

The Police Act 2020 as a Primer for addressing Police Brutality in Nigeria

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Abstract

Police brutality has assumed the front burner in national discourse as one of the most pressing problems in Nigeria. The Police Act 2020 has been lauded as having provisions that will address policing challenges, including brutality. This paper analyses the 2020 Act to determine how its provisions can help address police brutality in the country. It finds that some of its provisions will serve as a catalyst for addressing police brutality in the country, but other factors will limit its potential in this context. Among other things, it was argued that the obligation on the police to uphold fundamental human rights is a cap on their limitless discretionary powers, which breeds brutality. The provision forbids the profiling of suspects based solely on their hairstyle and dressing was argued also to curtail the excesses of the police that births brutality. The mandatory training of the police, including on areas that positively impact minimising brutality, was also argued to be a welcome development. The provisions on community policing committees were analysed and it was argued that it would facilitate a healthy relationship between the police and, the community, which will avert brutality. Among other things, it was argued that the lack of specification of the training frequency might undermine the Act's potential in this context. The paper was concluded with key recommendations, including widespread awareness that will usher in the foundation for accountability by the police for this purpose.



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1. Introduction

The phrase ‘police is our friend’ has lost meaning due to the global inhumane and degrading treatments faced by the populace. This trend, however, has been a common and challenging problem in many countries.¹ Police brutality is the excessive, illegal and

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¹ Global G.L.O.W. Team, ‘Police Brutality in Nigeria: An Unending Nightmare’ (November 4 2020) <<https://globalgirlsglow.org/police-brutality-in-nigeria-an-unending-nightmare/>> accessed 4 July 2022.

unprovoked use of force by law enforcement agents against an individual or a group of people.² Since time immemorial, the Nigerian Police Force, especially a department known as Special Anti-Robbery Squad (SARS), has developed a reputation for brutality manifested in harassment, extortion, rape, extrajudicial killings, accidental discharge, torture and other notorious acts against innocent citizens.³ Apart from violence against the citizens, they are also known for other misconducts like false arrests, coerced confessions, false imprisonments, and unwarranted searches. With these continual deadly forces, it appears as if the police force has taken over and continued with the lawlessness that was in practice during the military regime in Nigeria.⁴

Police brutality in Nigeria has assumed an epidemic proportion with no exception to boundaries.⁵ A prominent example of police brutality was seen in the EndSARS protest 2020.⁶ In an attempt to fight for people's rights, disapproval of the continuous/frequency of these acts and unruly behaviour of the police, many Nigerians, especially the youth, came out for a peaceful protest in the major cities of Nigeria. What started as an innocent exercise of the constitutional right to peaceful demonstration was interrupted and hijacked by the Nigerian Police and other enforcement agencies. The EndSARS protest resulted in the death of no fewer than 56 persons in Nigeria.⁷ It is apt to mention that police brutality is in direct contravention of fundamental human rights, including rights to life, freedom of movement and speech, right to assemble peacefully and right to dignity.⁸

The Police Act 2020 was enacted to address brutality and curtail the body's excesses by incorporating community initiatives and human rights provisions. The 2020 Act is predicated on the need to respect, protect, and fulfil human rights in performing their duties. Policing, therefore should be fair and consistent with human rights values and

² Amnesty International, 'Police Violence' (2021) <<https://www.amnesty.org/en/what-we-do/police-brutality/>> accessed 4 July 2022

³ E Ulo, 'Police Brutality and Human Rights Abuse: A study of the END SARS Protest in Nigeria' (2021) 4(2) International Journal of Management, Social Sciences, Peace and Conflict Studies (IJMSSPCS) 180; Amnesty International, *Nigeria: Time to End Impunity Torture and other Violations by Special Anti-Robbery Squad (SARS)* (Amnesty International Publication Abuja. 2020) 12.

