**Lightning kills three [Zimbabwe]**

 16 OCT, 2020 - 00:10

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**Midlands Bureau Chief**While farmers and the rest of Zimbabweans are happy about the rains, villagers in Gokwe North and Gokwe South are living in fear following the death of three locals who were struck by lightning in the past week.

As the country celebrates the onset of the wet season in anticipation of a good harvest and the filling up of dams for future water use, villagers in Nemangwe, Njelele and Chireya are already wishing the rains had not come.

Normal to above normal rainfall is expected in the 2020/21 rainy season.

A villager from Chief Nemangwe’s area was struck by lightning while sitting in his kitchen with his family. The kitchen didn’t catch fire and none of his relatives were injured.

In the last two rainy seasons, no villager was struck by lightning in the area, only some livestock.

In an interview yesterday, Chief Nemangwe said all was not well in Gokwe South and Gokwe North.

He said normal rains don’t result in people being struck by lightning.

Chief Nemangwe said one person who was struck by lightning was from Chief Njelele’s area, another from Chief

Chireya’s and the third from Maware area in his jurisdiction.

“We are living in fear, our people are living in fear because what is happening is not normal. We can’t have the early rains being accompanied by lightning which kills people. The early rains are normally cool, quiet and bring relief in the form of water for pastures, humans and animals,” he said.

“Three people one from Chief Njelele, one from Chief Chireya and the other from my area in Maware were all struck by lightning last week.”

The chief said there was an indication that the lightning could be associated with sorcery or witchcraft. He said they are now going to hold a ceremony for spirits to guard the people against sorcery or witchcraft.

Chief Nemangwe suspects that some people were unleashing umuthi (magic) on each other in the form of lightning.

“The first rains are supposed to be very peaceful and should bring relief to humans and livestock,” said Chief Nemangwe.

Chief Chireya from Gokwe North confirmed that one of his subjects died after being struck by lightning while penning his cattle on Thursday.

“In my area I have received one incident where a man who was attending to his cattle was struck and killed last Thursday. So, we are attending the vigil because if we don’t, people will die in numbers,” he said.

Chief Njelele said people should take extra precautions when it is raining to avoid being struck by lightning.

He said he will attend the night vigil.

Gokwe South District Development Coordinator Mrs Netsai Mushauri confirmed that she had received reports of villagers who were fatally struck by lightning in the past week.

Mrs Mushauri who is also the District Civil Protection chairperson encouraged villagers to take extra caution when it’s raining to protect themselves from lightning.

“Villagers are urged against standing under trees, not to use water or use electric gadgets when it’s raining. A human being can be a conductor of electricity and therefore there’s need to be careful,” she said.