

## **STATEMENT BY THE AFRICAN SECURITY SECTOR NETWORK (ASSN) ON THE POLICE AND MILITARY KILLINGS IN NIGERIA**

The African Security Sector Network (ASSN) condemns in no uncertain terms the senseless and flagrant killings of peaceful protesters in Lagos and other parts of the country by the Nigerian military and police, ironically while protesting the criminal actions of a notorious and now-banned police unit, the Special Anti-Robbery Squad (SARS).

However, what the protesters were speaking to --beyond these extra-judicial killings-- are wider and long-standing problems of bad governance, state violence and human rights abuses, corruption, youth unemployment and marginalization, a failing educational system, desperate poverty, and an excessive wealth gap, that successive Nigerian governments have been unable or unwilling to address. Nevertheless, what is being immediately displayed in these incidents is the extreme damage that a long-unaccountable security establishment, used to undermining rather than protecting the safety and security of the Nigerian people, can inflict on its citizens.

Together with all people of good will, we demand:

- the immediate withdrawal of the military from all public streets and back to barracks;
- protection of the protesters and their right to free speech and peaceful protest;
- the release of all detained protesters;
- treatment of and compensation for the victims of police and military brutality; and
- prosecution of the perpetrators of these extra-judicial killings.

We join with international, regional and sub-regional bodies to urge the Nigerian government to:

- heed and fully implement the demands of Nigerian youth;
- implement all recommendations contained in the several police reform reports issued by the National Human Rights Commission, Amnesty International, and others; and
- Initiate comprehensive Security Sector Reform (SSR) and governance reforms in Nigeria.

We understand that the National Human Rights Commission has set up an 'Independent Investigative Panel on Human Rights Violations by Defunct Special Anti-Robbery Squad (SARS) and Other Units of the Nigeria Police Force 2020', and that all States of the Federation have also constituted state-level Investigation Panels.

We applaud these measures, but at the same time realize that we have been here before --repeatedly-- and only too aware that these security reforms cannot be accomplished within a profoundly broken governance system. We hail the long struggle of the Nigerian people for democracy, and in particular their heroic efforts -- of which these protests are such an organic and striking expression--to defend and sustain the fragile democratic gains of the last three or four decades. We urge the Nigerian government to listen to the youthful voices of conscience and -- for once--respect the will and aspirations of the Nigerian people.

Signed



**Dr Niagale Bagayoko**  
**Chair**  
**African Security Sector Network (ASSN)**