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## Cameroon lightning strike kills 5 schoolchildren

By EMMANUEL TUMANJONG (AP) — Sep 16, 2009

YAOUNDE, Cameroon — A lightning bolt killed five children at their school in northwest Cameroon as they were preparing to begin their school day, Cameroon's state radio said Wednesday.

Some 58 others were taken to a hospital near the small village of Bamali, which is some 285 miles (460 kilometers) northwest of the capital, Yaounde.

Dr. Kwazo Kedze, chief medical officer at the Ndop district hospital, said 34 children were still being treated for shock and other ailments Wednesday.

"It happened at about 8:20 a.m., when the children were preparing to start studies," said teacher Moses Kengong. "Some were on the verandah and others inside their classrooms, and some began crying 'Please sir, help me, help me,' shortly after the thunder strike."

Several witnesses, including a prominent traditional ruler, said they believed the event had mystical roots. Belief in witchcraft is common in the West African nation, and a thunderbolt is traditionally seen as a way of settling disputes.

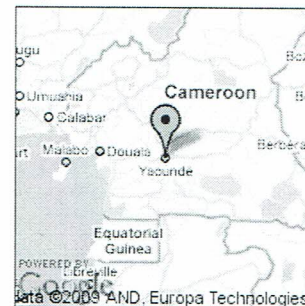
"There's something mystical about this incident," Bamali traditional ruler Fon Idrissu Ndofoa told state-run Cameroon Radio Television on Wednesday.

Mountainous northwestern Cameroon has been deluged with floods and landslides in recent months. At least six people have been killed by floods and landslides triggered by heavy downpour in the region.

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