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Tourist left brain-dead after brutal beating at Cancun resort

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CANCUN, Mexico (11 May 2007) -- An Alberta man on life support after suffering what his family describes as a brutal beating on the grounds of a Mexican resort was on his way home Wednesday.

Jeff Toews, 33, of Grande Prairie, Alta., was expected to arrive in Edmonton aboard a chartered medivac flight late in the day, accompanied by his wife Natalie and his brother Murray.

Sister-in-law Colleen Toews said Jeff will be reassessed by doctors at the University of Alberta hospital in Edmonton and the family will then make further decisions on organ donation. Mexican doctors had said he was brain-dead as a result of his injuries.

Jeff was on vacation in Cancun with his wife and nine other couples from northern Alberta when he was injured after visiting a nightclub on the resort grounds Sunday night.

His family doesn't believe Mexican authorities who say the Canadian fell from the second floor of his hotel. The family says his head and back injuries came from a severe beating, maybe at the hands of hotel security guards.

They are also accusing Mexican authorities of covering up a crime.

One of his brothers, Murray, said it is a tragedy to see Jeff's life come to an end at the age of 33.

"There's no way on a holiday that a man should end up on a sidewalk like that."

It's the latest in a string of violent incidents involving Canadian tourists in Mexico.

Last February, Domenic and Nancy Ianiero of Woodbridge, Ont., were found with their throats slit at a resort near Playa del Carmen, Mexico. Their murders have never been solved.



Greg Toews, twin brother of Canadian Jeff Toews gestures during an interview with Canadian media outside of the hospital where his brother is on life support in the resort city of Cancun, Mexico Wednesday.

The MP said the United States sends investigators to Mexico to assist in investigations involving that country's citizens and Canada should do the same.

"I can tell you that we were planning a family vacation in the next several of months and Cancun was one of the places we were thinking of, but I can tell you I ain't going there," added Dosanjh.

Back in Jeff Toews' home town, people who knew the father of a three-year-old boy were in shock.

"It's horrible," said Jerry Lojczyc, manager of Beaverlodge Motor Inn where Jeff and his three brothers often stopped by for lunch.

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In January, Adam DePrisco, 19, also of Woodbridge, was killed outside an Acapulco nightclub. A Mexican doctor blamed the teen's death on a hit-and-run driver, but his family and friends believe he was beaten to death.

And last month, two Canadians were injured when a gunman fired into the lobby of a hotel in Acapulco.

The latest controversy reached Ottawa on Wednesday, when Liberal Foreign Affairs critic Ujjal Dosanjh called on the government to strike a co-operative agreement with Mexico on investigations involving Canadians.

"The Toews are a well-known and well-liked family here and we're sharing their pain, if that is possible," he said.

SOURCE - Leader-Post

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