

Uganda: Catechist, Wife Die As Lightning Hits Church

BY PATRICK OKINO, 11 MAY 2012

Four people including a catechist died on the spot when lightning struck St. George Catholic church at Agweno-Otongowelo village in Alito sub-county, Kole district Wednesday.

The evening tragedy unfolded when Geoffrey Okullo, the catechist was conducting baptism training for eight members of the church. His wife Dorcus Okullo also died in the incident which occurred at around 6pm.

Five other people sustained life-threatening injuries and were rushed to Atapara hospital in Oyam district. The lightning also burnt one grass-thatched house in the area.

Pius Ogwang, a resident identified two other victims as Abalo Anyce who is a pupil of Ogwangadar Primary School and Daniel Okello, a Primary Seven child of Barowoo.

"It started raining at around 6pm. Then immediately we saw sharp lightning and a thunder," Ogwang narrated the brief but fatal incident.

"From that point, one child came running to us and told us that there was a serious lightning in the church and that all people inside had gone to sleep," he added.

He said when residents rushed to the church, they found four people had already died and five others were unconscious.

Among those admitted at Atapara hospital include Ayo Geoffrey, Owany Denis, AtimBarabra and Alwoc Juliet.

The catechist's child, Belmos Okwanga was admitted at Barowoo health centre but later was discharged.

Alito LC3 chairman, Moses Ocilo said it was the second time such an incident is happening in the same church.

He said last year, nine people sustained injuries when the wall of the church collapsed on them while under a heavy downpour.

"We have failed to find out what could be the problem," Ocilo said, adding that the district should help the families of the victims.