy, Human rights, Police, Nigeria, Democracy

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## INTRODUCTIONS

Human rights are rights which people have simply as human beings irrespective of their nationalities, religion, citizenship, marital status, occupation, income or any other social or cultural activities (Ehinder, 1998). In other words, human rights are of universal application and implications. Clinton (1997) contends that human rights are the cornerstone of a viable and visible democracy, giving hope to all in society: the strong and the weak, rich and poor, great and small.

If democratic practise in Nigeria must meet up with western democratic standards, then it must address the current problem of gross violations of human rights. Though the desire of the Nigerian people for democratic rule was achieved in 1999, it is yet to overcome the institutionalized violation of human rights by security agencies, especially the Nigerian police force. Thus, this study is aimed at drawing the attentions of the Nigerian government and supporters/sponsors of democratic rule in Nigeria to redirect their effort to ensure that the democratic expectation of qualitative justice hinged on the democratic values of fundamental human rights that emphasizes the dignity of the human person, rights to personal liberty, right to due process and fair hearing, right to life and the right to freedom of movement, which the Nigerian people are largely deprived of.

## STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

The violation of human rights is not a strange experience in Nigeria. This sad situation has been attributed to decades of military rule in the country (Ahmadu, 2001), which had attracted sanctions and all sorts of condemnation from the international community. Sadly, however, the end of military rule, and the consequent enthronement of democratic rule has failed to eliminate,

or at least, reduce the cases of violations of human rights in Nigeria. The majority of cases of violations of peoples' rights being carried out by the Nigerian police force. Provable incidences of extrajudicial killings, brutality of innocent citizens, use of force to elicit confessional statements from suspects, blatant corruption, et cetera continue to be characteristic of the Nigerian police in our promising democracy. Thus, the lack of trust and confidence in the police by the Nigerian citizens continues to exist irrespective of the hypocritical posters and television advertisements by the police authorities to create a positive image for the Nigerian Police, as the force has become more of an instrument of oppressions and coercion against innocent citizens, and a willing tool in the hands of the rich and powerful in society to intimidate and victimize the common man

This study documents the incidences of human rights violations in Nigeria as well as cases in two communities (Ikeje and Ayingba) in Kogi State using primary and secondary data.

### RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The following questions are to be addressed by the study:

- i. What is the extent and nature of human rights violations in Nigeria?
- ii. Why has democratic rule failed to address the problem of human rights violations in Nigeria?
- iii. What effects do human rights violations have on the victims, the democratic process and the Nigerian police?
- iv. How do citizens react to the violations of their human rights in Nigeria?

## **OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

- i. To ascertain the extent of human rights violations by the Nigerian police on civilians
- ii. To show that there is no difference between military and democratic regimes in Nigeria in terms of human rights violations
- iii. To recommend a more democratic, humane and constitutionally acceptable approach to dealing with crime suspects so as to build trust and confidence between the police and the Nigerian people

## **SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

This study is very important to the extent that respect for human right is important in democratic governance. It exposes the inability of the Nigerian government to halt the violations of the rights of its citizens by the Nigerian police, and the danger that the practice portends for its nascent democracy.

## **POLICE AND POLICING IN NIGERIA**

During the colonialism, the colonial masters established local, decentralized police forces; this led to the creation of the police in Lagos in 1861. Subsequently formed constabularies also policed the northern and southern protectorates. The basic function of the police during the colonial period was to aggressively suppress and repress and activity was antithetical to the goals or success of the colonialism or colonial masters. Police activities at this time helped to extend and strengthen colonial domination in Nigeria.

The use of violence marked a dislocation between the police and the local community, which has characterised the law enforcement practices (by the police) in Nigeria. Today, police see the use

of lethal force and brutality as hall mark of their profession. Hence the police in Nigeria have betrayed their responsibility to protect the public, and now branded for brutality, corruption and exploitation, to say the least.

## **STRUCTURE AND ORGANISATION OF THE CURRENT NIGERIAN POLICE FORCE**

The Northern police force and its southern counterpart merged into the first national police force in 1930.

Then Nigeria police are a centralized and federally administered institution, and commanded by an Inspector-General of police. The inspector –General of police is appointed by and accountable to the president of Nigeria. He also takes directive from the minister of police affairs representing the president in that regard.

