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## EndSARS to EFCC: Trading One Nightmare for Another

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### ABSTRACT

The transition from the EndSARS movement to increased harassment by the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) in Nigeria signifies a troubling swift shift in governmental repression. Although the EndSARS protests seemed to have successfully led to the dissolution of the notorious Special Anti-Robbery Squad (SARS), they inadvertently led to a new form of persecution – EFCC. This study employs Discourse Analysis (DA) and this approach is particularly suited for analyzing the discourses around EndSARS and the EFCC, given the power struggles, ideological conflicts, and societal impacts involved. Drawing from sources which include news articles and editorials from major Nigerian newspapers and online news platforms, social media posts, comments, and hashtags related to EndSARS and the EFCC on platforms such as Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram, the study shows that the EFCC, initially established to curb financial crimes, has begun targeting the youths, employing similar tactics of arbitrary arrests, detentions without trial, and abuse of power. This transition from police brutality to financial harassment shows the rising wave of abuse of authority within Nigeria's law enforcement agencies, undermining public trust and violating both national and international legal rights. Consequently, the frequent detention of individuals, seizure of property, and public shaming of arrested individuals by Nigeria's EFCC can impede business operations, leading to financial losses and, in some cases, the demise of fledgling enterprises. This article explores the consequences of this transition, emphasizing the urgent need for comprehensive reforms to safeguard individual freedoms and uphold the rule of law in Nigeria.

### INTRODUCTION

An important turning point in the fight for youth rights and justice came with the launch of the EndSARS campaign in Nigeria in October 2020 (Inyang & Essien, 2021). Many young people were inspired to act because they were fed up with the actions of the Special Anti-Robbery Squad (SARS), a police unit known for its repeated violations of human rights. This led the movement to call for the unit's total dissolution. The use of social media to document acts of misbehavior and to show the gravity of the protesters' goals helped bring these demonstrations to the forefront and make them widely known. Oyeboade (2022) portrays that the victory was short-lived, even though the government eventually announced that SARS had been disbanded. Upon waking up, the youths were faced with yet another troubling predicament - the EFCC had become an even more harmful instrument of state persecution. Hence, there arises the need for a comprehensive examination of the human rights and legal ramifications of the EFCC's shift from financial persecution to police brutality.

Coming as an aftermath of the 2020 EndSARS campaign, Amaefule and Umeaka (2016) notes that the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) now targets and arbitrarily detains young Nigerians in an effort to combat corruption and financial crimes. In 2003, the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) was established to combat the pervasive corruption and

financial crimes in Nigeria. The EFCC first won over the public's sympathies, but its tactics are now under criticism for the brutality they used. To recall, the EndSARS protest was against this method of public policing and law enforcement. Amnesty International (2022) reports that the EFCC has shifted its focus to creating an atmosphere of fear and intimidation through the unjust arrest and imprisonment of young persons. This change highlights the long-lasting trend of government repression in Nigeria.

The shift from SARS to EFCC harassment is explored in this study, along with the human rights and legal ramifications of this shift. This study aims to provide a thorough examination of the EndSARS movement, covering its origins, objectives, and outcomes. Additionally, this examination will provide a thorough overview of the EFCC's beginnings, goals, and actions, as well as a critique of its formation. The study compares SARS and the EFCC's enforcement strategies, looking for similarities and differences as well as any violations of human rights that may have resulted. Testimonies from Individuals who have experienced or witnessed harassment from the EFCC are incorporated into the study to support this comparison. To further highlight the gravity of these crimes, this research also looks at the broader human rights and legal ramifications, drawing on both local laws and international accords.

