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Drowning continues

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AVUYO Ntsepho (15) and Lindile Ngani (14) were two young boys of Goqwana rural village in Lusikisiki whose future seemed to be bright in football. But now it is so sad that the very same football they loved so much is reportedly the actual cause of the end of their lives. Their families and friends last saw them on 24 March 2012 when they went to play football in Port St Johns. Fever Publications learnt that after they played the game they went to risky Port St Johns Second Beach to cool down and swim. Unfortunately, they drowned. However, none of the divers and rescue members were seen searching for their bodies since they have drowned. Families and friends embarked on a searching campaign but to no success. In fact there are not even warning signs that Port St John beaches do not have rescue teams.

This area is also faced with a huge problem of sharks where most of the visitors are being attacked by sharks daily. Now people are calling on the government to close Port St Johns beaches because people are dying like animals at the natural beauty coast beach of Port St Johns. "We are still waiting in vain and pain and no one from the police and Port St Johns Municipality seem to be willing to help us," said the deceased's (Avuyo) father, Bulisile. He said this is very painful and he believes that they are deliberately neglected because they are uneducated and poor. "A few weeks ago rugby players drowned in Port Elizabeth but rescue and television crews from all over the country flocked to the scene and flew all over the ocean. In the end they found all the missing bodies. But on one side of the divided Eastern Cape there is mainly rich people in former South Africa which is Port Elizabeth, and the former Transkei is mainly dominated by poor people. Government does not care about us," said Ntsepho in pain.

He said that Port St Johns police told them that they do not have police divers and all the rescuers employed by Port St Johns Municipality decided to stop rescuing people at the gorgeous coast because Municipality stopped paying them. He said he was amazed when the police demanded they search for the bodies themselves but warned them not to enter the ocean. He also said when an animal drowns the SPCA respond very quickly, but because of their poor background no one seems to want to help them find their kids. "Police and Port St Johns Municipality have done nothing up until now and I did not even get a call from them explaining what they are doing to search for the bodies of our children," said Bulisile. He also believes that the government is failing to help poor people, but rich people in big cities get easy access.

Eastern Cape Provincial Police Spokesperson Captain Ernest Sigobe denied that they are treating Eastern Cape people differently, saying that people are trying to make something out of nothing.

"We received a report to the fact that two children have drowned and a complaint that they have not got the services.

When we investigated we found that divers have been dispatched to Port St Johns to search for the bodies but they could not find them and they went back on the following day but in vain," said Sigobe. Meanwhile Port St Johns Municipal Spokesperson Nonceba Madikizela said they are in a process of managing Port St Johns sea especially the attacks of sharks and drowning.

She said stakeholders are busy discussing this problem and they will come up with a plan to minimise sharks attacks and drowning. She also said on 30 April 2012 they will issue a statement regarding to the stakeholders resolutions.

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