Section 215 (3) of the constitution states that:

*The president or such other minister of the government as he may authorize in that behalf may give to the inspector general of police such lawful directions with respect to the maintenance and security of public safety and public order as he may consider necessary and the inspector general of police shall comply with those direction or cause them to be complied with.*

Each state in Nigeria and the Federal Capital Territory has a command headed by the commissioner of police, while three or four state commands constitute a zone under an Assistant inspector- General of police. State commands have smaller area commands called divisional police station headed by the Divisional police officer (DPO) and finally local police post.

The functions or duties of the police as enacted in section 4 of the police ACT (Ehindero, 1998) are:

1. The prevention and detection of crime
2. The protection of life and property.
3. The apprehension of offenders.
4. The preservation of law and order.
5. The due enforcement of laws and regulations with which they are directly charged and
6. The performance of such military duties within and without Nigeria as may be regarded of them by or under the authority of any act.

### **HISTORICAL BASIS OF HUMAN RIGHTS**

Social theorist, as well as philosophers, have sought to establish a free and fair society where the aspiration of man ( spiritual, intellectual, social, economic, etc.) could be achieved without artificial hindrances to them, Hence rights had existed under the auspices of synonyms of “natural right, inalienable rights, inviolable rights, absolute right, and fundamental human rights (Ehindero, 1998)

Among such notable social thinkers and philosophers were Thomas Hobbes, John Locke, and Jean Jacques Rousseau.

Thomas Hobbes (1558-1679) in his notable book “The Leviathan” argued that every man in the primitive society is born with an innate natural right of self-preservation. The threat to this natural right of self-preservation resulting from the war of all in which case the strong had his

way against the weak necessitated that men ( both the strong and the weak surrender their individual rights to an absolute ruler who was to ensure that the right of his subjects especially the rights of self-preservation ( or right to life) was protected and held in trust.

Hobbes went further to state that the social contract will ensure that there would be peace and absence of violation of rights of the weak by the strong in the society as the freedom of society member would be yield to a powerful sovereign who will enforce the promise of protection of individuals.

John Locke (1632-1704) in his political writings asserted that the state's function was to uphold the superiority and inalienability of individual's innate or natural rights to life and liberty. He stressed the need for the state to protect these inalienable and natural rights

In Lockes state of nature, individuals are free but their liberty was not synonymous with freedom to do whatever one wanted. Rather it was limited by the self-evident, God given laws of nature which prohibits a man from committing suicide (since God created man to live without his natural life span), and from harming other people (since God created us as equals not to be debase by one another).

Jean Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778) in his book " the social contract" sympathized with the pitiable state of man in the society by saying that "man is born free, but everywhere he is in chains" how can he live in a free society, where protection of life and properties will be guaranteed? Rousseau envisaged a society where our natural freedom or rights becomes part of our humanity, for him it is a democratic society where the general will prevail over the will of all.

Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274), of the natural law school, sought through his writings to present before the state what would allow for peaceful coexistence and the good life. Here he stated that the precept of natural was to “do good and avoid evil” which will help men in keeping their natural and fundamental rights, Thomas Aquinas saw a strong relationship between natural law and natural rights.

Modern Theologians, who are interested in human rights, draw inspiration from the writings of naturalist such as Aquinas. They believe that God is ceaselessly active in history, liberating human beings from all that enslaves and oppresses them; from the exodus to the liberation struggle today God is freeing people, not just from sin and death but from oppressive system and structures (Blackburn et al, 1991)

The resistant position and disposition to absolutism and the concern for free society was instrumental to proclamation of the rights of man by distinguished western European philosopher in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries. It coincided with the period of extreme political and social upheavals, which resulted in the English, American and French revolutions.

The consequences of agitating for human rights were abolition of slave trade, introduction of universal suffrage, democracy and liberation of man from oppressive feudalism. Furthermore it has in the reformation and amendment of laws, constitution and ACT.

## **THEORETICAL FRAMWORK**

### **THE NATURAL LAW THEORY OR THEORY OF NATURAL RIGHT**

Aristotle and Thomas Aquinas are the classical theorist of this school. Central to this theory is the issue of morality and ethics. Naturalist in this context argue that justice demands that man



respect the natural rights of one another. This right according to them is not man determined but by God given proceeding from the being of God and discovered by the reason of man.

Between the 16<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century the natural law theory had become an independent and rationalist system professed and espoused by the philosophers of the secular school of natural law. The enactment of the America and French declaration metamorphosed the natural law to the theory of natural rights- a liberating principle, ready at hand for the use of modern man in his challenge against institutions (Ehintero 1998).

