

3 killed, houses burnt as Bauchi birthday party turns deadly

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By Jimitita Onoyume & Perez Brisibe

NO fewer than three people were killed, while two houses and a car were burnt in the early hours of yesterday as party-goers clashed at a birthday bash in Bauchi, Police said.

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The Police said a minor disagreement at the birthday party snowballed into violence.

Eyewitnesses at Yelwa area of Bauchi State said their sleep was disrupted when they began to hear shootings at about 1a.m.

“The shooting was deafening and it lasted for hours as we heard footsteps of people running,” said a trader, who only introduced himself as Mr. Matthew.

“The shootings, which we later came to understand was from the soldiers and policemen deployed to quell the fracas, lasted till dawn. We learned that some lives were lost in the fight,” he added.

Eyewitness account

A female eyewitness, who would not want her name mentioned, gave an account of how the attack happened.

Her story: “It was a mere kids’ birthday party that took place in Laushi near the mobile telecom mast.

“Suddenly, they began to enter people’s houses. At the first house they entered, they rounded up the man and hacked him to death using cutlasses and knives. After that, they set the house on fire.

“The second house that was burnt was even more pathetic. When they were advancing towards, some neighbours went and alerted the man who quickly moved his family and children out on time to a family friend’s house.

“Sadly, the man returned to the house, locked himself up and the attackers set fire on the houses, burning him alive.

“The third man that was killed was on a bike when they stopped him and began to beat him up. They poured petrol on him and set him ablaze,” said the woman, who had just returned from the Police station where she said her younger brother, who knew nothing about the fight, was being detained.

Police report

The Police Public Relations Officer in the state, Kamal Datti, disclosed that 75 persons have so far been arrested in connection with the incident.

Mr. Datti, a Deputy Superintendent, confirmed that lives were lost in the fracas, adding “what actually happened was that yesterday, in the night, some group of persons were celebrating at a birthday party at Lushi area, during which they had a misunderstanding, and in the process, a fight erupted among them.

“As a result of the fight, three people were killed, two houses and a car were burnt, while five persons were injured.

“What the Police want to make clear about this incident is that it is not a religious crisis. It is just a fight among some groups of people and it started from a birthday party.”