

HEARTLESS PREDATORS: Katsina community mourns 10 traders burnt to death by bandits in Zamfara

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Eleven cattle traders who were travelling from Dan Iyau/Karaje village in Batagarawa Local Government Area, Katsina State, to Kasuwan Shinkafi in Zamfara State, in March this year, had an ugly encounter with bandits who set their vehicle ablaze and burnt 10 of the 11 travellers to death after robbing them of their possessions.

Abdullahi Adamu, the only survivor of the 11 traders, who were travelling in the same vehicle, said the incident would linger in his memory for life. In a heart-rending account, he painted a picture of the bizarre incident.

He said: "It was a Thursday at about 9 am and we were on our way to Shinkafi Market. We had passed Jibia and Gurbi. In the thick forest just before the market, we suddenly heard sporadic gunshots.

"The driver was the first to be shot and our vehicle burst into flame after colliding with an oncoming one.

"Eight of us were burnt to ashes in the vehicle after it caught fire, while the three of us managed to get out of it.

"I sat close to my brother, Awalu, who like the eight others in the vehicle did not survive. Isiyaka was raising his hand to signal to me while his two legs were already paralysed. He later died in the hospital.

"The place later became quiet after the incident. The sun was shining so bright but nobody came to our rescue.

"It was much later that vehicles started passing, but every driver I waved down for help would just move on.

"Luckily, God brought a good Samaritan riding a motorcycle, who on seeing what had happened started reciting Islamic prayers and I urged him to help us.'

“He went back and returned with a lot of people and we were taken from that place to a shade where they stopped the vehicle that took us to the hospital.

“Later, the one that lay close to me died. He was severely burnt. It was later on that our people came to the hospital and we returned home.”

Asked what he lost in the attack apart from the physical injuries, he said: “The bandits robbed me of my N80,000, but I don’t know of others.

“Seeing my condition at the moment, you will know that I seriously need help. I have about three broken bones, and I have a wife and nine children. My late brother also has eight children and they will all be under my care.

“I go to the hospital but I am also being attended to traditionally. Medical personnel who sometimes check on me do administer drugs on me. They come from the Primary Health Care Centre here in Karaje village.

“The only help I get is from people who come to greet me and drop sums ranging from N100 to N1,000.

“There was a time the chairman of the LGA came and gave me N5,000, while those who died, their families were given N10,000 each.”

Choice of Shinkafi Market

Adamu recalled that Shinkafi Market in Zamfara State had being their favorite since the days of their parents and they grew up patronising it.

He said: “Sometimes, if we bought the cows, we wouldn’t even enter a vehicle but treck home. That was when the land was peaceful, but this time we usually go with our car, buy and convey them back home before taking them to Caranci Market”.

The village head of Dan Iyau/Karaje community in Batagarawa Local Government Area, Alhaji Suleiman Adamu, while appealing for help from the state and local governments, especially in the areas of education and feeding about 90 children and 16 wives the deceased persons left behind, said: “We have some marketers who are mostly youths and they used to assist one another whenever the need arises.

“There were 11 that went to that market in Zamfara in a chattered vehicle as they used to do. Unfortunately, they were met by gunmen who opened fire on their vehicle; the bus crashed into an oncoming truck and went into flame.

"Eight passengers inside the bus were burnt to ashes, while three persons were later rescued but seriously burnt. Two of the three eventually died while the remaining one was in critical condition."

The Nation confirmed that three survivors were brought home, two of which later died, leaving the remaining one in critical condition.

Alhaji Adamu further appealed to the local and state governments to come to the aid of the families left behind by the deceased traders and assist in the medical treatment of the remaining one who is presently in critical condition.

He said: "I am calling on the governments to assist the children they left behind with their education and what they will eat. They no longer have parents and they are too small.

"Also we want government to help us with roads. We are not far from the main road but we don't have good roads. We are pleading with government to help us with road from Mobile to Ajiwa.

"We have tried several times to reach our representative in the state House of Assembly but he remained elusive and nothing has been done."

Ibrahim Dan Kaita, a village head who also lost about six persons from his community, said: "Our people who went to the market on that faithful day had gunmen attack them and about eight persons were burnt to death, including the goods they were taking to the market.

"Those who got burnt include Mohamed Kabir, Alhaji Badamasi, Alhaji Samadu, Awal Da'a, Mallam Isiyaka, Mallam Nasiru, and Mallam Samaila,

"Since the incident, we all in the village have been mourning because we are saddened by the tragedy. In fact, we totally lost our joy because everyone in the community was shocked on hearing the news.

"All the victims hailed from this place and they are all married with two or three wives. We even have one among them who got married 11 days before the incident. He had two and added another before his death.

"In fact, their children, if well calculated, will be up to 90. We want government to please help in sponsoring the children to school, and if possible, take care of their feeding."