The study further looks at the roles of various oversight

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bodies and the shortcomings of existing systems to see what is preventing these abuses from ending and what is preventing them from being more severe. By highlighting the perspectives and reactions of key actors including civil society groups and the international community, the study aims to provide a comprehensive picture of the subject. At the end, the study proposes concrete reforms, stressing the need to strengthen legal frameworks, enhance oversight, and increase accountability to safeguard human rights in Nigeria. To address these systemic issues and ensure that the lessons acquired from EndSARS are not ignored, the study stresses that politicians, legal professionals, and human rights advocates must act immediately.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

This study employs Discourse Analysis (DA) because it allows for an in-depth examination of how language reflects and shapes power relations within society. Given the power struggles, ideological conflicts, and societal impacts, this approach is particularly suited for analyzing the discourses around EndSARS and the EFCC. The DA framework, somewhat influenced by the works of Norman Fairclough, Teun A. van Dijk, and Ruth Wodak, guides the discussion by focusing on description, interpretation, and sociocultural practice (explanation). The insights developed in this study were collected from various sources to capture a comprehensive picture of the discourse. These sources include News articles and editorials from major Nigerian newspapers and online news platforms. Social media posts, comments, and hashtags related to EndSARS and the EFCC on platforms such as Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram. Reports and publications by local and international human rights organizations. A purposive sampling technique was employed to select texts that are rich in content and relevant to the research topic. The sample includes texts from the peak periods of the EndSARS protests (October 2020) and significant EFCC operations or controversies up to the present.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### The EndSARS Movement

Anger against the Special Anti-Robbery Squad (SARS) was the impetus for the EndSARS campaign, which emerged as a powerful protest against the excessive power of the Nigerian police. Extrajudicial killings, torture, and extortion are only a few examples of the many human rights violations committed by SARS since its inception in 1992 as identified by Ulo (2021). Calls for the disbandment of the SARS unit were sparked in many states in October 2020 when a video purportedly showing the death of a young man by SARS officers in Ughelli, Delta State went viral (Nwafor & Nwabuzor, 2021). Protests, live updates, and footage of police brutality were all made possible through social media, which contributed to the movement's rapid growth and attracted international attention. A global audience noticed Nigeria's youth's

plight as the hashtag #EndSARS became viral. Protesters called for improvements to the Nigerian Police Force and the elimination of SARS. Justice for victims of police brutality and the establishment of an independent body to oversee investigations into police misconduct are two components of these changes. A non-partisan stance and widespread support from people all across the world helped the campaign gain and maintain momentum (Ulo, 2021).

The government was at first against the protesters, but they had little choice but to respond due to the increasing number of supporters and intensity of the demonstration. The Nigerian government formally ended SARS on October 11, 2020, which the protestors cautiously welcomed. Nevertheless, the declaration was deemed inadequate, considering the government's track record of making comparable commitments without substantial implementation. The protesters called for tangible measures, including the prosecution of officers involved in misconduct and extensive overhauls of the police force. On October 20, 2020, security personnel fired upon peaceful protesters at the Lekki Toll Gate in Lagos, causing multiple casualties and increasing public anger. A news report published in Premium Times (2021) showed that the event, also known as the Lekki Massacre, served as a pivotal moment in the EndSARS movement, shedding light on the government's readiness to employ deadly force against its people.

The impact of the EndSARS movement extended beyond its immediate objectives. Currently, it has inspired and motivated many Nigerian young people, fostering a culture of involvement in politics and activism, hence, the rise of the Obidient movement may in some way be associated with the energy that was birthed during the EndSARS protest. The EndSARS movement also underscored the importance of digital advocacy in mobilizing and maintaining protest movements (Fabiya, 2023). Nevertheless, the reaction to the protests revealed underlying problems within Nigeria's governance systems, such as a deficiency in holding individuals responsible, the disregard for consequences faced by security forces, and the vulnerability of the legal framework as identified by a publication by the Sahara Reporters (2021). The government's stringent measures against demonstrators and subsequent intimidation by the EFCC have sparked apprehension regarding the state's dedication to human rights and democratic tenets.

The EndSARS movement symbolizes a notable success in rallying the public against police violence, while also serving as a clear indication of the ongoing obstacles in attaining institutional change (Ecoma, 2023). The movement's impact on the discussion around human rights and governance in Nigeria persists, emphasizing the necessity of ongoing activism and attentiveness to guarantee that the pledges of reform result in concrete transformation. Examining the escalating instances of EFCC harassment necessitates an appreciation of the historical and social circumstances elucidated by the

EndSARS movement. This movement not only sets the stage but also fuels the resistance against possible governmental tyranny.

