

Protest

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Nigeria Tactical: Nationwide demonstrations to commemorate #EndSARS protest slated to be held on October 20; avoid nonessential travel

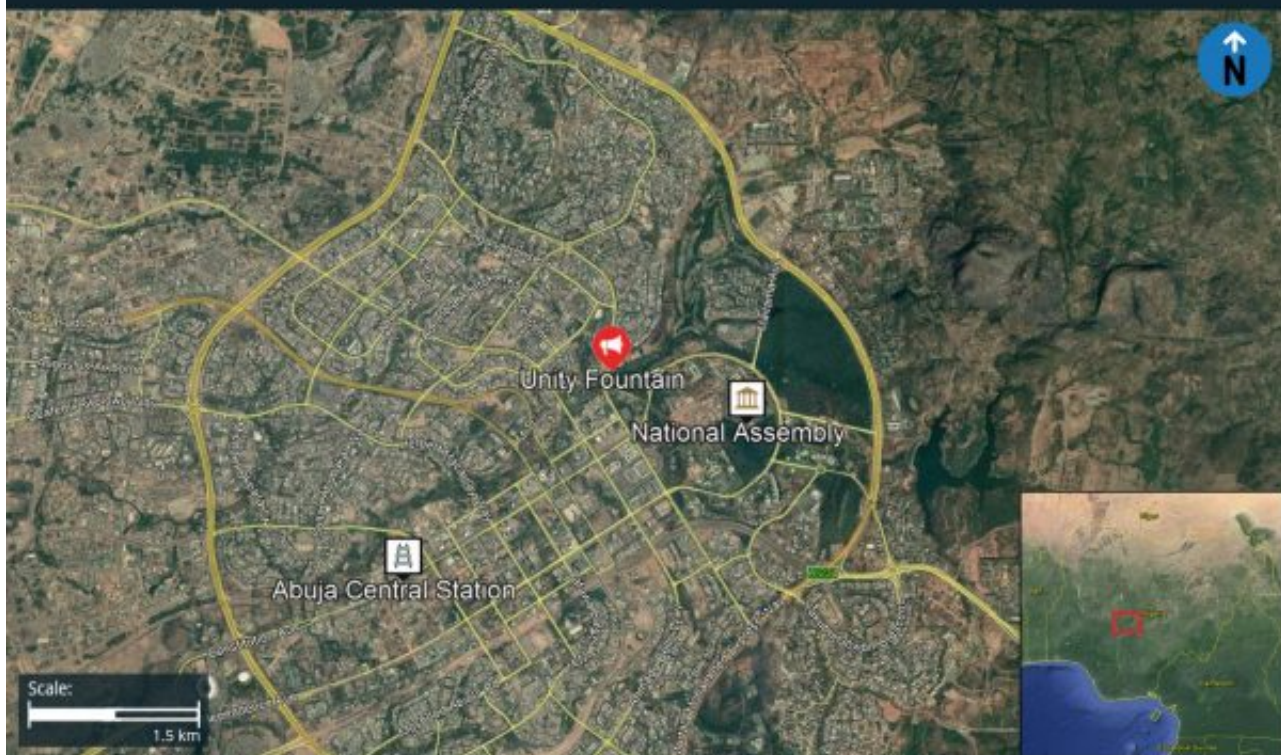
Please be advised

- Reports indicate that civil society groups are slated to conduct nationwide protests in commemoration of the #EndSARS protests on October 20.
- In Lagos, the protest will take place at Lekki Toll Gate from 08:00 (local time). Demonstrations are slated to take place all day and extend into a candlelight vigil through the night.



- In Abuja, the protest will take place at the Unity Fountain from 08:00 (local time).

LOCATION OF PROTEST IN ABUJA ON OCTOBER 20



- Protests are also planned in other locations nationwide, including Edo State, Kwara State, Ondo State, Oyo State, and Plateau State.
- The protest is being organized as part of a series of events to commemorate the one year anniversary of the #EndSARS protests which broke out in [2020](#) demanding the disbandment of the police's Special Anti-Robbery Squad (SARS) unit, and then morphed into a wider movement against police brutality.
- Additionally, the event is also being organized to commemorate the incident referred to by civil society groups as the "Lekki Toll Gate Massacre", in which at least 12 protesters were allegedly shot dead by security forces on October 20, 2020 during #EndSARS protests.
- These slated protests are being supported by various political groups and activists, including Omoyele Sowore, of the African Action Congress (AAC).
- Reports indicate that the police have authorized the event, though the Lagos State Commissioner of Police Hakeem Odumosu, warned protesters against blocking roads and disrupting traffic flow.

Assessments & Forecast

1. The event highlights the continued public discontent over the issue of police brutality, which sparked the mostly decentralized civil unrest movement and mass protests through October 2020 despite the police dissolving the SARS unit in compliance with civil society demands. The event also indicates continued public frustration around the government's management of the inquiry into the incident at Lekki Toll Gate, as authorities continue to deny claims to have killed protesters despite the investigations of various credible national and international media as well as human rights groups revealing consistent findings of security force excesses. These grievances have continued to manifest into sporadic protests, including an incident on February 13 where at least six protesters were injured and 13 arrested during a police crackdown on a protest.
2. **FORECAST:** Given the continued sociopolitical tensions, the protest on October 20 will likely be relatively well attended with a turnout in the low-to-mid hundreds at events in Lagos. While the turnout is expected to be stronger in Lagos given that the city represented the focal point for the

protest movement, given the sensitive nature of the issue and the strong anti-government sentiment among civil society at large, events in Abuja and other locations could also feature a relatively similar turnout. Additionally, given the decentralized nature of the #EndSARS civil unrest witnessed last year, protests may not be restricted to the Lekki Toll Gate and the Unity Fountain, with the potential for activists gathering in other public locations spontaneously through the day.

3. **FORECAST:** Though the Lagos police has reportedly authorized the event, it is notable that the police warned against the blocking of roads and disruptions to traffic flows citing the impact on economic activity. In this context, any perceived disturbance in terms of road blockages could lead to the police utilizing force to disrupt protests in Lagos as well as Abuja and other cities, which could include the use of rubber bullets, tear gas and baton charges to contain perceived escalations. Additionally, the continued tensions between civil society and law enforcement could trigger confrontations between protesters and the police, especially in the scenario of the police's actions being perceived as an intentional disruption to the protest activity.

Recommendations

Those operating or residing in Nigeria on October 20 are advised to avoid all nonessential travel to Lagos' Lekki Toll Gate, Abuja's Unity Fountain, and all other protest locations due to the slated demonstration and associated potential for civil unrest.