

Reporter

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Man murders brother and wife then takes selfie with their bodies



Desiree Gonzalez, 50, and Miguel Encalada



Encalada took a "selfie" after the murder.



George Rochester, 25

in Ladyville, where the incident occurred.

Reportedly, Miguel Encalada went the restaurant where he found George Rochester Jr., 25, and Desiree Gonzalez, 50, and proceeded to open fire on them multiple times.

The Reporter will continue following this incident as more details—which are currently scarce—become available.

NO EXCEPTIONS!

Political Parties cannot be exempted from suite anti-money laundering reforms! Business Senator says

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Business Senator Kevin Herrera speaking at this week's Senate meeting.

By Javan Flowers
Police have detained a man suspected of murdering his wife and brother, and thereafter proceeding to take a

photo of himself with the victims' corpses.

It is reported that the suspect, Miguel Encalada, caught his brother and wife together in a restaurant

Non-Profit Organizations Bill passes with amendments given social partners' concerns

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Senator Bishop Alvin Benguche raises concerns about NPO Bill.

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BNTU elects new leaders at AGM



Belize honors 5 Women in Renewable Energy

By William Ysaguirre

In his budget presentation last month Prime Minister John Briceño spoke of the “unsustainable” cost of pensions for retired public officers including teachers.

This year pension payments will amount to \$95 million. Next year payments will reach \$100 million. The International Monetary Fund estimates that today’s pension payments account for 77 percent of the Gross National Product, which is more than the national debt.

The business of how we take care of our retired public officers is one which will engage our attention and challenge our creativity in the years ahead.

In Belize, public-sector pensions are funded entirely by money from public revenue. As the number of pensioners continues to grow, and as retired men and women continue to live longer, the amount it takes to pay them is growing at a faster pace than the revenue can afford.

“This budget line spending is neither sustainable nor fair”, the P.M. warned.

To deal with the problem, the government is considering a three-tiered approach which would involve raising the retirement age for all public officers and teachers from 55 to 65, scaling back the number of intakes to the public service, and requiring all newly recruited public officers to contribute to their pension fund as part of their terms of employment.

The Prime Minister has expressed his gratification for the progress made in discussions so far, with the first contributions to the pension fund scheduled to begin on July 1, 2023.

Five women pioneers were honored for their outstanding contributions to Belize’s renewable energy sector, by the Ministry of Public Utilities, Energy, Logistics and E-Governance (MPUELE), the “Lait Up Belize” Project and the European Union.

Energy Director Ryan Cobb of the Ministry presented the awards to Kayla Gabourel, Sheena Kuylen Simpson, Kay Menzies, Brittany Meighan Rancharan and Khara Roches Francois in a ceremony at the Best Western Biltmore Hotel in Belize City on Monday afternoon, April 17.

Kayla Gabourel has been working as an Energy Officer with ministry’s Energy Unit since 2017, when she received her Bachelor’s degree in Chemical Engineering from the University of Arkansas. Her main responsibility is for energy efficiency management projects, and she is contributing to the Sustainable Energy Policy by developing Energy Efficiency standards for Belize. She also pioneered investigative research into manifestations of geothermal energy in southern Belize.

Sheena Kuylen Simpson is the Belize Electricity Ltd’s manager of Systems Planning and Engineering. She has worked for BEL for 14 years after achieving her Bachelor’s degree in Electrical and Computer Engineering from the University of the West Indies, and she has enhanced her professional qualifications with a Masters degree in Electric Power Engineering from Washington State University. Her work entails network design and grid system modelling using emerging technologies for



(l-r) Kayla Gabourel, Brittany Meighan Rancharan, Kay Menzies, and Sheena Kuylen Simpson

smarter and safer operations, to ensure the most efficient, stable and sustainable delivery of energy to BEL’s customers.

Kay Menzies is the first female President and Chief Executive Officer of Fortis Belize Ltd, managing three hydroelectric facilities, which supply over 40 percent of Belize annual energy needs. She is no engineer, but her head for numbers and her skill in getting the most of her workers have propelled her to the forefront of the Belize business community as a strategic leader in distribution, e-commerce and digital transformation.

She is the co-founder of BelizeON.bz and Socias Ltd. She is currently the Deputy Chair on the BEL Board of Directors, and has also served on the Boards of Belize Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Belize Port Authority, BELTRAIDE, the Development Finance Corporation and the Economic Development Council.

Brittany Meighan Rancharan is an Environmental Engineer and Climate Change expert with a Masters degree from the Federal University of Ouro Preto in Brazil. She is also a program associate with the Greenhouse

Gas Management Institute.

Energy engineer and consultant Khara Roches Francois could not attend in person, but joined the ceremony by virtual tele-conference. She recommends that since all economic sectors use energy, and renewable, clean energy technologies are central to all sectors of development, it is important for all sectors to work together, as Belize transitions from fossil fuels to renewable energy.

All five women are members of the Women in Renewable Energy Network (WIREN). WIREN associate Laura Diez of the Rocky Mountain Institute explained that WIREN is an international network which advocates for gender inclusion and the empowerment of women working

in the energy sector, particularly for gender equity in renewable energy, in the private sector - power utilities and the government regulators. WIREN joined the Rocky Mountain Institute about six years ago and became a part of their network. Diez suggests that the next step would be for Belize to have a local chapter of WIREN.

The Ministry is fully onboard with the Ministry of Education to encourage more girls and women to a studying Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) subjects and to pursue professional careers in this field, and to challenge the stereotype, that there is no reason for women not to enter these fields which have traditionally been dominated by men.

THE REPORTER

Phones: 501- 227-2503 / 227-1767

Fax 501-227- 8278 P.O. Box 707

e-mail: reporternewspaper@gmail.com

website: <http://www.thereporter.bz>

Publisher Harry Lawrence

Editor Dyon A. Elliott

Financial Controller Rosa Maria Lawrence

General Manager Lisbeth Ayuso

Lithographer Rodolfo Castro

Journalists Michelle Sutherland
Britney Gordon

Desktop Publisher/

Graphic Designer Jackie Fuller

Accounts/ Advertising Rodolfo Castro

Chief Printer Earl Young Jr.

Office Assistant Misael Muñoz

NO EXCEPTIONS!

Political Parties cannot be exempted from suite anti-money laundering reforms! Business Senator says

Along with a collection of anti-money laundering related legislations being pushed through the legislative process, Business Senator Hon. Kevin Herrera emphasized to *The Reporter* that political parties cannot be exempted.

“It is high time for political parties to be regulated,” said Herrera. “If not under the Non-Profit Organization Bill (NPO Bill) which was passed with amendments at this week’s Senate meeting, then definitely under dedicated Campaign Finance and Political Parties laws.”

Herrera explained that there is a suite of laws that are going through the legislative process in order to satisfy the criteria set by the Financial Action Task Force (FATF). The NPO Bill and the already enacted

Customs Regulation (Amendment) Act of 2023 are two such laws. He made the point that if it is that the goal is to minimize all the risky areas for money laundering, then political organizations—which are prone to accept funding from all sorts of sources and are classified in some jurisdictions as NPOs—should be captured in this regard.

Herrera’s point on the political parties’ need for regulation—whether under the NPO Bill or preferably under a dedicated Campaign Finance and Political Parties’ Registration law—echoes that of Senator Elena Smith who, while speaking on the NPO Bill at the Senate meeting held on Wednesday, April 19th, said: “We feel that the political parties should have been included here [in the NPO Bill]. If we are going to be

looking at all of the possible areas of risk and all of the possible areas where you could maybe have some of these questionable finances, then we should include all those who would be seen as [at risk].”

Herrera also reiterated that international benchmarks already exist for sound campaign financing legislations to emulate. He pointed to the Council of Europe’s “common rules,” which sets out 16 key principles. The principles include recommendations that Campaign Finance laws should regulate political contributions from foreign donors. Specifically, Article 7 of the “common rules” says that countries should “limit, prohibit or otherwise regulate donations from foreign donors.”

The common rules also prescribe limits on

the amount of donations as well as heightened transparency by way of reporting and disclosure rules.

The BCCI’s Draft Bill

The discussion on campaign finance was recently raised by the Belize Chamber of Commerce and Industry (BCCI), which has drafted one such proposed Bill and has since submitted to the government.

On Wednesday,

January 26, the BCCI had met with the media to outline the details of the draft bill as a part of its “Anticorruption, Pro-Good Governance Campaign.”

BCCI President Marcello Blake explained then that the bill seeks to regulate campaign financing in Belize, which is an objective currently shared by the Government, which listed this as a goal in the Medium-Term

Development Strategy (MTDS) released on Monday, January 23, 2023.

The draft bill promulgated by the BCCI prioritizes addressing issues such as the transparency of donors, campaign budgets, and time period for campaigning. Blake explained that the bill can still benefit from input from other social partners and key stakeholders such as the NGO sector, the unions, and the churches.

Non-Profit Organizations Bill passes with amendments given social partners’ concerns

The Non-Profit Organizations Bill 2023 passed in the Senate this week, with amendments, following numerous concerns raised by social partner senators

The Bill, which was heavily criticized, was the major point of discussion at the Senate meeting on Wednesday, April 19, where the Government outlined several changes made since its first iteration.

Senator representing the churches, Bishop Alvin Benguche, said that the Bill contains provisions which states that if the “controller” of an NPO is found to be liable of legal wrongdoing, the registrar of NPOs will be empowered to assign someone to take control of the church.

“It means that that controller that is then seconded to the bishop or the head of the church takes over an institution that actually the head was in the first place an ecclesiastical person not a secular controller that is asked to take control of that body,” Benguche said.

He went on to say that there are several

other considerations that could have been made in the area of anti-money laundering protection including legislation on campaign financing for political parties; however, the church will agree to the bill in good faith, looking forward to the Government of Belize enacting such legislation.

Senator Elena Smith also raised concerns regarding the impact of the Bill on church-managed schools and their ability to raise funds to acquire resources necessary for their operations.

