Reporter

Volume 56, No.07 Sunday, February 12th, 2023 Price: $1.00

Unions threaten to strike if increment is not reinstated by April 1st

By Michelle Sutherland

The Joint Unions Negotiating Team (JUNT) held a press conference earlier this week to give the Briceño Administration a final ultimatum to restore their increment by April 1st, or instead prepare for industrial action.

During the JUNT one-and-a-half-hour press conference held on Tuesday, several issues were brought up but among them, the most pressing matter was the issue of increment which has been frozen for approximately three years as part of the Government's austerity measures in the face of the pandemic. The unions say that their members have issued a collective call for their increment to be reinstated and that after several attempts to negotiate with Prime Minister John Briceno to reinstate what rightfully belongs to them they aren't prepared to wait any longer and are serious about pursuing more stringent actions.

Pg. 3

The Joint Unions' leadership says they are prepared to take industrial action.

PM prepared to meet with JUNT; says they are entitled to industrial action

JUNT members at press conference

Prime Minister John Briceno

By Michelle Sutherland

Prime Minister John Briceño has indicated his willingness to commence negotiations with the Joint Unions Negotiating Team (JUNT) concerning the reinstatement of their pension

Pg. 2

Father of Canaan student calls out BNTU president for comments

Pg. 3

BNTU President Elena Smith

It appears that the former Al Queda terrorist, 42-year-old Majid Khan, has been given, or will be given asylum in Belize. He is already in Belize and has been interviewed by senior government officials.

Majid Khan pleaded guilty in 2012 after US authorities arrested him in Pakistan for participating in terrorist activity against the United States.

He was born in Pakistan but grew up in America. He became radicalized after a visit to Pakistan, the place where his leader, Ben Laden was hiding out.

The United States Government has asked Belize to accept Majid Khan and expressed the view that Khan is now a reformed man. Khan himself says that he has changed, saying: "I have been given a second chance in life, and I intend to make the most of it. He pledged to become "a productive, law-abiding member of society."

This assurance may be enough for the Belize Government which appears to be partial towards Khan. Maybe the government knows something that we out here don't know, but it is never wise to trust a "reformed" terrorist, especially one with the connections that Majid Khan has.

We should require a written and sworn pledge from him that he will not, under any circumstances, engage in any clandestine or terrorist or subservience activities as long as he is a guest of Belize. Breaking such a pledge should result in automatic expulsion or imprisonment.

Belize is renowned for her hospitality to strangers. It appears that the Muslim community here is prepared to accept him as well, as long as he comes in peace.

In the broader view, Belize has to take note that there are 34 others detained at Guantanamo Bay and that 30 of these are eligible for early release.

Will Belize be asked to accept more of these, and what will be our response?

Belize does not want to become a dumping ground for people who have the potential to be dangerous. We will have to tread very carefully, and if we think that we should say **"No,"** we should not hesitate to do so!

PM prepared to meet with JUNT; says they are entitled to industrial action

Cont'd from pg. 1

following threats of industrial action by members on April 1st.

In an interview with the media on Wednesday the Prime Minister said that he is prepared to meet with the unions on April 1st and that it will depend on whether or not they are able to negotiate seriously and work with whatever they are presented with. Negotiations can be finished on another day should it prove a challenge to get it done in one sitting.

"Well, I have always started with the premise that the unions have a right to strike, and if they believe they have a need to strike, they can strike; it is their right in this country, " said the Prime Minister as he responded to threats of industrial action by the unions.

Briceño explained that when the government met with the joint unions in 2021, they were appraised of the dire financial state of the country, which was on the edge of bankruptcy at that time. He said that the IMF had even recommended that the government dismissed at least three thousand employees, some of which he said could have been handpicked to include UDP supporters. But instead, the Prime Minister said that they decided to approach public officers and ask them to make a collective sacrifice instead.

"We all had to do some sort of sacrifice because, let me point out that during the pandemic, public officers all collected a hundred percent of their salaries but if you are to ask people in the private sector, many lost their jobs, and many more got significant pay cuts. So, they got the full hundred percent of their salaries, and it was time for them to make their sacrifice," said Briceño.

Eventually, the public officers agreed to accept that sacrifice, which resulted in a pay cut for three years as well as an increment freeze. After a year, the 10 % was reinstated, and currently at the start of the third year, according to Briceño, he has been discussing with the unions and has expressed the government's intentions to look at the issue of restoring the increments; however, this will be done going forward and not back.

But even as the Prime Minister says he is prepared to restore increments he is also calling on the unions to come to the table and discuss pension reform and realize and agree that the current pension structure is unsustainable. According to Briceño, Belize is one of the few countries in the world where 100% of the pension is paid by the taxpayers. As the country come to the end of this financial year the bill stands at a hundred million dollars, and by 2035, according to Briceño, the bill would have increased to a hundred and thirty million dollars, increasing exponentially every year.

"We cannot afford it. So, we have to find a way where we can protect or have a grandfather clause where those who are in the system for a number of years do not lose because it would not be fair to them, but we have to come up with a new formula where the public officer and the government combine to make payments towards a pension for them. That is the way it works everywhere in the world, and in Belize business in the private sector do that where employer and employees put monies together for the employees to get a pension," said Briceño.

The Unions, however, are questioning the government's motive as a memo dated this week, February 8th, revealed that the Chief Justice's salary was bumped up to $240,000 per year, while the President of the Court of Appeal was also bumped up to $200,000 tax-free, while the Justice of the Court of Appeal will also get an increase of $185,000 per year tax-free. Another memo dated January 9th also announced a $175,000 tax-free base salary increase for judges. This was also followed by a recent approval of the Prime Minister's vehicle allowance which shot up to $4000 per month.

While the increase in the judges' salary is noteworthy, United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNDOC)'s "Resource Guide on Strengthening Judicial Integrity and Capacity" does advise that the salaries for the judiciary should be comfortable. This is seen as necessary to reduce the likelihood of judges falling prey to bribes.

"Salaries of judges should be such as to relieve them from economic hardship," says the UNDOC report. "Salary increases should be anchored to objective criteria and decided in a fully transparent manner."

According to that same document in Italy a law was enacted in 1984 to provide an automatic mechanism to increase the salaries and pensions of judges every three years in a way that maintains their remuneration, well above that of other state employees.

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Unions threaten to strike if increment is not reinstated by April 1st

Cont'd from pg. 1

President of the Belize National Teacher Union (BNTU) Elena Smith had this to say:

"A good warrior never gives out his secret, but I will tell you from now, you know what day is April 1st? We will not wait for All Fools Day. That's not a day when you pretend to fool somebody. If you are going to do something, you do it. I think you all have seen us. You know how we operate. When you see us coming and we are starting these things it should signal something to you. That's all I will say."

President of the Public Service Union (PSU) Dean Flowers also touched on the topic saying that in the last conversation with the Prime Minister, he had indicated that not only was he not prepared to restore increments in the upcoming fiscal year but that he was not prepared to restore public officers to the point where they ought to be when they do decide to resume those payments. That, according to Flowers, is not even guaranteed to occur in 2024 because the Prime Minister has already indicated that his administration is planning to introduce pension reform instead.

"What we've said to the prime minister is that we're prepared to have a conversation surrounding pension reform. But a conversation surrounding tax reform must also occur because it is currently the workers of this country and more importantly public sector workers who are carrying the burden of taxes while we have these unscrupulous businessmen who recent legislation was passed for them to easily declare bankruptcy."

In one of his conversations with the Financial Secretary Joseph Waight, Flowers said that at the time he had indicated that the government would have yielded seventeen million dollars in savings annually from the freezing of those increments which would have boiled down to $51 million in three years.

Flowers then questioned whether the government really needed to freeze their increments, asking what sort of justification they could give for going back to the House and requesting two hundred and forty million dollars in supplementary income.

"That does not show austerity for a government that is managing the finance of the country prudently. Now, our position to the government remains, increments must be restored on April 1st, 2023. There is absolutely no reason for the government to continue punishing public officers by withholding their increments," reiterated Flowers.

Tuesday's press conference was used as a means of updating the public as well as members of the JUNT's meeting with the Prime Minister in December of last year. During that meeting, discussions were centered around several topics including the reinstatement of increment. However, according to the unions, despite the restoration of the CEO's allowances and even a recent 200% increase in the Prime Minister's transport allowance, after three years, their increments have still not been restored.

Father of Canaan student calls out BNTU president for comments

By Michelle Sutherland

The parent of a young female student of Canaan SDA High School who recently became the victim of predatory behavior by a teacher is calling on the President of the Belize National Teachers Union (BNTU) Elena Smith to withdraw comments that she had made publicly concerning the topic.

The parent, who remains anonymous to protect the identity of his child, lamented Smith's comments that said the parent cannot act hastily and demand that a teacher immediately be placed on administrate leave since there are processes that needs to be followed prior.

"She needs to withdraw and correct her statements. She also refrained from mentioning the prior incident which took place at this very same school recently, involving another student and a different teacher that was of a sexual and physical nature. Unions do not supersede the laws of Belize. If she doesn't even know the facts of this particular situation or the rules and laws outlined by the GOB/Ministry, then how can she be leading the BNTU?"

The parent was referring to comments made by Smith who stated that when dealing with such sensitive matters, the school management is required to pay close attention to the process, and rules. She reiterated that schools cannot send home a teacher based on allegations, but are required to conduct an investigation into the allegations, among other things, before making a decision.

"So, while as a parent you may want that teacher to be put out right away because of the undue stress on the child, the school has to follow those procedures. Whatever recommendation the board makes to the ministry and … to the Teaching Services Commission, it has to be one that has come about after following that procedure. That is the first thing. In terms of our students, of course, we feel for them. Those are our students as well," Smith explained.

The president also mentioned that the union does not condone these types of actions by any teacher, but has an obligation to represent them as members to ensure that due process is being followed where they are concerned so they are not taken advantage of in any way. She however reiterated that the union will not be defending any wrongdoings and have instructed members to refrain from becoming engaged in these types of behaviors.

The parent apart from pointing out that the school had not addressed the situation for an entire week despite him writing them and even going in to present them with evidence had only moved to suspend the teacher when the media had gotten involved. He also pointed out that the school had also failed to report the first incident which was of a sexual nature despite the Education Amendment Rules of 2012 outlining that both sexual abuse and sexual harassment are major offenses and even outlining the steps that managing authorities can take to place teachers accused of such on administrative leave.

To date the parent said that he has still not gotten an official response back from the school, the 7-Day Adventist Church, the Special Envoy or the BNTU on the matter. He however confirmed that the Ministry of Education has been in direct contact with him and that they are scheduled to meet sometime this week.

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LIQUOR LICENSE NOTICE: Notice is hereby given that **Frank Clarke** of La Democracia Village, Belize District is hereby applying for a **Malt and Cider Liquor License** for **Kira' Cool Spot.** Situate in **La Democracia Village, Belize District for the year 2023.** Under the Intoxicating Liquor Act (Revised Edition) of 2000.

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TENDER NOTICE

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The forms for the expression of interest can be downloaded from the National Health Insurance Belize Facebook page: www.facebook.com/NHIBelize or picked up at the SSB office in Orange Walk Town.

Letters must be submitted in a sealed envelope labelled **"INTEREST FOR TENDER OF NHI PHARMACY SERVICES"** and received by the SSB office in Orange Walk Town no later than **4:00 p.m. local time on February 15th, 2023.** Kindly address the envelope to:

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ICJ issues a 3-month deadline for the Sapodilla Cayes dispute

By Britney Gordon

The International Court of Justice (ICJ) has issued a notice, declaring that Belize must file its memorial regarding the Sovereignty over the Sapodilla Cayes (Belize versus Honduras) dispute by May 2023.