### The Rise of the EFCC

As stated earlier, the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) was founded in 2003 as a component of Nigeria's endeavors to combat the widespread corruption and financial crimes that had significantly hindered the nation's economic progress and governance. The EFCC was established as a specialized organization with a comprehensive mandate to investigate and prosecute economic and financial crimes, such as money laundering, advance fee fraud (often referred to as "419" scams), and corruption in the public sector. At first, the EFCC garnered substantial public backing and was regarded as a crucial instrument in combating the widespread issue of corruption in Nigeria. During the tenure of its inaugural chairman, Nuhu Ribadu, the EFCC initiated numerous notable investigations and legal actions, specifically focusing on influential politicians, business magnates, and government officials (Okpaga & Ugwu, 2012). The agency's efforts garnered both praise and censure, as it was accused of being utilized as a political instrument to target government adversaries. Notwithstanding these problems, the EFCC's initial years were characterized by a sequence of triumphs that enhanced its standing both within the country and on the global stage. Obuah (2010) notes that in 2006, the agency played a crucial role in Nigeria being taken off the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) list of non-cooperative countries and territories. In Nigeria, the continuous battle against corruption has shown tremendous progress, according to Premium Times (2021).

The EFCC's strategies and objectives came under increasing scrutiny and criticism over time. Human rights breaches began to surface, including instances of disproportionate force being used, wrongful incarceration without due process, and unfair arrests (Obuah, 2010). The EFCC's regular disrespect for legal standards and procedural procedures, according to critics, undermined the organization's credibility and effectiveness. These concerns were further compounded by the idea that powerful people and institutions engaged in significant corruption often avoided punishment and that the EFCC unfairly targeted young people, particularly those charged with cybercrime. Drawing from a Sahara Report (2021) publication, a shift in the EFCC's focus has given rise to claims that the organization has become a weapon for the state's repression rather than a respectable anti-corruption group.

The EFCC is somewhat being used as a tool of intimidation after the EndSARS movement. The younger generation was heavily involved in the demonstrations, and it is allegedly the target of the EFCC's activities. People have been arrested and placed under detention based on vague and generic accusations of financial malfeasance. Many young Nigerians feel that they have been unfairly

targeted for persecution and prejudice, which has caused them to worry more and feel less confident. The EFCC's strategies bear a strong resemblance to the harsh and overbearing measures taken during the SARS group, suggesting that the state's repressive actions persist under a different cover.

The EFCC's actions have not only drawn notice and condemnation from across the world, but they have also caused concern on a national and international level. Many international non-governmental organizations and human rights groups have voiced their criticism of the tactics used by the EFCC and have called for more oversight and accountability (Bello & Cosmas, 2022). The agency's actions have cast doubt on Nigeria's commitment to upholding international human rights standards, particularly regarding the treatment of suspects and the protection of civil freedoms. In addition to the obvious effects on the impacted people and communities, the EFCC's actions have a substantial influence on Nigeria's position internationally and its dedication to preserving legal and regulatory systems (Abdulrauf, 2020).

The creation of the EFCC has given Nigeria's fight against financial mismanagement and corruption a more complex and oftentimes contradictory dynamic. While the agency's founding was praiseworthy, charges of wrongdoing and abuse of power have damaged the organization's growth. Given the EFCC's emphasis on youth in Nigeria in the wake of the EndSARS campaign, a thorough assessment of the organization's functions and procedures is required. Mayerfield (2016) supports that rebuilding public trust and ensuring effective government would require addressing these issues through legislative changes, improved oversight, and a reaffirmed commitment to human rights and fair legal processes.

### Transition from SARS to EFCC Harassment

The shift from SARS to EFCC harassment brings attention to the persistence of publicly sanctioned corruption in Nigeria. At first, the dissolution of SARS was celebrated as a triumph for the EndSARS campaign. However, the subsequent intensification of the EFCC's aggressive strategies has made this accomplishment seem less noteworthy. To show how ongoing acts of corruption and despotism have obstructed any chance of advancement, this section compares and contrasts the strategies and objectives of SARS and EFCC.