“That is the concern now. How is that going to impact these things that we do as schools?” Smith asked. “And then the further impact it would have on our teachers who continue to take out of pocket to provide resources for their classrooms and for the schools.”

NGO Senator Ema Kay also cautioned that the initial way the Bill was handled, referring to the lack of consultation in the early stages of its drafting, cannot set the precedent for how future bills are handled.

Leader of Government Business Hon. Eamon Courtenay emphasized the need for the Bill to pass, noting examples locally and internationally where a lack of oversight led to illegal activities by unregulated bodies. He pointed to the Sanctuary Bay incident in Belize, where there was an NPO called the Sittee River Wildlife Reserve, which was unregulated.

“In 2021, Cardinals, Bishops, from the Vatican where the Pope lives [were] criminally indicted for money laundering. Next story, non-traditional church in Guatemala used to launder the proceeds of drug trafficking. The issue here is not whether a church, school or any NPO is involved in money laundering, financing of terrorism,” Courtenay said.

The NPO Bill forms a part of a larger suite of legislations that the government is using to meet international obligations under the recommendations of the Financial Action Task Force to address a perceived risk of terrorism financing in Belize via NPO’s.

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY

The U.S. Embassy Belmopan is seeking eligible and qualified applicants for the following position:

Position Name: Criminal Fraud Investigator

Vacancy Number: Belmopan-2023-07-R

Extended Closing Date: April 23rd, 2023

Interested applicants must submit their application via the Electronic Recruitment Application (ERA) system, a web-based system. To view and apply for this vacancy, visit the ERA site at: <https://erajobs.state.gov/dos-era/blz/vacancysearch/searchVacancies.hms>

Please visit the Embassy’s website for instructions on how to apply via the ERA system: <https://bz.usembassy.gov/embassy/jobs/>

Note 1: This position is being re-advertised with a new closing date.

Note 2: Resumes will not be considered. Candidates must note all work experience when completing the ERA application. Insufficient or incomplete information will result in an ineligible application.

Note 3: Candidates must submit applicable required documentation by the closing date of this announcement. Failure to provide the required documentation will result in an ineligible application.

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY

The U.S. Embassy Belmopan is seeking eligible and qualified applicants for the following position:

Position Name: Electro-Mechanical Technician

Vacancy Number: Belmopan-2022-06-R

Extended Closing Date: April 23rd, 2023

Interested applicants must submit their application via the Electronic Recruitment Application (ERA) system, a web-based system. To view and apply for this vacancy, visit the ERA site at: <https://erajobs.state.gov/dos-era/blz/vacancysearch/searchVacancies.hms>

Please visit the Embassy’s website for instructions on how to apply via the ERA system: <https://bz.usembassy.gov/embassy/jobs/>

Note 1: This position is being re-advertised with a new closing date.

Note 2: Resumes will not be considered. Candidates must note all work experience when completing the ERA application. Insufficient or incomplete information will result in an ineligible application.

Note 3: Candidates must submit applicable required documentation by the closing date of this announcement. Failure to provide the required documentation will result in an ineligible application.

CLASSIFIED ADS

VACANCY: A vacancy exists for Warehouse Supervisor at Cosmetic Corner. Please Call: 227-0145 for more information.

TWO APARTMENTS FOR RENT: UPPER FLAT - Single bedroom concrete walls and floor. Hot and cold water & Internet. Electricity and water are separate. **LOWER FLAT** - Single bedroom, spacious living room and kitchen. Secure with concrete walls and floor. Hot and cold water & Internet. Electricity and water are separate. Kitchen sink installed. Located at the corner West and Allenby Streets, Southside Belize City. Please Call 672-4454 or 227- 2503 for more details or for viewing opportunity.

The Righters Write

Migration – trends and flow see significant shifts

In the last few months, media in Belize have been highlighting matters concerning persons entering or traveling through Belize primarily from countries like Venezuela, Cuba, Haiti and now Jamaica. Those intercepted have faced immigration charges and many have ended up in Belize' central prison for weeks and even months. The Human Rights Commission of Belize won a case for a group of Cubans in March of 2022 and that triggered a ripple effect of migrants reaching out for assistance.

Now, the Human Rights Commission of Belize is not against the enforcement of the law. The only concern is that such enforcement is done with the highest respect for people's human rights and dignity - that they be guaranteed due process as is affirmed in our laws.

This piece, however, is not focused on this but more so on the present migration crisis we see today. The reality is that this discussion is not black and white. It's not an easy one. There are a number of factors that surround this topic, especially since migration trends and even migration flows have shifted significantly in Latin America and the Caribbean.

The International Organization for Migration, IOM, reports that migration "to Northern America is a key feature in the Latin America and Caribbean region. In 2020, over 25 million migrants had made the journey north and were residing in Northern America. The Latin American and Caribbean population living in Northern America has increased considerably over time, from an

estimated 10 million in 1990. Another 5 million migrants from the region were in Europe in 2020." Girls and adolescent girls represent around 20% of the female human mobility flow in the region (UNDP, 2020).

Belize is both a transit point and a destination for migrants. Though our data is not representative of a comprehensive survey or an overview of the situation in the entire country, through the Amnesty Support Program we had been running at the Human Rights Commission of Belize during the amnesty application period in 2022/2023, of the 700 plus migrants, we saw 69% came from Guatemala and 21% from El Salvador. When we look at asylum seekers seeking Amnesty support from our office, from a total of more than 400 persons, 69% were

from El Salvador, and 14% from Guatemala.

"Belize is currently receiving the largest number of immigrants since 1983, with a similar proportionate number of men to women migrating to Belize. Apart from this, the country is also experiencing high emigration and receiving a rising number of forced and voluntary returnees," states IOM.

As a result, Belize government has taken a keener interest in migration governance. So far, the government has looked into matters concerning the influx of Venezuelans, Cubans, Haitians and most recently, Jamaicans.

IOM is also working with the government and other states in the region "to tackle old and new challenges posed by migration

management; promote understanding about the nature of migration flows; encourage social and economic development through the benefits of migration; and ensure respect for the human dignity and well-being of migrants".

We do not intend to get into the political aspect of these processes but aim to look at the overall situation across the region. The numbers have increased and as evidenced by the new urgencies for states to "create migration governance systems that can adapt and respond effectively for the management of these evolving flows," it is important to understand the why and the how.

Article 13 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights states: "Everyone has the right to freedom of movement and residence within the

borders of each state. Everyone has the right to leave any country, including his own, and to return to his country."

Article 14 of the UDHR grants the right to seek and enjoy asylum from persecution. In our next submission, we hope to highlight some of the reasons for the significant shifts and continued increase in migration within the region, including the imminent shifts that climate change will trigger in the years to come.

Disclaimer: the opinions expressed by our columnists are theirs alone, and are not necessarily reflective of the newspaper's stance on the issues touched. We believe it is critical that our columnists be allowed freedom to generate discussion through their expressions on any number of topics.

TENDER



Inventory Management Consultancy

BEL invites tenders for Inventory Management Consultancy as follows:

The Consultant will review and document BEL's current end-to-end inventory management and logistics processes to determine how well they align with the Company's objectives and the requirements of the end-use departments as well as with regional and international best practices. Based on these findings and other relevant considerations, the Consultant will propose a wholly revised end-to-end process with supporting policies, procedures, and systems re-engineered to deliver on the Company's mission, vision, objectives, and strategic plans and to meet the requirements of end-users as cost-effectively as possible.

The bid document which outlines all the duties and responsibilities of the contract, and dates are available on BEL's website at www.bel.com.bz/Tenders.aspx

Bidders are invited to a pre-bid virtual meeting at **2:00 p.m. local time on Tuesday, May 9, 2023.**

Bids will be accepted by email only and should include the bid number located on the respect bid form.

Submit bids via email to bidsubmittal@bel.com.bz no later than **3:00 p.m. local time on Friday, May 12, 2023.**

For more information or queries, send email to bidboxrequest@bel.com.bz

Cost incurred for preparation of the tender document is the sole responsibility of the bidder. The lowest or any tender will not necessarily be accepted.

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- Proven experience with profitability models and performance management methodologies.
- Sound understanding of commercial risk dynamics, strategies and management.
- Strong people management with the ability to influence.
- Creative and innovative approach to achievement of business goals.

APPLY BY SENDING YOUR RESUME TO:

tania_requena@unicomer.com

Deadline: April 27th, 2023

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BNTU elects new Leaders at AGM

By William Ysaguirre

The Belize National Teachers Union elected a new president in the person of Ruth Shoman, at its 53rd annual general meeting held at the Muffles College auditorium in Orange Walk Town last Wednesday and Thursday, April 12th-13th.

Shoman previously served as national secretary and in the elections held last Thursday evening, she won 356 of the votes cast, while Ifasina Efunyemi garnered 226 votes, and Ray Martinez received 71. Jorge Mejia was elected vice president with 402 votes, while his rival Edison Ogaldez got 253 votes.

Bay Rivas received 341 votes for national secretary and Armin Cardenas – 313. Keisha Williams was endorsed as Treasurer unopposed, as there were no other candidates. The

newly elected officers take up their duties immediately to serve for the next two years, while Shoman takes over from outgoing president, Senator Elena Smith on July 1.

Smith has worked to improve working conditions for teachers during her six-year tenure as national president, and she reviewed some of the achievements of the past year in her annual address to the members of the 10 branches who attended the AGM. She has lobbied with the Education ministry for teachers to be allowed time off to go to the bank on payday, which some teachers in remote areas felt the time allowed was not enough.

The union was able to convince the ministry to allow the teachers more time for some schools based on their location and transportation issues. The Union has also worked with teachers to help them improve

their professional qualification through training workshops, and several teachers were able to attend training sessions offered by the Caribbean Union of Teachers.

