# Lightning strike kills 2 in Harare in rare incident in urban area [Zimbabwe]

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BULAWAYO – Two people died after being struck by lightning in Harare on Tuesday – a rare occurrence in an urban area, police said.

Event 1

Leonard Matipano, 33, was planting a maize crop in a field in an open space near Ridgeview, Belvedere, when he met his death.

Event 2

National police spokesman Assistant Commissioner Paul Nyathi said two brothers, Phillip Chiundudzi ,43, and Prosper Chiundudzi, 27, were struck by lightning while hiding from rain under a shed at Habakkuk Church at Retreat Park in Waterfalls. Philip succumbed to his injuries upon admission at a local hospital while Prosper was admitted at the same hospital in a serious condition.

The rain season, while bringing hope and joy for farmers, also comes with tragedy across the country. Zimbabwe is one of the world’s most lightning-prone countries: the holder of a world record in lightning-related fatalities. During the rainy season, lightning strikes typically kill up to 100 people, mostly rural dwellers.

Event 3

On November 11 this month, a woman was killed by lightning in the Gwatakwata area of Binga after her thatched roof kitchen caught fire from a lightning strike.

Event 4

Two days later, at Ndimimbili village in Lupane, Evans Moyo, 22, and his three-year-old daughter died from a lightning strike while sheltering from rain the kitchen. Moyo’s wife, Nomatter Moyo, 23, survived the strike with serious burns.

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Zimbabwe has the most deaths from a single lightning incident, according to the Guinness Book of World Records. On December 23, 1975, 21 people were killed by a single bolt of lightning at Chinamasa, a small rural community in Manicaland.

Zimbabwe’s high lightning incidence rate is blamed on the prevalence of granite outcrops across the country. A study by the University of Zimbabwe showed that granite is radioactive and discharges gamma rays up to the cloud, in the process ionizing the air molecules.