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AFP (12.01.2023) - Nine people were killed when suspected jihadists attacked a mosque in northeastern Burkina Faso, local sources said Thursday.

The attack happened at around nightfall on Wednesday in the village of Goulgountou in Burkina's Sahel region, when assailants arrived on motorbikes and herded worshippers inside the mosque, a witness said.

"They separated out the women, children and elderly and then made sermons to try to convince worshippers of abandoning" their form of faith, the source said.

"A discussion even started up with the imam, and because he refused he was executed," the source said.

"They tried to cut his throat, but he fought back, saying he wanted to die standing up, so the terrorists shot him in the head," a local resident said, adding that he had attended the victims' funeral on Thursday.

"Eight other worshippers, mainly community leaders, were shot dead in the same way."

Goulgountou is located close to the gold mining town of Falagountou, which lies near the border with Niger.

The area has suffered several incursions by suspected jihadists since the start of the week, the sources said.

Thousands of people have died and more than two million people have fled their homes since jihadists began launching attacks on Burkina Faso from neighbouring Mali in 2015.

More than a third of the country's territory lies outside of government control.

The insurgency fuelled two coups last year among army officers angered at the rising toll.

Photo : Burkinabe soldiers aboard a military vehicle. Photo: Olympia De Maismont/AFP/Getty