The Union has also advocated for the Education ministry to lighten teachers' work load by providing lesson modules and a bank of Lesson Plans for the Competency-Based Curriculum that the ministry is implementing. The ministry has created an online platform where primary school teachers may access these resources. Similar support is not yet available for secondary school teachers, with whom the ministry will soon be holding a second round of consultations to get feedback on the Subject Specific Framework.

The Union also convinced the Ministry to work with school managements



President-elect Ruth Shoman (l) and outgoing president Elena Smith

to provide teachers with the basic charts required for teaching, which should result in considerable savings for teachers. An extra half hour has been added to the curriculum, and the union has asked the ministry to consider the time that teachers dedicate to extracurricular activities with their students.

Smith also reported on the progress towards a Collective Bargaining Agreement, which has been ongoing for many years, and progress made in the last few months on Proposal 22, which she hoped can finalized soon for secondary school teachers to enjoy some benefits and to be content with their

retirement benefits. She also urged teachers to provide accurate information for surveys to help the Union determine which teachers should qualify for commuting or hardship allowances.

The union is happy that the 10 percent salary cut has been reversed after one year, but the Joint Unions continue to work with the government to consider the sacrifices that teachers made, and that they should be compensated for the hardships they endured when increments were frozen. The union has proposed for teachers to be given double increments as the quickest way to get them back to the correct point on

the pay scale. The B.N.T.U. will continue to negotiate for this to be finalized by June.

The Joint Unions continue their discussions with the government on Tax Reform, Revenue Enhancement measures and Cost Savings, but the unions insisted that Pension Reform should not be tied to restoration of increments.

Carla Villafranco of the Stann Creek branch was awarded \$200 for proposing the theme of this year's AGM: "One Union, One Mission, One Voice". The Union also continued its annual tradition of approving a \$500 contribution to a worthy cause, which this year went to the Orange Walk branch of Help Age.

STATUTORY NOTICE TO CREDITORS

IN THE ESTATE OF HORTENSE ADELLA EVELYN, Deceased, of 20 1/2 Miles Stann Creek Valley Road, Stann Creek District, Belize.

NOTICE is hereby given pursuant to Section 36 of the Administration of Estates Act, Chapter 197 of the Laws of Belize that all creditors and other persons including beneficiaries and kin having any claims and demands upon or against the Estate of **HORTENSE ADELLA EVELYN**, late of **20 1/2 Miles Stann Creek Valley Road, Stann Creek District, Belize**, who died on the 26th day of April 2018 in whose estate a Grant of Administration has been granted to **SUCCESSION EXECUTORS LTD.** the Lawful Attorney of **Donna Faye Dawkins** to lodge any claims or demands in writing to **Succession Executors Ltd. c/o Mikhail Arguelles & Associates, Attorneys-at-Law of 35 New Road, Belize City, Belize** on or before the expiration of three months from the first publication hereof **AND NOTICE IS ALSO HEREBY GIVEN** that at the expiration of the said three months the said Administrator shall proceed to distribute the assets of the said **HORTENSE ADELLA EVELYN**, deceased amongst the beneficiaries entitled thereto, having regard only to claims and demands of which they shall then have had notice.

DATED the 21st day of April, 2023

**Mikhail Arguelles & Associates
Attorneys-at-Law for the
Administrator of the Estate of
HORTENSE ADELLA EVELYN**

 **Atlantic Bank**

Holiday Opening Hours

The public is advised that all Atlantic Bank Branches and Drive Thrus will be closed for business on Saturday, April 29, 2023 in celebration of Labour Day.

All branches and drive thrus will reopen on Tuesday, May 2, 2023.

AI-generated song, using global superstars' vocals, goes viral

By Javan Flowers

An allegedly AI-generated song, using global megastars Drake and The Weeknd's vocals, was unleashed onto popular streaming services, accumulating millions of listens, resulting in stark warnings from Universal Music Group (UMG) to industry players who need to choose "which side of history" they want to be on.

As reports suggest, the viral track "Heart on My Sleeve" was published by an anonymous TikTok user named Ghostwriter977, who claims to have used artificial intelligence (AI) to generate the voices of famous Canadian Musicians Drake and The Weeknd for the track.

UMG, the music label representing Drake, The Weeknd, and numerous other global superstars, sent urgent letters in April to streaming platforms, including Spotify and Apple Music, asking them to prohibit AI platforms from "training on the melodies and lyrics" of their copyrighted songs.

In a statement to CNN, UMG notes that "The training of generative AI using our artists' music, which represents both a breach of our agreements and a violation of

copyright law as well as the availability of infringing content created with generative AI on digital service providers, begs the question as to which side of history all stakeholders in the music ecosystem want to be on: the side of artists, fans and human creative expression, or on the side of deep fakes, fraud and denying artists their due compensation."

The record label said platforms have "a fundamental legal and ethical responsibility to prevent the use of their services in ways that harm artists."

"Heart On My Sleeve" has since been pulled from Spotify, as well as Apple Music, TIDAL, and YouTube; though, many music fans that listened to the song before it got struck down seemed impressed. One comment on TikTok with more than 75,000 likes said it was the "first AI song that has actually impressed me." Another said Ghostwriter was "putting out better Drake songs than Drake himself." A third said AI was "getting dangerously good."

Even if short-lived, the sensational success of "Heart On My Sleeve" has since created much concern over the impact of AI on the music industry – across the globe.



Artificial intelligence generated song that rivaled actual artists' (Drake and The Weeknd's) music.



Caribbean Community Climate Change Centre

TENDER OPPORTUNITY: REQUEST FOR EXPRESSIONS OF INTERESTS

Project Development Specialist

Beneficiary:	Belize
Donor:	Green Climate Fund (GCF)
Project Name:	National Adaptation Planning for Integrated Water Resource Management in Belize (BLZ-RS-007)
Contract Title:	Project Development Specialist
Contract #:	#33/2023/GCF/Belize/CCCCC
Number of Positions:	1
Type of contract:	Lump Sum – Individual expert's cost will include Professional fees, travel related expenses
Estimated Start Date:	May, 2023
Contract duration:	12 Months
Budget:	USD \$48,000.00
Main duty station:	CCCCC Office- Belize
Deadline for Submission:	<i>on or before 2:00pm (GMT-6), Wednesday 10th May 2023</i>

The CCCCC is an equal opportunity Employer and Reaffirms its commitment to achieving gender equality

The full Terms of Reference (TOR) for the contract "Project Development Specialist" can be accessed and downloaded at: <https://wp.me/pa0qC3-5sm>

Requests for Clarification: email: procurement@caribbeanclimate.bz Attention: **Andrea Tillet, Procurement Officer**. Requests for clarification should be received by the Centre no later than: **Monday, 1st May 2023**. Consultants are advised that the responses to the requests for clarification will be only posted on the Centre's Webpage at: <https://www.caribbeanclimate.bz/blog/category/opportunities/procurement-2/procurement/>

The Caribbean Community Climate Change Centre reserves the right to accept or reject any submission and to annul the process and reject all submissions at any time prior to the contract signature without thereby incurring any liability.



Oración al Espíritu Santo

Espíritu Santo. Tú que me aclaras todo, que iluminas todo mis caminos para yo alcance mi ideal; tú que das el don divino de perdonar y olvidar el mal que me hacen y que en todos los instantes de mi vida estas conmigo, yo quiero en este corto diálogo agradecerte por todo y confirmar una vez más que nunca quiero separarme de ti, por mayor que sea la ilusión material! Deseo estar contigo y todos mis seres queridos por tu misericordia para estar conmigo y los mfos. (La persona debere rezar esta oración 3 días seguidos sin decir el pedido. Dentro de tres días será difícil que sea. Publicar en cuando se reciba la gracia.

Gracias Espíritu Santo.

R.M.L.

GOB and UNDP to develop partnership to support good governance reform

By Javan Flowers

Hon. Henry Charles Usher, the minister of constitutional and political reform, met with representatives from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) to further bolster support for

good governance reform. The meeting focused on discussions on the way forward regarding strengthening good governance, accountability, and finding innovative solutions to address issues in Belize. Key topics discussed included

the work of the Good Governance Unit in addressing corruption and the importance of leveraging technology and data to improve governance outcomes.

In emphasizing the GOB's commitment to improving governance and accountability, Minister Usher noted that "effective governance is critical for the country's social and economic development" and highlighted the importance of transparency, citizen engagement, and anti-corruption measures.

One of the discussion points was the development of a roadmap for good governance in Belize. The roadmap will be based on international best practices and will consider the specific

challenges and opportunities facing Belize. The UNDP's knowledge and resources, including its extensive network of governance specialists and its background in assisting with governance reforms in other nations, will support the partnership.

The UNDP works

in 170 countries and territories to eradicate poverty and reduce inequality by aiding countries in developing policies, leadership skills, partnering abilities, and institutional capabilities and to build resilience to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.

Senior officials from the Ministry of Constitutional and

Political Reform accompanied Minister Usher. The UNDP representatives included Linda Maguire, the deputy director for Latin America and the Caribbean; Denise Antonio, the resident representative; Ian King, the deputy resident director; and Richard Kelly, programme specialist.



Hon. Henry Charles Usher and UNDP Representative Linda Maguire

Wife of Mexican President on a Mission to preserve History



Hon John Briceno and Dr. Beatriz Gutiérrez Müller and handing over ceremony

By Javan Flowers

Dr. Beatriz Gutiérrez Müller, Spouse of the President of Mexico, began her tour in Belize to deliver equipment to the Caribbean under the project "Recovery of Historical Archives in Latin America and the Caribbean."

Dr. Müller arrived at the House of Culture in Belize City, where she handed over a Bookeye 5v5 Overhead Book Scanner to the Government of Belize - equipment critical to safeguarding historical Belizean historical documents.

Speaking at the handing-over ceremony, Müller remarked, "History is not only a social discipline, but History is also a teacher, don't

forget that. Everything you have here in your country is very ancient, for example, this historical house we're visiting it's beautiful, and maybe somebody says, 'Oh what a nice house' but that house has a past and has an explanation about the History of this country."

