# Five family members killed by lightning in Mbeya during heavy rains-Tanzania <https://www.thecitizen.co.tz/tanzania/news/national/five-family-members-killed-by-lightning-in-mbeya-during-heavy-rains-4873300>30 December, 2024

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## **Mbeya.** Tragedy struck in Isangawane Village, Matwiga Ward, Chunya District, Mbeya Region, as five members of a single family from a pastoralist community lost their lives, and five others were injured after being struck by lightning during heavy rains on Saturday night.

This marks the second lightning-related fatality in the area this month, with an earlier incident claiming one life.

Regional Police Commander Benjamin Kuzaga confirmed the incident, stating that it occurred overnight on Sunday, December 29, 2024. The victims were sleeping in a makeshift livestock shelter when the lightning struck.

The deceased have been identified as Balaa Scania (28), Masele Masiganya (16), Hemi Tati (10), Manangu Ngwisa (18), and Kulwa Lawaje (10). The injured include Manyenge Masagala (13), Serusi Solo (13), Paskalia Kalez (16), Gulu Scania (30), and Huruma Kalezi (19), all residents of Nkinga Hamlet in Isangawane Village.

Speaking to The Citizen, Matwiga Ward Councillor Frank Mkondo explained that the affected area had been officially surveyed by the village government for residential use.

“The heavy rains began at midnight and lasted for nearly two hours, accompanied by intense lightning. Tragically, this resulted in the immediate deaths of five individuals and injuries to six others. The victims were camping in the area with their livestock,” said Mkondo.

After the rains subsided, villagers alerted the authorities. Local leaders arrived at the scene, finding five bodies and several injured individuals requiring urgent assistance. The injured were transported to a nearby dispensary for first aid.

Burial preparations underway

“The bodies remain at the scene, but preparations for burial are ongoing,” Councillor Mkondo added.

Limited access to healthcare

The injured were taken to a local dispensary due to the absence of health centres in the area. Mkondo explained that the nearest health facility is seven kilometres away, a challenge compounded by Chunya District’s poor infrastructure and difficult terrain.

“Residents of Isangawane Village often rely on essential medicine shops for healthcare due to the lack of nearby facilities,” he said.

Councillor Mkondo called on the government to bring essential services closer to residents, including deploying adequate medical personnel.

Official response awaited

When contacted, Chunya District Commissioner Mbarak Batenga stated he had not yet received details of the incident but promised to follow up and provide clarification.

Local dispensary’s efforts

A worker at the medicine shop, speaking anonymously, confirmed that they attended to five injured individuals.

“We did our best to provide immediate assistance. One person has since been discharged, while the others are still recovering,” they said.

This incident highlights the ongoing challenges faced by rural communities in accessing healthcare and coping with natural disasters.