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3 Militants Shot Dead in Dagestan

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MAKHACHKALA — Security forces killed three militants in Dagestan on Sunday after trapping them inside a house that went up in flames during a gunbattle, police said.

Television footage showed the house in the city of Buinaksk on fire during the nighttime operation. Two bodies also were shown.

One of the dead militants was suspected of organizing a suicide car bombing at the Buinaksk military base in September that killed four soldiers and wounded 34 others, local Interior Ministry spokesman Vyacheslav Gasanov said.

All three militants were accused of involvement in the killing of policemen, armed attacks on civilians and extortion of money from businesses, he said.

Violence in Dagestan is linked to an Islamist insurgency that has spread from Chechnya to other Russian republics in the North Caucasus.

Sakhratula Nazhmudinov, who was among those killed Sunday, was believed to have organized the attack on the military base, Gasanov said. In the attack, the driver of an

explosives-laden car plowed through a gate and headed for an area where soldiers were quartered in tents, but soldiers opened fire on the car before it reached the center of the base and it exploded after ramming a military truck.

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