

Lightning kills four pupils, injures six

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BUTAMBALA. Four pupils from two different schools died on the spot after they were struck by lightning while participating in sports competition.

The incident happened during a heavy downpour as the pupils from various schools gathered to support their schools in an inter-school football competition at Kitagobwa playground in Ngando Sub-county, Butambala District, last Thursday.

The deceased pupils were identified as Kuzeifa Ntale, 14, from Kitagobwa Umea Primary School, Muhammed Sozi, 16, from Mabanda Muslim Primary School, Abdul Malik, 13, and Isma Serugga, 16, both from Kitagobwa Primary School.

"The rain was characterised by lightning and storms. Many residents lost their banana plantations and some houses were destroyed. There were six primary schools involved and each school represented a sub-county," Mr Mustapha Yiga, the head teacher of Bulo Junior School, said.

Police speaks out

Mr Phillip Mukasa, the Katonga region police spokesperson, confirmed the incident.

"Four pupils in Butambala have been struck by lightning and died instantly. The injured ones (six in number) have been taken to a clinic but we are monitoring them to see that they recover well. We shall give you more details later," Mr Mukasa said in telephone interview with this newspaper last Thursday.

Police from the nearby Bugobango Police Post took the bodies to Gombe Hospital mortuary, while the injured pupils were rushed to Rapha Medical Centre in Kikambwe village for medical attention.

Mr Mukasa advised parents to provide their children with shoes to minimise the risks of being struck by lightning.

"Many school children, especially in remote areas, go to study without shoes. This is risky and parents should buy for their children shoes to avoid such tragedies in schools," he advised.

PAST INCIDENCIES

June 2011. Three children, all from one family, were struck dead by lightning during a lunch time downpour, as they left school for their home.

November 2015. Lightning killed 6