

National

Seven students hospitalized after lightning strike

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Lightning strikes are common in the Albertine region of Uganda.

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HOIMA - Seven students of Mandela Secondary School remain hospitalized at EDPA Medical Centre, Hoima town after they were struck by lightning during heavy rains Monday night. No lives were claimed.

The incident occurred while students were in class for the evening prep session at around 9.00pm local time, some of them said.

A few of their friends, who include the seven admitted, fainted from the lightning strike.

A student found attending to the injured students at the health facility told New Vision on Tuesday that the victims fainted from a thunderous bang following the lightning.

They were later rushed to the medical centre for treatment.

Most parts of the country are receiving heavy rains following a long dry spell in the recent months.

People living in high-risk areas – prone to landslides and floods – have been warned to take caution.

An official from the meteorological department has [said the rains would continue until October](#).

Albertine region police spokesperson, Lydia Tumushabe sounded reports by the school head of Mandela Secondary school that the Monday night incident revolved around a loud bang.

Headteacher Francis Nzigu said the students fainted following a loud bang.

The police spokeswoman said most of the affected students had a history of Asthma and heart attack, and that they only suffered shock, which could have caused them to fall down.

She identified some of the students as Florence Murungi (S.2), Juliet Nanbunya (S.2) and Julian Baker Kabateremwa (S.3) who is reportedly to be in critical condition.

Others affected were Sheila Kimuli (S.3), Gloria Katushabe (S.3), Brendah Nyakojo (S.1) and Helen Murungi of S.1.

Emanuel Agaba, a staffer at the hospital who was on duty that night, said that by the time the students were brought to the health facility, most of them had slumped into unconsciousness.

He said others could have been injured as they struggled through a stampede out of the classroom.

Police's Tumushabe urged the public not to move bare-footed during rainy weather and also consider wearing rubber-soled footwear.

The Albertine region is one of the areas highly prone to lightning strikes.

The police publicist called on schools and churches to install lightning conductors on their building to reduce risk of injury and worst, death.

She warned that police will have to deal with schools which do not conform with the education ministry's policy on lightning conductor installation on buildings.