

Sandy Beaches Trump Threats of Violence



An aerial view of the El Cid Marina, in Mazatlán

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For Tim and Nancy Muzyka, the lure of sandy beaches and crashing waves trumped headlines about mass murders. The couple, who live in Edmonton, Alberta, bought a waterfront condominium in Mexico, ignoring the almost daily reports of drug-related violence in the country. They paid about \$500,000 for a 185-square-meter, or 2,000-square-foot, apartment (...) on a stretch of beach on the outskirts of Mazatlán, on the Pacific Coast. “I don’t feel any less secure there than walking down the streets of Edmonton,” Ms. Muzyka said.

In many areas, Canadians and wealthy Mexicans have replaced Americans as the primary foreign buyers. “The press has done a very good job of scaring Americans, but Canadians and Europeans don’t seem as heavily influenced,” said Mitch Keenan, director of Mexico International Real Estate, a property agency in Merida, on the north coast of Yucatán State. Sanda Krslak and Steve Lemire of Vancouver paid about 235,000 Canadian dollars, or \$228,000, for a two-bedroom, 242-square-meter house in Merida. They fell in love with the city, wandering the old streets at night. “We never felt uncomfortable,” Ms. Krslak said. “The No.1 reason we decided was because the crime rate here is almost nonexistent.”

Several developers are forming their own coalition to promote the country as a safe destination. “They need to make the differentiation that not all Mexico is violent,” said J. Patrick Butler, chairman of Club Acquisition. “We try to point out the positives, the cost of living, the quality of life”.

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