The three outstanding characteristics of the natural rights theory are rationalism (because the rights are simple and indisputable, subject to the dictates of reason), individualism (because of the equal inalienable and natural nature of the rights), and radicalism (because the exercise of power is liable to be referred to the end of all political institutions). Natural law theorists contend that the end of all political institutions is the preservation of natural and imprescriptible rights of man.

### UTILITARIAN THEORY OF RIGHTS

This theory argues that human right are not individual right but collective rights, and that individual right pose danger to the general welfare of greater number of society members.

The utilitarian theorist replaced rights with duties, the y are consequentially theorists, believing that the consequences of an action, if it will serve the best interest of the greater number of society is most welcome, hence for example the killing of , without due process an armed robber by policemen is okay- if it will maximize the happiness of majority and minimize pain.

## THE VALUE OF RIGHTS THEORY

The theory advocates the benefits of rights. It argues that rights are treasures because of the protection they give to people in the society. For example human rights allow for freedom of worship in most democratic societies, it allows for the preservation of life, freedom of movement, etcetera.

### Applicability of the Theories To The Present Study.

As shown by the various theories, human rights are for people to 'enjoy' not because of where one belongs in the ideological divide or social status or any other artificial consideration but by the fact "all men are born equal" and as such are determined by virtue of membership of human race or society.

The utilitarian theory of right is applicable in this study because for human rights of individual which ought to be at the centre of democratic governance works for the majority in the society. The hatred of the masses for the police profession casts an aspersion on the function role of the police in the sustenance of democracy and protection of lives and property, finally, the value of rights theory shows the pragmatic benefits of enforcing human rights of citizens and the dangers that indifference to human right can throw a society into.

### LITERATURE IN THE STUDY

Bunton et al (2003) reported that human rights violation in Nigeria are high and respect for fundamental human rights of persons by the police was very poor, in their work they asserted that "operation fire for fire "(an anti –robbery police fighters) were the most frequent human right violators, as they committed extra judicial killings in apprehension and detention of crime

suspects. The report claims that former inspector –General of police TafaBalogun told the ‘Country Reports on human rights practices “that from March 2002 until November, police killed more than 1,200 criminals and arrested more than 2,800” and that the force operated with impunity in the apprehension, illegal detention and sometimes execution of criminal suspects.

Sizani (2001) asserted that respect for human rights must be the foundation for building lasting peace and justice. He further noted that fundamental human are at risk in Africa and court must be especially vigilant protection.

Myers (1996) stated that although democracy is not about utopia it is about the hope of women and men to live freely as individuals in a society that holds the promise of liberty and justice for all, and about commonly held values of equality and freedom. Because of frequent violations of human rights by Nigerian police, the confidence of the public in police has been gravely battered.

Amuwo (1995) argued that the perceived significance of an African conception of human rights rendered almost nugatory by practical statistics and leadership-centred actions and policies.

In the report of the study carried out by human rights watch on Nigeria for 2005, it was asserted the president (Obasanjo) empowered the men of the Nigerian police force to kill with impunity, this assertion by human right watch cannot be ignored as the presidents, in several cases had ordered reprisal attacks on civilians who had clashed with security forces.

Ogbunwezeh (2003) stress that Nigerians are not only living in the shadows of torture, they are at present enslaved in a valley of death, where the police are kill masters. In his article Human Right and the maintenance of international peace and security in Africa; Professor Amadu (2001) asserted that respect for human rights, their promotion and protection have become

conditionalities in international political transaction especially between the developed countries of the North and the third world. Violations of fundamental human rights of people are one and the same in the direction of injustice. This is why Esiemokhai (1998) describe injustice as unholy practice of knowingly hurting others through the blatant denial of other people's right and privileges.

Agwu (2003) asserts that the right to human dignity is in a serious imperilment and can only be projected by strengthening human right groups and social forces that will ensure the implementation and extension of the right to dignity beyond the statute books.

### METHODOLOGY

In this chapter, the research design, study population, sample population and sampling technique, data collection instrument, methods of data analysis, and the limitations of the methodology are all stated.

### RESEARCH DESIGN

Data were collected from December 2005 through to April 2006. The researcher used the triangulation method, which enabled him to collect data through multiple sources including survey method, observations, and secondary documents. This multiple methods of data collection helped strengthen reliability and validity.

