

### 3 students drown in A'lbom beach, policeman in C' River

ON JUNE 19, 2019 9:31 AMIN [CRIME GUARD](#), [NEWSBY TONY0](#) [COMMENTS](#)



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**Uyo**—THREE secondary school students reportedly drowned at Ibeno Beach, Akwa Ibom State, while a policeman also drowned at Agwagwune village, Biase Local Government Area, Cross River State.



Man drowning

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It was gathered that the students of a grammar school located in Upenekang community in Ibeno local government area, two boys and one girl, went to the beach to swim after their morning exercise, weekend, when the incident occurred.

*Vanguard* learned that they were buried on the river banks according to the tradition of the people; anyone that drowns should be buried by the waterside.

Contacted, Task Force Chairman of the beach, Mr. Samuel Christopher, said he went to the beach that morning only to meet a crowd gathered at the waterside.

Christopher said: "The three students that drowned were part of a team of students, who went on road walk in the early hours of Saturday."

“While some of them went home, others decided to go to the beach to swim. I suspected that some of them were students of the Grammar School in Ukpenekang community, Ibeno Local Government Area.

“The incident happened around 6a.m., because when I went to the beach at about 7a.m. I saw a crowd gathered there. Unfortunately, the incident happened in the wee hours when no one was around to rescue them.

“The victims would have entered the water thinking that they were safe. Unfortunately, even when you know how to swim, the water is not safe, especially when you venture into the dangerous spots.

“The high ocean tide brought back the corpse of the girl about three hours later, while those of the two boys were returned next day being, Sunday. The corpses have been buried by the water side by the families of the deceased, according to the tradition.

“Unfortunately, there is no life guard in this Ibeno beach in case of such accidents, so it is difficult to carry out any rescue operation whenever an accident happens at the beach.”

### **...Police Corporal drowns making arrest**

The policeman, a corporal, that drowned, identified as Eteng, reportedly drowned on Monday at Agwagwune in Biase Local Government Area, Cross Rivers State while on official assignment.

The policeman, according to a source, Jones Ebikang, went with others to Agwagune village which is across the river to effect the arrest of some suspects.

But after the arrest, the boat in which they were returning to Ugep, his station, capsized and he was swept away because he could not swim.

Ebikang said: “It was a matter of everyone to himself. So those who could swim swam to safety, but Eteng could not, so he was swept away by flood.”

He said rain had been falling in the area for some days, causing the water level in the river to rise making navigating the river risky to those who cannot swim.

He added: “The man is from Ugep in Yakkur Local Government Area, which adjoins Biase where he went for the arrest. Instead of saying he could not swim to allow those who could swim to go across while he waited at the beach, he took the risk.”

He said the man was swept away with his riffle and as at Monday evening, his body was yet to be recovered.

DSP Irene Ugbo, Cross River Police Command Public Relations Officer, said she was yet to be briefed on the incident.

“Let me make a call and call you back,” she said.

But when *Vanguard* called her after two hours, she did not take her calls.

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