⁴ C Chima-Chukwu and others, 'Police Brutality and Human Rights in Nigeria's Democracy: Focus on Restoration of Man's Dignity' (2020) 15(7) *Revista Brasileira de Gestão Ambiental e Sustentabilidade* 159, 160.

⁵ O. Nwanguma, 'Curbing Menace of Police Brutality in Nigeria' *The Guardian* (April 20 2019) <<https://guardian.ng/saturday-magazine/curbing-menace-of-police-brutality-in-nigeria/>> accessed 10 July 2022

⁶ Ulo (n 3) 183.

⁷ Amnesty International Nigeria, 'Nigeria: Killing of #EndSARS Protesters by the Military must be Investigated' (October 21, 2020) <<https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/press-release/2020/10/killing-of-endsars-protesters-by-the-military-must-be-investigated/>> accessed 11 July 2022.

⁸ Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria 1999 as Amended, s 34.

eliminate any militarised tactics. Given these very sensitive and essential obligations, the Police Act was enacted to provide a very effective and well-organised police force.⁹

In the light of the above, this paper analyses the Police Act 2020 to determine the extent to which it addresses brutality by the force against the citizenry in Nigeria. It finds that existing provisions will undoubtedly reduce and address police brutality in Nigeria. However, the saying goes, 'all the taste of the pudding is in the eating'. As such, its effectiveness is contingent on relevant stakeholders' actual implementation of its provisions.

2. The Menace of Police Brutality

Although it appears difficult to get an accurate figure of the instances of police brutality in Nigeria, there is serious evidence that it exists in several magnitudes.¹⁰ According to the Amnesty International's Report, severe torture is a routine practice commonly used by the police as a shortcut to solve many cases in Nigeria and to extract “confessions” or as a kind of punishment for alleged crimes.¹¹ Examples of these can be attained from testimonies of many detainees in police custody indicating that they were subjected to torture, including hanging, shooting in the leg, beating with iron rods, punching and kicking, and using pliers or electric shock, burning with cigarettes.¹²

The Nigeria Police was reported to be responsible for hundreds of extrajudicial executions and enforced disappearances of many people each year in Nigeria. Global Rights has disclosed that no fewer than 122 cases of extrajudicial killings were recorded in Nigeria between January and October 4, 2020 alone, during the first initial two weeks of COVID lockdown, many Nigerians died at the hands of the police for violating the imposed curfew than been killed by the virus.¹³ Often times these killings are so obvious as they do not happen secretly, or in hideaway of police cells and dungeons but are publicly made.¹⁴ Example of this can be found in a video that trended shortly afterwards on social media, which led to the End SARS protest. The video vividly showed a police officer shooting a

⁹ Nigeria Police Act 2020, s 2.

¹⁰ Amnesty International (n 3) 9.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ G. Akinsanmi 'Nigeria Records 122 Extrajudicial Killing in Nine Months' *This Day* (October 4 2020) <<https://www.thisdaylive.com/index.php/2020/10/11/nigeria-records-122-extra-judicial-killings-in-nine-months/>> accessed July 18 2022. See Ezeigwe A.C. Addressing the Human Rights Abuses Occasioned by Coronavirus Lock Down (2021) 12 (2) NAUJILJ 165.

¹⁴ A R Uwazuruike, '#EndSARS: The Movement Against Police Brutality in Nigeria' (2020) Harvard Human Rights Journal 5.

young Nigerian in front of Wetland Hotel, Ughelli, Delta State, leaving the scene with the victim's car.¹⁵

Several factors have underpinned the problem of police brutality in Nigeria, including inadequate training and distrust between the force and the public.¹⁶ Law enforcement officers must be constantly updated on training methods that will ensure that these officers are well-focused on safe detainment and use of reasonably necessary force and be able to balance their duties of protecting lives and properties with respecting and fulfilling the people's rights. Without proper training and orientation, many law enforcement officers will still maintain the same thought processes that have resulted in countless police brutality cases. The menace of police brutality is rampant in Nigeria because of a lack of inadequate institutional training. It has been well established that due to insufficient training, many police officers believe that oppressing unarmed citizens using excessive force is the only way to perform their duties successfully.¹⁷ Furthermore, a more significant number of the Nigerian police officers who frequently relate with the public are junior officers whose academic qualifications are low and mostly limited to high school certificates, which is evident in the ways and manners of these junior officers with little academic qualifications.¹⁸