The indiscriminate detentions, torture, and unlawful killings that SARS was known for are portrayed by Etim *et al.* (2022). The younger generation was especially subject to these tactics, which aimed to incite fear and quell opposition by using stereotypes about people with certain physical traits, such as dreadlocks or tattoos, which were commonly linked to criminal behaviour. The dissolution of SARS did not spell the end to these abuses, despite intense criticism. However, in its efforts to combat financial crimes, the EFCC has reportedly used comparable strategies. There have been accusations that

the commission has been involved in arbitrary detentions and imprisonments, frequently without adhering to the correct legal processes. Cybercrime and financial fraud are legitimate concerns, but these practices unfairly affect young people, especially those with mysteriously high wealth.

There are a lot of similarities between the ways SARS and the EFCC operate. Claims that they used torture to coerce suspects into confessing or providing information have dogged both groups. Attacks, threats, and extended jail terms without a fair trial are some of the psychological and physical forms of abuse that victims have described.

The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) (Assembly, 1966) proscribes torture, and these practices go against both Nigerian law and international human rights norms. Sourced cases demonstrate notable similarities in the functioning of SARS and the EFCC. Victims have described experiencing physical and psychological maltreatment (Cross, 2020). In addition, both SARS and the EFCC have faced allegations of selectively focusing on particular demographics, specifically young males, who are frequently subjected to stereotypes associating them with criminal activities or fraudulent behavior due to their looks or way of life.



**Figure 1:** Photos of Individuals Apprehended by the EFCC on suspicion of involvement in financial crimes.  
*Source: Randomly Sourced from Heritage Times (2021) & Prime News (2021)*



**Figure 2:** Photo showing the EFCC's mass arrest of individuals suspected of financial crimes.  
*Source: Leadership News (2022)*

The EFCC's intensified efforts to combat financial crimes have inadvertently given rise to a novel type of harassment that extends beyond the primary targets, affecting a larger number of individuals (Obuah, 2010). An instance of this is the commission's inclination to

publicly disgrace individuals during raids and arrests. This involves publicly portraying the accused as a criminal before any official legal processes have begun. In addition to eroding the concept of assuming innocence, this type of behavior stigmatizes entire communities and cultivates

an environment characterized by fear and distrust. The EFCC has faced criticism for what certain individuals perceive as a lack of openness and accountability in its activities. Drawing from the video below whose link is

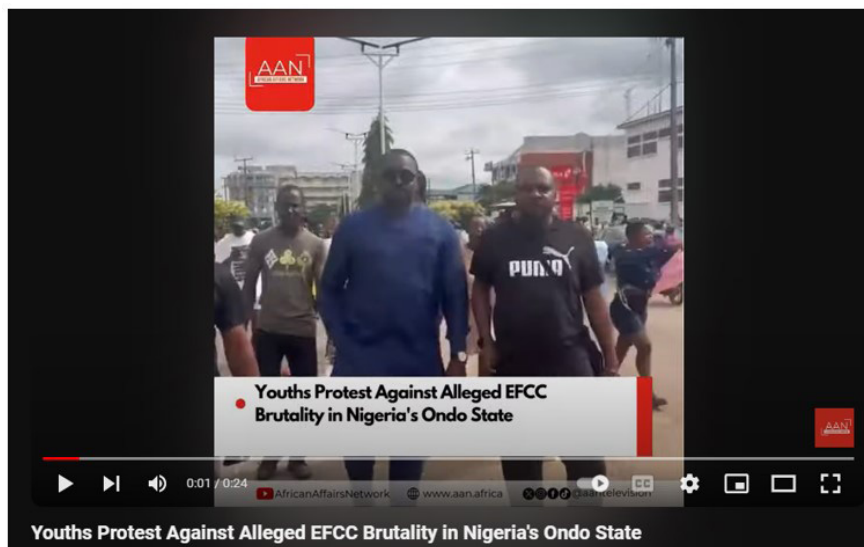
provided, it is believed that many incidents are rooted in political or personal goals rather than legal law enforcement purposes.



**Figure 3:** Screenshot from a video featuring a man discussing the issues surrounding EFCC arrests.  
 Source: Access Video via: <https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=501464728891123>

There are structural problems with the justice and police systems in Nigeria, as shown by the many cases of state abuse (ranging from SARS to the EFCC) (Balogun *et al.*, 2021). Problems with abuse, dishonesty, and a lack of responsibility remain unsolved, even if the names and

titles of the organisations involved have changed. This matter highlights the importance of making significant changes that go deeper than superficial adjustments to tackle the root causes of these abuses.



