# **How lightning conductors were stolen from 120 govt schools - Uganda** <https://www.monitor.co.ug/uganda/news/national/how-lightning-conductors-were-stolen-from-120-govt-schools-4950690>

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Unknown criminals have stolen lightning arresters from all 124 government primary schools, triggering a new wave of criminality in Busia District. The criminals stole the copper rod and dug the base in the hope of retrieving mercury and the filaments of the anti-lightning conductors.

A survey by Monitor in the 124 government primary schools in the District established massive vandalism of the lightning arresters. Most of the arresters were stolen during the December holidays, after criminals took advantage of the schools' lack of fences and security guards.

With rains soon to resume, thousands of pupils in these schools are at a high risk of being struck by lightning in a district listed among the most lightning-prone.

At Busiabala Primary School in Lunyo Sub-county, the criminals have stolen all four anti-lightening conductors that had been installed on the classroom blocks.Ms Josephine Nabwire, a teacher at Busiabala Primary School, revealed that four arresters had been installed, but all had been stolen.

Mr Amos Oundo, the local council Chairperson of Sihubira village, explained that they woke up one morning and discovered all the lightning arresters stolen.

"It appears the vandals took advantage of the dark to steal all the anti-lightening conductors that had been installed on all the classroom blocks,’’ Mr Oundo said.At Buhehe Primary in Buhehe Sub County, all the lightning conductors were stolen from all the classroom blocks.

Mr Yudah Opio, the school headmaster, noted that at the close of the third term, the lightning arresters were all intact, but two weeks ago, when the school opened, they found all had been removed.

He made a report to police, and a general inquiry file was opened to investigate the theft. "We suspect the thieves should be from within this community because apart from stealing the arresters, windowpanes had also been vandalised,’’ Mr Ojambo said in Busia Municipality, all the seven government-aided schools of Busia Integrated, Maranchi, Busia Border, Buchicha, Mawero East, Arubain Islamic, and Madibira Primary Schools have suffered vandalism of the arresters.

Mr Siraji Majibo, the headteacher of Madibira Primary School, narrates that all the 15 classroom blocks had arresters stolen, leaving more than 3,000 pupils at risk of lightning strikes. Busia District is listed among the districts prone to lightning, according to a report by the Ministry of Disaster Preparedness.

Last year in August, lightning struck a farmer in Gunda Village in Buhehe Sub -county and killed several of his livestock during an afternoon drizzle. The other districts listed among the most prone are Bugiri, Bushenyi, Kibaale, Amuru, Nwoya, Kyegegwa, Mitooma, Tororo, Lira, and, Kalangala. As a result, the Ministry of Education designed a policy to have all classroom blocks installed with lightning arresters in high-risk districts.

Mr Jimmy Ngolobe, the Busia District Natural Resources Officer, observed that the Education Ministry policy was to have all new buildings constructed with lightning arresters. He said with the district too prone to lightning, the vandalism leaves thousands of pupils at risk with rains set to resume.

The cost of installing single lightning arresters goes for between Shs2m and Shs2.5mMr Rodrick Ojambo said whereas he would have loved to have new arresters fixed on all his classroom blocks, the cost was impeding.