Interviews were conducted by the researcher at the police station on some of the inmates. This was done one-on-one and in groups.

Using self-completion questionnaire approach, questionnaires were administered to victims of human rights abuses. This was done to get on the victims' experiences of violation.

The complementary method of using survey questionnaires and unstructured/non standardized interview provided both quantitative and qualitative data.

Documents: Both public and private documents were used. The public documents used were reports on human rights situation in Nigeria from 2000 to 2005 for example the country reports on human rights practices (Nigeria), and that of human rights watch were used. Others included Newspapers, Journals and Magazines.

### STUDY POPULATION

As stated in the research proposal of this study was carried out to substantially reveal and explore the extent of human rights violations experienced by people in democratic Nigeria, using two communities in Kogi state and available document as cases studies. The set of element that were the focus of this study included victims of human rights violations, prisons inmates, ex-convicts and the police force.

### PARTICIPANTS

At Ayingba community in Kogi State, 27 victims of human violations comprising of 19 males and 8 females returned the self-completed questionnaires. I also interviewed commercial motorcyclists who claimed to have been illegally detained by the police; they were basically university students and indigenes of the community. Also interviewed was the Divisional crime officer of the Ayingba police station, Mr Okelegwu, who provided the researcher with useful information for the study as regarding police station actions and relationships with the public. At Ikeje, Victims in police custody and others already bailed were interviewed.

## SAMPLING TECHNIQUES

The non-probability sampling approach was used for the study, using purposive and snowball sampling methods. The purposive sampling enabled the researcher to identify people who have special insights into my research questions because of their experiences and contacts; thereby having useful data to provide. The snowball sampling process was also used. This process enabled me to identify and contact victims of human rights violations by the police.

## INSTRUMENT FOR DATA COLLECTION

A) Primary Sources: The first instrument that was used in this study was a questionnaire, containing eighteen (18) items. Also, the researcher use the semi- structured interview to have an in-depth exploration of interviewees' (who have been victims of human rights violations) feelings and attitude towards the Nigerian Police Force. Data was also collected on the experience or treatment of victims by the police force (i.e victims' survey or crime surveys) using hand information collected from individuals via a self-completion questionnaires and interviews.

B) Secondary Sources: Data was also generated/collected using secondary or existing sources. These existing sources include those gotten from the United States country's report on human right practice (Nigeria), 1999-2003, the Human Right Watch and police reports.

The justification for using both primary and secondary sources is that it provided both the first hand and second hand information and did allow the findings of this qualitative investigation to be checked against quantitative information gotten from statistical data presented in the reports.

## ETHICAL CONSIDERATION

The respondents were asked for their consent. Also anonymity and confidentiality principles were employed.

## METHOD OF DATA ANALYSIS

The different sources of evidence (triangulation), this is survey data, observational data, and documentation was analysed using statistical and content analyses. These analyses were also done by means of integration.

## DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

The data presented and analysed in this section was done using combined methods, which is because the data was collected using combine sources, Hence in analysis of the self-completed-questionnaire that were administered to victims of human right violations in Ayingba the presentation and analysis was done via statistical tabulation.

The data collected through documents were presented and analysed using content analysis in both quantitative and qualitative ways.

The data from interviews conducted will be presented and analysed.

It is important to state that the data will be analysed according to the researcher questions, by this the reader can see how data presented and analysed answer research questions.

Table 1: Analysis showing the response of victims of Human right Violation at Ayingba

Sex of respondents	No of Respondents	Percentage of respondents	Approximated % of respondents
Male	19	70.37	70
Female	8	29.62	30
Total	27		100
<b>Educational qualification</b>			
Tertiary	25	92.59	92
Secondary	1	3.70	4
Not indicted	1	3.70	4
Total	27		100
<b>Alleged crimes</b>			
Fighting	12	44.44	44
Wandering	10	37.04	37
Gambling	1	3.70	4
Fraud	1	3.70	4
Theft	1	3.70	4
Not indicated	2	7.41	7
Total	27		100



<b>Duration in police custody</b>			
< 2days	21	77.78	78
>2 days	3	11.11	11
4-5 days	2	7.41	7
1 week	1	3.70	4
Total	27		100
<b>Means freed</b>			
Bail	21	77.78	78
Escape	1	3.70	4
Police discretion	5	18.52	18
Total	27		100
<b>Use of force to incriminate self</b>			
yes	14	51.85	52
No	12	44.44	44
Not indicated	1	3.70	4
total	27		100
<b>Performance rating for police by</b>			

<b>respondents</b>			
poor	24	88.89	89
Good	2	7.41	7
Not indicated	1	3.70	4
Total	27		100

All the respondents claimed to be aware of their fundamental human right as enshrined in the Nigerian constitution, but all except two said they were exercising their rights.