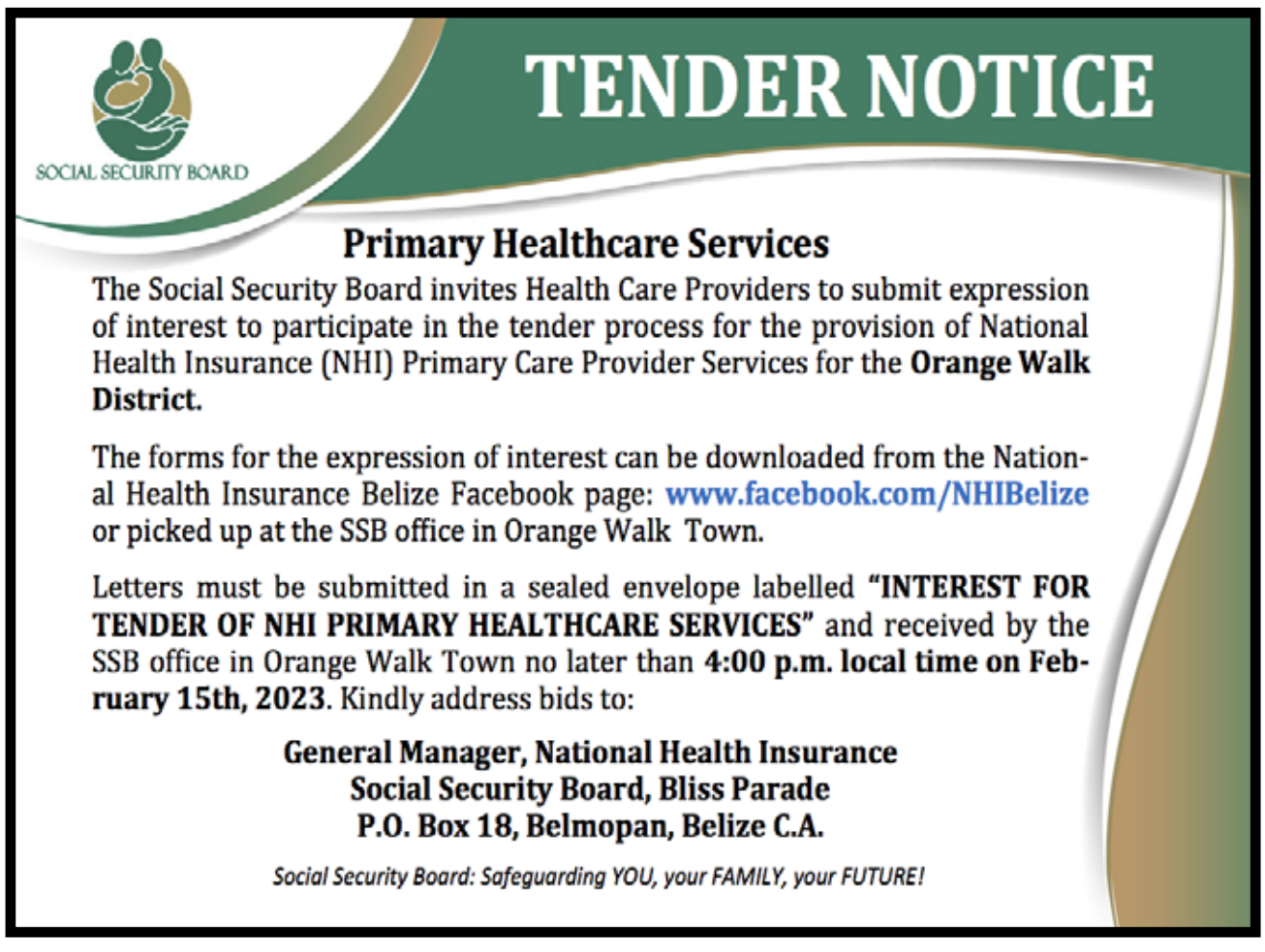
The notice was delivered by H.E. Philippe Gautier, Registrar of the International Court of Justice to Belizeans agents on Thursday, February 2, 2023. It stated that Belize would be required to deliver its Memorial on May 2, 2023, while Honduras would be required to deliver its Counter-Memorial by December 4, 2023.

The Government of Belize declared in a statement that "it has taken this measure to protect the vital interests of Belize in ensuring the full and final settlement of all outstanding territorial disputes to Belizean territory," while emphasizing that "it has done so in support and furtherance of its friendly relations with Honduras."

The initial application was filed to the ICJ in November 2022, seeking to resolve the tension between Belize and Honduras over the Cayes. The application stated the Sapodilla Cayes have formed part of the territory of Belize since the early nineteenth century as they were a part of the initial settlement of Belize and later the colony of British Honduras.

Belize argues that "under international law, Belize is sovereign over the Sapodilla Cayes" and that "the Honduran claim to the Sapodilla Cayes, articulated in its 1982 Constitution, which remains in force as a matter of the internal law of Honduras, has no basis in international law." Under these claims, Belize affirms its right to sovereignty of the Sapodilla Cayes and Seal Caye.

According to H.E. Ambassador Assad Shoman, Belize intends to file its Memorial on or before the deadline set by the Court.



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JUNT calls on GOB to address inflation and price gouging

By Michelle Sutherland

PSU President Dean Flowers

During the Joint Unions Press conference on Tuesday, the President of the Public Service (PSU) Union Dean Flowers took aim at the Minister of Agriculture Jose Mai for what he calls a lack of trying to address inflation and price gouging despite promising the Belizean public that he would.

Mai had promised that he was working on several measures to nip price gouging and inflation before it got out of hand including amending the Supplies Control Act and strengthening the inspection on the ground. Flowers said, "Almost a year later, absolutely nothing from the Ministry of Agriculture in the form of this amended Supplies Control Act from the honorable minister or the AG's ministry. It is time for the lip service to stop where inflation and price gouging are concerned. We hope the government introduces at its next sitting an amendment to that act to address this dire situation."

According to Flowers, the JUNT and specifically the PSU, recognizing the price control unit in the Ministry of Agriculture is immensely understaffed, had written to the Minister and the Prime Minister informing them that several public officers had expressed their desire to assist in increasing the manpower in the unit to carry out inspection.

"I'm pretty sure on many occasions you've heard the prime minister and the minister say that the unit is understaffed, so in essence, public officers stepped forward and said they wanted to empower that unit. In this regard, public officers could be appointed as special price control inspectors to implement the proposed law at no cost to the government, as public officers would do so at their own leisure when shopping at these stores when they themselves have to visit to make purchases," explained Flowers.

But, despite offering assistance, Flowers said that to date there has not been any response from either the minister of agriculture or the Prime Minister. He and the unions are, therefore, calling on the government to immediately come up with a "well-designed policy and measures" to urgently prevent the deepening of existing levels of poverty and inequality in Belize.

"This issue has significantly affected the Belizean public, including our members who form part of the lower income earners in our country. So, while we are proud to be called public officers and teachers, it should not be lost on the general public that our income is not in the higher echelon of society but rather in the lower income brackets," he said.

BEBL divided by Kirk Smith Jr debacle

Belize City, February 8th, 2023

Kirk Smith Jr

Kirk Smith Jr, like his father before him, has represented Belize internationally, playing with the senior national team in 2019 in the pre-qualifiers for the FIBA AmeriCup 2021, but his decision to sign with two teams in the Belize Elite Basketball League 2023 semipro competition is now threatening to tear the league apart.

The 23-year-old 6'7" power forward signed first with the Digi Defenders on December 21, 2022, and Defenders manager Reynaldo Malik received the signed document along with a photograph of Smith signing on December 26, 2022.

The team management informed the BEBL commissioner Chris McGann of these facts in protest when it was announced that Smith Jr had subsequently signed a contract with the Benny's Hurricanes to play the 2023 season, which began on Friday, January 27.

Upon verifying that this was indeed the case, McGann offered Smith and the Hurricanes three options: (1) that he honor his first contract to play with the Defenders: (2) that the Hurricanes negotiate an agreement with the Defenders for him to play with the Hurricanes; or (3) that Smith Jr would be suspended from playing in the BEBL for one year. When the both teams were unable to come to an agreement, McGann followed the BEBL bye-laws by ruling on January 18 that Smith be suspended for one year.

The Hurricanes appealed this ruling, and the appeals tribunal overturned the Commissioner's decision on February 2, after meeting with both parties and examining the evidence on January 30. The tribunal upheld the Hurricanes' contract as valid, finding that the Defenders' contract was flawed because it was not properly executed, because Smith's signature had not been validated by the signature of a witness to the signing, and because no Defenders' representative had signed the contract. The tribunal allowed for Smith to play the 2023 season with the Hurricanes, who welcomed this decision by introducing Smith on their roster for a pre-game press conference last Wednesday, February 1.

Smith did not suit up for the Hurricanes for neither the first two games on January 28 nor February 3, but the other BEBL team managers were up in arms when McGann wrote to inform them of the Appeals Tribunal's decision on Monday, February 6. McGann's letter said that the Tribunal's ruling was final according to BEL bye-laws. The team owners challenged that McGann could not on the one hand follow the league bye-laws which called for Smith's suspension for one year, and then abide by another contradictory bye-law that the Tribunal's decision be final.

Five of the other teams went public with their disagreement in a virtual press conference on Tuesday, February 8, with Defenders Reynaldo Malik and former NEBL commissioner Karim Juan, now Western Ballaz coach, presenting their position. Juan said five teams—the Belmopan Red Taigaz, Western Ballaz, the Griga Dream Ballers, the Belikin Orange Walk Running Rebels and the Digi Defenders—had issued an ultimatum to the Commissioner that they would boycott all Hurricanes' home games, and that all Hurricanes' away games would be treated as a forfeit if Smith Jr were included on their roster.

Western Ballaz coach Karim Juan

This prompted McGann to warn the five dissenting teams in a press release on Wednesday, February 8, that they would be sanctioned for bringing the league into disrepute, and for violating the league's bye-laws by going public with their dispute. He accused these "parties" of making untrue and defamatory allegations in their press conference. He emphasized that the Tribunal's decision was final, and would be upheld, in accordance with the BEBL bye-laws. He also invited them to exercise their right to take any appropriate legal action they see fit, if they are dissatisfied with the Tribunal's decision.

The Tribunal had also recommended that the league review and revise the penalty of one year's suspension for signing with two teams, to consider the development of young players, and that penalties be instituted to deter teams from signing a player when they know he has already signed with another team.

It remains to be seen which side will stick to their guns when the Hurricanes visit Orange Walk for their away game against the Belikin Running Rebels on Saturday night, February 11th.

CENTRAL BANK of BELIZE

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The Central Bank invites qualified individuals to join its Banking, Currency, and Investment Department.

The Senior Secretary, Banking, Currency, and Investment, will provide secretarial support to the department's management team on a daily basis, maintain the department's correspondence files, respond to customer queries, and assist with the coordination of social activities within the department. Essential duties and responsibilities of the Senior Secretary include:

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- Schedule and coordinate appointments and meetings;
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The applicants should possess the following:

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- An associate's degree in business management or a related field from a recognized tertiary institution with at least three years of relevant work experience.

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Submit the following documents by **Wednesday, 22 February 2023**:

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Applications should be addressed to:

Manager, Human Resources Department
Central Bank of Belize
P O Box 852 or Gabourel Lane
Belize City, BELIZE

Ref: Senior Secretary- Banking, Currency, and Investment Department
Email: hr@centralbank.org.bz or online at www.centralbank.org.bz
(All applications will be held in strict confidence.)

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No progress made in combating corruption

By Britney Gordon

The 2022 Corruption Perception Index (CPI) reveals that nearly 90 percent of countries have made no significant anti-corruption progress since 2017, with levels stagnating across the region for a fourth straight year.

The report, issued by Transparency International, reveals that countries in Latin America and the Caribbean are still grappling with corruption; progress is hindered by adversaries such as established crime networks and political unrest. Currently, 180 countries and territories are included in the report. Uruguay achieved the best rank in the region, ranking at 14 with a score of 74 out of a possible 100. While Haiti, Venezuela, and Nicaragua consistently remain on the lower end of the ranking.