"[It is for this reason] why those from the social sciences and the humanities put so much value on the objects that represent and symbolize us. An object like this scanner will allow your archive or your library, that everything you have inside, which is a treasure, can be preserved, especially in these kinds of countries, very tropical, with many problems with humidity." She

continued.

H. E. Rossana Briceño, Wife of the Prime Minister of Belize, expressed similar sentiments: "Historic preservation is a deep and meaningful conversation about our past which in turn influences key aspects of our future. It is an opportunity for future generations to understand and appreciate the significant events, people, and stories that shape Belize's History."

The visit from Müller comes almost a year after President Andrés Manuel López Obrador made an official visit to Belize and met with Prime Minister John Briceno and officials from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. During that visit, trade, education, agriculture, infrastructure and transport agreements were forged.

Weh Wi Ga Fi Seh

How 2023 di goh?
Gi tanks evriday:
tee, dina, tee.

Madaz! Mee Lov Mi Mada Tong

Tank yu, Miz OFELIA BROOKS ... maaaaayn, if unu noh reed it yet, unu mikays goh tu dis websait ahn reed "Mother Tongue."

<https://cutleafjournal.com/nonfiction/mother-tongue/>

Dis da Miz Ofelia Brooks chroo chroo stoari a how shee geh fi lov op di priti priti Kriol langwij. Wen yu geh fi noa seh dat Miz Ofelia Brooks grani ahn ma da Bileeyzan tu, ahn shee groa op da Stayts, ahn fahn di lishn tu ih grani di brok intu ih Kriol da Stayts Laad, unu MOS hori mikays chek dis owt! BIG OP Miz Ofelia Brooks, sayk a how shee laan ihself di Kriol raitn sistim. Gyal .. yu gud gud! Ahn tank yu, Andrea Young/Kuchriments.com fi link wi op wid dis paat a Miz Ofelia!

"I play videos on my phone of the Belizean chef Sean Kuylen cooking every night. I close my eyes every few words to revel in the way he sounds, especially how he pronounces each word. Ai nayli bon aaf mi aiybrow, he says, while flambéing butter sauce for black cake, a Belizean take on holiday fruit cake." (Para. 1, Joon, 2022)

Ah play op dehn vidyo a di Bileezyn tapa tapa kuk, Sean Kuylen, evri nait. Ah shet mi aiy evri now ahn den fi mek di way hihn song plezha mi. Ah speshali laik how hihn seh eech werd klyaa klyaa [or this could be klayr, klayr]. 'Ah nayli bon aaf mi aiy broa' ih seh, sayhn taihn di lait faiya pahn bota fi mek saas fi blak kayk. Blak kayk da di Bileezyan hailday froot kayk." (Paat 1 a 2)

Res eena pees, Juliet Vernon Austin.

Tu yu famili ahn faamli ahn aal Kriol Bileezyan, wi seh Gaad bles, ahn TANK YU, wi Kriol Prinses. Tel yu ma, wi Kriol Kween Leela Vernon, dat wi noa shee welkohn yu da Hevn ... bot Laad-a-masi, how wi mis unu ahn aal di Kriol kolcha lov.

GRASSROOTS

CONTRIBUTION OF HON. GILROY USHER TO THE 2023/2024 BUDGET DEBATE



By Hon. Gilroy Usher

Madam Speaker: First I must say greetings to the wonderful residents of Port Loyola, who elected me to represent them in the National Assembly. I also take this opportunity to thank you, Madam Speaker, for including myself as one of the two persons to represent Belize at the 71st Westminster Seminar in London from Monday March 13th, 2023 to Sunday March 17th, 2023.

Madam Speaker: I must acknowledge that it was a very informative seminar. Consequently, I returned from London with renewed commitment and new ideas to be of greater service to the residents of Port Loyola and our beautiful country, Belize.

Madam Speaker: I now take this opportunity to make my contribution to the draft Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure for Fiscal year 2023/2024.

Madam Speaker: According to the Budget in the new fiscal the government expects to collect \$1,372, 743,486.00 in revenue. Out of that amount it is envisioned that \$1,112,855,051.00 will be used for expenses in running the government and addressing the needs of the people as best as possible from Corozal to Toledo and from Benque to

the Cayes.

When those expected expenses are deducted from the expected revenue there is a surplus of \$259,888,435.00. The 2022-2023 Budget of this administration also had a surplus after projected total expenses were deducted from the projected revenue.

Madam Speaker: That is prudent management of the finances of the country, because the Budget is only an estimate based on past trends.

Madam Speaker: A budget surplus is always good news. A budget surplus allows the government to continue addressing the needs of the people without significant disruption in the event there is a major decrease in revenue or a major increase in the cost of accessing goods and services as a result of unforeseen circumstances.

Madam Speaker: When one listens to the Opposition they make it sound as if managing the finances of the country in the interest of the Belizean people is as simple as ABC.

This administration restored stability to the nation's finances, because Prime Minister Briceño and his Ministers are governing the country in the best interest of the Belizean people as they promised to do in Plan Belize.

Madam Speaker: The now Opposition had 13 years in government to manage the finances of the country in the best interest of the people, and they failed miserably, that is why they are sitting on that side

of the House with next to no chance of forming the government anytime soon.

Madam Speaker: As a result of poor management of the country's finances for 13 long years, in its final term the previous administration was on the unsustainable path of borrowing one million dollars

per day to pay salaries and keep the country running.

Despite the financial mess they were creating, the former Prime Minister said he would continue borrowing until he could borrow no more, and in admitting the financial mess in which they had the country with the IMF

demanding the firing of over 2,000 public officers to bailout Belize financially, the former P.M. said that he felt sorry for whomever took over the government after he demits office.

Madam Speaker: Things were that dread in the country.

After spending over a billion dollars yearly well over 13 billion

dollars in 13 years under the previous administration more Belizeans were in poverty than ever before, there was rampant corruption in practically all Ministries and government departments, crime especially murders and gang violence were out of control,

Cont'd on pg 9



VACANCY P PORT of BELIZE LTD. NOTICE

A Port with a Global Perspective

Accountant

Applications are invited from suitably qualified persons to fill the following post in the Accounts Department. In the Port's continued effort to promote diversity both males/females, able/differently abled are encouraged to apply for the available post.

Reports to: Chief Accountant

Summary of Responsibilities: The Accountant assist and support the Chief Accountant in carrying out the overall financial function for the Port. Applies principles of accounting to analyze financial information and prepare financial reports. Provide accurate quantitative information and assist with the supervision of accounting staff in the absence of Chief Accountant. Ensure the accurate, consistent and timely input of data into the accounting system.

Job Responsibilities:

- Overall Supervisor of the Accounts Department
- Prepare bank reconciliations for all accounts.
- Prepare management payroll.
- Prepare weekly cash flows – Review A/R
- Supervise – Cashier and Storekeeper
- Prepare monthly accruals (follow journal guide)
- Prepare monthly for PBL and BPOL GST and Business Tax return.
- Prepare managers monthly department expenses.
- Distribute end of month reports to managers
- Assist Chief Accountant: Analysis of Revenue, budget preparation.
- Manage Accounting Department in the absence of Chief Accountant
- Supervise preparation and loading of PAYE and Social Security to portal.
- Reconcile intercompany accounts BPL, BPOL, BLTL
- Prepare and reconcile loan accounts.
- Supervise preparation of staff payroll
- Prepare and reconcile monthly reports – suspense Acts, prepayments accounts etc.
- Prepare and update monthly depreciation schedule.
- Supervise: Petty cash reconciliation
- Stevedore Floats account
- Assist in checking out of cashier.
- Any other duties of a related nature as per departmental needs

Job Qualifications/Requirement:

- Bachelor's Degree in Business Administration with an emphasis in accounting
- 5+ years' experience
- Strong interpersonal and supervisory skills
- Strong verbal and written communication
- Report writing
- Ability to multi task

Skills/Competencies:

- Strong command of accounting principles as per
- Problem solving skills
- Able to work under pressure
- Confidential
- Trustworthy

Compensation Package: Will be commensurate (in accordance with the Company's Salary Structure).

To apply: Provide updated resume, cover letter (addressed to Human Resource Manager), copy of valid social security card, valid police report, name and phone number of two(2) previous employers.

Email to:
jobapplications@portofbelize.com
 Closing date for receipt of applications is Friday, April 28, 2023.



REQUEST FOR EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST INDIVIDUAL CONSULTING SERVICES

Institution: Ministry of Infrastructure Development and Housing
Country: Belize
Project: Climate Vulnerability Reduction Program (CVRP)
Sector: Infrastructure, Environment and Natural Disasters
Abstract: Individual Consulting Services – Final Evaluation for the Climate Vulnerability Reduction Program

Loan/Credit/Grant No.: 4426/OC-BL

Deadline: April 26th, 2023, at 10:00 a.m. (Local Belize Time)

The Government of Belize has received financing from the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), towards the cost of the Climate Vulnerability Reduction Program (CVRP) and intends to apply part of the proceeds for consulting services.

The consulting services (“the Services”) include the contracting of an Individual Consultant for a duration of eight (8) consecutive weeks or forty (40) consultancy days over a three (3) month period who will be responsible for conducting the **Final Evaluation of the Climate Vulnerability Reduction Program**. The overall objective of the consultancy is to determine the Program’s impact and will assess the following. **a.)** Degree of attainment of targets as set out in the results matrix and reasons for any variances. **b.)** Effectiveness of the execution unit (s) and arrangements established for program execution, including the establishment of a monitoring and evaluation system. **c.)** Sustainability of the activities funded under the program and **d.)** Confirmation if the Social and Environmental Safeguard Plans were implemented and. **e.)** Lessons learned that could be applied for future projects.

The Ministry of Infrastructure Development and Housing now invites eligible Individual Consultants to indicate their interest in providing the Services. Interested Consultants should provide information demonstrating that they have the required qualifications and relevant experience to perform the Services.

