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World Watch Monitor (29.01.2018) - <http://bit.ly/2nyKiO5> - Residents of Roum village in the Far North region of Cameroon woke up to two churches and many houses ablaze on the night of 15 January. The fire was claimed by Boko Haram militants, who had stormed the village late at night. Four people were killed.

Apart from the Union des Eglise Evangelique (UEEC) Church and a Catholic church, the fire also destroyed 93 huts, 20 food storehouses, and 11 motorbikes, a local newspaper reported.

On the same night, a health centre belonging to the UEEC, not far from Roum, was reported attacked.

Earlier this month, Nigeria-based Boko Haram militants attacked other towns in the same region, such as Mozogo and Moskota.

"We hear it and it almost means nothing again to us because they come in and loot and make away with our property," a church leader in Moskota told World Watch Monitor. "During one of such attacks, they made away with several cows belonging to the population. We tried to run away also when they came, and sometimes we just grow weary of running when they attack, but we can't help it."

The parts of the Far North region that share a border with Nigeria have been most affected by Boko Haram's insurgency. The department of Mayo-Tsanga, which includes Mozogo and Moskota, is one of the militants' constant targets.

In August 2017, six siblings were kidnapped from Moskota during a night raid by Boko Haram, during which their father, Adamu Nguda, was killed and their mother left behind in a state of total shock. Nguda was a church elder in Mouldougwa before the family became displaced and moved to Moskota. The children, between the ages of three and 15, were able to escape from captivity and were later found near the border with Nigeria by a group of vigilantes.

Boko Haram started carrying out attacks over the border in Cameroon's Far North in 2013.

The violence worsened after President Paul Biya vowed in May 2014 to "declare war" on the group. In response, the jihadists launched an offensive against army positions and several other locations, causing great damage to local populations, especially the churches.

According to the UNHCR, the Boko Haram insurgency has caused more than 170,000 people in the Far North region to flee their homes, while the area has received at least 73,000 Nigerian refugees escaping the jihadists' attacks at home, although many of them have started to return to Nigeria in the last couple of years. A great number of the displaced are Christians.

In spite of Nigerian President Muhammadu Buhari's claims that Boko Haram had been defeated, the group carried out 150 attacks in 2017 – mostly in Nigeria, but also in Cameroon, Niger and Chad – and this was 23 more attacks than in 2016, according to the BBC.
