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Agence France-Presse | 01/11/2012 8:46 AM

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KANO - Gunmen killed three people in an attack Tuesday on a Christian village in northern Nigerian Bauchi state, police and community leaders said.

Unknown gunmen launched the pre-dawn attack on a farming village in the predominantly Christian district of Tafawa Balewa, bordering central Plateau state.

"There was an attack on Dalman village by some unidentified gunmen but we still don't have details of casualties," Bauchi state police commissioner Ikechukwu Aduba said.

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The secretary of the Sayawa ethnic group council of elders, Bukata Ziyadi said three people were killed in the attack.

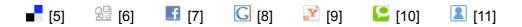
"The victims bore gunshot wounds and machete cuts on their heads," he said.

There is deep-seated mutual suspicion and animosity between the majority Sayawa, who are mainly Christians, and the minority Hausa-Fulanis community in the area, most of whom are Muslims.

Night-time attacks and reprisals have continued in the area since a billiard hall dispute between a Christian owner and a Muslim customer in January last year led to sectarian clashes that left at least 35 dead and 50 homes and a mosque burnt.

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