A Consultant will be selected in accordance with the procedures set out in the Inter-American Development Bank: **Policies for the Selection and Contracting of Consultants financed by the Inter-American Development Bank (GN-2350-15, January 2020)** – Section V, 5.2 Selection of Individual Consultants based on Comparison of Qualifications of National Individual Consultants. Further information can be obtained at the address below during office hours:

Program Management Unit
#1 Power Lane, Belmopan, Cayo
Office Hours: Monday - Friday 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.
Tel: 501-822-0100/1942
Email: pmupcmow@gmail.com, cvrp.4426.4@gmail.com or procurement.officer.midh@gmail.com

Expressions of interest must be delivered in a written form to the address below (in person, or by mail, or by e-mail) by 10:00 a.m. (Local Belize Time) on April 21st, 2023.

Attn: Mr. Rolando Chan
Program Coordinator
Program Management Unit
#1 Power Lane, Belmopan
Cayo District, Belize
Tel: 501-822-0100/1942
E-mail: pmupcmow@gmail.com, cvrp.4426.4@gmail.com
or
procurement.officer.midh@gmail.com

CONTRIBUTION OF HON. GILROY USHER TO THE 2023/2024 BUDGET DEBATE

Cont'd from pg 8

the roads were bad, the dropout rate for all levels of education was mind-boggling, people could not get access to land and adequate housing, and unemployment was going through the roof. The only persons, who did well during the Opposition 13 years in government, were their well-connected colleagues. Many of those special Belizeans became overnight millionaires.

Madam Speaker: For the great disservice the previous administration did to this country, the Opposition should apologize to the Belizean people.

Madam Speaker: The draft estimate of revenue and expenditure for fiscal year 2023 /2024 will do justice to our manifesto pledge “Everybody fi win / Todos Ganamos” as it will build on the many achievements of the previous budget that impacted the lives of Belizeans throughout the country in positive ways.

For the Legislature the new Budget for the Ombudsman is \$327,981.00. That is a significant increase from what was budgeted for that office when the Opposition was voted out of office in November 2020. The office of the Ombudsman will, therefore, be better equipped to ensure that ordinary citizens get justice in a timely manner whenever they make legitimate complaints of injustice, injury, abuse, or other wrong doing against police officers or others in authority.

Madam Speaker: There is also an increase in the budget for the Contractor General.

That is a very important increase. It will help ensure that the tax payers of the country get value for their hard earned dollars that

are used to finance needed government projects.

With the Briceño Administration, scores of lengths of steel, dozens of buckets yellow paint, and other construction materials that are purchased with taxpayers money are no longer being used to build large overnight concrete houses for any Area Representative. The new budget of this administration puts the office of the Contractor General to put it in a better position to prevent corruption, because whenever corruption is prevented in every possible way everybody win.

Madam Speaker: Apart from continuous training and improvement of the workplace to enable public officers to offer better service to the public, the new Budget guarantees the resumption of payments of increments to all public officers and teachers as of April 1st, 2023.

With the healthy recovery of the economy in the current fiscal year, government terminated the 10% salary cut for public officers and teachers from July 1st, 2022 in keeping with its promise to fully restore the salary cut as soon as possible. And less anyone forgets the salary cut was introduced to deal with the severe decline in revenue for over a year as COVID forced scores of business to close due to very low sales.

Madam Speaker: This administration also deserves credit for introducing a pension plan that will guarantee public officers and teachers a better pension in their golden years. Considering the contribution career public officers have already made to the existing pension scheme only those persons, who enter the public service on July 1st, 2023, will be included in the mandatory pension

scheme.

That is additional proof that this government listens to the concerns of public officers.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Rodwell Ferguson is the Minister of Youth, Sports, and Transport. Minister Ferguson is a very hardworking, dedicated, and passionate Minister, and am happy to serve as the Minister of State in the Ministry.

With Clear the Soil nowhere in sight, under this Briceño administration, the revenue for the Transport Department has increased tremendously each year including the current financial year that will end next week on Friday March 31st.

To better serve the public, the Transport Department has opened new offices in Spanish Lookout and other parts of the country, numerous training sessions have been held to enable the staff to be more effective, special campaigns have been held to promote traffic safety, highway patrol has been increased, and the department continue to work with bus operators for improvement of their equipment to offer better service which commuters truly deserve. The Transport Department was also able to ease the hardship on bus operators as a result of high fuel prices by securing fuel subsidy for them twice from the Ministry of Finance.

****To be continued next week.**

Disclaimer: the opinions expressed by our columnists are theirs alone, and are not necessarily reflective of the newspaper’s stance on the issues touched. We believe it is critical that our columnists be allowed freedom to generate discussion through their expressions on any number of topics.

Belize & Mexico partner to preserve history

By William Ysaguirre

Belize has partnered with Mexico to preserve our historical and cultural records; as both countries share a common history of the struggle for democracy and freedom.

Chief Executive Officer Dian Castillo Maheia signed an agreement to this effect with Executive Director Dr. Laura Elena Carrillo Cubillas of Mexico's Agency for International Cooperation in Development (AMEXCID), witnessed by Minister of State for Education and Culture Hon. Louis Zabaneh PhD and Dr. Beatriz Gutierrez Muller, the wife of Mexico's President, at the House of Culture in Belize City on Tuesday morning, April 18.

Special Envoy for Families and Children Hon. Mrs. Rossana Briceño welcomed Mexico's First Lady and her delegation to Belize with a short tour of Government House, before the signing ceremony.

Mrs. Briceño and the Mexican First Lady share a mutual interest in continuing education, as Briceño is a lifelong educator, particularly of children with



Minister Louis Zabaneh and Dr. Beatriz Gutierrez Muller witness agreement

special needs; while Dr. Gutierrez is a researcher, author and poet, who has published novels and short stories.

Dr. Gutierrez Muller brought with her the gift of history books, a scanner and other electronic equipment for preserving historical records in digital format, as part of the larger Project to Preserve Historical Archives in Latin America and the Caribbean.

President Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador has indicated the importance for Mexico to help its southern neighbors of Latin America in development and especially immediate neighbors such as

ere their valuable information be lost.

The agreement solidifies Mexico's commitment to continue bilateral cooperation to "safeguard our collective national and regional identity through solid mechanisms for the preservation, organization and documentation of collections that are of priceless historic and cultural value".

Dr. Carrillo Cubillas noted that the agreement includes a training program for the staff of the Archives Department in the use of the

when AMEXCID began rolling out its "Sembrando Vida" Planting Life program to assist 2,000 rural farmers in Belize. This latest project is part of Belize and Mexico continuing over 40 years of technical and scientific cooperation.

Director Kevin Montero of the Belize Archives and Registry Service and Mexico's Ambassador to Belize H.E. Martha Zamarripa Rivas also attended the presentation.

The ceremony concluded with a



Laura Carrillo, Rossana Briceño, Dr. Beatriz Gutierrez Muller, Dr. Louis Zabaneh & Martha Zamarripa Rivas

Belize, Dr. Gutierrez noted. Belize and Mexico share a common cultural

history, and it is important that fragile historical records be preserved, for

equipment. This was her second visit to Belize, as she had previously visited

cultural presentation by the Marines Mariachi Orchestra from Mexico City.

S U D O K U

Medium Puzzle

							2	
			7	1				
		5		9		7		
	7				6			9
2	9					6	1	5
	1			8				
		2	3		5			8
		3		2	1	9		6

Answer to Puzzle

6	7	6	1	2	4	3	5	8
8	4	1	5	7	3	2	6	9
2	5	3	9	8	6	7	1	4
5	1	6	7	3	8	4	9	2
7	8	4	2	5	9	1	3	6
9	3	2	6	4	1	8	7	5
3	9	7	4	9	2	5	8	1
4	9	5	8	1	7	6	2	3
1	2	8	3	6	5	9	4	7

Sudoku rules are extremely easy: Fill all empty squares so that the numbers 1 to 9 appear once in each row, column and 3x3 box. Tip. Use a soft erasable pencil. Start with the easy puzzles, then move on to the harder ones. Make small pencilmarks to show which numbers are allowed in empty squares. This will come handy when analyzing techniques are used. Never guess! Only make moves based on logical deductions. There is only one unique solution for each puzzle.



Skin: Facts about the body's largest organ and its functions

Skin is the body's largest organ and, along with hair, nails, and skin-associated nerves and glands, is part of the integumentary system, according to the National Library of Medicine (NLM).

This system acts as a protective barrier between the external environment and the inside of the body, shielding the internal organs against heat, light, injury and infection. In addition, skin plays an important role in regulating body temperature, preventing water loss, producing vitamin D and detecting sensations caused by mechanical stimuli that make contact with or put pressure on the skin.

In an average adult, skin accounts for about 15% of total body weight and covers a surface area of approximately 22 square feet (2 square meters), according to the NLM. There are different thicknesses and textures of skin on different parts of the body. For example, skin is thicker on the soles of the feet and palms of the hands, and thinner on the eyelids and genitals, the NLM states.

Human skin is composed of three layers of tissue: the epidermis, dermis and hypodermis. The thickness and density of skin layers vary among individuals, depending on their age, sex and genetic factors. For example, female adults and children typically have thinner skin than male adults in most areas of the body. Environmental influences, such as exposure to sun or certain medications, may also affect skin density, NLM states. Epidermis

The epidermis is the top, visible layer of skin. It is further divided into four layers: the stratum basale, stratum spinosum, stratum granulosum and stratum corneum. The thick skin on the palms and soles of the feet has an additional layer, called the stratum lucidum, according to the NLM.

Keratin, a protein made by cells in the epidermis, gives skin its toughness and strength, according to a 2009 review published in the *Journal of Anatomy*. The epidermis is constantly renewed as dead skin cells are shed daily. New skin cells form at the bottom of the epidermis. As these newer cells form, it takes them about one month to reach the top layer of the epidermis. The new cells then replace the old cells on the skin's surface.

