

## 5th Anniversary of Zaria massacre : How I survived the brutal army attack in Gyallesu - Nasir Abdulmalik

Written by freezak

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Just when you thought you have heard the worst of tales on endless brutality of the Nigerian Army in Zaria on 12-14th December, 2015, Nasiru AbdulMalik narrated how brutal the Army was on those fateful days.

By Nasiru Abdulmalik

I hail from Saminaka town in Kaduna state. First of all, we reached Gyallesu residential area (in Zaria) on 12th December, 2015 at 10 p.m. Not long after we have entered the area, the soldiers came shooting and they spent the whole night doing just that. In the beginning we were able to evacuate the victims of gunshots and take them to our medics. The fact that I was one of the First Aid volunteers, I stayed with them after we had taken a wounded person. We were busy looking after the wounded by giving them necessary medical attention such as dressing the wounds with bandage.

The following day, Sunday, after the dawn prayer, I came out of the temporary Medics Centre and by that time they had already entered the area because they were reinforced. I was shot where the second transformer was stationed near the Sheikh's residence. I was taken to a place where we used to keep the wounded persons, Sheikh Maina's house. I was treated there. But the place was too cold for me due to the weather. I was then transferred to a passage leading to the house, and the cold subsided eventually.

We were still there when we heard them shelling and killing people. The shelling continued throughout that day. It came to a point where the wounded could not be evacuated any longer because they had overpowered our brothers at that point. It came to a point that they entered the house we were sheltering the wounded. We could hear their movement in the house where they shot to death the critically wounded people and further shot at those who already attained martyrdom as well. Having finished the killings, we heard them spraying petrol and burning the dead. We also heard their footsteps upstairs and they burned down every valuable material inside. We heard everything. But luckily they did not enter our hiding place. We heard some of them saying, "There are lots of people out there who are not dead! So make sure you kill them all." We just hid inside praying, and luckily, they did not enter the hiding place.

Early in the morning on Monday, I told those I was with who were wounded and those who did not sustain injuries that I would go. I tiptoed among the burnt dead bodies. When I was close to the gate, I saw a soldier's shadow standing. I stepped back to the house. I decided to escape the house through the wall. Despite my wound from the gunshot, I limped and climbed the wall and escaped. I trespassed through a number of houses. On my way to escape, I came across a lot of corpses until I managed to take refuge in one house. When I entered the house, I made my way to a room by breaking into the window because the door was locked. The room looked like an unused chicken coop. I still hid under the cupboard to make it hard for a person to even find me. At that point, I heard a movement; when I peeped through the window I saw it was a brother hiding under a table. I asked him to come in and hide together.

We were there when we heard shootings inside Sheikh Maina's house (because we were close to the house) and later they set fire to the entire house. The house kept burning until

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Tuesday. In the noon, the soldiers came into the house (we were hiding) to search. A soldier kicked the door and broke it open but he did not enter; he moved on. They came back to the house in the evening but we managed to leave where we were hiding to a room that contained a lot of luggage and we even wanted to change our dress. They began to search every nook and cranny of the house until they found us. They fished us out and it was at that point they pricked my head with a bayonet. Blood started gushing out. They asked me to cover it with a piece of rug. They searched us thoroughly and confiscated our money, phones and ID Cards. They brought us all out and stationed us in front of Sheikh Zakzaky's house.

It was at our leader's residence that they returned our money but withheld the phones saying it was only if we were to be released they would return them. We remained there till the late evening before they carried us in their vehicle and took us to their barrack. After the sunset, they took us to an underground cell, it had staircase. The cell was made for torturing inmates because there was what looked like an unused swimming pool. They brought us out, searched us and removed our belts, tied our hands behind our back, then transferred us to another detention facility.

I could not walk when they were transferring us, I was in pain. One of them warned they would leave me behind if I could not catch up with them. One of the soldiers carried me on his shoulder and dumped me in the detention room. We spent the night there in chain. We saw a lot of brothers and sisters including children who were abducted and brought to the room. But the children were not tied. In the midnight, they said it was time to sleep, so they asked us to lie down on our faces, and they did not give us anything to eat let alone did they give us water. We remained like that for the whole night and soldiers beat us with belts and marched on whoever tried to move or asked for help.