As iterated, a contributory factor is the distrust between the police and, the public. A major challenge observed to be facing the police force is poor communication between the community and the public generally. The public sees the police as a terror while the police too view the public as helpless people that can easily be bullied and threatened without any cause.¹⁹ With this type of attitude, citizens have therefore refrained from being too close to the police to report accident or crime cases to avoid implications that can rope them in such cases. This has created a disconnection between what the reality is in the 2020 Act and what currently operates in society. More often than not, private individuals desist from providing such essential and valuable information.²⁰ Consequently, the public

¹⁵ Ibid; See Chidubem - Iwuoha and Toochi- Aniche E. 'Protests and blood on the streets: Repressive State, Police Brutality and #EndSARS Protest in Nigeria' (2021) 3(2) Security Journal 2.

¹⁶ O. Aelagun and I. Adediran, '#EndSars: How Lagos Panel Awarded # 410 million to 70 Victims of Police Brutality' *Premium Times* (October 30 2021) < <https://www.premiumtimesng.com/news/headlines/492376-endsars-how-lagos-panel-awarded-n410-million-to-70-victims-of-police-brutality.html> > accessed July 16 2022; End Sars: How Nigeria's Anti-police Brutality Protests went Global, BBC News (October 16, 2020), <<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-5> > accessed July 3 2022.

¹⁷ E.O. Alemika and I. Chukwuma 'Police- Community Violence in Nigeria (Centre for Law Enforcement Education (CLEEN) Ikeja and Lagos and National Human Rights Commission Abuja. 2000); 17, 25, 26.

¹⁸ D R Akingbulugbe, 'Police : your Friend or Fiend' (An Objective Study of the Ethos, Violence and Brutality of the Police Force in Nigeria)

¹⁹ Primera Africa Legal, 'The Nigerian Police (Establishment)' < <https://primeraal.com/news/the-nigerian-police-establishment-act-2020/> > accessed 13th July 2022.

²⁰ C. Oyemwinmina and S. Aibieyi 'Analysis towards Effective Policing in Nigeria' (2016) 10 (1) African Research Review an International Multidisciplinary Journal Ethiopia 68.

has lost confidence and trust in the baseless police actions, which automatically translate to odium and hostility towards the police instead of respect and trust. This kind of social tension frequently leads to clashes and riots in society.

3. Police Act 2020 and Measures to Address Brutality

3.1. Introduction

The Police Act 2020 contains some provisions that are important to addressing brutality. The first one is the duty of the police to uphold fundamental human rights in their duties. The Act further prohibits profiling suspects solely because of their hairstyles and dress. There is also an obligation on the police to respect the rights of suspects in their custody. There is a mandatory provision for training of police officers in thematic areas that may minimise police brutality. We also have community policing provisions. These provisions will be analysed in seriatim.

3.2. Duty to Uphold Fundamental Human Rights

The extent to which a police officer exercises his duties must depend on the scope and limitations provided under the Act that establishes the police force. Before enacting this current Police Act 2020, the previous Act was criticised for its inadequacy to hold any police officer accountable for protecting the rights of the people. This is because the Act consisted of various problems like giving unnecessary discretionary powers to the police officers and no strict imposition of duty on the police to respect fundamental human rights.²¹ Police brutality came into existence because of the abuse of this discretionary and mandatory power that invariably violated the citizens' human rights. Police brutality, therefore, becomes more frequent since they are under no severe obligation to protect the rights of a person or treat suspects in a humane way (un-torture) under this Act therefore, the police cannot be held liable for using their discretionary power in a wrong way.²²