The epidermis contains melanocytes, which are cells that produce melanin, the pigment that gives skin its color. Melanin is also responsible for suntans and freckles, according to the NLM. Dermis

The dermis is the middle layer of skin, found underneath the epidermis. It is further divided into two layers: the papillary dermis (the upper layer) and the reticular dermis (the lower layer). The dermis is the thickest layer of skin and contains nerves and blood vessels. It is also home to the sweat glands, oil glands and hair follicles. The dermis is made up mostly of a protein called collagen that makes skin stretchy and strong, according to the NLM.

HYPODERMIS

The hypodermis, also called subcutaneous fat, is the deepest layer of skin. This layer is made up mostly of fatty tissue, which helps to insulate the body from heat and cold; cushion internal organs, muscle and bones; and protect the body from injuries, according to the NLM.

WHAT IS THE FUNCTION OF THE SKIN?

Skin functions as a protective barrier against harmful microbes, mechanical injury, heat and

hazardous substances that could otherwise damage the body's internal tissues. It also plays other important roles in the body, including the following:

Sensing pain and touch: Nerve endings in the dermis contain receptors that react to specific stimuli and trigger signals that get sent to the brain, where they're interpreted as various sensations, such as pain, pressure, touch, itchiness and temperature.

Producing sweat and oils: Sweat glands help to cool the body, and sebaceous glands make the oils that keep skin soft and moist.

Growing hair: Hair follicles found in the dermis grow the hair on your head, face and body. That hair also helps to control body temperature and protect the body from injury.

Bringing blood to the skin: Blood vessels found



in the dermis nourish the skin and help control body temperature. When skin becomes too hot, blood vessels widen to release heat from the skin's surface, while cold constricts blood vessels so they retain body heat.

Fighting infection: Lymphatic vessels, which drain fluid from the tissues and are an important part of the immune system, are housed in the dermis. They help ward off infections and harmful substances.

Producing vitamin D: Exposure to sunlight triggers the production of vitamin D in the skin.

IS SKIN WATERPROOF?

Top-down view of a dark-skinned child with curly hair sits near the pool and put their feet in the water.

Keratin is one of the main components of the skin's waterproof barrier. Skin is waterproof due to the anatomical makeup of the upper and lower layers of skin. It is a functioning organ that is constantly healing and remodeling, which helps maintain the skin's integrity, Dr. Ross Perry, aesthetic doctor and medical director at Cosmedics Skin Clinics in England, told Live Science.

Keratin is one of the main components of the skin's waterproof barrier, according to the NLM. Because this protein cannot dissolve in water — meaning it's "water insoluble" — it seals the skin barrier and prevents water from breaking through. Sebum, which is also water insoluble, coats the surface of the skin, protecting it from drying out.

The organization of fats in the superficial layers of the skin may also contribute to its waterproof properties, according to a 2012 study in the *Journal of Investigative Dermatology*. The study authors looked at samples of skin scrapings and found fatty structures "that had not previously been described in a biological system." They not only appear to make skin resistant to water but also enable the skin to bend, the study authors noted.

WHAT IS THE SKIN MICROBIOME?

The skin microbiome refers to microorganisms, such as bacteria and fungi, that live on the surface of the skin. These microbes are found mostly on the superficial layers of skin and hair follicles. Helpful microbes found in the skin microbiome play an important role in protecting the skin from harmful microbes that might overgrow on the skin and cause infection, Perry told Live Science.

Many microbes on the skin can produce molecules that prevent the colonization of other microorganisms or alter their behavior to make them less threatening to the host. In addition, some bacteria, such as *Staphylococcus epidermidis*, have been found to bolster resilience to infections by prompting the host's immune system to produce more messenger proteins essential to fighting inflammation, according to a 2018 review published in the journal *Nature Reviews Microbiology*.

The skin microbiome of a healthy adult stays relatively stable over time, but the composition, or balance, of microbes may differ depending on the skin site. For example, species in the genera *Staphylococcus* and *Corynebacterium* tend to be found in moist areas, including on the feet and the bends of the elbows. Species in the genus *Propionibacterium*, on the other hand, are more abundant on the skin sites that are richer in sebaceous glands, such as the scalp, the review authors noted.

WHY DOES SKIN TAN?

Tanning is the skin's response to ultraviolet (UV) radiation. When skin is exposed to UV rays, it produces more melanin pigments. Melanin is the first line of defense against sun — it absorbs the UV rays and prevents them from damaging the skin. When the amount of UV light exceeds the amount of protection melanin can provide, the radiation may lead to sunburn, premature skin aging, cataracts and even cancers, according to Johns Hopkins Medicine.

People have different levels of sensitivity to UV rays, depending on their age, health status and skin type. Adults over age 50, children under 5, people with light complexions and those with immune system deficiencies tend to be more at risk of harmful effects of tanning, according to the Food and Drug Administration (FDA).

"Although people with darker complexions are less likely to get skin cancer than people with lighter complexions, they can still develop malignancies and suffer all forms of UV damage," the FDA notes.

WHY DOES SKIN AGE?

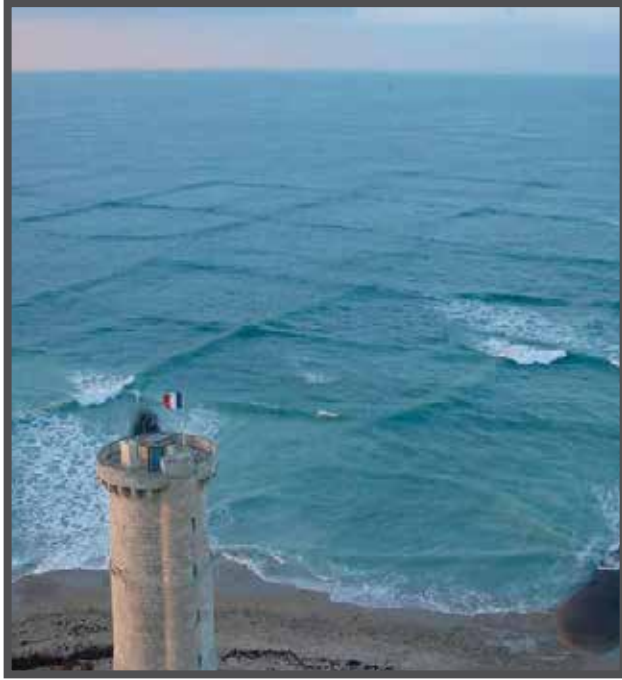
With age, skin becomes thinner, less flexible and more prone to wrinkles, dryness and age spots, also known as liver spots. Bumps, cuts and other wounds also may take longer to heal, while small blood vessels may be more visible through skin, according to the National Institute on Aging. Aged skin is characterized by a decreased number of skin cells and a breakdown of the skin's structural proteins, such as collagen. Compared with young skin, aged skin also has higher levels of inflammation and skin-damaging free radicals, reactive molecules produced as a byproduct of metabolism, according to a 2021 review in the *International Journal of Molecular Sciences*.



FUN FACTS!

What Do Square Waves Mean?

Have you ever noticed that waves crash horizontally, and parallel to the coastline? It seems like it's just the way all waves crash, so not many people take note of this. However, there is a phenomenon called "square waves" that actually make the surface of the water look like a chessboard. Now that you know they exist, what do square waves mean?



Square waves can be spotted from a vantage point that's higher up and looking down on the water. Sometimes you can see them from the beach, but the larger patterns will only be visible from higher up.

It may look like square waves are happening from something deep underneath the water. However, that's not usually the case. Also known as cross sea or grid waves, square waves are a result of the intersection of two seas. They occur when waves from different weather sys-

tems meet each other at just the right angle.

Some kind of a weather pattern (it can vary) in the region can cause the waves to form into this checker-like surface. This means that two opposing swells have collided, creating a unique and almost impossible-looking pattern on the water.

Why Are Cross Seas So Dangerous?

What do square waves mean when it comes to danger? Even in small swell conditions, these waves can be danger-

ous. And while they may look neat, some experts say to get out of the water immediately if you ever see them yourself.

Even as an experienced surfer or swimmer, square waves aka cross sea is not something to mess with. They're too strong to get out of, and are usually associated with powerful rip tides which can be super dangerous and even deadly!

Square Waves And Cross Seas Have Been Known To Even Sink Ships!

What do square

waves mean for ships? Great question because this rare phenomenon happens way out at sea, as well as close to shore. Because of this, they can have a devastating effect on ships at sea.

The pattern can appear and disappear within minutes, but the minutes when they are visible present a tide and underwater currents that are so strong they can sink a ship.

The combination of waves from two different directions can produce a severe rolling movement. Because of this, a ship can be moved in a way where it takes on water, which can lead to disaster.

Keep in mind, however, that these types of waves are more dangerous for ships out at sea. And while they can indicate rip tides, most rip tides are not visible on the surface. Technically, square waves are more dangerous for ships than they are for surfers and swimmers.



Taste Buds!

DID YOU KNOW?

TRY **FOODS** THAT YOU HATED AS A KID, YOUR **TASTE BUDS** CHANGE **EVERY 7 YEARS** AND YOU'RE VERY LIKELY TO ENJOY MOST OF THE **FOODS YOU DISLIKE**

Royal Purple!

Did you know

PURPLE IS KNOWN AS A 'ROYAL' COLOUR BECAUSE IT WAS THE HARDEST DYE TO EXTRACT AND IT CAME FROM SEA SNAILS WHICH ONLY THE ROYALS COULD AFFORD.

