

TIT-BITS Vol. 7

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE NIGERIA POLICE ACT 2020

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On September 16, 2020, President Muhammadu Buhari signed the Nigeria Police Bill 2019 into law. The Nigeria Police Act 2020 (the **“Act”**) repealed the Police Act Cap. P19 Laws of the Federation of Nigeria 2004.

The Act seeks to provide an effective Nigeria Police service that complies with the principles of accountability and transparency; and protects human rights and freedom.¹ Some of the major highlights of the Act are as follows:

1. Police officers must attend periodic trainings on basic policing, law enforcement, gender issues, gathering of evidence, etc.;²
2. The Police is prohibited from arresting any person for a civil wrong or a breach of contract;³
3. The Police is prohibited from arresting any person in place of a suspect;⁴
4. Only Police officers who are legal practitioners now have powers to prosecute suspects;⁵
5. The officer in charge of every Police station must issue a monthly report to the nearest Magistrate on every suspect arrested without warrant within his jurisdiction.⁶ Such report must specify whether all such suspects have been admitted to bail or not; and
6. The Police is responsible for the vetting and approval of the registration of private detective schools and private investigative outfits.⁷ This paves the way for the operation of private detectives who are not employed by the government.

¹Section 1.

²Section 20.

³Section 32(2).

⁴Section 36.

⁵Section 66(1).

⁶Section 69(1).

⁷Section 4(i).