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Member of Parliament

Bawku Central Constituency

Representative to the ECOWAS Parliament

Tuesday 7th February 2023

The Right Honourable Speaker,

Statement in Parliament on the Recent Military Killings in Bawku

Sumaila Jafaru, a 12 year old boy watched soldiers gruesomely kill his father in a garden at Baratinga, a suburb of Missiga electoral Area in Bawku Municipality. 12 years old Jafaru took to his heels and headed in the direction of their family home. I personally saw bullet holes on the wall of their house caused by gunshots by soldiers who shot at this 12 years boy and missed him as he sought to escape their brutality. Upon reaching in front of his family house, Jafaru jumped into a mud barn used to store dry hay in front of the compound. Eyewitnesses ~~account to~~ say that from afar they saw the men in military uniform who chased 12 years old Jafaru shoot into the barn and subsequently they saw the hay in the barn burning. 12 year old Jafaru was most likely hit by these bullets shot into the barn in which he sought to hide but the fire started burning his body in the barn.

Jafaru's mother run out of the house and realizing that her 12 year old son was in the burning mud barn hurriedly went for a bucket of water to pour into the barn. Eyewitnesses say they saw the men in military uniform prevent her. She persisted in wanting to pour water into the burning barn and ultimately they shot her hand to completely disable her from trying to rescue her 12 years old son.

Her husband is dead. Her 12-year son is dead and burning in a barn and she has sustained gunshot wounds and bleeding profusely. Jafaru's late father, and her husband, Adamu Sumaila aged 32 and whose house address is No. ME43 Baratinga, Missiga was married to two wives and survived by 7 children. He was executed by the soldiers who dragged him out of a nearby house that he had run to hide. Eyewitnesses saw the soldier shoot him at close range in the Valley where he was fetching water with a donkey cart. The valley is near Songuri Primary School and houses a number of dry-season gardens.

Rt Honourable Speaker.

Six other persons were similarly shot and killed in the valley in military-style execution within the view of eyewitnesses. Four of them were apprehended in the valley and after their hands were tied to their backs, the men in Ghana Armed Forces uniforms took turns shooting them one after the other as they cried aloud and asked for mercy. I saw with my very eyes the blood of these helpless victims of the men who are supposed to protect them. The valley has many mango trees. Some of the gardeners took refuge in the trees. So what the soldiers did was within their full view and hearing and they have come forward to give eyewitness accounts. These 6 executed citizens included the following:

1. Akudugu Bugnaba Karim

A 31 year old nurse was running away when he heard gunshots from the armored vehicles and soldiers on foot approaching their community. His home address is MC 146 Songuri- Missiga. He was married and survived by 3 children. His mother, Issifu Ayishetu, and father Akudugu Issifu are both alive. He died of gunshot wounds. Eyewitnesses confirm seeing him being chased by a group of military men, some on foot and others by the use of an armored vehicle. This incident occurred at the same "valley of death" near Sunguri primary school where some members of the community had sought refuge.

2. Abunbiana Madi

Aged 33 year old man was survived by three (3) wives and six (6) children. He lived at ~~the address~~ MC 147, Songuri at the Missiga Electoral Area. His father, Mamudu Abunbiana and mother, Mamudu Salamatu are both alive. He was a motorcycle mechanic temporarily living and working in Kumasi but had just come home to visit this family. He died of gunshot wounds by the military. Men wearing military uniforms were seen chasing him on foot while some were in the armor vehicle and shot at him as though it was a game. He was subsequently apprehended and murdered in the "valley of death".

3. Kassim Issah

Age: 33 and ~~lived at the address~~ ^{resident of} House No. ME43, Zoogin Missiga. He was married with 1 child. His mother, Kassim Habiba is still alive. He died of military gunshot wounds on his head. Eyewitnesses say he was shot in the head at very close range in the "valley of death" ~~when he took~~ ^{where} refuge on a mango tree.

4. Ndeego Mumuni

Age: 39 and a resident of house number ME23, Baratinga, Missiga. He was married to one wife and had 5 children. He died of gunshot wounds inflicted by the military. He was in his garden watering his plants in the garden. The location of incident was his garden in the same "valley of death".

5. Haruna kodus

Aged 17 a resident of house No. ME36 Zoogin, Missiga. Died of gunshots by the military in the same valley.