COLOR ME





U.S. Embassy Belmopan, Belize
Office of Public Affairs

Press Release

**Central America Regional Security Initiative Economic Support Fund (CARSI-ESF)
2023 Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO)**

The U.S. Embassy in Belmopan, Belize announces a notice of funding opportunity (NOFO) for projects addressing strengthening government through civil society engagement. For more information and eligibility requirements, please visit www.grants.gov and search for "Belmopan." All grant proposals MUST be submitted on the grants.gov website. **Closing date for proposal submission: May 11th, 2023.**

Contingent upon the availability of funds and quality of proposals, U.S. Embassy Belmopan intends to issue four to six awards in an amount not to exceed \$1 million USD in total funding. Each award will be for an amount between \$150,000 and \$250,000. Projects should not exceed two years and the anticipated start date for successful proposals is September 29th, 2023.

This funding will support U.S. Government objectives under the Central America Regional Security Initiative (CARSI) to support democracy and good governance efforts in Belize and is part of the Economic Support Funds (ESF) grants program. Project proposals should address one or more of the following project objectives:

- 1) Strengthen civil society organizations and support collaboration to improve government transparency by developing policies or procedures that reduce corruption and impunity and increase citizen participation in anti-corruption efforts. Proposals may encourage citizens and civil servants to participate in anti-corruption advocacy initiatives, support corruption-exposing investigative journalism, increase youth engagement in civic action, expand corruption reporting mechanisms, or seek to improve legislation or policies that promote transparency and accountability at all levels of government.
- 2) Support civil society working in collaboration with the government to improve accountability and delivery of services at all levels. Proposals may focus on activities by civil society organizations leveraging government, private, and civil society resources and networks to collectively improve, expand, or supplement government service delivery particularly to vulnerable and/or marginalized populations, particularly outside of the Belize City district.
- 3) Support and enhance mechanisms among key stakeholders to leverage services to curb human trafficking and gender-based violence. Proposals may involve supporting early detection and institutional support systems for victims and survivors of human trafficking and gender-based violence, strengthening policies and protocols, and ensuring adequate and efficient delivery of justice and access to government services.

View the full 2023 CARSI-ESF NOFO under the "Related Documents" tab at www.grants.gov or send us an email.

The U.S. Embassy in Belmopan will host a CARSI-ESF Grants Question & Answer Session on Facebook Live **Friday, April 14th, 2023 at 10:00 a.m.** Interested applicants are also encouraged to send any related questions or queries to BelmopanCARSI-ESF@state.gov.

NOTICE

**GOVERNMENT OF BELIZE TREASURY BILLS
ISSUE NUMBER 5/2023**

Tenders are invited for an issue of Government of Belize Treasury Bills. The amount of the issue will be \$64,391,800.

The Bills will be issued in electronic form only evidenced by an electronic book entry in the Central Securities Depository of the Central Bank of Belize in multiples of \$200 and will be repayable at par 91 days after issue. They will be issued on Tuesday, 25 April 2023 and will be redeemed on Wednesday, 25 July 2023.

Each tender must be for \$200 or a multiple of \$200 and must specify to five decimal places the amount, which is offered for each one hundred dollars face value of the Bills sought.

Members of the public who wish to participate in the auction must submit their bid to the Central Bank of Belize electronically to bids@centralbank.org.bz or at the designated drop off box no later than 12:00 noon on Friday, 21 April 2023.

The Auction in the Central Securities Depository System (CSD) will be open from 10:00 am to 12:00 pm on Tuesday, 25 April 2023.

Successful bidders should arrange to settle via the Automated Payment & Securities Settlement System of Belize (APSSS).

**Bank: Central Bank of Belize
Account: GL1CORP0402627**

The Government of Belize reserves the right to accept or reject any and/or all tenders in whole or in part.

CENTRAL BANK OF BELIZE

Notices are placed on Central Bank of Belize Website (www.centralbank.org.bz)



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High Broken Ridge land Water easily available Clear Title Bze. 20,000 per acre

Call Lawrence at phone 610- 4454 for more details.

No Excuses Thanks and Praise

**CONTRIBUTED:
Sedi Elrington**

It is not often that I praise local politicians and journalists. It is not often that I publicly thank them either. But I would wish to go on record on this occasion to publicly thank and praise all the politicians and journalists who have ever served our country from the beginning of our transition from colonial days to the present time.

While there have been both politicians and journalists who in my view have done more harm than good to our fledgling society, their failings, I believe, had been occasioned more by ignorance than malevolence, and I therefore forgive them completely.

Being a politician and a journalist in Belize can be a peril-

ous undertaking. Ideally, in a democracy, they should both be beyond reproach.

The politician has to be scrupulously principled, honest, bold, driven and committed, to be successful. Also it is imperative that he/she has access to adequate amounts of money.

Regretfully that imperative often cause them to make common cause with unsavory characters. These unsavory characters include the rapacious, unscrupulous business man as well as the murderous, heartless drug baron. The journalist must also be principled, bold, honest and committed. Regretfully, both journalists and politicians have been imprisoned in our country during the brief period of our history commencing with the

birth of the Nationalist Movement.

In my view they were all wrongly imprisoned. The colonial administration weaponized the judiciary to suppress the nascent nationalist fervor of those leaders. The impris-

All these politicians and journalists readily paid a heavy price to ensure that our democracy prevailed, that our country developed, and that our people are kept informed and enlightened on matters of National importance.

oned include national hero Philip Goldson, Leigh Richardson, and Cyril Davis. Evan X Hyde, journalist and politician, once narrowly escaped criminal jeopardy only through the advocacy skills of his legal team.

However, he was not able to escape having to pay out money for Libel.

Among those who successfully sued him for Libel was the Rt. Hon. George Cadle Price.

Another journalist who paid dearly for the practice of his profession is Harry Lawrence of the Reporter Press.

Harry Lawrence had more than his fair share of civil suits and awards of damages against him. And the Rt. Hon. Said Musa was himself faced with the peril of criminal sanction for actions he took while he was Prime Minister of our country.

All these politicians and journal-

ists readily paid a heavy price to ensure that our democracy prevailed, that our country developed, and that our people are kept informed and enlightened on matters of National importance.

All surviving journalists and politicians who were active since 1964, when our country obtained full Internal Self Government, are now advanced in age and are, for the most part, in frail or failing health!

It is, in my view, only fitting, at this time, that a grateful nation should shout out to them and thank them for the immeasurable contribution they have made to our beloved country and people. Were it not for them our beloved Belize would not be the peaceful, tranquil, democratic nation state it now is.

We must wish them all well in this the closing chapter of their sojourn here on earth.

I end in the hope that I will be forgiven for naming those journalists and politicians who, in my view, demonstrated outstanding capacity, exemplary passion, patriotism and resolve in the pursuit of public service. These statesmen earned my unqualified respect and gratitude. In order of seniority they are Harry Lawrence, Hubert Elrington and Evan X Hyde.

Disclaimer: the opinions expressed by our columnists are theirs alone, and are not necessarily reflective of the newspaper's stance on the issues touched. We believe it is critical that our columnists be allowed freedom to generate discussion through their expressions on any number of topics.

IN THE SUPREME COURT OF BELIZE, AD 2022
ACTION NO. 467 of 2022


IN THE MATTER OF Section 42 of the Law of Property Act Chapter 190 of the Laws of Belize Revised Edition 2020 and Section 138 of the Registered Land Act, Chapter 194 of the Laws of Belize, R.E. 2020.

IN THE MATTER of an application on the part of LINDA HUMES LOCAYO of 159 West Street, Belize City, Belize District, Belize for a DECLARATION OF TITLE IN RESPECT OF LAND HELD IN CONTINUOUS AND UNDISTURBED POSSESSION.

TO: AARON BROFFETT (adjoining owner neighbour property) of Stann Creek District, Belize
TO: GEORGE FOREMAN (adjoining owner neighbour property) of Stann Creek District, Belize
TO: KELLY (adjoining owner neighbour property) of Stann Creek District, Belize
TO: The Village Council of Sittee River Village, Stann Creek District, Belize
TO: The Commissioner of Lands & Survey, Ministry of Natural Resources of Belmopan, Cayo District, Belize

TAKE NOTICE that a Petition for the Declaration of Title of property being all that piece or parcel of land situate at Sittee River bordered on the North four chains fifty links and also five chains of land of Aaron Broffett West three chains also on Aaron Broffett South ten chains ninety links on road also East seven chains ninety links on a road and three chains twenty links on the Boom Creek containing 6 acres Stann Creek District, Belize now or formerly subject matter of Grant 335 of 1882 as shown as plan 35 of 1882 attached thereto once owned and occupied by Thomas Glenn) has been filed in the SUPREME COURT in Belize City, Belize by LINDA HUMES LOCAYO, and that you are required within Thirty (30) days of this publication hereof to file at the Supreme Court, Belize City, Belize by Affidavit any objections you may have to the said Petition AND FURTHER TAKE NOTICE that in default of your doing so the court will proceed to grant the said Declaration of Title your absence notwithstanding.

Dated this 12 day of April, 2023.


REGISTRAR
THE HIGH COURT OF BELIZE



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FACILITIES TECHNICAL ASSISTANT

in the Facilities Management Services Department of our Employee & Corporate Services Division in Belize City.

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Submit application letter and resume to career.opportunity@bel.com.bz by Friday, April 28, 2023





\$5bn of drugs seized in Latin American operation

Police in Latin America have seized cocaine and other drugs worth \$5bn in an operation lasting three weeks and spanning 15 countries.

They also seized more than 8,000 illicit firearms and carried out almost 15,000 arrests.

Police forces from Mexico in the north to Argentina in the south exchanged information in the operation, which was co-ordinated by Interpol.

Interpol said the arrests had disrupted the workings of several powerful

gangs.

Dubbed Trigger IX, the international effort was mainly aimed at fighting the trafficking of illicit firearms.

Experts from the participating countries gathered at a centre of operations in Foz do Iguaçu, a city on Brazil's border with Argentina and Paraguay, from 12 March to 2 April.

There, they exchanged intelligence on the workings of in-

ternational crime gangs, such as First Capital Command (PCC), and Mara Salvatrucha with the aim of disrupting the flow of illicit firearms.