In the morning when the sun rose over the horizon, they asked us to get up. There were critically wounded persons among us who were also tied up. One of them succumbed to his wounds as a result of several gunshots he sustained, and he suffered so much that he was writhing in pain. It was at dawn that he passed on.

There was a female soldier who suggested they give us food, but they declined. Then she demanded that critically wounded people be taken to hospital, and her anxiety was worsened by the death of one of our members. She asked for an ambulance after which the wounded were separated and that was how we were taken to the army-administered hospital. We then observed that there were some brothers at the place many of whom were women who sustained various degrees of injuries. It was so bad that one woman's hand was completely shattered; another woman's leg was destroyed and one woman was injured on her thigh, to mention but a few. Many of them were women and men with broken legs.

After that, they transferred us to ABU Teaching Hospital at Shika in the evening, including the person who died in detention. They handed us over to the medics who took over our cases. They gave us necessary treatment and food. That was where we were fed.

When they kept us in front of our leader's house, they uttered abusive words like "This is the end of Zakzaky and you will never hear from him again!" They even told us his condition was worse than ours. They also said, "Shi'a would no longer be practiced in Nigeria unless a person will go to Iran to practice it. Shi'a exists in Iran but not in Nigeria anymore." When they realized from my ID that I'm a health volunteer, they kept teasing me that I was the Shiites doctor. They even taunted us, "you are very educated but you have wasted your time serving Zakzaky rather than looking for a job."

Yes, to be honest, some of the soldiers were not happy with the way we were being

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maltreated; some of them even stopped their fellow soldiers from beating us.

They often said we should be treated with respect. There was one soldier who did not beat anybody. He even said he was included in the operation against his wish. He tried to assuage our panic, saying we should not panic because it was going to be over soon. Honestly, he sympathized with us so much.

As for law and order, if there are violators, then the Army is the law breaker. First of all, which law did we break? What crime have we committed? They said we blocked their convoy and we refused to let them pass despite repeatedly pleading with us to lift the blockade, but which law permitted them to use firearms and kill people just to pass? Let's assume their allegation is true, what were they supposed to do according to the law? They neither reported it to the police nor took the case to court, in fact, they did not even take the case to the National Human Rights.

But what made them to open fire on women, children and men when they besieged Hussainiyya and demolished the building and killed its occupants? How has the law allowed the killing of over a thousand people just because their convoy was blocked? Nonetheless, when they went to Gyallesu, where they massacred hundreds and demolished the house, shot Sheikh Zakzaky and arrested him together with his family members and followers, was their convoy also blocked there?

Besides, everybody including religious or political groups block roads during its religious or political rally. Even Nasir El-Rufai before his emergence as Governor, only God knows how many rallies he organized and how many times he blocked roads. Should he have been shot at and killed? They massacred people at Darur Rahma, demolished it and evacuated the victims. It was located in a bush, so it did not pose a threat to anyone. They just planned to massacre people thinking that it would bring the Islamic Movement to its knees just because it's oppressive government disliked it.

We heard them saying they were done with Shi'a and Zakzaky in this country. So, is there a law in this country that prohibits adherence to the teachings of Ahlulbayt? I think even The Constitution allows a person to even worship his own shoes if he so wishes. Therefore, people should understand that the prime target is to destroy Islam.

My plea to our brothers and sisters is to keep praying for divine vengeance over the atrocities they have committed against us. We should also pray for endurance and salvation. We should also execute our pledge of not giving in to the oppressors. Whenever we are asked to come out to march in protest, we should try to cooperate. It is through this endurance and resistance that we can achieve victory. By God's grace, this is a sign that their end is in sight.

The good thing is the people have understood that we are the victims of oppression and there are people who have been misinformed (about the issue.) They think it was our total disregard to the law that caused us all this. Some even think it is the nemesis for those who are abusing the Sahabas. What the people especially Muslims need to know is another section of Muslims would be targeted after they've finished with us until they wiped out the Muslim community. In fact a lot of people who were not Shi'as, were also killed in Zaria, so this should be a wakeup call for people to realize the fact that our enemies are at war with Islam and Muslims.

Culled from the book: DECEMBER 2015 MASSACRE OF SHIITES IN NIGERIA: Survivors Accounts

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Picture of Mando mass grave where KDSG admitted burying 347 Shiites in the middle of the night