6. Ayuma Eliasu

Aged 37 and a resident of Sarabogo, Pusiga. He happened to be in the vicinity. He is married with 2 wives and survived by 7 children. He died of gunshot wounds inflicted by the military.

Incident occurred in the same valley near Sunguri primary school.

Rt. Honourable Speaker,

These victims of military execution were either at their gardens in the valley or had run into the valley from their homes upon hearing the approaching military gunfire whilst at home.

I have personally gone into the valley and walked around the community to observe and understand army troop movement that morning of 1st February 2023. I have met and listened to eyewitnesses who gave accounts of what they saw and heard. I believe them.

The Assembly Member of the Missiga Electoral Area, Mr. Musah Bukari, braved it and at the risk of being killed, approached the soldiers and pleaded with them to stop what they were doing. The soldiers physically assaulted him until he was bleeding profusely. But he stood his ground and insisted that the soldiers must stop what they were doing. The soldiers got angry that his effort had distracted them and diverted their attention and gave an opportunity for those hiding in the trees to escape their killings. Please join me to applaud and recognize the bravery and heroism of the Assembly Member whose actions saved several lives that morning. He is slowly recovering from his wounds. May God bless this brave and courageous leader.

Rt Honourable Speaker

The Ghana Armed Forces did not deny the various killings. In a widely publicized statement ~~of~~, ~~the report~~, they mention that they “neutralized armed men” in Guzesi valley that day. Mysteriously, they did not retrieve a single weapon from any of the alleged combatants. Their explanations are clearly untenable.

Rt Honourable Speaker,

The military in Bawku has been inflicting brutality on both sides in the conflict. On 26th January they shot and killed Imoro Salifu in front of his house in Patelmi in Bawku township. He was aged 59 years. He was a resident of house No: J25, Patelmi, Bawku. He is survived by 2 wives and 6 children.

Dauda Salifu also aged 60 years was shot and killed in front of his house at No: J24 Patelmi, Bawku. He is survived by a wife and 5 children. The incident occurred in Patelmi.

Both incidents occurred on the 26th of January 2023.

Both in the township and the outskirts of Bawku, we now have evidence that the operational style of the military has evolved to include shooting and killing citizens that they have been tasked to protect. I wish to condemn all such reckless killings. I equally condemn any act of killings by all the factions themselves in the conflict in Bawku. No one has legal authority to deprive any innocent citizen of his life. It is unacceptable that youth have drawn lines that cannot be crossed by the other factions. Those in the township must live in freedom and be able to travel out in safety. Those in the outskirts of Bawku must also freely access the central township. Let me also condemn the actions of those who have mounted road blocks in the past in the environs of Bawku and the North East Region and engaged in armed attack of travelers from Bawku. We should be a community governed by laws and not the ~~mi~~ght of guns.

I call on all, including the youth on both sides of the conflict, to respect the sanctity of lives in Bawku. I urge the youth to appreciate that the military was brought in to protect lives and property in Bawku. The military must also realize that they are dealing with human lives which they have

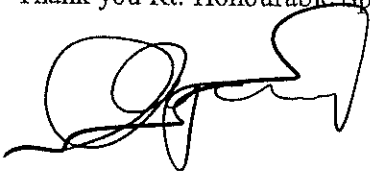
a duty, first and foremost, to protect even in very trying circumstances. I will engage the military constructively on the way forward.

However, I call on Parliament to look into the military brutalities and their operational style in Bawku. I have petitioned the Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice (CHRAJ) to address these specific egregious human rights violations occasioned by these cold blooded executions by the soldiers of the 10 citizens of Bawku. Within military regulations I expect the command to take the appropriate remedial action.

As a nation, we should leave no stone unturned to ensure the accountability of every organ of state, including law enforcement agencies like the military. It is by demonstrating that our systems are able to hold everyone accountable that we will stop others from also taking the law into their own hands. We should not allow the seeds of radicalization to be sowed in any of our communities. Let this Parliament demonstrate that we are a functioning democracy abiding by the supreme values of Freedom and Justice.

Meanwhile, I ask for calm in Bawku. No youth should try and engage the military. The cooperation of everyone with the military is needed to see a restoration of peace.

Thank you Rt. Honourable Speaker



Mahama Ayariga MP

Bawku Central

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