Hence, power relations between the police (who have the weapons) and the masses who are powerless because of their armless, determine violation.

The data presented and analysed below was sourced from reports of human rights watch and “country Reports on Human Rights Practices” on violation of human right in Nigeria.

**TABLE 2: CRIME STATISTICS FROM 2000 TO 2003**

	2000	2001	2002	2003
Armed robbery suspects arrested	4,341	5,252	7,048	8,300
Armed robbers killed in combat	834	821	2021	3,100
Fire arms recovered	928	1,013	3,150	3,451
Stolen vehicles recovered	579	603	953	1,220
Police killed in operation	33	23	172	58

**Source:** Human Rights Watch World Report on Nigeria, 2003

From the above table, it is clear that human rights situation in Nigeria has not been bettered; rather the activities of the police against the fundamental rights of people have increased in democratic Nigeria.

The nature of violation is beyond description. Victims are beaten with sticks, iron, metals, base of guns, and etcetera. A victim explained his ordeal thus:

## SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### SUMMARY

In the introduction or general background to this study, it was established that human rights are the cornerstone of a visible and viable democracy. It was in clear terms that Nigeria as a democratic nation still grapples with the hitherto problematic experience of human right violation being perpetrated especially by the Nigerian police.

The introduction section of this research also considers the contradictions in the implementation, by the police, of the constitutional prescription of due process and fundamental human rights of individuals as clearly stated in chapter 4 of the 1999 constitution of the federal republic of Nigeria.

The heartbeat of the introductory chapter was the subsection on statement of problem where I stated that the inability of the police to conform with democratic values and constitutional provisions in the handling of crime suspects and the Nigeria people as epitomized in the extra judicial killings of suspects, arbitrary arrest and detention, torture and other cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment of civilians was disturbing in a democratic regime as there was no

significant differences between it and the military regime in the violation and abuse of people fundamental rights.

The second chapter, which dealt with the review of literature work, was linked to broader and previous researches on human rights. In this section, the historical background to the study and concept of human rights, from the philosophical exploration to the scientific exploration of the concept, was discussed. Also relevant literatures that are current were explored. The literatures that are current were explored. The literatures consulted had used different methodologies in researching human right except triangulation of methods. Hence this studies which used the triangulation methods to collect data on human right violations improved on the existing findings of existing studies on human rights abuse in Nigeria by the police. The natural law theory, utilitarian theory and the value of right theory were the theoretical framework used in this study. The applicability of the theories to this study was also stated.

The third of this study- methodology- showed the sources of data collection. In this study, data were collected using interviews (questionnaires and unstructured), observation and documentary sources. Both primary and secondary data were used.

Although the study intended to establish the extent of human rights violations by the police in democratic Nigeria, two communities (Ayingba and ikeje) in Kogi state were case studies used. The set of element that were used include victims of human rights abuses and the police.

The fourth chapter or section of this study is the data presentation and analysis. Data collected was conceptualised, reduced, elaborated and related to one another via coding also content analysis was used in the analysis of the secondary sources.

## CONCLUSIONS

The findings of this study clearly reveal that human rights violations by the police in democratic Nigeria have not in any way declined but rather, impunity for human rights violations thrives as the Nigerian government remains unwilling to go beyond lip service to human right reform in this democratic era of the country.

Human rights violation by the police continue to reflect in extra judicial killing of people (who are in most cases innocent persons), arbitrary arrest and detention, torture and other cruel inhuman or degrading treatment, use of excessive force and other abuses (harassment, extortion, etcetera).

It was also discovered that the greatest and one of other biggest simple obstacles to the reduction or eradication of torture and other serious abuses by police in Nigeria is impunity.

This implies the absence of deliberate effort to ensure accountability for violations committed by the police force.

The findings also showed that the public has lost faith in the Nigeria police force the erosion of this public confidence in the police makes the people of Nigeria to see the police as their “enemies” and their “friends” for example, one of my interviewees said he couldn’t confide in his sibling who is a policeman.