Belize remains excluded from the list, as it has been for the past 14 years. The last time Belize was included was in 2008 when it scored a 71 and ranked 110 out of 180. The report shows little sign of global improvement revealing that the global average remains unchanged for over a decade at just 43. The majority-more than two-thirds-of countries score below 50, while 26 countries have fallen to their lowest scores yet. A country constantly battling with corruption and political unease is Hait, which depends on corruption as the country's primary source of illicit proceeds, over crimes such as drug, and human trafficking. Uruguay, on the other hand, has a firm grasp on the issue, combating it with strict security and judicial institutions.

Transparency International revealed that global peace has been deteriorating for 15 years and corruption has contributed greatly to this issue and has increased as a result. This is largely due to the fact that corruption undermines governments' ability to protect people and erodes public trust, provoking more and harder-to-control security threats.

NOTICE

GOVERNMENT OF BELIZE TREASURY BILLS
ISSUE NUMBER 3/2023

Tenders are invited for an issue of Government of Belize Treasury Bills. The amount of the issue will be $67,408,200.

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 Wednesday, 15 February 2023 and will be redeemed on Wednesday, 17 May 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, 10 February 2023.

The Auction in the Central Securities Depository System (CSD) will be open from 10:00 am to 12:00 pm on Wednesday, 15 February 2023.

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

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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

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TENDER

BELIZE ELECTRICITY LIMITED

Transportation of Fuel to Caye Caulker

BEL invites tenders for the Transportation of Fuel to Caye Caulker for 2023.

The bidding documents, which outline all the duties and responsibilities of the contract, are available on BEL's website at **www.bel.com.bz/Tenders.aspx**

Bids must be submitted via email to **bidsubmitta@bel.com.bz** no later than **3:00 p.m. on Friday, February 17, 2023,** and labelled **"Bid #2023-805 Transportation of Fuel to Caye Caulker"**.

Questions and requests for clarification can be sent by email to **bidboxrequest@bel.com.bz** no later than **3:00 p.m. on Wednesday, February 15, 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.

John Saldivar wins Belmopan convention

By Michelle Sutherland

After months of negative political scrutiny from inside and outside his party, embattled UDP member John Saldivar has finally reclaimed his post as standard bearer for Belmopan following Sunday's Convention at the University of Belize Gymnasium which resulted in him garnering the majority of votes against his two opponents.

One hour after the polls had closed at 4:00 p.m. on Sunday approximately 1,914 votes were cast (with 44 spoiled ballots) and after the vetting was concluded it was established that Saldivar was able to garner 901 of those votes, representative of 48.2%. The second largest number of votes went to former CEO of the Ministry of National Security George Lovell who was able to sway 512 votes in his favor or 27.3% of the total votes cast. Political newcomer and businessman Emil Torres received the least support in the form of 457 votes representing 24.4 % of the total number of votes cast that day.

John Saldivar wins UDP's Belmopan Standard Bearer Convention.

Still reveling in his victory, Saldivar attributed the success of his political machinery to volunteer work by his supporters. This he said is a testament to the good work that he has been carrying out in his constituency over the years. Saldivar also shot down claims that even in his victory he could be seen as a political liability to his party and instead said that his victory should be proof that he is a political asset to his party.

As it relates to the allegations against him as well as his Party Leaders' public dislike of him Saldivar said, "That's not for me to decide. It's for others who criticized me to decide to give it up. The people of Belmopan have spoken, so if they still want to march like little Johnny against what everybody is saying that's up to them. Our party is not a one-man show and so when we make decisions to move forward with our party, it's a collective decision, not a one-man decision and that is what I am going to follow going through. I will respect the decisions of my party; I will respect my party leader. He is going to have to decide how he treats me after this."

The UDP's Party Leader Moses "Shyne" Barrow congratulated all the candidates and thanked them for keeping democracy alive, telling The Reporter, "The people of Belmopan have spoken in one of our most sacred Democratic exercises. Thus, we respectfully move forward with the choice of the People."

Barrow's initial choice for the UDP in Belmopan was Lovell, whom he had publicly endorsed. While Lovell did not win, he also conceded his defeat saying that the people of Belmopan have spoken and that while he will respect their decision it will not be the end of his political career. Torres also conceded defeat and congratulated the new standard bearer, pledging his support as well.

Last week well-known pollster Dr. Phillip Castillo, an assistant professor at the University of Belize, based on the result of a poll conducted around Belmopan, had predicted that Saldivar would be victorious in the convention and would receive the majority of votes, followed by Torres and Lovell.

FAO Director-General addresses the launch of the Early Warnings initiative for the Caribbean

February 7, 2023, Bridgetown, Barbados – The Director-General of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), QU Dongyu, on Monday addressed the launch in Bridgetown, Barbados of the Executive Action Plan for the Early Warnings for All Initiative (EW4ALL) for the Caribbean, an event designed to mobilize support among the region's governments for a UN plan that helps protect people and assets from the growing number of natural disasters in a relatively cheap and effective way.

Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) Director QU Dongyu

The event enjoyed the support and leadership of the Prime Minister of Barbados, the Honorable Mia Amor Mottley, and the Prime Minister of Saint Lucia, the Honorable Philip J. Pierre. The Deputy Secretary-General of the United Nations, Amina J. Mohammed, also delivered a keynote address to the regional launch of EW4ALL, a UN initiative unveiled during last November's COP27 climate change conference in Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt.

Speaking in Bridgetown, the Director-General called on the Caribbean region to "build up more sustainable agrifood systems."

FAO has a 10-year strategic framework on "how to transform agrifood systems together" to make them "more efficient, more inclusive, more resilient, more sustainable for better production, better nutrition, better environment, better life, leaving no one behind," Qu said.

With its wealth of expertise on early warning systems and risk-informed anticipatory action, as well as its presence in more than 130 countries, FAO can play a key role in helping protect agricultural livelihoods and support local food production ahead of forecast shocks.

Between 2008 and 2018, the agriculture sector (including crops, livestock, forestry, fisheries and aquaculture) absorbed 26 percent of the overall impact caused by medium- to large-scale disasters in low- and lower-middle-income countries.

And Small Island Developing States (SIDS) such as Barbados, where the meeting was held, are particularly exposed. Over that same period, disaster-related loss recorded in crop and livestock production across the Caribbean SIDS amounted to $8.7 billion, corresponding to about 14 percent of potential production, according to FAO data.

FAO's role

Since 2016, FAO has been among the pioneering agencies in anticipatory action and has helped more than 40 countries link early warnings to anticipatory action to protect the agricultural livelihoods and food security of the most vulnerable people.

FAO also provides key global early warning services and tools such as the Global Information and Early Warning System on Food and Agriculture (GIEWS), the Joint FAO–OIE–WHO Global Early Warning System for health threats and emerging risks at the human–animal–ecosystems interface (GLEWS), the Desert Locust Watch, and the Predictive Livestock Early Warning Information System (PLEWS), among others.

It also produces forward-looking analyses focusing on acute food insecurity such as the FAO-WFP Hunger Hotspots report.

In 2021 alone, FAO provided support to over 90 countries to strengthen disaster and food security risk-related early warning systems.

In particular, GIEWS has been active in the early warning on food and agriculture, for almost 50 years, and stands ready to support the Early Warning 4 ALL Initiative in the Caribbean.

The need for inclusive and accessible multi-hazard early warning systems is urgent as the number of recorded disasters has increased five-fold, driven in part by human-induced climate change and more extreme weather, as well as, by other hazards such as earthquakes, tsunamis, and more recently pandemics.

Early warning systems are widely regarded as a relatively cheap and effective way of protecting people and assets. For instance, studies from Sudan to Mongolia show that for every $1 invested in anticipatory actions, families can gain up to $7 in benefits and avoided losses.

By predicting where hazards will hit and deploying resources when people and their assets can still be saved, anticipatory action is more effective and more dignified, as it provides people with the means to save their livelihoods before they are wiped out and need to be rebuilt.

"Together we can go far and we can go better," the Director-General said.

For more information:

Marquita Sugrim
FAO National Communications Consultant
FAO Sub-Regional Office for the Caribbean
marquitajuanne.sugrim@fao.org

(END)

Weh Wi Ga Fi Seh

Mek 2023 di yaa yu tek gud gud kayr a yu badi ahn soal

Valentainz Chaaklit, Sweet, ahn Flowaz

chaaklit *n.* chocolate.
Dehn mek di baybi eet tu moch chaaklit; dats wai ih soh fat. *The let the baby eat too much chocolate; that's why he's so fat.* — *adj.* **Ah mi laik di chaaklit aiskreem weh yu mi gi mi.** *I liked the chocolate ice cream you gave me.*

flowaz *n.* flower. (*Both sg. & pl.*)
Tifani bwaifren gi ahn sohn priti flowaz fi Valentainz. *Tiffany's boyfriend gave her some pretty flowers for Valentine's Day.*

flowaz pat *n.phr.* vase.
Sayk a di fait, dehn bwai lik dong di hoal flowaz pat a flowaz fahn aaf a di taybl. *Because they were fighting, the boys knocked the vase of flowers from the table.*

sweet *adj.* sweet.
Di laydi ga sohn flowaz weh smel sweet. *The woman has some flowers that smell very sweet.*
— *n.* 2) sweets, candy, dessert. (*Both sg. & pl.*) **Weh Karol lee gyal eet soh moch sweet, ih teet dehn geh ratn op.** *Carol's little girl's teeth got rotten because she ate so much candy.* *See:* **dezert**.
— *v.* amuse, make one laugh. **Da joak weh Babzi gi mi oanli sweet mee.** *That joke that Babsy gave me really made me laugh.*

sweet mowt *n.phr.* flattering mouth.
Shee kaal evribadi 'daalin' ahn 'pet', kaa shee ga sweet mowt. *She calls everybody 'darling' and 'pet' because she has a flattering mouth.*

sweet op *v.phr.* butter up, play up to, be nice to.
Amaari wahn chrai sweet op ih ma fi mek ih goh da paati. Amari will try to play up to her mom so she can go to the party. *See:* **sweettaak**.

Silvaana Udz, Ed.D da fahn Bileez. If yu waahn tel shee bowt sohnting speshal fu put eena dis Kriol aatikl, eemayl: sudz142@gmail.com **Vizit: www.nationalkriolcouncil.org**

DPP to determine if family accused of restraining woman with chains will be charged

By Michelle Sutherland

The Office of the Director of Public Prosecution is in possession of Nicole Polonio's case file and is reviewing it to determine whether any of her family members will be held accountable for Polonio suffocating to death on account of her having been physically restrained.

On Monday, ACP Hilberto Romero, Officer Commanding the Eastern Division indicated that "a post-mortem examination has been conducted on the body. We have since carried out a thorough investigation, several statements have been recorded, exhibits have been retrieved from the house and we will forward the file to the DPP to make a determination whether anyone is to be charged for that incident. The report we received is that she had a mental breakdown and had been restrained thereafter she was found motionless, apparently dead. The results of the post-mortem have been established and all that is a part of the file will be sent to the DPP for directives."

According to Romero, family members have explained to the investigating officers that they were forced to chain up Polonio because she had become violent and was causing injuries to herself by repeatedly banging her head against the walls. During those episodes, Romero said that the family also informed that Polonio was discovered nude wandering the streets and had damaged several items inside the house, leaving them with no other option but to physically restrain her until they could seek assistance.

Polonio, 34, a mother of five children ages 3to 15, who was a resident of San Pedro Town, was discovered dead inside her room on Saturday, January 28th by police.

Reports say that she was found tightly wrapped up inside a sheet mimicking a straight jacket and had several bruises on her body. Prior to her death, Polonio was reportedly tied to her bed for five days with chains around her hands, feet, and neck which were also secured by padlocks. After the fifth day, Polonio was reportedly unshackled but was placed inside a sheet where she was tightly tied up, resulting in her dying from positional asphyxia due to her being unable to breathe.

