

Cameroon sentences 89 Boko Haram militants to death

• Kills another 20 in raid in northern Nigeria

Residents of northern Cameroon have praised a military court for sentencing 89 members of Boko Haram to death after finding them guilty of terrorism charges.

Two other people were acquitted by the court on the same charges in January. The 89 suspects were convicted for their role in various attacks in the north of the country.

The executions are the first since a new anti-terror law was enacted in 2014 in Cameroon, which is part of a multinational force along with Nigeria and others aimed at combating the group's spread in West Africa.

Some 850 alleged members of Boko Haram, which pledged allegiance to the Islamic State

militant group (ISIS) in 2015, are being detained in Cameroon, according to the BBC's Hausa service.

BBC Hausa service quoted a Garoua resident as saying: I'm glad justice has been served, we support the court's decision because what they are doing is against Islam."

Another person said: They are just killing innocent people, I don't care about their fate as long as they have been confirmed to have links with Boko Haram."

Human rights groups have called for the reform of Cameroon's justice system after it emerged that those convicted have no right to appeal against the judgement.

In another development, Cameroonian soldiers killed 20 Boko Haram fighters on Wednesday during a raid in northern Nigeria carried out by a multinational force tasked with stamping out the Islamist militants, Reuters quoted military sources yesterday.

Cameroon commander General Jacob Kodjisaide the Islamist fighters were killed in the Nigerian town of Djibila, which is about 10 km (six miles) from the Cameroon border.

A spokesman for Cameroon's Defence Ministry, Colonel Didier Badjeck, said 12 hostages were freed and munitions and armoured vehicles were seized during the opera-

tion.

Boko Haram militants have been suspected of carrying out suicide bombings particularly in Cameroon's Far North region. The group upped its activities last year across Nigeria's borders in Cameroon, Chad and Niger.

President Paul Biya has vowed to wipe out Boko Haram and said in his New Year message in December 2015 that "not one centimeter of our territory has been ceded to the aggressors."

In a video published in January 2015, Boko Haram leader Abubakar Shekau threatened to attack Cameroon and assassinate Biya unless the Francophone country abandoned its secular constitution and embraced Islam.