**Figure 4:** Screenshot from a video showing youths protest against alleged EFCC brutality.  
 Source: Access Video via: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DytQvOQFppQ>

To ensure that the police adhere to human rights and legal boundaries, it is necessary to establish mechanisms such as checks and balances, impartial investigations, and protective measures (Oromareghake *et al.*, 2018). Furthermore, to overcome the prejudices and biases that hinder certain individuals from escaping their victim status, a more extensive societal transformation is necessary

(Premium Times, 2021). The transition of harassment in Nigeria from SARS to the EFCC is indicative of the persistent existence of state brutality and tyranny. Although the disbandment of SARS marked a major triumph for the EndSARS campaign, the emergence of the EFCC's assertive strategies underscores the persistent obstacles in attaining substantial transformation. An

all-encompassing approach to solving these concerns requires changes to the legislation, more monitoring, and a strong commitment to defending human rights and encouraging fair treatment. By drawing lessons from the experiences of those affected by SARS and the EFCC, it is feasible to establish a just and transparent law enforcement system in Nigeria.

### Legal and Human Rights Implications

The acts of the EFCC in Nigeria have raised serious legal and human rights issues, taking into account the constitutional protections and international commitments of the country (Mikail, 2018). The Nigerian Constitution ensures fundamental human rights, such as the right to life, freedom of speech, and protection against torture and other forms of harsh treatment, under Chapter IV. However, the EFCC frequently violates these laws, so undermining the principles of the rule of law and resulting in significant encroachments on individual freedom. This section analyses the precise manner in which the acts of the EFCC contradict both local laws and internationally recognized human rights principles. The statement emphasizes the urgent requirement for legally required modifications to the legislation and increased responsibility.

The EFCC's actions raise major legal concerns due to the practice of arbitrary arrests and prolonged incarceration without trial (Oke, 2013). The Nigerian Constitution guarantees an individual's right to personal liberty and also requires that any person who is arrested or detained be promptly presented before a court. Notwithstanding these safeguards, several stories indicate that the EFCC regularly infringes on individuals' fundamental rights by unlawfully detaining them for extended durations without initiating legal proceedings. Despite the significant mental and physical pain inflicted upon detainees and their families, these tactics are occasionally justified as essential for comprehensive investigations. The misuse of authority by EFCC personnel is exacerbated by the absence of openness and accountability in these procedures.

The Nigerian government places great importance on human rights, not just due to domestic legislation but also because of the country's extensive international human rights agreements (Alobo & Obaji, 2016). Nigeria, as a signatory of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), is obligated to adhere to the provisions of the ICCPR that denounce arbitrary arrest and incarceration and require the enforcement of fair trial protections. Article 7 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) explicitly prohibits the practice of torture or any kind of cruel, harsh, or degrading treatment or punishment. The EFCC's actions blatantly violate these international commitments, as they involve eliciting confessions through torture and other coercive methods. Torture not only breaches international law, but it also undermines the credibility of evidence collected through torture, jeopardizing trust in the legal system (Assembly, 1966).

The acts of the EFCC have larger consequences for human rights, namely the rights to due process and a fair trial. The presumption of innocence, a basic element in both domestic and international law, is infringed upon when individuals accused of crimes are publicly exhibited in front of the media, sometimes without any official charges being made (Gelaye, 2014). Aside from infringing against their entitlement to a just trial, this practice exposes suspects to public disgrace and degradation, which can have long-lasting repercussions for their professional and personal life. The limited options available to victims seeking justice and compensation are a result of inadequate legal remedies and oversight structures, exacerbating these abuses (Amnesty International, 2022). An effective reform is necessary to tackle these systemic issues, as the strategies employed by the EFCC have significant legal and human rights implications. Enhancing legal frameworks to guarantee compliance with human rights criteria set by the constitution and international organizations is very crucial (Kumm, 2004). It is imperative to establish the current legal measures to prevent unjustified imprisonment and physical mistreatment, and the EFCC and other law enforcement authorities must adhere to the legal boundaries. To ensure the EFCC's accountability and prevent the misuse of authority, it is imperative to establish robust oversight mechanisms such as independent investigative bodies and judicial review.

