



Written by [Dennis Behrendt](#) on July 31, 2009

## Mexico Shuts Down Cancun Beach Over Alleged Theft of Sand

It sounds like something that can only happen in a third world country — police and navy personnel wrapping a beach in crime scene tape because of a suspicion that, of all things, someone has been stealing sand.

But that is just what happened this week in Mexico, on the trendy and popular beaches near Cancun.

There, [according to Fox News](#), "Environmental enforcement officers backed by Mexican navy personnel closed off hundreds of feet of powder-white coastline in front of a hotel accused of illegally accumulating sand on its beach."



Hotel operators in the resort area depend on sun, surf, and most importantly, on white sand beaches to attract tourists. To head off erosion that threatens business, some hotels have been building breakwaters and pumping sand from the ocean floor back onto their beaches. The result is unequal sand distribution on Cancun's beaches. Against this crime, officials have been eager to take action.

Referring to the police cordon and action against one hotel, Mexican Attorney General for Environmental Protection Patricio Patron noted: "Today we made the decision to close this stretch of ill-gotten, illegally accumulated sand. This hotel was telling its tourists: 'Come here, I have sand ... the other hotels don't, because I stole it.'"

The heavy-handed action was not well-received by tourists. "They promised us a beach," said one tourist from Uruguay. "This is very unpleasant, we feel bad. This is intimidating," she said.

With such new found zeal for law enforcement, perhaps Mexican officials will address the twin problems of drug trafficking and illegal immigration of its citizens to the United States.

*Photo: AP Images*



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