

2 students drown while playing football on A'Ibom beach

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WIDESPREAD fears have enveloped Idua community in Eket Local Government Area of Akwa Ibom State following the death, at the weekend, of two students of Alex Secondary School. The deceased, Aniekani Harry and Uche Okoli, said to be Senior Secondary School (SSS) Two students of the private school, were reported to have drowned at Qua Iboe River, after playing football on the beach.

A local fisherman, Effiong Ufot, told the Nigerian Tribune in Eket, on Sunday that their floating lifeless bodies were recovered at the weekend in the river, three days after drowning.

It was gathered that the students left their school for the Qua Iboe River beach, "to have fun" after a friendly football match scheduled to hold with a rival school was abruptly cancelled, forcing them to look elsewhere to ventilate their energy.

According to one of the stu-

dents, Owen Oscar, "eight of us left the school after the friendly game was cancelled to still play the game at the beach among ourselves but two of us left after to go and swim. All entreaties to make them wait for others so we can all swim together, proved abortive.

"They (the victims) shunned all advice and went to the river to swim and ended up penetrating into the deeper part of the river," he added.

Owen said he and other students ran to the Marine

Police post to raise the alarm, adding that help could not reach the victims because of late intervention by the Marine Police.

"The Marine Policemen only advised us to go and report the matter to the parents," the student said, adding that efforts to locate the victims' remains were hampered by lack of facilities.

Confirming the incident, the Principal of the school, Mr. Asuquo Ekong, denied knowledge of any football match against a rival school

that was cancelled, which forced the students to stray out for beach football.

"I am not aware of such development that there was any football match with another school. If there was something like that, management of the school would have been notified, but we were not informed," Ekong explained.

However, a family member, who identified herself as Mercydonia Harry, dismissed the position that the victims died of drowning, alleging that they were murdered.

She disclosed that the dead

members die in inferno in Plateau