Checks made with several other family members have since revealed that Polonio was not known to suffer from any mental health condition. A death investigation is currently ongoing.

REQUEST FOR EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST

Consultancy Services

IDB Inter-American Development Bank

Consultancy Services for the Digitization and Implementation of a Digital Document Management System inclusive of the Procurement of a Document Management System/Software and Development of User Manuals

Institution: Ministry of Finance
Country: BELIZE
Project: Strengthening of Tax Administration Project
Sector: Finance
Project No.: BL-L10315
Operation No: 4839/OC-BL
Deadline: Friday, February 17th, 2023, at 4:00 pm local Belize time

The **Government of Belize (GOB)** has received financing from the **Inter-American Development Bank (IDB)** for the execution of a five-year tax modernization project entitled **"Strengthening of Tax Administration" (STA) (BL-L1031).** The Ministry intends to apply a part of the proceeds towards the consultancy service for the Digitization and Implementation of a **Digital Document Management System inclusive of the Procurement of a Document Management System/Software and Development of User Manuals.**

Through the STA Project, the **Belize Tax Service Department (BTSD)** has procured a **Modern Integrated Tax Administration System (the Revenue Management System (RMS)** and is presently in the implementation process. This new system will be used in the management of the Belize Tax Administration. The BTSD is looking for reorganizing its Internal Audit Division into an Internal Control Division with the view of improving both, the control of staff integrity and the internal audit. This consultancy is intended to address this concern.

Objective of the Consultancy:
The purpose of this consultancy is to implement a digital document management system and imaging services, which will include the procurement of a suitable document management software, associated hardware and the development of user manuals.

The consulting services **("the services")** is expected to be for a period of **fifteen (15) months.**

The selected consultancy firm should have the following characteristics:

The Firm
General Experience:
- The firm should demonstrate at least five (5) years general experience.

Specific Experience:
- Working experience in similar assignments
- At least five (5) years in the following areas below:
  - Document management system
  - Digitization activities
  - Working with software networks, updating system software and tracking data and communications
  - Working experience conducting software and hardware installations, operating systems, troubleshooting, and networking Job analysis and job evaluation.
  - Working experience writing, reviewing, or executing plans for new or established document management systems
  - Working experience analyzing, interpreting, or disseminating system performance data.
  - Training needs analysis, and;
  - Staff training capacity

The firm should have but not be limited to the following Key Experts:
- Team Leader/Lead Consultant
- IT Expert
- Document Management Specialist

The Consultancy Firm specific objective will be.
- To implement an electronic document management systems and imaging services to facilitate BTSD's goal of reducing paper consumption and to convert paper-based document formats into digital images that are easily storable, searchable, and retrievable for viewing and printing, either in part or in the document's entirety as specified by the User.
- Digitize all hard-copy files using identified software; to scan, index, and properly save files in the database by establishing Digital Document Management System (DDMS) parameters such as naming conventions and search criteria.
- To perform data validation and quality checks of the digitized records and to configure the software product to operate with existing BTSD computer systems.

The Ministry of Finance now invites eligible Consultancy Firms **("Consultants")** to indicate their interest in providing the services. Interested eligible Consultants must submit an Expression of Interest providing information demonstrating that they have the required qualifications and relevant experience to perform the services **(description of similar assignments specifying start and end dates of assignments, experience in similar conditions, availability of appropriate skills, etc.).** The term **"consultant"** means a legally established professional consulting firm or an entity that may provide the services.

Expression of Interest package should contain:
- **(i)** Document explaining interest, experience, and competence of the consulting firm.
- **(ii)** Firms experience in the assignment of similar consultancy services during the past five years. Description of similar assignments specifying start and end dates of assignments.
- **(iii)** Firms evidence of past jobs. (These includes letters from the respective client on the job (s) carried out, or a copy of contract or agreement with the client including copy of the TOR).
- **(iv)** Proof of nationality: Copy of certificate of incorporation, information of shareholders of company specifying the shares owned by each respective shareholder of the company and a copy of documentation of nationality of the shareholders of the company.

Additional documentation required for National Consultants:
- **(v)** Copy of Certificate of Good Standing from Belize Company Registry
- **(vi)** Copy of Certificate of Good Standing from the Social Security Board
- **(vii)** Copy of Certificate of Good Standing from the Belize Tax Service
- **(viii)** Copy of Current Trade License

Consulting firm will be selected in accordance with the Quality and Cost-Based Selection (QCBS) method 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)** and is open to all eligible consultants as defined in the IDB policies. The selection of the successful firm will be based on a competitive process among short-listed firms that takes into account the quality of the proposal and the cost of the service. Only the short-listed firms will be asked to submit a technical and price proposal.

Consultants may associate with other firms in the form of a joint venture or a sub-consultancy to enhance their qualifications. For the purpose of establishing the short list, the nationality of a firm is that of the country in which it is legally incorporated or constituted and in the case of Joint Venture, the nationality of the firm appointed to represent it.

Interested consulting firms are asked to submit their expression of interest via e-mail to **Michelle.Longsworth@bts.gov.bz** and copied to **tamara.tingling@mof.gov.bz** marked **STAP- Consulting firm to design and implement an Internal Control Model including the implementation of a system to support internal control processes** in the subject header, or submit hard copy on or before **4:00 p.m. (local Belize time)** on **Friday, February 17th, 2023,** to the following address:

Director General
Belize Tax Service
Strengthening of Tax Administration Project
Eleanor Hall Building
Chetumal Street, Lake I, Belize City
Tel: 501-222-5114

For clarifications kindly contact:

Procurement Specialist
Project Executing Unit
Strengthening of Tax Administration Project
Eleanor Hall Building
Chetumal Street, Lake I, Belize City
Tel: 501-222-5114/E-mail: tamara.tingling@mof.gov.bz

Charting Globalization's Turn to Slowbalization After Global Financial Crisis

Shekhar Aiyar, Anna Ilyina

The free flow of ideas, people, goods, services, and capital across national borders leads to greater economic integration. But globalization, the trend toward these things moving ever more freely between nations, has seen ebbs and flows over the decades.

Those trends are coming into sharper focus this year as policymakers work to understand and address the prospect of geoeconomic fragmentation, which threatens to undo the integration that has improved the lives and livelihoods of billions of people.

Looking back over a century and a half of data, the main phases of globalization are clearly visible using the trade openness metric—the sum of exports and imports of all economies relative to global gross domestic product.

As the Chart of the Week shows, globalization plateaued in the decade and a half since the global financial crisis. This latest era is often referred to as "slowbalization."

Each of the chart's five main periods was characterized by different configurations of economic and financial powers, and different rules and mechanisms for economic and financial ties between countries, as we recently highlighted in a recent IMF staff note that discussed the impact of trade fragmentation as well as technological decoupling.

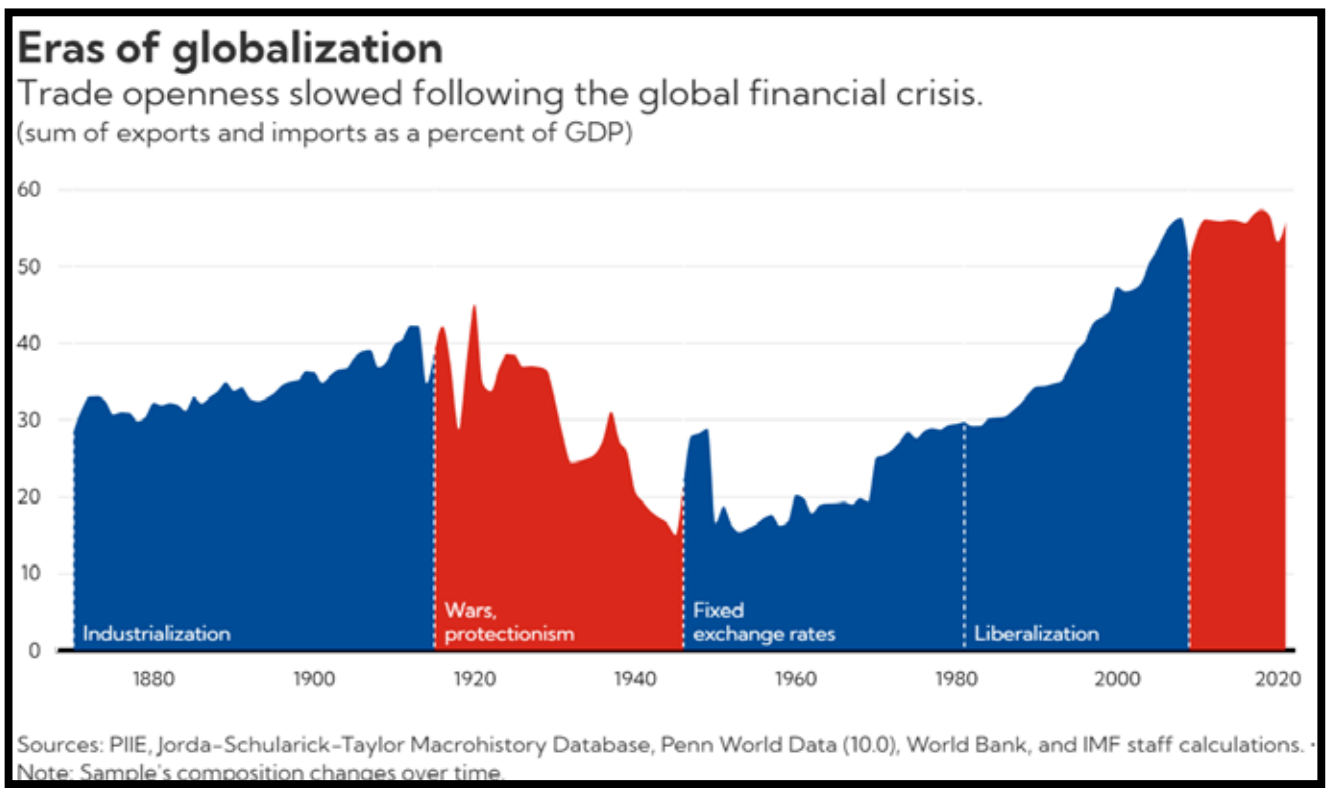
The Industrialization era was a period when global trade—dominated by Argentina, Australia, Canada, Europe, and the United States—was facilitated by the gold standard. It was largely driven by transportation advances that lowered trade costs and boosted trade volumes.

The Interwar era saw a dramatic reversal of globalization due to international conflicts and the rise of protectionism. Despite the League of Nations push for multilateral cooperation, trade became regionalized amid trade barriers and the breakdown of the gold standard into currency blocs.

The Bretton Woods era saw the United States emerge as the dominant economic power with the dollar, then pegged to gold, underpinning a system with other exchange rates pegged to the greenback. The post-war recovery and trade liberalization spurred rapid expansion in Europe, Japan, and developing economies, and many countries relaxed capital controls. But expansionary US fiscal and monetary policy driven by social and military spending ultimately made the system unsustainable. The United States ended dollar-gold convertibility in the early 1970s, and many countries switched to floating exchange rates.

The Liberalization era saw gradual removal of trade barriers in China and other large emerging market economies and unprecedented international economic cooperation, including the integration of the former Soviet bloc. Liberalization accounted for most of the increase in trade, and the World Trade Organization, established in 1995, became a new multilateral overseer of trade agreements, negotiations and dispute settlement. Cross-border capital flows surged, increasing the complexity and interconnectedness of the global financial system.

The "Slowbalization" that followed the global financial crisis has been characterized by a prolonged slowdown in the pace of trade reform, and weakening political support for open trade amid rising geopolitical tensions.



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 miscericordia para estar conmigo y los míos. (La persona debera rezar esta oración 3 días seguidos sin decir el pedido. Dentro de tres días será dificil que sea. Publicar en cuando se reciba la gracia.

