

Lightning kills 2 Webuye kids, neighbours suspect witchcraft (Kenya)

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Residents led by Sitikho ward JP MCA nominee Erick Soita Patroba mill at the home of Ngachi in Mangana village Webuye west constituency after two kids were struck dead by lightning on Sunday evening/BRIAN OJAMAA

A family in Mangana village, Webuye West constituency, is mourning the death of two children who were struck by lightning on Sunday evening as they prepared supper.

A third boy suffered serious burns and is fighting for his life in the Webuye Subcounty Hospital.

Three other children escaped unhurt when the lightning struck.

The deceased were pupils aged seven and five years.

Residents and relatives streamed to the homestead to console the family.

They said they had never witnessed such a tragedy in the area, and only heard stories of lightning striking trees, houses and animals — but not children inside a house.

They asked religious leaders to visit the home and pray with the family, suggesting the deaths could be the result of witchcraft.

Speaking to journalists who visited their home, Moses Ngachi, the father, said he and his wife were in the house, and their children were sheltering from the rain in the kitchen.

“I heard a loud noise and cries of my children. When I rushed outside, I found some of my children crying and others lay on the ground lifeless. The kitchen had been partly destroyed,” Ngachi said.

Ngachi said the lightning killed two of the seven children on the spot. The one with serious injuries was rushed to the hospital by a neighbour.

He said he raised the alarm and neighbours tried to administer first aid, without success.

The children’s mother was too traumatised to speak.

Briton Lusweti, one of the surviving children, said they were in the kitchen when all of a sudden they saw huge smoke, which was followed by a raging fire.

He said darkness engulfed the room and he fell on the ground unconscious. When he came to, his younger siblings lay on the floor with burns all over their bodies.

“My younger brothers were struck on the chest and were unconscious. I got up and ran outside, but it was still raining. I called my parents and neighbours who came and assisted the children. But they were already dead,” he said.

Jubilee’s Sitikho ward MCA candidate Erick Patroba was among the first people to visit and condole with the grieving family.

He urged the county government, through the department of Special Programmes led by director Julius Bakasa, to help the family with burial plans.

He also asked Bakasa to assist the family put up lightning arresters to prevent such a calamity in the future.

“As you can see, this family is very poor and their father, the sole breadwinner, is also not in good health.

“I am appealing to my fellow leaders and well-wishers to intervene and help this family bring home the bodies that are in the morgue for burial,” Patroba said.

Webuye police took the bodies to Webuye sub county hospital morgue.