**Weatherman warns of lightning strikes as heavy rains intensify [Rwanda]**

[Michel Nkurunziza](https://www.newtimes.co.rw/node/861377)

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Rwanda Meteorology Agency has warned of growing [lightning strikes](https://www.newtimes.co.rw/news/lightning-kills-two-nyabihu-district) as heavy rains intensify in different parts of the country. The forecast released by Meteo Rwanda on Wednesday February 23, indicated that growing lightning strikes during expected storms could be recorded in the districts of Kigali city**,**Bugesera, Rutsiro, Karongi, Rusizi and Nyamasheke.

The warning is also based on the report by the Ministry for Emergency Managing Management (MINEMA) last week showing that most of the disaster-related deaths were caused by lightning in less than two months. It shows that about 50 people killed by disasters from January up to Friday last week, over 20 people were killed by lightning strikes. The report indicates that 54 people were also injured by lightning strikes.

At least 59 lightning strikes have been recorded besides 27 flush floods, one hailstorm, 23 landslides, 10 mine disasters, 114 rainstorms and 11 windstorms, according to the report.

**30 students struck by lightning on Wednesday**

According to local media, lightning on the Wednesday morning struck 30 students from GS Gihinga in Kinzuzi sector of Rulindo district. No death was recorded apart from four students who are still being hospitalized in Rutongo hospital. According to reports, the lighting damaged four classrooms, the school administration office and damaged the electrical transmission line at the school.

**Subsidise lightning rods**

According to the advisory by MINEMA, people should seek shelter inside houses instead of under trees during rainstorms. It says people should not stay outside for various activities when a storm is mixed with [lightning.](https://www.newtimes.co.rw/opinions/watch-out-deadly-lightning-strikes) “Avoid using phones outside when it is raining and people have to unplug electronic equipment. The residents are advised to avoid walking on bicycles and motorcycles during storms,” MINEMA warns.

Jean Baptiste Nsengiyumva, the Disaster and Natural Hazard Risk Manager and researcher told The New Times that besides inculcating behaviors of avoiding risks from lightning through community education and awareness, there is also a need for increasing lightning protection facilities. “The facilities should be set up in public places like schools, markets, recreational spaces among others. This could reduce the intensity of lightning strikes which claim lives of people and damage other properties,” he noted. He said the cost of lightning rods should be subsidized to make them more affordable for communities that are prone to lightning. In 2018, Members of Parliament urged the government to [fast track the procurement and installation of lightning rods](https://www.newtimes.co.rw/news/govt-urged-expedite-acquisition-lightning-rods) or lightning conductors in public spaces to avert the lightning induced deaths and other damages although the installation status is yet to be known as of now.