Gracias Espíritu Santo.

R.M.L.

SUDOKU

Medium Puzzle

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

Answer to Puzzle

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

Critical thinking is great, but in a world full of information we need to learn 'critical ignoring'

Competition for our attention has accelerated over the past decade, which is why we need we need strategies to help us reclaim some cognitive space.

Critical thinking helps us to evaluate the information we come across, but it may not be enough in a digital world that contains more information than the world's libraries combined.

This is why we also need to learn 'critical ignoring' – the ability to choose what to ignore and where to invest our limited attentional capacities.

The web is an informational paradise and a hellscape at the same time.

A boundless wealth of high-quality information is available at our fingertips right next to a ceaseless torrent of low-quality, distracting, false and manipulative information.

The platforms that control search were conceived in sin. Their business model auctions off our most precious and limited cognitive resource: attention. These platforms work overtime to hijack our attention by purveying information that arouses curiosity, outrage, or anger. The more our eyeballs remain glued to the screen, the more ads they can show us, and the greater profits accrue to their shareholders.

It is hardly surprising, therefore, all this should take a toll on our collective attention. A 2019 analysis of Twitter hashtags, Google queries, or Reddit comments found that across the past decade, the rate at which the popularity of items rises and drops has accelerated. In 2013, for example, a hashtag on Twitter was popular on average for 17.5 hours, while in 2016, its popularity faded away after 11.9 hours. More competition leads to shorter collective attention intervals, which lead to ever fiercer competition for our attention – a vicious circle.

To regain control, we need cognitive strategies that help us reclaim at least some autonomy and shield us from the excesses, traps and information disorders of today's attention economy.

Critical thinking is not enough

The textbook cognitive strategy is critical thinking, an intellectually disciplined, self-guided and effortful process to help identify valid information. In school, students are taught to closely and carefully read and evaluate information. Thus equipped, they can evaluate the claims and arguments they see, hear, or read. No objection. The ability to think critically is immensely important.

But is it enough in a world of information overabundance and gushing sources of disinformation? The answer is "No" for at least two reasons.

First, the digital world contains more information than the world's libraries combined. Much of it comes from unvetted sources and lacks reliable indicators of trustworthiness. Critically thinking through all information and sources we come across would utterly paralyse us because we would never have time to actually read the valuable information we painstakingly identify.

Second, investing critical thinking in sources that should have been ignored in the first place means that attention merchants and malicious actors have been gifted what they wanted, our attention.

Critical ignoring to make information management feasible

So, what tools do we have at our disposal beyond critical thinking? In our recent article, we – a philosopher, two cognitive scientists and an education scientist – argue that as much as we need critical thinking we also need critical ignoring.

Critical ignoring is the ability to choose what to ignore and where to invest one's limited attentional capacities. Critical ignoring is more than just not paying attention – it's about practising mindful and healthy habits in the face of information overabundance.

We understand it as a core competence for all citizens in the digital word.

Without it, we will drown in a sea of information that is, at best, distracting and, at worst, misleading and harmful.

Tools for critical thinking

Three main strategies exist for critical ignoring. Each one responds to a different type of noxious information.

In the digital world, self-nudging aims to empower people to be citizen "choice architects" by designing their informational environments in ways that work best for them and that constrain their activities in beneficial ways. We can, for instance, remove distracting and irresistible notifications. We may set specific times in which messages can be received, thereby creating pockets of time for concentrated work or socialising. Self-nudging can also help us take control of our digital default settings, for instance, by restricting the use of our personal data for purposes of targeted advertisement.

Lateral reading is a strategy that enables people to emulate how professional fact checkers establish the credibility of online information. It involves opening up new browser tabs to search for information about the organisation or individual behind a site before diving into its contents. Only after consulting the open web do skilled searchers gauge whether expending attention is worth it. Before critical thinking can begin, the first step is to ignore the lure of the site and check out what others say about its alleged factual reports. Lateral reading thus uses the power of the web to check the web.

Most students fail at that task. Past studies show that, when deciding whether a source should be trusted, students (as well as university professors) do what years of school has taught them to do – they read closely and carefully. Attention merchants as well as merchants of doubt are jubilant.

Online, looks can be deceiving. Unless one has extensive background knowledge it is often very difficult to figure out that a site, filled with the trappings of serious research, peddles falsehoods about climate change or vaccinations or any variety of historical topics, such as the Holocaust. Instead of getting entangled in the site's reports and professional design, fact checkers exercise critical ignoring. They evaluate the site by leaving it and engage in lateral reading instead.

The do-not-feed-the-trolls heuristic targets online trolls and other malicious users who harass, cyberbully or use other antisocial tactics. Trolls thrive on attention, and deliberate spreaders of dangerous disinformation often resort to trolling tactics. One of the main strategies that science denialists use is to hijack people's attention by creating the appearance of a debate where none exists. The heuristic advises against directly responding to trolling. Resist debating or retaliating. Of course, this strategy of critical ignoring is only a first line of defence. It should be complemented by blocking and reporting trolls and by transparent platform content moderation policies including debunking.

These three strategies are not a set of elite skills. Everybody can make use of them, but educational efforts are crucial for bringing these tools to the public.

Critical ignoring as a new paradigm for education

The philosopher Michael Lynch has noted that the Internet "is both the world's best fact-checker and the world's best bias confirmer – often at the same time."

Navigating it successfully requires new competencies that should be taught in school. Without the competence to choose what to ignore and where to invest one's limited attention, we allow others to seize control of our eyes and minds. Appreciation for the importance of critically ignoring is not new but has become even more crucial in the digital world.

As the philosopher and psychologist William James astutely observed at the beginning of the 20th century: "The art of being wise is the art of knowing what to ignore."

DISCOVERY Landscape

Fun Facts!

The Rarest of Eye Colors

Green eyes are not caused by pigmentation, but by a lack of it.

The color of the eye is determined by a pigment called melanin in the outer layer of the iris. In green eyes, the levels of melanin are lower than in brown or hazel eyes.

Ultimately, eyes that have less melanin tend to look green or blue. Eyes that have more melanin appear hazel. Those with the most melanin are brown.

Individual eye color is determined by genetics. In the past, people believed that eye color depended only on a single gene.

Recent genetic research now confirms there are 16 genes responsible for color. Due to these genetic variations, parents can give birth to children with different eye colors.

If your baby is born with blue eyes, there is a chance their eyes may change colors. Between the first few months or few years, your baby will produce more pigment, which may cause their eyes to turn green, hazel, or brown.

Green eyes are the rarest eye color in human beings. According to the World Atlas, only 2 percent of people in the world have green eyes. This rarity makes it a sought-after color.

People with green eyes are generally found in northern, central, and western Europe.

As with all eye colors, some links have been made between green eyes and certain health conditions or traits.

A 2014 study from the University of Pittsburgh found that women with green or blue eyes may be able to handle pain better than women with brown or hazel eyes. Further studies are needed to draw strong conclusions on the association between eye color and pain tolerance.

People with green eyes are often considered creative and imaginative. This eye color is associated with jealousy and passion. Since it is rare, it is often deemed very attractive.

Green eyes, like blue and gray eyes, may have an increased risk for certain eye cancers.

People with lighter eye colors may be more likely to develop cancer of the eye called uveal melanoma. The uvea is the middle layer of the eye.

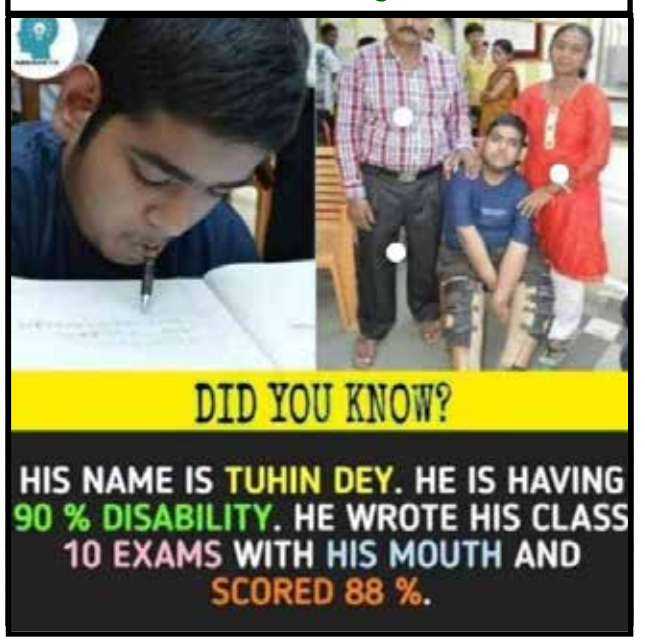
People with green eyes are also often fair-skinned, so they may be at greater risk for various forms of skin cancer as well.

An additional disadvantage of green eyes may be light sensitivity. If you have green eyes, you have less pigment in the iris. Due to this, it may be harder to block out sunlight or bright fluorescent light. As a result, your eyes may feel more sensitive to light.

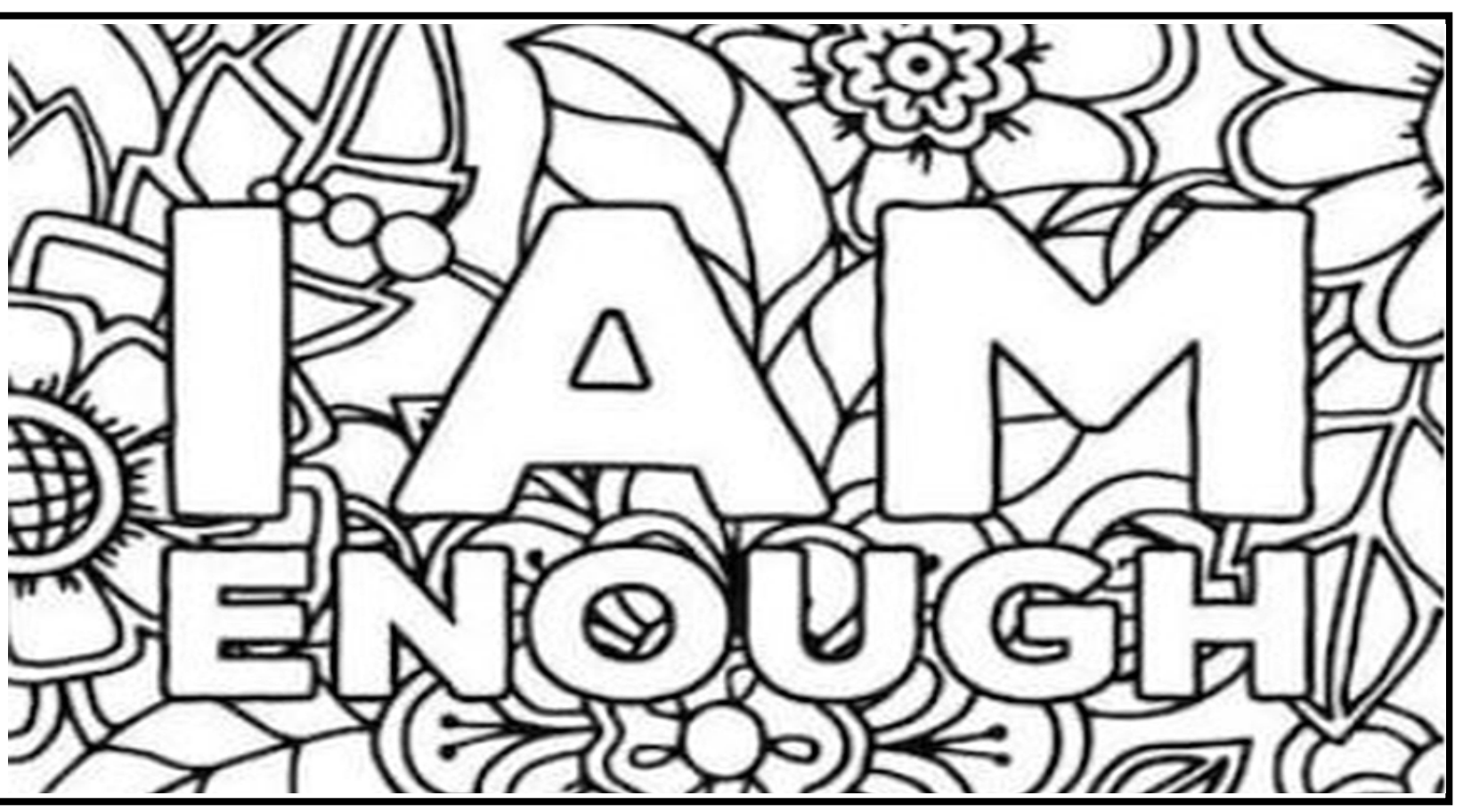
Did You Know?

