

2 students drown in Qua Iboe River

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We agreed to stay away from the deep middle— Colleague

They were murdered— Family member; It was an accident—Police

By Emmanuel Ayungbe

UYO—The lifeless bodies of two Senior Secondary 2 students that drowned at Qua Iboe River in Idua community, Eket Local Government Area of Akwa Ibom State, were, weekend, recovered by divers.

The deceased, Aniekan Harry and Uche Okoli, were students of a private school and were said to have gone to the river to swim after playing football by the river's banks.

A local fisherman, yesterday, disclosed that the floating bodies were recovered by divers three days after they drowned.

It was gathered that eight students of the private school, Alex Secondary School, left for the Qua Iboe River beach to swim after a friendly football match with another school was cancelled.

According to Owen, one of the students, “after the cancellation of the football match, eight of us moved to another location at the Qua Iboe River beach to dissipate our energy by playing football among ourselves.

“Thereafter, we went swimming. I later noticed that we were only six swimming. We had all agreed not to swim in the middle of the river, but it is like they refused to keep to instructions.”

It was gathered that when Owen and the other five students discovered that the other two students were missing, they ran to the Marine Police post to raise the alarm.

It was gathered that when the Marine Policemen could not find the victims, they advised the other students to go and report the matter to the parents.

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.

He advised parents to be in the vanguard of securing their children and wards through effective surveillance, proper advice, education and enlightenment.

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 students were surreptitiously taken to the beach for forced initiation into cultism, adding that their resistance compelled their colleagues to administer corporate punishment of death on them for their refusal.

But the Police Public Relations Officer, DSP Elkana Bala, who confirmed the incident, dismissed such allegation, maintaining that the victims' death was an accident.