

Beat: Vips

Comatose Dutch Prince Friso leaves London hospital

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USPA News - Dutch Prince Johan Friso, who has remained in a coma with `minimal signs of consciousness` after being critically injured in an avalanche in western Austria last year, was discharged from a hospital in England on Tuesday although his condition is unchanged. Friso, 44, was skiing in the Austrian town of Lech in February 2012 when he was hit by an avalanche and buried under the snow for about 25 minutes before being rescued and resuscitated at the scene.

Doctors said the oxygen deprivation caused extensive damage to his brain, leaving him in a coma which he may never come out. The prince, who is the son of former Queen Beatrix and the youngest brother of King Willem-Alexander, had been cared for at Wellington Hospital in London during the past year. He left the facility on Tuesday morning because hospital care is no longer required for his current condition. "Prince Friso remains unchanged in a condition of minimal consciousness. His health condition remains worrying. However, further treatment in a hospital is no longer required," the Netherlands Government Information Service (RVD) said in a statement on Tuesday, giving few other details about his condition. After Friso left Wellington Hospital, which is the largest independent hospital in the United Kingdom, he was flown to the Netherlands and transported to Huis ten Bosch royal palace in The Hague. The prince's family will examine long-term options for his care in either the Netherlands or the United Kingdom during the next few months. "Prince Friso will spend this summer with his family at Palace Huis ten Bosch, where a medical team under the direction of Prof. Jan van Gijn and Dr. Michael Kuiper will take care of him," the RVD said in the statement, adding: "The royal family thanks the medical team of the Wellington Hospital for their excellent and devoted care." Little news has been released since the initial accident in February 2012, but South African Archbishop Desmond Tutu revealed late last year that Friso had moved when Friso's wife, Princess Mabel, kissed him. "On another day, she said she kissed him and he moved a bit," Tutu said in an interview in September 2012, although there was no confirmation from the royal family. But in a statement in November 2012, the Dutch government said Friso had begun to show signs of `extremely minimal consciousness.` "The prognosis remains very uncertain and the medical team is still very concerned. It will take many months before there is more clarity," the statement said. The government previously emphasized it would only make an announcement in the event of medically significant changes in the condition of Friso, but doctors who are not involved in the treatment of the prince cautioned that minimal consciousness does not necessarily mean a patient will eventually recover and regain full consciousness. In the statement in November 2012, the royal family also asked the media to continue to respect the privacy of the family and thanked people who have sent messages of support. "This is the worst period of my life," Mabel said. "My love for Friso, the support of family and friends, and the many messages of sympathy give me strength in this difficult time." Friso is the second son of Princess Beatrix who abdicated as queen on April 30 in favor of her eldest son Willem-Alexander. Friso is not in line for the throne since marrying Princess Mabel in 2004 without permission from the Dutch government.

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