However, the new Police Act, it stipulates that the police force is highly responsible for promoting and protecting the fundamental rights of persons in police custody as guaranteed by the Constitution. In protecting this right, the police officers must also collaborate with relevant private initiatives from the establishment of a mechanism offering legal services to the accused person or detainees in police custody who may need legal services for full access to justice. The new Act, however charged the same police force

²¹ A Madaki, 'The Nigerian Police Force and the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights in Nigeria' (2012) (3)(1) Com. & Indus. L.J. 302.

²² J Madubuike-Ekwe and others, 'Assessment of the Role of the Nigerian Police Force in the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights in Nigeria' (2019) 23(1) (3) Annual Survey of International & Comparative Law 28.

the responsibility to protect and promote the fundamental rights of all persons in the country as guaranteed under the Constitution or in the African Charter on Human and People's Rights Act and other international legal instruments on human rights to which Nigeria is a signatory.²³ With this provision, however, police officers no longer have any discretionary power to refrain from protecting the fundamental rights of the citizens while carrying out their duties. This imposition thus increases the possibility of realising people's rights and freedom from police brutality because in the process of protecting the rights of the people, there is the likelihood that the police officers are mindful of how they treat suspects and citizens. It also clarifies that any police officer who fails to comply with this Act provision should be held liable and accountable.

It is indeed a good achievement that this Police Act can realise the rights of the people from police brutality, and the Act did not just stop there it also makes provisions for a workable implementation. Section 66 of the Act provides that every police Division must be assigned a police officer who is well qualified to practice as a legal practitioner, and his responsibility is to promote human rights compliance by officers of a division. As rightly pointed out, only a legal practitioner who is learned in law is qualified to help in these areas of compliance issues/matters because it is assumed that 8 out of 10 police officers are uneducated and so they are unable to understand the import of the human rights provisions.²⁴

3.3. Police Profiling of Suspects Based on Hair Style and Dressing

Criminal profiling is regarded as a behavioural and investigative tool that is intended to help investigators accurately predict and profile the characteristics of unknown criminal subjects or offenders²⁵ This, however, makes investigation easy because finding enough clues about offenders who commit crime at the fastest possible time helps curb the reoccurrence of such crimes. However, this tool in Nigeria has been applied wrongly, especially when it comes to crimes like internet fraud and others. It is a common trend for polices officer to easily tag certain people, mostly young men between the ages of 15-35 with usual hairstyles and dressings or with expensive cars and phones, as criminals, i.e. yahoo-yahoo boys. However, innocent people are also caught in this web of generalised profiling. More often than not, such profiling results in a tussle between the suspects and the police that ends in brutality.²⁶

²³ The Police Act, s 5.

²⁴ M.C Gerald, 'Police Legal Advisor' (1968) 58 (3) Journal of Criminal Law and Criminology 2.

²⁵ R.N Kocsis, *Applied Criminal Psychology: A Guide to Forensic Behavioural Sciences* (Charles C Thomas Publisher 2009) 226.

²⁶ Amnesty International Welcome to Hell Fire, *Torture and ill-Treatment in Nigeria* (Amnesty International Publication London UK 2014) 24.

Meanwhile, Police Act attempts to change the mentioned narrative. Section 54 of the Act states that personal attributes, including a person's colour, age, hairstyle, manner of dressing, or stereotyped images of particular persons or group of persons or previous conviction for possession of unlawful articles shall not be a reasonable ground for suspicions or to be tagged as criminals. This provision provides the victims with a leeway to legally challenge the power of the police if they are being harassed unjustly through negative profiling.²⁷

