

Displaced Northerners Narrate Ordeal After Returning From Oyo

By [Our Reporters](#)

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The National President of the Onion Farmers, Processors and Marketers, Aliyu Isa Binji, confirmed the death of 27 of their members during the Shasa crisis.

Daily Trust Saturday learnt that among the dead were three young men from Illela Local Government Area of Sokoto State. They were identified as Shekarau Garu, Auwalu Kurma and Kasimu Garu.

- [Sasha and the Shashasha amongst us](#)
- [Give bandits blanket amnesty – Gumi insists](#)

He added that many were still unaccounted for while 14 trucks loaded with onions were burnt to ashes.

Binji, who spoke with our correspondent at his Sokoto office, said 400 shops belonging to their members were looted and torched by the hoodlums.

According to him, over N200m was stolen from the burnt shops while 170 houses, including those owned by their members, were razed.

He stated that a 4-member committee set up by the association and chaired by the deputy national president who is from Lagos was mandated to investigate the remote cause of the attack and the damage it caused to their members.

He said that they would make their stance known to the public immediately after the report was submitted and analysed.

"This is not the first time our members would be attacked, killed and their property destroyed. It happened in Aba market, Abia State and we had written a complaint to the government of the state and the Presidency but nothing was done about it.

"As good citizens, we will still write a complaint to the governments of Oyo, Kebbi, Kano, Sokoto and even the Presidency and if nothing is done, we will summon a meeting of our members and take necessary action," he said.

Wondered why northerners are always targeted

Binji wondered why their members who were mostly from the North and doing their legitimate business were always the target in any tribal crisis.

"As we have Hausa onion marketers in Shasa of Oyo and Lagos, so also do we have many Yoruba and Igbo onion marketers in Karan Albasa (onion market) in Sokoto, Kebbi and Kano states and they have never been attacked.

"One of our trustee members is an Igbo man called Kingsley and Abdulrasheed, a Yoruba man from the South.

"We even made Abdulrasheed our leader in Goronyo Local Government Area and one of our revenue collectors because of his integrity.

"I am sure this will not happen in their area; they will never consider a Hausa man for any position no matter how much they trust him, talk less of entrusting him with

their money or allowing him to do his business unhindered."

Horrible experience – Survivor

One of the marketers who survived the crisis, Yunusa Muhammed, described the situation as "horrible and the highest level of wickedness."

"We were with them (security operatives) when we saw two of our men shot and butchered, and they did nothing to rescue them. If you don't pay them what they charged you, they would not help you. Even on our way to Yuwaye, some of the attackers continued stoning us, calling us all sorts of names," he said.

Muhammed, who is from Kware Local Government Area, said the hoodlums were supported by their fellow Yoruba traders and they came with guns, shooting our people at sight.

When asked if he would go back after the crisis, he said "No, because the government of today has no regard for the lives of its people, thus cannot respond to the emergency security situation.

"When the crisis started, we did everything to get help from the state government but nothing was done until it degenerated.

"As I am talking to you, some of our people are still unaccounted for and I was in contact with some who are still trapped in Shasa. Some said they have not eaten for three days and asked us to remain where we are, not to come back," he said.

Five of my boys killed – Victim

Alhaji Sani Yar Abba Malammawa, an onion and carrot trader said five of his boys were killed while the whereabouts of another one was still unknown.

Malamawa, who lost goods worth over N20m, noted that the market has been a source of livelihood to many people from the north, but that if the attacks continue, they would stop sending their goods to the south.

He appealed to the Oyo State government as well as the Federal Government to compensate those who lost their means of livelihood in the crisis and provide enough security in the market.

Some victims of last week's attack arrived in Kano with gory tales of the events that made them flee for safety.

A batch of the victims that arrived on Tuesday at about 9 am said they left many behind who are equally arranging for their trips while some are waiting for support from some philanthropists who hired buses to convey the affected to their various destinations.

The victims who arrived in Kano are mostly from Dan Dankali and Gwarmai villages in Bebeji Local Government Area of the state, our reporter gathered.

We escaped through farmlands

Speaking with Daily Trust Saturday on phone, the victims said it was by the grace of God that they escaped through farmlands and forest to safety.

Shuaibu Sani said, "We were lucky to have escaped alive. About nine of us regrouped and fled to Kano; it was a horrible experience. Many are stranded in Ibadan with no means of movement, they are waiting for free buses. It's an unimaginable situation as all our transactions and businesses are based there. We just pray it won't happen again."

Another victim, Ahmed Abubakar, said, "We first fled from Shasa to Sabo Ibadan, then Bodija and Akinyele where many northerners are staying presently. People are

returning in droves, and as I'm talking to you, some are on the road. No Hausa person is remaining in Sasha town. We suffered a lot.

"We learnt that four northern governors went to the place but unfortunately they didn't get to hear our side of the story. The Yoruba, who were there, told them their selfish stories," he said.

Maryam Yahaya said, "I was among the first set of people that left Ibadan for Kano at the beginning of last week's crisis in Sasa area of Ibadan.

"As the crisis did not reach our area, we had no idea of what was happening in Sasa until my husband came home and told me to get prepared to leave for Kano. We hurriedly took our children and boarded a vehicle to the North. We thank God for sparing our lives."

She added that they lost all their belongings to the crisis.

"After we left, we were told that hoodlums looted all our belongings. We don't know where to start. My husband also lost his shop at Sasha market. But we thank God that we are alive."

Maryam, who said she was born and raised in Ibadan, said she is still willing to go back to Ibadan as her parents are presently there.

"I am an Ibadan indigene; I was born and raised there. And I got married with two kids. We will be going back to Ibadan when peace returns."

Survivor vows not to return to Shasha

Alhaji Umar Nawowo alias Nafa Gode said though he escaped, he is still counting his losses. He accused the authorities of not handling the issue well and vowed not to return to Sasa forever.

"All that happened had happened in the presence of security agents but they did not do their work. They told us that they were not ordered to shoot even in the air. So, we were left with no option than to leave the place."

Another victim, Ahmad Muhammad, who is currently taking refuge at Sabo Ibadan, said "We have a list of at least 300 people who are yet to leave. Most of those who left at the onset of the crisis used their money and boarded private vehicles but others are waiting for free vehicles.

"Some philanthropists provided free vehicles for those who are willing to leave but cannot afford the fare. Most of our colleagues have vowed never to return here no matter what, following what they witnessed during the attacks," he added.