POLICE!

Amazing!



COLOR ME



Healthy Living ...it's good for life!

Heart . Mind . Soul

What is inflammation?

Inflammation is a vital part of the immune system's response to injury and infection. It is the body's way of signaling the immune system to heal and repair damaged tissue, as well as defend itself against foreign invaders, such as viruses and bacteria.

Without inflammation as a physiological response, wounds would fester and infections could become deadly.

There are different types of inflammation, ranging from acute to chronic. However, if the inflammatory process goes on for too long or if the inflammatory response occurs in places where it is not needed, it can become problematic. Chronic inflammation has been linked to certain diseases such as heart disease or stroke, and may also lead to autoimmune disorders, such as rheumatoid arthritis and lupus. But a healthy diet and lifestyle can help keep inflammation under control.

Acute inflammation occurs after a cut on the knee, a sprained ankle or a sore throat. It's a short-term response with localized effects, meaning it works at the precise place where a problem exists. According to the National Library of Medicine (NLM) the telltale signs of acute inflammation include:

In the case of acute inflammation, blood vessels dilate, blood flow increases and white blood cells swarm the injured area to promote healing, said Dr. Scott Walker, a family practice physician at Gunnison Valley Hospital in Utah. This response is what causes the injured area to turn red and become swollen.

During acute inflammation, chemicals known as cytokines are released by the damaged tissue. The cytokines act as "emergency signals" that bring in your body's immune cells, hormones and nutrients to fix the problem, Walker told Live Science.

In addition, hormone-like substances known as prostaglandins create blood clots to heal damaged tissue, and they also trigger pain and fever as part of the healing process. As the body heals, the acute inflammation gradually subsides.

Dr. Scott Walker is a family practice doctor. He received his medical degree from the University of Utah and his Doctor of Osteopathic Medicine from Kansas City University. He completed his family medicine residency at University of Wyoming with a specialty in obstetrics. Walker is certified by the American Board of Family Medicine and the American Osteopathic Association.

Chronic inflammation

Unlike acute inflammation, chronic inflammation can have long-term and whole-body effects. Chronic inflammation is also called persistent, low-grade inflammation because it produces a steady, low-level of inflammation throughout the body, as judged by a small rise in immune system markers found in blood or tissue. This type of systemic inflammation can contribute to the development of disease, according to the NLM.

Low levels of inflammation can be triggered by a perceived internal threat, even when there isn't a disease to fight or an injury to heal, and sometimes this signals the immune system to respond. As a result, white blood cells swarm but have nothing to do and nowhere to go, and they may eventually start attacking internal organs or other healthy tissues and cells, Walker said.

Chronic inflammation, caused by allergies, smoking or drinking, may also continually simmer under the surface. And while this low-grade level of chronic inflammation often does not have symptoms, doctors can test for C-reactive protein (CRP), a marker for inflammation in the blood.

High levels of CRP have been linked with an increased risk of heart disease. CRP levels can also indicate an infection, or a chronic inflammatory disease, such as rheumatoid arthritis or lupus, according to the Mayo Clinic.

Besides looking for clues in the blood, a person's diet, lifestyle habits and environmental exposures can contribute to chronic inflammation. Therefore, it's important to maintain a healthy lifestyle to keep inflammation in check.

DISEASE CAUSED BY INFLAMMATION

Researchers are still working to understand the implications of chronic inflammation on the body and the mechanisms involved in the process, but it's known to play a role in the development of many diseases.

Heart disease and stroke

One theory suggests that when inflammatory cells stay too long in blood vessels, they promote the buildup of plaque. The body perceives this plaque as a foreign substance that doesn't belong, so it tries to wall off the plaque from the blood flowing inside the arteries, according to the American Heart Association (AHA). If the plaque becomes unstable and ruptures, it forms a clot that blocks blood flow to the heart or brain, triggering a heart attack or stroke.

Cancer

Cancer is another disease linked with chronic inflammation. According to the National Cancer Institute, over time, chronic inflammation can cause DNA damage and lead to some forms of cancer. For example, the institute says that those with chronic inflammatory bowel diseases, such Crohn's disease, have an increased risk of colon cancer.

WHAT IS AN ANTI-INFLAMMATORY DIET?

Anti-inflammatory diets have become popular in recent years. The recommended foods are typical of a Mediterranean diet and include eating more:

Fish
Fresh fruits
Vegetables
Healthy fats
Eating moderate amounts of nuts
Eating very little red meat

Like the Mediterranean diet, the principles of an anti-inflammatory diet are healthful ones and the approach is nutritionally sound, according to the Mayo Clinic.

"Anti-inflammatory food components, such as omega-3 fats, protect the body against the possible damage caused by inflammation," said Ximena Jimenez, a Miami-based nutritionist.

Ximena Jimenez is a registered dietitian with a private practice in Miami. She proudly served as a national media spokesperson for the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics for seven years. Ximena has appeared as a guest expert on local, national and international shows.

An anti-inflammatory diet also means staying away from foods that can promote inflammation. It's best to minimize the amount of foods you eat that are high in saturated and trans fats, such as red meats, dairy products and foods containing partially hydrogenated oils, according to the University of Wisconsin.

In addition, limit sugary foods and refined carbohydrates, such as white rice and bread. And cut back on the use of cooking oils and margarines that are high in omega-6 fatty acids, such as corn, safflower and sunflower oils.

ANTI-INFLAMMATORY DRUGS

To help combat unwanted inflammation, there are a range of prescription and over-the counter medications. The most common ones are the over-the-counter medications known as non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs). They include:

An anti-inflammatory diet also means staying away from foods that can promote inflammation. It's best to minimize the amount of foods you eat that are high in saturated and trans fats, such as red meats, dairy products and foods containing partially hydrogenated oils, according to the University of Wisconsin. In addition, limit sugary foods and refined carbohydrates, such as white rice and bread. And cut back on the use of cooking oils and margarines that are high in omega-6 fatty acids, such as corn, safflower and sunflower oils.

According to the NLM, NSAIDs work by blocking the enzyme cyclooxygenase, which produces prostaglandins, a hormone-like substance that promotes inflammation. Prescription-strength NSAIDs are also available, such as Acetaminophen (which is also known as Paracetamol). This is another common pain reliever, but it does not relieve inflammation, the NLM states.

Corticosteroids, such as cortisone and prednisone, may be prescribed for inflammatory conditions, such as asthma and arthritis. The Mayo Clinic says corticosteroids may help suppress inflammation, but these powerful drugs also carry a risk of side effects, such as weight gain and fluid retention.

Before taking any of these drugs, it's always best to speak to a healthcare provider.

ANTI-INFLAMMATORY SUPPLEMENTS

Several dietary supplements are said to have anti-inflammatory properties, such as ginger, turmeric and willow bark. Although there is some limited evidence that a few natural products may provide modest benefits for acute inflammation, in general, there is insufficient evidence to support the use of many of these products for inflammatory conditions, according to the National Center for

THE BUSINESS PERSPECTIVE

Common rules against corruption in the funding of political parties and electoral campaigns

Contributed by the Belize Chamber of Commerce and Industry

As the discussion around the appropriate Campaign Finance Laws begins to pick up steam in Belize, there is always value in looking at international benchmarks that govern this type of legislation that is very significant for preserving the health of a nation's democracy. For this reason, this week's Business Perspective will simply reproduce the unedited text of the Council of Europe's "Recommendation on Common Rules against corruption in the funding of political parties and electoral campaigns." Except for the preamble, the "common rules" are delineated in their full form below.

The Common Rules

I. External sources of funding of political parties

Article 1 Public and private support to political parties

The state and its citizens are both entitled to support political parties.

The state should provide support to political parties. State support should be limited to reasonable contributions. State support may be financial.

Objective, fair and reasonable criteria should be applied regarding the distribution of state support.

States should ensure that any support from the state and/or citizens does not interfere with the independence of political parties.

Article 2

Definition of donation to a political party

Donation means any deliberate act to bestow advantage, economic or otherwise, on a political party.

Article 3

General principles on donations

a. Measures taken by states governing donations to political parties should provide specific rules to:

– avoid conflicts of interests;

– ensure transparency of donations and avoid secret donations;

– avoid prejudice to the activities of political parties;

– ensure the independence of political parties.

b. States should:

provide that donations to political parties are made public, in particular, donations exceeding a fixed ceiling;

consider the possibility of introducing rules limiting the value of donations to political parties;

adopt measures to prevent established ceilings from being circumvented.

Article 4

Tax deductibility of donations Fiscal legislation may allow tax deductibility of donations to political parties. Such tax deductibility should be limited.

Article 5

Donations by legal entities

a. In addition to the general principles on donations, states should provide:

that donations from legal entities to political parties are registered in the books and accounts of the legal entities; and

that shareholders or any other individual member of the legal entity be informed of donations.

b. States should take measures aimed at limiting, prohibiting or otherwise strictly regulating donations from legal entities which provide goods or services for any public administration.

c. States should prohibit legal entities under the control of the state or of other public authorities from making donations to political parties.

Article 6

Donations to entities connected with a political party

Rules concerning donations to political parties, with the exception of those concerning tax deductibility referred to in Article 4, should also apply, as appropriate, to all entities which are related, directly or indirectly, to a political party or are otherwise under the control of a political party.

Article 7

Donations from foreign donors

States should specifically limit, prohibit or otherwise regulate donations from foreign donors.

II. Sources of funding of candidates for elections and elected officials

Article 8

Application of funding rules to candidates for elections and elected representatives

The rules regarding funding of political parties should apply mutatis mutandis to:

– the funding of electoral campaigns of candidates for elections;

– the funding of political activities of elected representatives.

III. Electoral campaign expenditure

Article 9

Limits on expenditure States should consider adopting measures to prevent excessive funding needs of political parties, such as, establishing limits on expenditure on electoral campaigns.

Article 10

Records of expenditure

States should require particular records to be kept of all expenditure, direct and indirect, on electoral campaigns in respect of each political party, each list of candidates and each candidate.

IV. Transparency

Article 11

Accounts States should require political parties and the entities connected with political parties mentioned in Article 6 to keep proper books and accounts. The accounts of political parties should be consolidated to include, as appropriate, the accounts of the entities mentioned in Article 6.

Article 12

Records of donations

a. States should require the accounts of a political party to specify all donations received by the party, including the nature and value of each donation.

b. In case of donations over a certain value, donors should be identified in the records.

Article 13

Obligation to present and make public accounts

a. States should require political parties to present the accounts referred to in Article 11 regularly, and at least annually, to the independent authority referred to in

Article 14.

b. States should require political parties regularly, and at least annually, to make public the accounts referred to in Article 11 or as a minimum a summary of those accounts, including the information required in Article 10, as appropriate, and in Article 12.

V. Supervision

Article 14

Independent monitoring

a. States should provide for independent monitoring in respect of the funding of political parties and electoral campaigns.

b. The independent monitoring should include supervision over the accounts of political parties and the expenses involved in election campaigns as well as their presentation and publication.

