

## Lightning kills three and injures 15 others at burial, Uganda

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Four people died over the weekend and 15 others were admitted to hospital in critical condition after they were struck by lightning in Alebtong district. Margaret Acen, James Awio and Tonny Abwango, died two hours after lightning struck them during Saturday's evening cloudburst at Omio village, Akura Sub-county in Alebtong.

Abwango reportedly died at Lira Medical Centre and Acen died at Lira Hospital two hours after they were rushed for medication. Awio died on the way to Alebtong Hospital.

Death at a funeral the victims had gathered under a tree at the home of Mr Opio Owino of Omio village in Akura sub-county where Opio's wife Hellen Opio was being buried. According to a medical report reportedly read at the burial, Hellen Opio died of typhoid.

"We were seated under a tree, when lightning struck 15 people, they all fell down," Mr Agustino Ajal, a father of one of the affected, said. "I did not sense any problem until I heard people crying. Little did I know that my son was among those struck," Ajal said.

Those in critical condition were rushed to various private health units and government hospitals in Lira and Alebtong towns. One of them, the chairman PTA, Omele Modern Primary School, David Omara, was still unconscious on Sunday. Medics said they were doing all their best to save his life.

Three pupils of Omele: James Owani (P.5), Ronald Ongeng (P.3) and Ambrose Obua (P.4), were among those admitted to Lira Hospital. However, nurses said their condition had improved.

"Generally, the condition of the patients has improved. Yesterday they were in shock, but they can now eat and talk, except one woman suffering from high blood pressure," Ms Rose Amongi, a senior nursing officer at the hospital, said. The Lira Resident District Commissioner, Ms Susan Akany, who visited the victims at Lira Hospital, urged scientists to carry out a study to minimise deaths by lightning.

"I want to commend the administration of Lira Hospital because we got them working to save the lives of our people," Ms Akany said.

### Lightning in Mbarara

Last week, three people: Farouk Musindo, Patrick Basiime Tumusiime and Didas Gumirensi, who were at a butcher in Kakoba Division, Mbarara town, were struck by lightning.

The lightning curse is then said to have struck Rubirizi District in Katerera sub-county, killing one Jennifer Kiiza who was harvesting water in the wee hours of the evening.