Interpol has long warned that the smuggling of weapons strengthens the gangs' power and further fuels their criminal activities.

"The fact that an operation targeting illicit firearms resulted in such massive drugs seizures is further proof, if needed, that these crimes are intertwined," Interpol

Secretary General Jürgen Stock said of the 203 tonnes of cocaine and other drugs found.

Criminal gangs in Mexico, Central and South America are increasingly well armed and local police often find themselves out-gunned and overpowered when confronting them.

In Brazil and neighbouring Paraguay for example, members of the PCC have staged large-scale bank robberies and prison breaks.

The gang first emerged in Brazil but has expanded to operate internationally and has been linked to the murder of a Paraguayan prosecutor while he was on his honeymoon in Colombia.

Mara Salvatrucha, also known as MS-13, continues to control much of the human trafficking as well as the smuggling of drugs and weapons in Central America.

Interpol said that its operation had led to the

seizure of large amounts of ammunition even in countries which have so far largely not been associated with large-scale gun violence.

Police in Uruguay secured 100,000 pieces of ammunition, the largest ever amount seized in the country.

It had been smuggled into the country by two European nationals, highlighting the need for international intelligence-sharing, Interpol said.

BBC News

El Chapo sons among Sinaloa cartel members charged by US

Sons of drugs kingpin "El Chapo" are among members of Mexico's Sinaloa cartel charged in the United States with running a huge operation that supplies fentanyl to the US.

The operation was allegedly fuelled by Chinese chemical companies.

Fentanyl is responsible for the deaths of tens of thousands of mainly young Americans each year.

Joaquín "El Chapo" Guzmán, the former Sinaloa cartel leader, is serving a life sentence in the US.

His three sons charged - Ovidio Guzmán López, Jesús Alfredo Guzmán Salazar and Iván Archivaldo Guzmán Salazar - are known as the Chapitos, or little Chapos, and are believed to be the more violent faction of the cartel.

Federal prosecutors announced three separate indictments charging 28 defendants based in Mexico, China and Guatemala, eight of whom are in custody.

Attorney General Merrick Garland called it "the largest, most violent, most prolific fentanyl trafficking operation in the world".

Fentanyl is a synthetic opioid that is up to 50 times stronger than heroin and 100 times stronger

than morphine, according to the United States' Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

Ovidio Guzmán López, one of El Chapo's sons nicknamed "The Mouse" who was arrested in Mexico earlier this year, is the only brother in custody and awaiting extradition.

At least 29 people were killed during the bloody operation to arrest him in January. Furious gang members set up road blocks, set fire to dozens of vehicles and attacked planes at a local airport.

He was indicted in a Manhattan federal court on six counts, including conspiracy to import and distribute fentanyl. He faces life in jail.

Prosecutors also charged four owners of Chinese firms accused of providing chemicals to the cartel.

The US Treasury Department hit two China-based chemical companies with sanctions.

Mr Garland said that the Chinese government "must stop the unchecked flow of fentanyl precursor chemicals that are coming out of China".

- CNN News

World Athletics bans transgender women from competing in female world ranking events

The digital news outlet El Faro, founded in El Salvador in 1998 and hailed for its independent investigative reporting, has decided to move its administrative and legal operations out of the country amid what it describes as a campaign of government harassment.

In an editorial on Thursday, the outlet said that it registered on April 1 as a non-profit in San Jose, Costa Rica, though it stressed that its newsroom remains in El Salvador and plans to continue work as usual.

"Under the government of Nayib Bukele, campaigns originating in Casa Presidencial [the Presidential House] have sought to defame and discredit El Faro and its employees," the editorial states.

"We have faced physical surveillance and threats, Pegasus spyware attacks, harassment of advertisers, and defamation from public officials and ruling-party legislators."

The decision comes as human rights and press freedom groups express growing concern over the state

of democracy and civil liberties in El Salvador.

First elected in 2019, President Bukele has led a brutal crackdown on gangs over the last year, a campaign that has proved widely popular and brought respite to many in El Salvador after years of violence.

But critics say any gains in public safety have come at a steep price. Key civil liberties have been suspended under a "state of exception" that has been in place for more than a year, and tens of thousands of people have faced arbitrary detention, with reports of abuses such as torture and in-custody deaths.

"More than 66,000 people have been detained, many of them arbitrarily. There have been massive, systemic rights violations," Duncan Tucker, the regional media manager for the Americas division of the human rights group Amnesty International, told Al Jazeera in a recent phone call. "There has been a dismantling of the rule of law in the country."

Bukele has also been criticised for removing checks on his authority and attacking perceived rivals, with the investigative reporting of El Faro

among his favourite targets.

"Through out Central America, governments are criminalising journalism that they see as going against their interests. It is not there yet, but El Salvador is moving very quickly towards becoming another Nicaragua," Carlos Dada, the co-founder of El Faro, told Al Jazeera in a phone call.

The outlet says that such attacks have come in many forms, from surveillance and spyware to televised speeches by Bukele lashing out at the publication and its reporters.

Most troubling, Dada said, were several audits from the country's Treasury Ministry and what he called "fabricated criminal accusations of tax evasion".

El Faro says it is appealing those accusations but that there is no longer a separation of powers that guarantees the independence of the judiciary.

"What chance for legal defense is there when the president makes accusations without evidence and controls the entire judicial apparatus and the three branches

of government?" the outlet said in Thursday's editorial.

Roman Gressier is one of 22 known cases of individuals at El Faro who had their phone infiltrated by Pegasus, a spyware product made by the Israeli surveillance firm the NSO Group. The cases were confirmed by digital watchdog groups Access Now and the University of Toronto's Citizen Lab.

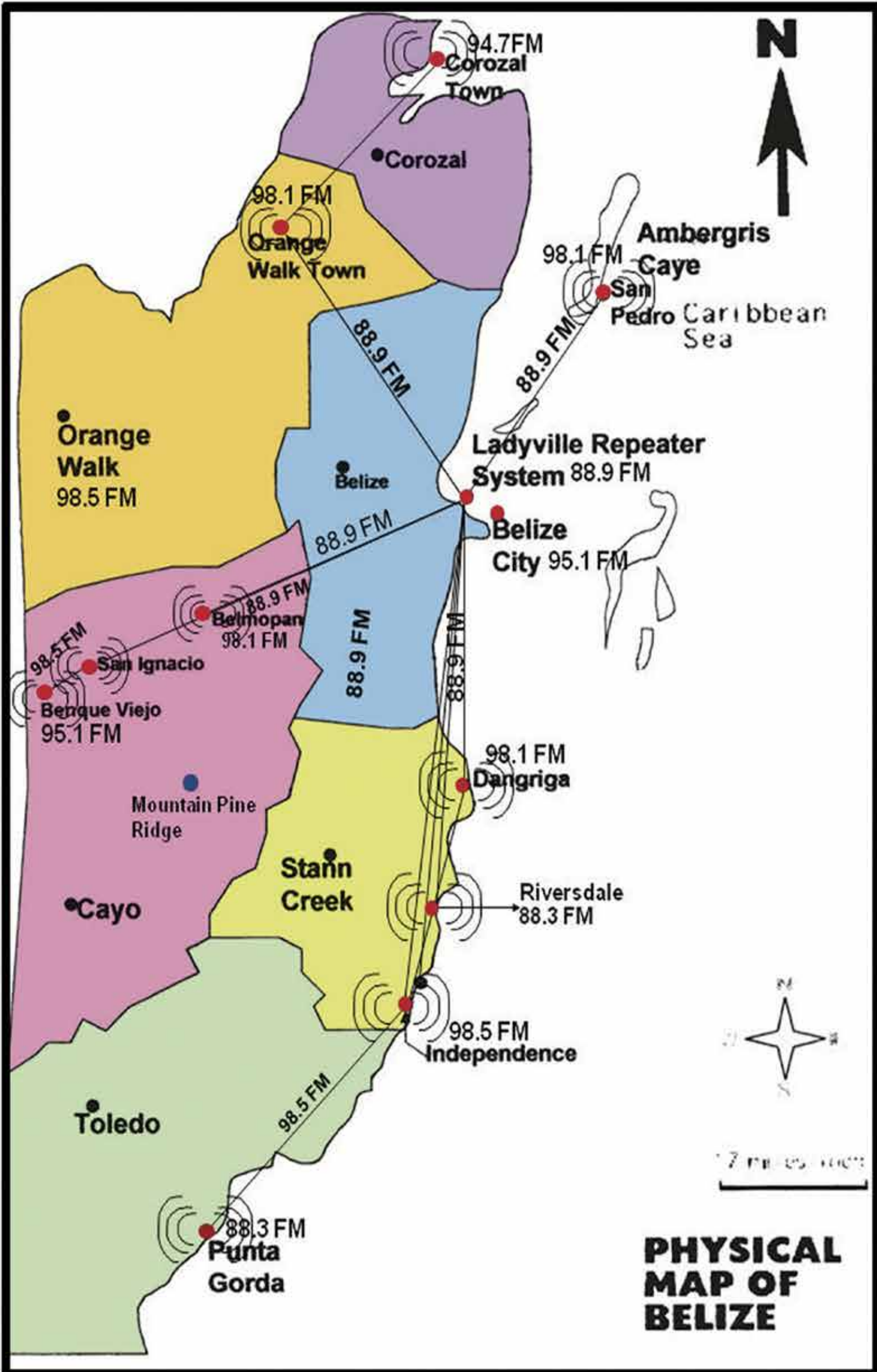
The Bukele administration has denied using Pegasus spyware to monitor journalists and claimed its own officials have had their phones hacked.

But the NSO Group says that it sells its products exclusively to government agencies, and a report by Citizen Lab found that the Pegasus attacks on Salvadoran journalists and activists had come from within El Salvador, concluding that the government's involvement was "very likely".

Press freedom associations also say that the Bukele government has created a hostile atmosphere for the country's media outlets by routinely using rhetoric that vilifies reporters.

- Al Jazeera

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