Article 15

Specialised personnel

States should promote the specialisation of the judiciary, police or other personnel in the fight against illegal funding of political parties and electoral campaigns.

VI. Sanctions

Article 16

Sanctions States should require the infringement of rules concerning the funding of political parties and electoral campaigns to be subject to effective, proportionate and dissuasive sanctions.

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.

All about The People

Historical Societal Demise

Neri Briceno

Two constants have proven to be the destructor of communities, societies, nations, and empires - the breakdown of law, along with the judicial process and the lack of equal opportunities for the poor. Belize stands at that precipice.

While it is arguable that these are not the only factors, it's conclusive from history, that they have been contributing destructive factors. I will highlight the demise and fall of two empires and two nations, all within the 20th century to bring into sharp focus the immediate threat that young Belize faces today.

The saying went that 'the sun never set on the British Empire' and from the late 16th century to 1997, that saying probably held true. They were those included in the Colony of British Honduras and now Belize who believe that the empire would never fall. However, with the relinquishment of Hong Kong from British rule to the Chinese in 1997 after 100 years of the lease, the final nail sealed the coffin. The empire failed because, men, as a creature of nature, wants that one thing that we see as our given birthright, 'Freedom'.

While geography, race, culture, equality, war, rebellions, and the respect of international treaties were key factors for the dismantling of the British Empire, at its core was the failure of the judicial system to see those of white British blood from the motherland, as the same as those of other races and cultures who lived in the colonies and territories.

Couple with this the yoke of poverty that permeated all of its colonies but especially by non-British living overseas.

The empire, although it had successes in education, infrastructure, healthcare, medicine, and wealth accumulation, it eventually fell. Up until 1991, the world had two superpowers, the United States which still exists, and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR). The two nations basically dominated the globe in, sports, science, technology, finance, education, territories, landmass, and satellite states, but more so in global influence and the military might they possessed. Few would have predicted the fall of the USSR in 1991, coinciding with the Berlin Wall. What remains today in the form of the nation of Russia, is but a piece of what was essentially an empire that lasted from roughly 1921-1991, a mere 70 years plus or minus. At the core of its breakup was when the people in the republics realized that the main politburo which resided in its capital city of Moscow and was the center of all power was corrupt to its core.

Justice was skewed toward them, and resources were concentrated in their hands. This created a deep imbalance in a centrally planned economy and in a nation that was extremely totalitarian. The People Power movement which yearned for justice, equality, and the ability to dig themselves out of poverty brought down what was essentially one of the most powerful regimes the world had ever seen.

The Middle Eastern nation of Iran, prior to the Islamic Revolution and the Shah, Mohammad Reza Pahlavi briefly saw a foray into democracy in the form of Prime Minister, Mohammad Mosaddegh.

The west threatened by some of his policies including the nationalization of western oil companies orchestrated a coup and he was subsequently removed and replaced by the Shah. The Shah's dictatorial monarchial regime deprived citizens of their rights and equal justice. This was especially apparent in his monarchial ability to overrule and mandate by royal decree.

Basically, He wielded the power to overrule laws, judicial rulings, and any national policy. This gave rise to a disenchanted population which eventually sparked the Islamic Revolution and saw him overthrown.

Upon his departure into exile, ordinary Iranians discovered the vast wealth of the Shah and his family while many ordinary Iranians were living in an abject state of poverty.

The following case illustrates the fall of a way of life and governance rather than the fall of a country itself. The apartheid regime of governance ruled South Africa from 1922 to 1992. While apartheid was governed based on the racial segregation of citizens within South Africa,what is little known is that under this system and before the world started noticing and placing international sanctions on it, was that South Africa was a powerhouse on the African Continent, if not the world.

It was the first country to successfully perform a human-to-human heart transfer in 1967 by Dr. Christian N. Bernard. The nation was rich in resources, excelled in international sports, has some of the best universities in the world, had a first-class infrastructure system, global influence, high tech weapon production, and its military prowess had little competition in that region.

> The government's vocabulary and actions should be geared around education, justice, employment, and investment.

Apart from the fact that apartheid was one of the cruellest and most inhumane forms of government, at the core of its fall, was the rule of law, social justice, and poverty. None were meted out equally under this system, with whites holding a level of privilege that did not even come close to what others could enjoy. The result was the fall of an unsustainable system in 1992 despite the advances that South Africa had as a nation.

The brief analysis of the four cases shows that it does not matter what successes a nation may enjoy, if the rule of law breaks down and poverty becomes rampant, chances are that nation has a very low chance of success, and eventually plunges into anarchy.

Looking at a 41 year old Belize we will see common factors. The breakdown of law and order resulting in horrific violence and daily street murders, and the delay of justice by an ever-increasing backlog of cases, has now prompted citizens to take the law in their own hands for the simplest of reasons. The resulting poverty created in the slums of Belize City, combined with a growing narcotics trade has only added fuel to a fire that is burning out of control. We can see that we have achieved two key milestones that have hastened the fall of empires and nations.

Overwhelming statistics have shown that the majority of violent crimes are being done by and against those citizens living in the most impoverished areas of the city. The commonality is that they come from single-parent families with a woman as the head of the household. The crimes are committed by males and the crimes have three further commonalities; they are mostly crimes of finance, robbery/jackings, sales of illegal narcotics, or over petty squabbles where someone feels 'disrespected'. Trivial nonsense.

The state's role in this is two-pronged. First arrest, prosecute, and punish perpetrators. Reform can come later before they are released but the message must be clear, that serving time is no walk in the park.

Second, provide opportunities through education and meaningful employment to those citizens living below the poverty line. Throughout history and time, education has shown to be the number one solution to bring a nation out of poverty. It creates a skilled workforce that is ready for any industry that sprouts up in the nation and it also breeds innovation and enables people to have the creativity to open their own businesses.

From a financial, social, and educational perspective a family that has one breadwinner, in most cases a single mother, is more prone to failure than one with both parents. The state must resist the urge to create a dependent population or one that is reliant on handouts, especially for single-parent families.

The word free should never be in a government's vocabulary since someone always pays. The government's vocabulary and actions should be geared around education, justice, employment, and investment. These are basic keys of nation-building along with the upholding of democratic principles.

As along as we continue to stray from these core building blocks, our chances of failure as a nation increase. It's all about the people!

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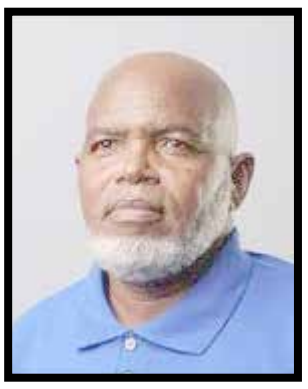
RF&G LIFE INSURANCE COMPANY LTD.

Date: February 3, 2023

Ivan Galvez of ***Lucky Strike, Belize District, Belize C.A.*** having made written declaration that Policy LTA0000070 under RF&G Life Insurance Company Ltd has been lost and having made request to the Company for a duplicate of the Policy, notice is hereby given that unless objection is raised within one month of the date herein, the requested duplicate policy will be issued.

GRASSROOTS

The Credit Reporting Law



By Hon. Gilroy Usher

"Your credit report and credit score are two of the most vital aspects of your financial health."- **Erin Lowry**

At the sitting of the House of Representatives on Friday February 3rd, the Credit Reporting Bill went through its final reading. After it is approved by the Senate and the Governor General in the coming weeks, the road will be paved for the establishment of Credit Bureaus in the country under the regulations of the Central Bank of Belize.

The new will be a historic achievement for the administration, creditors and lenders, Belizeans who know the benefits of being credit worthy, and Mr. Maurice Underwood, who knowing the importance of a Credit Bureau in national development and had the vision to establish Credit Master System despite many challenges.

By issuing a credit score for individuals and businesses that is based on their credit history, a Credit Bureau offers creditors / lenders the opportunity to offer or deny credit whether with cash, goods, or services based on the credit history of applicants which increases the likelihood of them being paid by customers as promised.

Credit is one of the most important things in an economy large or small. Credit makes all types of services accessible in Belize, the Caribbean, Central and South America, the United States, and all other countries through the world.

With the Credit Reporting Law Belize is catching up with many others countries in the establishment of a system that protects the interest of creditors and lenders as well borrowers or the users of credit.

By issuing a credit score for individuals and businesses that is based on their credit history, a Credit Bureau offers creditors /lenders the opportunity to offer or deny credit whether with cash, goods, or services based on the credit history of applicants which increases the likelihood of them being paid by customers as promised.

A Credit Bureau develops its data base by collecting information from businesses that offer a wide range of services on credit.

Some of the businesses that offer credit in the country are banks, credit union, pawnshops, payday loan centers, insurance companies, Courts, hardware stores, grocers, corner stores, importers, and exporters as well as producers and manufactures.

Establishment of more than one credit bureau will be very good for Belize. Natural competition in the market will motive the different Credit Bureaus to offer the most reputable service to increase their market share and profits.

In the United States Credit scores range from 300 -850. The higher your score ,the more credit worthy a person is deemed.

Credit Worthiness range as follows

Excellent 800- 850
Very Good 740-799
Good 670- 739
Fair 580- 669
Poor 300- 579

In the absence of Credit Bureaus in the country many individuals access new credit in the same city, town, or village after refusing to pay (stiffing) one or more persons or businesses that offered them credit.

With the new Credit Reporting Law such poor business practice will decrease drastically. Quicker than expected in a few months whenever persons seek a line of credit from any business, it will be mandatory that they produce a credit report from a reputable Credit Bureau in a similar way that possession of a valid Social Security Card is mandatory to apply for a loan at bank. Realizing the importance of good credit fast, from 2023 onward, more Belizeans will borrow wisely and make every effort to pay for whatever service is offered to them on credit to maintain a good credit rating.

Maintaining their credit worthiness will also result in less individuals and businesses being taken to court for payment of bad debts. Many of those who find themselves in such unfortunate situations will willing make use of payment plans to pay their debts and regain their credit worthiness.

The new Credit Reporting Law will also help to ensure that persons and businesses who accesses service for others on credit ensure that those beneficiaries make good on their payments as promised to protect their credit as good Samaritans.

Unintentionally the new law will result in a special fate for persons and businesses with poor credit rationing. By being in the bad book of hard payers, those who find themselves to the unenviable category ,will be denied access to an increasing number of services on credit ,or they will be offered services on credit at much higher interest than person with good credit.

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The Righters Write

Article 27: Right to Cultural, Artistic and Scientific Life

Taken from Universal Declaration of Human Rights at 70: 30 Articles on 30 Article, 2018

Contributed By The Human Rights Commission

The monumental Buddhas of Bamiyan, statues 10 to 16 storeys high hewn from sandstone cliffs, inspired reverence and awe in central Afghanistan for 15 centuries – until the Taliban blew them to smithereens in 2001. In 1993, during the Bosnian War, Stari Most, the gracefully-arched Ottoman bridge that gave the town of Mostar its name, was deliberately targeted by a barrage of artillery shells, sending the 427-year-old protected monument into the Neretva River.

When attacking armed groups want to crush the morale of civilians or opposing forces, they often deliberately destroy symbols of cultural heritage.

Article 27 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) helped lay the ground for this to be recognized as a war crime, and in a landmark judgment in September 2016, the International Criminal Court declared Ahmad Al Faqi Al Mahdi, a member of the Ansar Dine armed group operating in Mali, guilty of the war crime of attacking historic and religious buildings in Timbuktu. He was sentenced to nine years in prison.

It was the first time the destruction of cultural sites had been prosecuted as a war crime at the ICC, giving hope that more such court cases would follow – especially for members of ISIS who carried out wanton targeted destruction of a wide range of cultural and religious monuments in territory it once held in northern Iraq and Syria.

The ICC Al-Mahdi case was the first time someone had been charged with the destruction of cultural heritage as a stand-alone war crime. Other tribunals have charged individuals with the criminal destruction of cultural heritage sites – including the destruction of the bridge in Mostar -- but only as an additional offence attached to more established war crimes such as summary executions and torture.

