# Lightning Strikes Kill 22 as Storm Death Toll Reaches 31 - Malawi<https://africabrief.substack.com/p/lightning-strikes-kill-22-as-storm>The department urged residents to avoid open spaces and trees during thunderstorms.

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Winston Mwale

**LILONGWE, Malawi**— Natural disasters have affected more than 141,000 people across Malawi this rainy season, with lightning strikes accounting for most of the 31 deaths reported, disaster management officials said Tuesday, writes **Winston Mwale.**

The Department of Disaster Management Affairs reported 22 lightning-related fatalities and nine deaths from collapsing structures since the season began.

The toll marks a sharp increase from December's count of 11 deaths.

"The department is deeply concerned with increased lightning-related deaths," said Charles Kalemba, Commissioner for Disaster Management Affairs.

The figures exclude 13 deaths caused by Tropical Cyclone Chido in a separate weather event.

Officials are distributing food, blankets, and temporary roofing materials to 31,413 affected households.

The department urged residents to avoid open spaces and trees during thunderstorms.

"Seek enclosed shelter immediately when caught out in the open during thunderstorms," Kalemba said in the statement.

The government continues to work with humanitarian partners to assist affected communities as the rainy season progresses.