3.4. Treatment of Suspects in Police Custody

One of the most common techniques used during interrogative sessions, especially when extracting confessions from suspects/detainees by the Nigerian police officer in the police custody, is torture. However, hundreds of suspects in police custody are being subjected to a range of physical and psychological torture and other degrading and inhuman treatments.²⁸ No wonder a victim once described police custody as hellfire.²⁹ However, it has been established that overreliance on confessions in investigations coupled with a system riddled with a high level of corruption and personnel's freedom to act with impunity have greatly encouraged the increase of torture and other ill-treatment.³⁰

Contrary to this practice however, the Nigerian police Act has established that a suspect shall be accorded human treatment with regards to his rights to dignity of his persons and not to be subjected to any form of torture or other ill treatments. This section of the provision offers nothing less than what has been in existence before the enactment of the new Act. This is because Nigeria has always been a signatory to many regional and international conventions prohibiting torture.³¹ The Nigerian Constitution section 34 prohibits torture but does not criminalise it. Despite these laws and provisions, these police officers have not yet desisted from the act of torture or dehumanising suspects/detainees.³²

3.5. Training of Police on Human Rights

As earlier pointed out, the police are ill-equipped to handle citizens in the light of their fundamental human rights.³³ Essentially speaking, detainees' fundamental rights such as free access to a legal practitioner of their choice, family members, and medical personnel

²⁷ The Nigeria Police Act, s 66.

²⁸ R A. Aborisade and A A. Obileye , ‘Systematic Brutality, Torture and Abuse of Human Rights by the Nigerian Police: Narratives of Inmates in Ogun State Prisons’ (2018) 15 (1) The Nigerian Journal of Sociology and Anthropology 9-11.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Ibid, 24.

³¹ Ibid, 29.

³² Ibid, 26.

³³ J.C. Onwunyirimadu, ‘Police Brutality and Violation of Human Rights in Nigeria – Causes and Implications’ (2022) 10 (1) Global Journal of Politics and Law Research 15.

have not been abandoned and cancelled by any court of competent jurisdiction and police officers are often alleged to violate these constitutional rights.³⁴ Realistically, all these provisions on human rights in the Nigerian constitutions/Act_cannot be properly maintained if the police officers are not well conversant with these rights and the laws providing for them. Frequent human rights violations are a clear indication of an urgent need for continuous training on human rights protection at all educational levels. As a compulsory course/program, every police officer must be exposed to in-depth knowledge in the field of human rights, which they need to transfer and translate into skills to apply in their daily work.³⁵ In doing this, there is the likelihood that they must acquire a positive attitude towards the concept of respect for human rights and their necessities. Through continuous reminder of the rights, through various training with this however, the police officers will be able to balance up their dual roles of maintaining order and protecting the rights of the public.

This Act specifically makes training compulsory that all police officers must undergo periodically for re-training in the following - crime detection, and law enforcement, investigation and gathering of evidence, effective nationwide citizen engagement, human right, gender issues, public relations and other emerging issues such as democratic policing and emotional intelligence. To ensure that the training become a reality, the inspector general of police, in consultation with the ministry and police service commission is expected to be responsible for reviving the contents of the training exercises at least once every five years. ³⁶ It is anticipated that such training should have a serious positive influence in engendering mental reforms that will steer the police away from brutality.

However, a lot will depend on how well the training will be handled. Such training must be intentional and purposeful. Experts must also handle it to maximise its usefulness in minimising police brutality. The training should not be done using the tick box approach, but it should be intense and purposefully channelled towards equipping the police with the proper knowledge to deal well with the public to reduce police brutality. If the latter is not done, such training might be unproductive.

³⁴ Ibid, 165.

³⁵ Nevena Dičić Kostić , ‘Human Rights and Police – The Role of Police Training and Education’ (2014) - Belgrade Centre for Security Policy 56, 57.

³⁶ Police Act, s 19.