The findings of this study also reveal that the police are aware of the fundamental human right of the people as enshrined in the constitution of Nigeria. But because of the culture of violence in the Nigeria police force men and woman of the police force have a mentality that brutality and used the excessive force are fundamental to achieving success in policing Nigeria. Another

possible reason for perpetrating abuse of rights by the police is the inability of appropriate authorities to bring perpetrators to justice. Furthermore, the fact that police violates the rights of individuals as a way of servicing the interest of those in government makes the democratic government of obasanjo to partner with the police in committing certain atrocities such as harassment, intimidation and torture of political opponents and unionists.

The findings of this study also shows that although the citizens know their rights to an appreciable level, they do not fight for their rights because they have neither power nor means to do so successfully; hence they have normalised the violations of their fundamental (human rights) by the police. That's why even where they know the police action was wrong and illegal, they appear to feel powerless to register a complaint or seek redress, rather choosing to leave it to God for vengeance.

The negative effect of the violations of human rights on the victims our democracy, the general public and police force cannot be overemphasized. In a modern and civilized world of today, Nigeria must not be thrown back to the imagined state of nature in Hobbes Leviathan where individual freedom was despised by the strong and powerful.

The extent of violation is grave. The failure of the police to abide by the provision of the constitution and democratic norms of respect for fundamental right of people is answerable to psychological, political and socio-economic factors in addition to lack of proper or inadequate education of men of the Nigeria police "force" on human rights issues. The police continue to violate the human or fundamental rights of the people in Nigeria as clearly stated in the 1999 constitution of Nigeria.

Extrajudicial killings, torture, violence, brutality, bribery and other cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment constitute the nature of violations of human rights in Nigeria. Victims of human rights violations could spend as many days in police detention without trial until they pay for their bail. Bail cost ranges from N1, 000 to N6,000 depending on the nature of the offence committed.

Those victims, whose crime was 'wandering' pay between N2, 000 and N3, 000. Confession or admittance of alleged crimes by victims is based on force. In Mid-2004, 23 year old man described his treatment to human right watch thus:

*They hand-cuffed me and tied me with my hands behind my knees, a wooden rod behind my knees, and hung me from hooks on the wall, like goal post. Then they started beating me, they got a broomstick hair (bristle) and inserted it into my penis until there was blood coming out. Then they put teargas powder in a cloth and tied it round my eyes, they said they were going to shoot me unless I admitted I was the robber, this went for four hours.*

There exists no case of violations arising from either religious or ethnic affiliations. Majority of the person whose rights were violated come from a poor background. The relationship between citizens and the police is conflictual and based on suspicion, as the people have no confidence in the police.

Victims of extrajudicial killings by the police are summarily referred to as 'armed robbers' but the fact is that most victims are innocent individuals who may have refused to pay bribe, challenging the police and or involved in some kind of protests.

There is a link between the present policing approach and brutal, suppressive, oppressive and offensive approach that characterised the institutions during that colonial era. Top government

official use the police as instrument of intimidation of opponents and other illegal activities, which on the long run violate the rights of people.

Due process of law is not followed in the apprehensive and detention of suspects/victims.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

In the light of this research work, the following are the suggested actions to be taken by the federal government of Nigeria and the Nigerian police to ensure the elimination (or at least reduction) of violations of human rights by police.

- The federal government should immediately set up or establish an anti- human rights violation group within the police force that will investigate and bring to justice officers found to have violated the fundamental rights of people.
- Publicly condemning and (immediate) sanctioning of erring police officers. This task has to be championed by the inspector general of police.
- After graduating from Police College, recruits should be sent to various human rights organisation in Nigeria for ‘practical’ training on human right issues and implications.
- Ensure the prompt payments of police salary and improved welfare packages for officers’ of the force.
- Adequate and speedy compensation of victims, or victims’ family (in the case of death) by the federal government. The cost of compensation should be deducted from police yearly budget. By this the force will be mindful of consequences (economic cost) of violating people’s rights.



- Evidence gotten from victims as a result of torture should be disregarded in court by judges while ordering an impartial and prompt investigation into the allegation.
- Prompt trial of defendants within a reasonable time.
- Professional and effective training of policemen on how to handle crowd and riot situations, so that the hitherto problem/excuses of 'accidental discharge 'and 'stray bullet' can become a thing of the past.

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