The EFCC might effectively enforce human rights standards and due process if it received sufficient resources and training. The EFCC's actions, which violate both local and international standards, present significant challenges in terms of human rights and legal compliance. A comprehensive strategy is necessary to tackle these problems; this strategy must incorporate fresh legislation, enhanced supervision, and a dedication to safeguarding human rights and the principles of justice. Nigeria has the chance to safeguard fundamental human rights and liberties by enhancing accountability systems and safeguards in its fight against financial crimes (Premium Times, 2021).

### Entrepreneurial Implications

Nkechi *et al.* (2012) shows that many young Nigerians are striving to build startups and businesses that would have a positive impact on the country's economy. However, there might be significant obstacles caused by the EFCC's coercive tactics. The frequent detention of individuals, seizure of property, and public shaming can possibly impede business operations, leading to financial losses and, in some cases, the demise of fledgling enterprises. Abasilim *et al.* (2017) notes that the current climate of uncertainty discourages would-be entrepreneurs from taking action on their ideas, which in turn slows down innovation and limits economic diversity.

The EFCC's brutality and oppressive tactics have a psychological impact on young Nigerians. False accusations and imprisonment create an atmosphere of

mistrust and unreasonable fear (Hoyle *et al.*, 2016). Young business owners are forced to be cautious, changing their focus from innovation to just blending in. According to Kolo (2023), the capacity to think creatively and take risks—two essential components of economic success—is hindered by the mindset change. The mental toll of witnessing or experiencing such horrific acts of violence could also lead to long-term psychiatric issues. Feelings of pessimism, despair, and worry are common among victims and those around them. The mental toll adversely impacts on people's happiness and, by extension, their drive to improve society and the economy.

Trust in state policing institutions is further eroded as a result of the EFCC's actions. Tensions arise between the government and its populace when law enforcement forces are perceived as oppressive rather than protective (Soss & Weaver, 2017). Crucial to Nigeria's future, the country's youth may grow cynical of leadership as they feel alienated and helpless. Less engagement in public affairs, reluctance to follow established regulations, and, in extreme cases, the flight of talented people to more hospitable environments are all possible outcomes of a lack of trust. The cumulative effect of these factors is a major roadblock to Nigeria's economic development. To promote innovation, create jobs, and increase economic growth, entrepreneurship is essential (Ogunlana, 2018). Suppressing the entrepreneurial aspirations of Nigeria's young puts the country's potential for economic progress in danger of stagnation. Job opportunities, global competitiveness, and technological advancement are all negatively impacted by a lack of prospective entrepreneurs and firms.

### Regulatory and Institutional Challenges

The EFCC's persistent abuses are only one example of the many institutional and regulatory problems that afflict Nigeria's political system. The prevention of wrongdoing and the assurance of lawful operations depend on the accountability of law enforcement and the strict monitoring of their activities (Lambo, 2010). However, several holes in the current regulatory system have let the EFCC get away with its wrongdoing. This section examines the roles played by governmental and non-governmental organizations in monitoring the EFCC's operations. It draws attention to shortcomings in the monitoring systems and proposes institutional reforms to improve openness, responsibility, and human rights protection.

The regulatory landscape is severely impeded by the EFCC's lack of effective oversight mechanisms. Although the National Assembly and the President are tasked with supervising the EFCC, the commission's performance under their watch is often inadequate and untrustworthy (Albert & Okoli, 2016). On occasion, the legislative oversight committees tasked with reviewing the EFCC's spending, and activities are either unprepared, swayed by political factors, or unable to carry out their responsibilities appropriately. Furthermore, despite its

critical role in combating corruption, the EFCC has on occasion attempted to avoid accountability by abusing its operational independence (Rex, 2020). As a result, the agency gains a great deal of independence with very little oversight from outside parties.