3.6. Community Policing

As iterated, police brutality is caused by many things³⁷, including the rigid dichotomy between the members of the Nigerian society and the police, which breeds opposition against the latter.³⁸ The estrangement is attributed to the lack of interaction between public and police members save for an enforcement context, where they are either a suspect or a victim. The public views the police as a usurper of personal liberty.³⁹ One of the most fundamental ways of addressing police effective policing is to build up a good relationship based on mutual trust between the police officers and the community. To bridge the gap between the duo, the 2020 Act provides for community policing. Community policing, also known as neighbouring policing or proximity policing, is thus regarded by Rooyen as a philosophy or strategy that is based on the partnership between the community and the police to understand each other, work together and find corporate solutions to contemporary community problems, crimes and related issues.⁴⁰ It can therefore be inferred that community policing is a democratic, participatory, interactive, consultative and bottom-top approach which helps improve the sour police/community relationships.⁴¹ It conversely strengthens the community support for police by building strong confidence in police actions. In addition, it helps in reducing police brutality and increases accountability. Furthermore, it enhances information transfer from the police to the community.⁴² On this note however, the Act maintains that the Commissioner of every State in the country must institute a community policing as well as sub policing committees in all levels of police formation.⁴³ These community policing committees include representatives of the police force and the local community, all police divisions and State Units, respectively.

In other words, community policing can significantly help in reducing police brutality. Setting up these committees to open communications channels between the public and the police will enable the community to express their concerns freely on their utmost needs in any area. More importantly, mutual interaction could soften the highhandedness of the police to encourage cooperative relationships like community meetings and

³⁷ Other causes include undue stress on the police, inadequate training and lack of proper funding. See Gilbert Enyidah-Okey Ordu and Macpherson U Nnam, Community Policing in Nigeria: A Critical Analysis of Current Developments (2017) 12(1) International Journal of Criminal Justice Sciences (IJCJS) 83, 84.

³⁸ Ibid. See also Fry Lincoln J, *Public Mistrust of the Police in Nigeria* (2013) 16(2) African Journal for the Psychological Studies of Social Studies 1.

³⁹ US Department of Justice, *Importance of Police-Community Relationships and Resources for Further Reading*, (Mar 8, 2021, 1:01PM) <<https://www.justice.gov/crs/file/836486>> accessed 25th July 2022.

⁴⁰ J C Okafor and E T Anichie, Policing the Community or Community Policing: Implication for Community Development in Nigeria. [2018] (8)(12) *Research on Humanities and Social Sciences.*; 67

⁴¹ Ibid, 68, 67.

⁴² G E Ordu and M Nnam, Community Policing in Nigeria: A Critical Analysis of Current Developments (2017) 12 (1) International Journal of Criminal Justice Science 85, 86.

⁴³ Nigerian Police Act, Part XIV.

neighbourhood watch programs.⁴⁴ Thus, to solve their immediate needs, both the community and the conventional police will be able to pull their resources together to tackle their significant problems. When this kind of synergy is formed, the entire public will discover that police officers are responsible and friendly citizens, a condition that helps considerably lower the number of complaints about police brutality. As long as there are decreases in crime rates in an area by, solving problems amicably together reduces the level of police brutality as well.⁴⁵ This approach appears practically reliable if the committees are well composed of responsible police officers deployed to the area as well as well-established representatives of the community consisting of traditional rulers, opinion leaders, the council in chiefs, community leaders from all ethnic, religious, occupational, age groups in the community and youth leaders and other stakeholders.⁴⁶

With all the great benefits of community policing, godfatherism is a major factor hindering the thriving police community in Nigeria. The activities of the police officers are observed to be badly influenced by some desperate godfathers who want to use their wealth and influence to indirectly control the affairs of the community, security, justice and policing in the country. According to Onyeozilli, godfatherism' is the "funding and abetting of vices and shielding connected criminals from justice by government agents and highly placed officials entrusted with the power and authority to investigate and prosecute such vices".⁴⁷ When some influential Nigerians support and incubate criminals, the police are faced with the situation of not being capable of curbing criminal activities from the community. The godfathers thwart police investigations, pervert justice, and short down prosecutions of murderers through bribery and using their connections to influence people in power. Many godfathers even sponsor social vices through immoral actions and shield many criminals from undergoing prosecutions.⁴⁸ This has heightened the increase of criminal activities, and in the guise of performing their duties, there are illegal pick-ups and arrests of innocent people, especially vulnerable (poor), escalating the level of police brutality within the community.

