

School attack victim's family wants justice

Jaden needs brain surgery

CASANDRA THOMPSON-FORBES

The family of Signal Hill Secondary School student Jaden Pereira is calling on the authorities to answer key questions after the Form Five student was injured during a school fight last week, causing him to be rushed to hospital in a critical condition with a serious head injury.

Pereira was discharged from the Port-of-Spain General Hospital, where emergency surgery was performed on his fractured skull on Tuesday and he returned to Tobago. The family has since retained the services of attorney Martin George and intend to take legal action if no positive moves are made.

Speaking at the press conference yesterday, George said the issue of bullying at the nation's schools needs to be addressed.

"We want to try to first of all to get the spotlight on this whole issue of bullying, because I think it has really gotten out of hand and it has gotten to the point where sooner or later we will see some school child probably being murdered in a school as a result of these kinds of activities.

"And we have to call upon the authorities, in this case the Division of Education of the Tobago House of Assembly, the Ministry of Education, the school principal, the school supervisors, they have to do a whole lot more," George said. He also said the boys who were involved in the beating have



From left, attorney Martin George, Signal Hill Secondary student Jaden Pereira, his grandmother, Ella Pereira, and father Shawn, at yesterday's press conference in Scarborough. PICTURE CASANDRA THOMPSON-FORBES

since been released without any charges being laid.

George said he would be writing the Commissioner of Police about the incident to get an update on the status of the investigation.

"We are saying that it is a criminal offence and we are saying that this appears akin to an attempted murder, because to smash somebody's skull, whereby he now has a piece of his skull missing, so there are parts of his brain exposed under all the bandages that are there, to have that situation where someone swung at you with a piece of iron with a piece of concrete at the end of it and shattered your skull in that way, it appears to be nothing else than attempted

murder, regardless of what your intention may have been," George said.

Pereira will have to undergo brain surgery in the few months. He said since the incident he has been experiencing headaches, dizzy spells and slurred speech. He also needs constant care from his relatives and will be unable to attend school.

Reflecting on the incident, Pereira, who has maintained he was a victim of school bullies, said he believes he was targeted because he was from Trinidad and very popular with the girls and his schoolmates. He said the bullying started when he was in Third Form and he had cause to

defend himself on several occasions. However, he said after his near-death experience he does not want to go back.

"I don't want to go back to that school because I don't want the same thing to happen to me or anybody else...I'm not really a person who does lime around boys, but all the girls lime around me because of the person I am.

"I like to laugh and those stuff and maybe the boys don't like that," he said.

Both Jaden's father Shawn and his grandmother Ella said his condition has taken a toll on the entire family and they would leave no stone unturned until they get justice.

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THE PULSE OF THE PEOPLE

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Signal Hill
Secondary
student
Jaden Pereira
during a press
conference
at the
Scarborough
office of
attorney
Martin
George
yesterday.

PICTURE
CASANDRA
THOMPSON-
FORBES

FLASHBACK: Signal Hill
Secondary student Jaden
Pereira is attended to by
another student as he lies
unconscious on the ground
after he was attacked by a
schoolmate on January 17.
Pereira was flown to
Trinidad after his skull was
fractured in the incident.

School attack victim's family urge THA, CoP: 

CHARGE BULLIES