Judiciary oversight of the EFCC activities is inefficient, despite the judiciary's critical role in upholding the rule of law and protecting people's rights. The lengthy pre-trial detentions caused by the slow and complicated judicial system are the key reason why most cases of EFCC misconduct go unresolved, according to Osipitan and Odusote (2013). Accusations of corruption and political interference inside the judiciary undermine its capacity to mediate impartially in EFCC cases. The court must be equipped with improved capacity to deal with such cases if justice is to be administered impartially and promptly. As part of this effort, judges will be provided with specialized training on financial crimes and human rights. Institutional improvements are necessary to overcome these regulatory hurdles and increase the EFCC's openness. The current system of monitoring may be improved by setting up a separate regulatory agency whose sole responsibility is to make sure the EFCC follows all the rules when it comes to human rights and the law. To ensure transparency in the EFCC's activities, conduct independent investigations, and suggest sanctions, this institution must be granted the capacity to do so. Furthermore, the contents of the ICCPR (Assembly, 1966) rightly point out the need for the EFCC to improve its capacity to identify and tackle misconduct across the board. One way to accomplish this is by creating departments dedicated to internal affairs and bolstering existing systems of internal accountability, such as programs to protect whistleblowers.

The EFCC has limitations in its operations due to institutional and legislative requirements in addition to more systemic issues with leadership and political will. The anti-corruption measures must be carried out openly and equitably if the top echelons of government are truly committed to protecting human rights and the rule of law. This includes making sure the EFCC stays dedicated to its mission of upholding legal standards and fighting against the politicization of the agency.

Human Rights Watch (2021) states that political institutions and law enforcement authorities must work towards a culture of accountability and transparency if anti-corruption efforts are to gain public trust and achieve their full potential. To successfully combat the EFCC's wrongdoing and guarantee that its activities are in line with human rights and legal requirements, it is essential to address the legislative and structural hurdles in Nigeria's governance system. Improving oversight processes, strengthening the judiciary, empowering non-governmental groups, and fostering a culture of accountability are all critical to reaching this objective. By resolving these issues related to financial crimes, Nigeria can protect basic human rights and keep its judicial system strong.

## CONCLUSION

Effectively addressing the abuses and systemic issues inside the EFCC requires effective reforms at the legislative, institutional, and societal levels. Increasing the EFCC's accountability, openness, and efficacy are the goals of the following recommendations, which also seek to strengthen the primacy of legal principles and protect human rights. One must maintain and enforce the existing legal safeguards that protect individuals' rights if the frequency of arbitrary arrests and detentions is to be reduced. This means that Nigeria must fully implement its human rights obligations as outlined in its constitution and in the treaties it has ratified. Detention without a trial for a lengthy amount of time is illegal (Wilsher, 2011), and the EFCC's detainees must be brought before a court within a specific time. It is also essential to strengthen legislative structures to guarantee that EFCC actions adhere to stringent requirements. The Federal Republic of Nigeria Constitution from 1999 lays forth the requirements, including the need for warrants and the strict observance of due process.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

It is critical to set up an impartial organization to oversee the EFCC's activities so they can be better monitored. Transparency and openness should guide the EFCC's activities, enabling third-party investigations and the suggestion of disciplinary measures. The Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) must strengthen its internal systems of accountability, including its divisions of internal affairs and programs meant to protect whistleblowers if it is to become better at detecting and resolving corruption inside the agency. To guarantee the judiciary's ability to handle cases involving EFCC malfeasance, it is crucial to support and strengthen it. Part of this goal is making sure the court system is reliable and effective, and part of it is giving judges training on financial crimes and human rights. Berman and Feinblatt (2015) note that cases can be resolved more quickly, and pretrial detentions can be shorter with a simplified judicial system.

To expose abuses and fight for victims' rights, non-governmental organizations and civil society groups are vital. Strengthening their capabilities and guaranteeing their safety are crucial for effective advocacy and monitoring (Dutta & Dutta, 2021). This includes monetary aid, guarantees of legal protection, and encouragement of partnerships between NGOs and government agencies. Raising public knowledge and educating people about human rights is another way to encourage responsibility and legal compliance. The EFCC must operate in an open and accountable way if it is to regain the public's trust. An essential component is transparency, which entails freely sharing information about the methods of operation, costs, and decision-making. Transparency and public engagement in monitoring may be enhanced by public accountability mechanisms (Nelson, & Dorsey, 2008), such as public discussions and frequent reporting to the National Assembly.

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