⁴⁴ E.C. Onyeozili and others, *Community Policing in Nigeria, Rationale, Principles and Practice* (Virginia Tech Publishing 2021 USA) 67.

⁴⁵ T. McLaughlin, 'Community Policing that Encourages Building Relationship May Reduce Police Violence says New Research' Rutgers– Camden NewsNow (July 21 2021) < <https://news.camden.rutgers.edu/2021/07/community-policing-that-encourages-building-relationships-may-reduce-police-violence-says-new-research/> > accessed July 5 2022.

⁴⁶ Ibid, 86.

⁴⁷ E C Onyeozili, 'Obstacles to Effective Policing in Nigeria' (2005) 1 (1) African Journal of Criminology and Justice Studies 41.

⁴⁸ L O Ikuteyijo, 'The Challenges of Community Policing in Nigeria' (2008) 11 (3) International Journal of Police Science & Management 289, 290.

4. Conclusion and Recommendation

Undoubtedly, the Police Act 2020 is a significant milestone and welcomed development considering the laudable objectives of the Act, which has great potential for reducing the act of police brutality. Despite all these credible and innovative provisions, its usefulness is contingent on its implementation. As popular aphorism goes, 'all the taste of the pudding is in the eating'. Without the implementation of the analysed provisions, the Act would lose its flavour in addressing police brutality. In the words of Adesina,

with the spirit of optimism, the new Police Act 2020 embodies sleeping potentials that can only be awakened through the strict and conscious implementation of its provisions. Only then can the new Act achieve its purpose and fulfil the principles of justice to promote peace and protect lives and properties.⁴⁹

While one cannot realistically expect that the provisions of the Act would have fully crystallised within two years after its implementation, hitches in issues pertaining to funding⁵⁰ as provided in it are indicators that there might be difficulty in this regard.

Another anticipated impediment relates to the training of police officers. Even though the Act specified that the entire police force be trained periodically and the responsibility of the inspector general of police is to ensure that the training is well carried out. There are still some limitations regarding the Act because there are no specifications as to the frequency of such activity when in fact, constant training and retraining matters a lot in a system that is almost engulfed with many laxities towards protecting the human rights of the people. Besides, there is no further evidence that the training will be sufficient to address the issue of police brutality. It, therefore, becomes essential to devise a more practical and transparent policy for effective implementation of the Act.

In a way to totally oppose/condemn any form of torture/ill treatment of the police and to ensure the total safety of the public, the government must find a way to criminalise the act of torture and other ill-misconduct while police officers who are guilty of this act should be held accountable and be punished severely for their actions. Where a police officer is found guilty and punished for his misconduct will deter many other police officers from committing the same offence. This, however, can help implement the Act to reduce police brutality and protect the public's rights. As regards the implementation issue,

⁴⁹ Adedoyin Adesina and others, 'New Police Act 2020' <<https://www.funmirobertsandco.com/2020/11/16/the-new-police-act-2020/>> accessed 24th July 2022.

⁵⁰ Ima Elijah, 'Reps invite AGF and Finance Minister over delay in 20% Salary Increase for Police' (2022) <<https://www.pulse.ng/news/local/reps-invite-agf-and-finance-minister-over-delay-in-20-salary-increase-for-police/907yj5z>> accessed 24th July 2022.



there should be massive awareness of the provisions of this Act. If the general public is adequately enlightened, it will be the first step to checkmating excesses of police officers who thrive on the ignorance of unenlightened individuals.