

By Ebele Orakpo

For a few seconds, shut your eyes and imagine living outside your country and suddenly, you receive a call that almost all your male relations have been wiped out and you no longer have a village to go back to. Your entire village, the place of your birth, has been razed, leaving desolation all around.... Unimaginable!!

But this is the story of Mrs Liyatu Simon Tawasu, a Nigerian who lives in faraway Australia. For a moment, her life seemed to come to a standstill when she received the news that her beloved village, Gwallam in Hawul Local Government Area of Borno State had been razed and many killed, including her brother and uncles. Fifteen men murdered in cold blood! She narrates her story to Sunday Vanguard. Excerpts:

Phone Call:

According to Mrs. Liyatu Tawasu, it was on Wednesday, October 1, 2014 that she got a shocking phone call from her sister, who is also living in Australia, informing her that the Boko Haram insurgents went to their village, Gwallam in Hawul Local Government Area of Borno State and burnt down the village to ashes.

As if that was not enough, the heartless insurgents, as has been their practice in many towns and villages, called out their uncles and shot them while forcing their wives to watch as their beloved husbands were being murdered in cold blood.

Not yet done, they seized her only brother, Yohanna and his friends, tied them up and asked them to burn the village church. They refused and

**Liyatu Tawasu... no one can quantify my anguish*

this further infuriated the terrorists. Why they (terrorists) did not want to burn the church by themselves, nobody knows.

One of Yohanna's friends saw an opportunity to outsmart the terrorists and save his life. He asked them to untie him so he could go and set the church

GRISLY TALE FROM ABROAD

'Women forced to watch as Boko Haram killed husbands'



My brother and his two friends, who were tied to the tree, were later killed. My father is still alive because he was away in Kano when this happened

ablaze. They quickly obliged him. He was untied and he went towards the church, pretending to go and burn it down; that was how he escaped.

"My brother and his two friends, who were tied to the tree, were later killed. My father is still alive because he was away in Kano when this happened.

My brother, Yohanna, the only male child of my father, is gone, died in the hands of vicious group called Boko Haram. My beloved village, Gwallam, has been turned into ashes. The pillars of the village are gone, and my brother taken," she lamented.

For days, bodies of the dead littered the ground until the old



**Yohanna ... murdered in his prime*

women went back to the village to bury their loved ones.

"Right now, Gwallam is still a ghost town as the inhabitants are not yet back to the village, for fear of being killed," said Liyatu.

"The barbaric action of Boko Haram is getting out of hand. One of my uncles that lost his life, his eldest brother was killed in 2001 when Reinhard Bonke went to Kano. Their aged mother lost two of her sons to extremists. She is left with two daughters-in-law who are now widows.

"When I think of all these, I can only shed tears inside, but I always wish to voice out loudly.

I am a victim; no one can quantify my anguish. I am in a society where I cannot scream, shout, and mourn as an African woman."

Men needs N6m to live