**Malawi: 2 children dead as lightning strikes 5 in Malawi**

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Blantyre, Malawi (PANA) - Two children are reported to have died in a remote village in the southern tea-growing district of Thyolo, some 40 kilometres from the Malawi commercial capital, Blantyre, after being struck by a bolt of lightning.

"We are just receiving reports that five children were struck by lightning last week and two died," Edith Kachotsa, the Thyolo Police spokesperson, told PANA Monday.

She said it was raining lightly and the children were dancing to music outside a beer hall when the bolt of lightning struck them.

"All the five children became unconscious after being struck by the lightening but medics failed to resuscitate two of them," she said.

Kachotsa said this was not the first time for a bolt of lightning to claim lives in the district during this rainy season. She said another child was also killed in January.

This year's rainy season in Malawi has also been characterised by heavy storms and violent flooding that have left at least 176 people confirmed dead, over 200 missing and 230,000 displaced.

Incidents of fatal lightning strikes are not uncommon during rainy seasons in Malawi.

In 2013, a bolt of lightning killed eight in a church in the capital, Lilongwe, while in 2001 in the southern border district of Nsanje, five people were killed while over 100 others were injured when a huge bolt of lightning struck a crowed football pitch.

Lightning is often associated with myths, including witchcraft, in Malawi. Some people believe that one can send lightning through magic to kill an enemy while others believe that if one puts on something red and stands under a tree when it is raining one is susceptible of being struck by a bolt of lightning.
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