

## 7 die in church lightning strikes [Zambia]

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SEVEN people have died after being struck by lightning at a church and a village in Eastern and Southern provinces.

The deaths occurred during heavy rains on Monday and Tuesday.

In Eastern Province's Vubwi district, the four that died were among congregants at Martyrs of Uganda Catholic Parish on Tuesday when lightning struck at about 11:00 hours.

Seven other victims that were seriously burnt have been admitted to Mwami Mission Hospital.

Eastern Province police deputy commissioner Patrick Bili confirmed the incident.

"Both the injured and the dead are adults but we are yet to determine their ages and gender.

They were putting a floor in the church when lightning struck," he said.

Chipata Diocese Bishop George Lungu said the catechist and another man with two ladies were doing some maintenance works in the church when they met their fate.

Bishop Lungu said doctors have described the condition of the injured as stable.

He said it is the first time that such a tragedy was experienced in the church.

Vubwi district council secretary John Kamanga, who visited Mwami Mission Hospital, said doctors at the hospital confirmed that four people had died while others were injured.

In the Pemba incident in Southern Province, among the three dead persons are a couple that died on the spot after lightning struck their houses following a downpour on Monday.

The lightning killed Kennedy Moonga, 27 and his 31-year-old wife, Monile Michelo, who was burnt beyond recognition. The couple's seven children were also injured, leaving three of them with serious burns.

They are admitted to Pemba clinic.

And 81-year-old Victoria Machaka also died during the storm which started on Sunday and continued on Monday.

Southern Province police commissioner Goldwin Phiri and Pemba district commissioner Reginald Mugoba confirmed in separate interviews the incidents which happened on Monday in Munamoomba and Hamazongo villages.

He said two villages in Pemba received heavy rains on Monday, which destroyed several houses other valuable properties.

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