

Lightning kills 3 at Xmas party

by: Lindie Whiz

THREE people taking shelter in a hut from a Christmas Eve downpour died after being struck by

Police said 16 others suffered varying degrees of burns in the same incident in Jotsholo, Matabele

Lupane District Chief Superintendent Johannes Gowo said the victims had gathered for a Christmas home of one Jabulani Ncube in Ngondo Village when it started raining just after 11.30PM.

"Some people moved into the kitchen to shelter from the light showers. A few minutes later, lightning demolished the hut," Chief Superintendent Gowo said.

"Three people died on the spot while 16 were rushed to Fatima Clinic with varying degrees of burns. Two were treated and discharged the same day and 14 were admitted but are now said to be in poor condition."

The dead included members of the same family -- Esnath Tshuma, 41 and Farai Tshuma, 2 -- and Gladmore Luphahla, 8.

Superstitious locals have blamed the incident on witchcraft.

One local man who helped pull survivors from the rubble said: "I was asleep when I heard a loud explosion which was followed by people screaming. We went out to investigate and found the hut destroyed and smouldering.

"I think an evil villager caused the rain to fall and then sent the lightning to kill these people. It is the light showers produced the lightning that caused so much damage.

"People are now living in fear as they thought whoever had sent the lightning would do it again."

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3 KILLED, 16 INJURED

HUT

41, 2, 8