

Brain-damaged Dutch prince Friso in hospital in London

March 1 2012

Dutch Prince Johan Friso, brain-damaged and in a coma after being caught by an avalanche in Austria last month, was transferred to a London hospital Thursday, the palace said.

"His Royal Highness Prince Friso arrived today in London, where he has been living for many years," a statement said.

"Wellington hospital was recommended by experts. Considering his condition, Prince Friso will receive the best possible treatment there," the palace added.

Queen Beatrix, and the prince's wife and two daughters, also flew to London, the palace said.

The 43-year-old has been in intensive care in hospital in Innsbruck since being buried by an avalanche in the Austrian Alps on February 17. Doctors said last week he may never regain consciousness.

"It can't be said with certainty at this point whether Prince Friso will ever regain consciousness again," according to Wolfgang Koller, head of the trauma unit at Innsbruck University Hospital.

"In any case, a neurological rehabilitation will be required that will take months, if not years."

The father-of-two, the second son of Queen Beatrix, was skiing off-piste

in the Lech resort with a friend when the avalanche struck.

At the time the avalanche alert level was at the second highest, posing a particular risk away from the prepared ski slopes.

The Dutch royal family had been vacationing in Lech, where it regularly spends its skiing holiday, when the accident happened, and members of the family made daily visits to the prince's bedside.

Prince Friso has been chief financial director of Britain's URENCO group -- dealing with nuclear fuel supplies -- since 2011, and previously worked with the investment bank Goldman Sachs in London.

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