

Five pupils struck by lightning buried

BUSHENYI

By Chris Mugasha

A sombre mood hung around Nyakabingo Primary School in Kakanju sub-county, Bushenyi district as hundreds of mourners gathered at the school to pay their last respects to the five pupils who were struck dead by lightning on Wednesday.

Mourners stood in shock as three district double cabin pick-up trucks drove in the five coffins from a mortuary at Kampala International University (KIU) teaching hospital in Ishaka.

The coffins contained the remains of Benson Ahimbisibwe (Primary Two), Vitas Asasira (Primary One), Ophras Mutahunga (Primary Six), Anxious Tusiwirwe and Owomugisha Betina.

Mutahunga, whose home is just near the school, was struck while he was rescuing his goat's kids from the heavy rain.

The service to send off the pupils was presided over by the Bishop of West Ankole Diocese, Yona Katoneene.

"To lose young people at this age is a national tragedy," Katoneene said. "It is a loss to the nation".

The mourners appealed to the Government to prioritise the installation of lightning conductors on all buildings in schools.

"We should install lightning



Local leaders led by the Igara West MP Raphael Magezi (right) put wreaths on the coffins that contained the remains of pupils who were struck dead by lightning. Photos by Chris Mugasha

What the residents say



Elias Muhereza
The Government should help us install lightning conductors on all buildings to save the lives of our children.



Jane Karemiri
Many parents lost interest in government schools and those still there cannot afford private schools.



K. Kakureiremu
The Government should not leave such a sensitive matter (lightning conductor) in the hands of parents, some of them are too poor to afford them.

conductors on every building to save the lives of children," said the Kakanju LC3

chairperson, Lauben Kananga. The headteacher, Annet Namata, said when it started

raining, they advised the children to seek shelter in the building that was next to one

with lightning conductors. "Amid the heavy rain, one pupil came complaining

that he had been struck by lightning. We immediately moved around all the classes, only to find bodies scattered," the headteacher recalled. Those in the building which has a lightning conductor were not affected. The bishop said they had engaged parents in a campaign of making sure every building gets a lightning conductor. The Igara West MP, Raphael Magezi, who purchased the coffins, described the incident as sad. Bernard Muhumuza, the greater Bushenyi regional criminal investigations officer, said there should be some fact-finding mission to establish why particularly this corridor (western part of the Bushenyi district) is always hit by lightning.

Other incidents

Six pupils of St. Andrew's Primary School in Kyamuhunga sub-county suffered shock due to lightning last week.

Asaph Muharwe of Mayanga in Mitooma district died in September due to lightning.

Last year, seven pupils of Buramba Primary School were struck dead by lightning. Muhumuza suspected that the corridor might be endowed with minerals and explorers might be using substances which are not environmentally friendly to prospect for them.