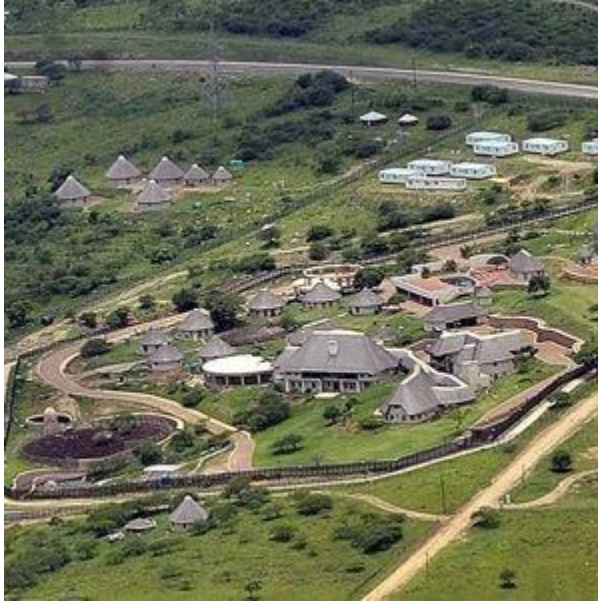


## Zuma's niece recounts her terror as Nkandla rondavel goes up in flames (South Africa)

<https://www.news24.com/SouthAfrica/News/zumas-niece-recounts-her-terror-as-nkandla-rondavel-goes-up-in-flames-20170125>

2017-01-25 13:00

By Amanda Khoza, News24



*Durban – A thatched rondavel on the flanks of President Jacob Zuma's Nkandla homestead was razed by fire when it was struck by lightning during a severe thunderstorm on Tuesday afternoon.*

*Zuma's niece Mabuyi Zuma, 43, on Wednesday recounted her terror as she scrambled to save her belongings from her burning rondavel in the KwaNxamalala village.*

*Mabuyi's father Khanya is Zuma's younger brother, she said.*

*She said she was alone in the thatched rondavel, situated next to her uncle Michael Zuma's rondavels, when the house was struck by lightning at around 16:30 on Tuesday.*

*"There was a bucket full of water and I threw the water towards the fire but unfortunately, the roof was too high."*

*Mabuyi said when the lightning bolt struck and the house caught fire, she could only get herself to safety.*

### **Uncle unaware**

*"Everything was destroyed. I lost everything; I only took my cellphone because it was the closest thing to me."*

*A tearful Zuma said her daughter, a Grade 5 pupil, went to school without her uniform on.*

*"I am sad that the house burnt down," she said.*

*When News24 called Michael Zuma he said he was not aware of the incident.*

*"I am not home and I have not been informed about the incident," he said.*

*Ward 14 councillor Bongokwakhe Mbambo confirmed the incident.*

*He said a huge thunderstorm had hit Nkandla.*

*"[The house]... is part of the Zuma family homes around the president's homestead. It looks exactly like some of the rondavels inside the president's homestead but it is situated outside the homestead [fence]. You pass the homestead to get to it.*

*"Everything was destroyed, they lost everything but luckily, no one was injured."*

### ***Not the first time***

*He said four other houses were destroyed during the thunderstorm, including one that collapsed and another that was blown away.*

*King Cetshwayo District Municipality disaster management confirmed receiving a report of a fire at KwaNxamalala.*

*The department's Sibongile Kunene said: "We received a report that the house caught fire after it was struck by lightning. We have sent someone to assess the damage."*

*Two neighbours told News24 they saw the house go up in flames.*

*One of them, who asked to remain anonymous said: "Shame, it was one of the Zuma homes. These [lightning strikes] happen all the time here in Nkandla. Every time there is a thunderstorm and lightning, houses are destroyed."*

*He said firefighters arrived at the scene but there was nothing they could do as "everything was burnt to the ground".*