

# 20 Bauchi pensioners died during verification, says NUP

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The Chairman, Nigerian Union of Pensioners, Bauchi State chapter, Alhaji Abu Gar, has said that 20 pensioners have died while undergoing the verification exercise of pensioners in the state.

Gar, who disclosed this in an interview with newsmen in Bauchi, on Tuesday, said the union was worried over the loss of its members.

He lamented that the state government was insensitive to the plight of pensioners, accusing the government of treating pensioners inhumanly.

He said this had resulted in all forms of hardship to Bauchi pensioners.

Gar said that the N60m approved by the state government last Friday, following pensioners' protest to the Government House, could not settle the backlog of the pensions owed by the state government.

The chairman disclosed that the sum of N235m was needed to clear the backlog of pensions owed over 3,000 pensioners in the state. He added that the pensioners were yet to get their cumulative stipends after a prolonged verification exercise.

He said the state government had only settled between April and May, 2016 the backlog of the pensions of 4,002 pensioners out of the 7,527 pensioners in the state.

Gar said 3,000 pensioners still languishing in misery were awaiting their turn to be paid.

He said, "As I speak with you now, hundreds of our members have besieged the state secretariat, venue of the verification exercise, voicing out their grievances and hoping to attract the sympathy of top government officials."

He blamed the Bauchi State Accountant General, Mr. Abubakar Gabi, for allegedly saying that the number of pensioners in the state was getting higher.

Gar said it was wrong of the state government to owe pensioners who had laboured for over three decades, adding that they (pensioners) deserved a better treatment from the government.

When our correspondent sought the reaction of the Senior Special Assistant to the Bauchi State Governor on Media, Mr. Sabo Mohammed, on the telephone, he said, "I am on my way to the office. I am driving. I will call you back when I get to the office."

He has yet to call back as of the time of filing this report.