**Tarmac Voodoo: Plane Struck By Lightning Exorcized After Landing**

 https://worldcrunch.com/what-the-world/tarmac-voodoo-plane-struck-by-lightning-exorcized-after-landing

*What happens when lightning strikes a plane? First, thanks to modern safety features, it flies on and lands without incident. But in Togo, airport staff last week made sure one such plane was thoroughly \*explored and inspected.*

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With [bolts of lightning](https://worldcrunch.com/blog/freak-lightning-storm-in-chile-kills-67-cows/c0s15537) regularly striking airplanes, aeronautics has long since developed technologies to ensure the planes can withstand the impact, and pilots and passengers can [safely continue their journey](https://worldcrunch.com/food-travel/fear-of-flying-there39s-a-special-flight-school-just-for-you).  
  
Yet last week in the West African country of Togo, an extra-layer of security was added after the plane landed safely: an exorcism ritual on the tarmac.  
  
Like the millions who go to airport chapels before take off, religions around the world seem to have a special relationship with [modern air travel](https://worldcrunch.com/coronavirus/airline-industry-arrival-time-for-the-nightmare-scenario). In Togo, where voodoo is widespread and highly respected, other measures are employed.  
  
The Ethiopian Airlines plane that regularly serves the New York-Lomé route, was hit just before landing June 20 at the airport in Togo's capital. Slightly damaged and unable to take off again, a group of voodoo priests were called in to exorcize the plane the following day.  
  
[Algerian daily *El Watan*](https://worldcrunch.us2.list-manage.com/track/click?u=bf931133a7ae98b961f49dd17&id=56563c4739&e=b89d1f2d80)reports that the ceremony consisted of splashing the plane with water and pouring liquor as an offering to appease the anger of Hiébiésso, the "divinity of thunder" in Mina, a local language spoken in South Togo. (Here's a [video of the rite](https://worldcrunch.us2.list-manage.com/track/click?u=bf931133a7ae98b961f49dd17&id=1755826159&e=b89d1f2d80))  
  
"When lightning strikes, it is our duty, for the sake of people's security, to identify and purify the area struck by this natural phenomenon." said Togbé Assiobo Nyagblondjor, president of the country's traditional priests confederation.  
  
Originally from Benin and Togo, the [voodoo religion](https://worldcrunch.com/coronavirus/africa39s-healers-quacks-and-charlatans-cash-in-on-coronavirus) counts 50 million believers around the world, including many in the [Caribbean](https://worldcrunch.com/paris-calling/my-friend-from-guadeloupe-and-me-what-it-means-to-be-french), [Brazil](https://worldcrunch.com/listbycountry/Brazil) and the [U.S. state of Louisiana](https://worldcrunch.com/default/old-square-new-orleans/travel-tourism-photography-french-quarter-louisiana/c0s16314).  
  
While Togo is officially a secular state, voodoo is widely accepted. The president of the National Agency of civilian aviation, colonel Latta Gnama, was personally present at the ritual held on the tarmac. "Everything was done to help them in their task," he said.  
  
Gnama also confirmed the necessary repairs to the damaged airplane were completed before the jet took to the air again. Either way you look at it, best to be double covered when flying.