

Lightning kills family of five in Zimbabwe

REPORT: ZIMBABWE

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By **Ryan Truscott in Harare**

Five people have been killed by a single bolt of lightning in northern Zimbabwe. Lightning strikes are becoming increasingly common during the summer rainy season and some experts blame deforestation.

The dead are all members of a single family.

Tinashe Simbarashe, his wife Sheila Makopa and their three children were all killed when lightning struck their hut near the small town of Alaska in northern Zimbabwe on Thursday.

State radio says a neighbour was sheltering with them but escaped unhurt.

The lightning appears to have struck the family's kitchen hut.

Zimbabwean family homesteads normally number several huts with the kitchen and sleeping areas usually separate.

Fatal lightning strikes are not uncommon in Zimbabwe during the rainy season which starts in November.

That may be partly due to deforestation, which can leave low huts as the tallest objects around.

Lightning strikes in urban areas are a lot less common.

Police are encouraging rural Zimbabweans to erect locally made lightning conductors at their homes.

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5 KILLED

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