All but one of the historic mausoleums Ahmad Al Faqi Al Mahdi had helped destroy were UNESCO World Heritage sites, and UNESCO Director-General Irina Bokova has described this war tactic of tearing communities apart as "cultural cleansing."

"It takes centuries, sometimes thousands of years to create a culture, but genocide can destroy a culture instantly."

–Raphael Lemkin, proponent of 1948 Genocide Convention

According to the Special Rapporteur on cultural rights, Karima Bennoune, "the destruction of cultural property with discriminatory intent can be charged as a crime against humanity, and the intentional destruction of cultural and religious property and symbols can also be considered evidence of intent to destroy a group within the meaning of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide."

Article 27 says everyone has the right to freely participate in the cultural life of the community, to share scientific advances and its benefits, and to get credit for their own work. This article firmly incorporates cultural rights as human rights for all. They relate to the pursuit of knowledge and understanding, and to creative responses to a constantly changing world. A prerequisite for implementing Article 27 is ensuring the necessary conditions for everyone to continuously engage in critical thinking, and to have the opportunity to interrogate, investigate and contribute ideas, regardless of frontiers.

One of the great unachieved goals of the UN's ill-fated predecessor, the League of Nations, was protection of minority groups. Charles Malik, the Lebanese drafter who made important contributions to the UDHR as it was drawn up between 1946 and 1948, strongly defended the rights of minority groups. He wanted to make sure members of minority communities were protected from extreme forms of assimilation. In the end, the Declaration did not include a separate article devoted to the rights of members of minority groups, but the term "culture" is understood to also refer to "the way of life" of ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities. It is about preserving diversity.

Article 27 is closely linked to Articles 22 and 29 in asserting that economic, social and cultural rights are indispensable for human dignity and development of the human personality. Taken together, they show the UDHR

Cont'd on pg. 19

VACANCY NOTICE

PORT of BELIZE LTD
A Port with a Global Perspective

BOATMAN

Applications are invited from suitably qualified persons to fill the following post in the Marine 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: Marine Manager

Summary of Responsibilities: The primary duty of the Boatman shall be to safely assist navigation of the vessel along with the Boat Captain.

Job Responsibilities:

1. Proper care, preservation and maintenance are taken of mooring lines, life belt, anchors and other related equipment.
2. All matters related to deck seamanship including safe loading and unloading of the vessel, swab deck, cleaning interior and exterior of vessels on a daily basis or as required by the Captain or the Marine Department.
3. Be required to paint and assist in repairs, refit program and servicing of vessels.
4. Assist with the mooring and unmooring of the vessel.
5. Act as lookout when underway.
6. Assist in the refueling of vessel.
7. Any other duties assigned from time to time of a related nature.

Job Qualifications/Requirement:

- Minimum High School Diploma.
- 3 years experience boat handling.
- Work flexible hours (inclusive of night duties).

Required Skills, Knowledge and Characteristics: To be selected applicants must possess the following important characteristics:

- Knowledge of marine craft communication and problem –solving skills.
- Must have the ability to adapt to changing conditions and respond to emergency situations.
- Ability to swim.
- Team Oriented.
- Be Punctual.

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 Monday, February 13, 2023.

Former Guantanamo Bay detainee says Belize 'perfect' for him

By Britney Gordon

Newly resettled, former Guantanamo Bay detainee, Majid Khan, spends his first days of freedom promoting Belize and planning for his future after nearly 20 years of solitary confinement in the U.S. military base.

Khan, the first "high-value" detainee to be resettled from the prison, was escorted by three Belizean workers acting as tour guides. He was also accompanied by five members of his legal team, who had flown into the country a day prior to awaiting his arrival. On his second day of freedom, Khan was treated to lunch at a seafront restaurant. He was also taken shopping for essentials. To ensure

that Khan would be able to comfortably adapt to his new lifestyle, the US government has provided funds to purchase a home, a phone, a laptop, and a car.

In an interview with the New York Times, the 42-year-old revealed that he plans to begin working once he is settled, expressing a desire in owning a restaurant and an interest to run for public office. The government has also agreed to permit Khan's wife and teenage daughter to join at a later time. After familiarizing himself with the city, Khan referred to Belize as, "the perfect place" to become a "productive member of society."

Khan had been convicted for his affiliation with Al Qaeda, for which he operated as a courier. After his capture by the C.I.A. in 2003, he endured what was referred to by Minister of Foreign Affairs, Eamon Courtenay as "the most horrific torture". He was held by the C.I.A. for three years before he was moved to Guantánamo Bay in Cuba.

Khan pleaded guilty to terrorism charges and began cooperating with the U.S. government in 2012. This cooperation is what ultimately led to his resettlement among other factors. A poem written by Khan expressed his remorse, reading, "On this day, Feb. two, 2023 … God set me free … My actions hurt others, like the sting of a bee. May they forgive me. I can say this or that, A to Z. To prove my skeptics wrong, I hope to be."

VACANCY PORT of BELIZE LTD A Port with a Global Perspective NOTICE

Security Officer

Applications are invited from suitably qualified persons to fill the following post in the Security 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 Security & Safety Officer

Summary of Responsibilities: Ensuring the safety and security of designated properties, assets, personnel, and visitors. Responsibilities include patrolling the premises, setting up security controls, monitoring property access, investigating suspicious behavior, and enforcing company policies.

Primary Responsibilities:

a. Patrol of Pier, Transit Sheds, Compounds, Office. Low Berth etc. as instructed
b. Control of Entry and exit points of Facility
c. Surveillance of cargo from ship to delivery
d. Deposits to the banks
e. You are to be verse with the Port of Belize Limited Surveillance System & Security Manual
f. Any other duties of a related nature assigned from time to time.

18.2 of the ISPS – Code Port facility personnel having specific security duties should have knowledge and receive training in some or all of the following, as appropriate:

1. knowledge of current security threats and patterns;
2. recognition and detection of weapons, dangerous substances and devices;
3. recognition of characteristics and behavioral patterns of persons who are likely to threaten security;
4. techniques used to circumvent security measures;
5. crowd management and control techniques;
6. security-related communication;
7. operations of security equipment and systems;
8. testing, calibration and maintenance of security equipment and systems;
9. inspection, control, and monitoring techniques, and
10. methods of physical searches of persons, personal effects, baggage, cargo, and ship's stores.

Job Qualifications/Requirement:

- A High School diploma, with 3 years experience in Security Officer field.
- Must possess a valid driver's license.
- Computer literate.
- Knowledge of Laws & regulations
- Working Knowledge of public safety
- Security operation & procedures

Skills/Competencies:

- Ability to work independently.
- Team oriented, ethical, and punctual (On Call)
- Good communication skills
- Strong reporting skills

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 Monday, February 13, 2023.

Article 27: Right to Cultural, Artistic and Scientific Life...

Cont'd from pg. 18

drafters' determination not just to guarantee basic minimum standards, but to help us all become better people.

All three rights were subsequently enshrined in other international treaties including the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, ratified by 169 states.

"Science is a beautiful gift to humanity; we should not distort it."

–A.P.J. Abdul Kalam, scientist and former President of India

Under a separate topic covered by Article 27, lies a concern that everyone's right "to share in scientific advancement and its benefits" has been attacked in recent years, particularly in debates over climate change and disease.

In some circles, the issue of whether humans cause climate change, or whether climate change even exists, is treated as a matter of personal belief rather than rigorous science. And scientific publications have expressed alarm at what one described as "a rise of populist antagonism to the influence of experts." In 2018, a group of 58 experts wrote an open letter condemning a misplaced sense of balance creating "a false equivalence between an overwhelming scientific consensus and a lobby, heavily funded by vested interests" that intentionally sows doubt. Climate change is real, they declared: "We urgently need to move the debate on to how we address the causes and effects of dangerous climate change" because the alternative, they said, will be "catastrophic."

"The point of modern propaganda isn't only to misinform or push an agenda. It is to exhaust your critical thinking, to annihilate truth."

–Gary Kasparov, former world chess champion and Russian politician

Scepticism about science, or pseudoscience, can cost lives, as tragically illustrated by pressure placed on parents not to vaccinate their children against diseases which had greatly diminished after decades of successful vaccination campaigns. The World Health Organization says 21 million lives were saved by the measles vaccine between 2000 and 2017. But between 2016 and 2017, reported measles cases jumped 30 percent, in part because of parents refusing to use the vaccine because of false claims about its risks. In 2017 alone, WHO estimates 110,000 children died from the virus

In the same way, putting commercial interests before the common good can also lead to loss of life, when patent policies and subscription prices for specialist publications make knowledge and its application inaccessible to those who need it. This is true in medicine, but also in food production, architecture, engineering and many other spheres.

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.

Joint Statement by the Heads of the Food and Agriculture Organization, International Monetary Fund, World Bank Group, World Food Programme and World Trade Organization on the Global Food and Nutrition Security Crisis

(L-R) WTO's Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, FAO's Qu Dongyu, IMF's Kristalina Georgieva, WBG's David Malpass, and WFP's David Beasley

Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) Director General Qu Dongyu, International Monetary Fund (IMF) Managing Director Kristalina Georgieva, World Bank Group (WBG) President David Malpass, World Food Programme (WFP) Executive Director David Beasley and World Trade Organization (WTO) Director General Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala issued the following joint statement calling for continued urgent action to address the global crisis on food and nutrition security.

We offer our deepest sympathies to the people of Türkiye and the neighboring Syrian Arab Republic who have suffered the recent earthquakes. Our organizations are closely monitoring the situation, assessing the magnitude of the disaster, and working to mobilize necessary support in accordance with each organization's mandates and procedures.

Globally, poverty and food insecurity are both on the rise after decades of development gains. Supply chain disruptions, climate change, the COVID-19 pandemic, financial tightening through rising interest rates and the war in Ukraine have caused an unprecedented shock to the global food system, with the most vulnerable hit the hardest. Food inflation remains high in the world, with dozens of countries experiencing double digit inflation. According to WFP, 349 million people across 79 countries are acutely food insecure. The prevalence of undernourishment is also on the rise, following three years of deterioration. This situation is expected to worsen, with global food supplies projected to drop to a three-year low in 2022/2023. (1) The need is especially dire in 24 countries that FAO and WFP have identified as hunger hotspots, of which 16 are in Africa.(2) Fertilizer affordability as defined by the ratio between food prices and fertilizer prices(3) is also the lowest since the 2007/2008 food crisis, which is leading to lower food production and impacting smallholder farmers the hardest, worsening the already high local food prices. For example, the reduction in 2022 of the production of rice, for which Africa is the largest importer in the world, coupled with prospects of lower stocks, is of grave concern. In response to the inflation of food, fuel and fertilizer prices, countries have spent over US$710 billion for social protection measures covering 1 billion people, including approximately US$380 billion for subsidies. (4) However, only US$4.3 billion has been spent in low-income countries for social protection measures, compared to US$507.6 billion in high-income countries.

To prevent a worsening of the food and nutrition security crisis, further urgent actions are required to (i) rescue hunger hotspots, (ii) facilitate trade, improve the functioning of markets, and enhance the role of the private sector, and (iii) reform and repurpose harmful subsidies with careful targeting and efficiency. Countries should balance short-term urgent interventions with longer-term resilience efforts as they respond to the crisis.

1. Rescue hunger hotspots

We call on governments and donors to support country-level efforts to address the needs in hotspots, share information and strengthen crisis preparedness. The WFP and FAO need funds urgently to serve the most vulnerable immediately. In 2022, WFP and partners reached a record number of people — more than 140 million — with food and nutrition assistance, based on a record-breaking US$14 billion in contributions, of which US$7.3 billion came from the United States Government alone. WFP sent over US$3 billion in cash-based transfers to people in 72 countries and provided support to school feeding programs in 80 countries, including 15 million children through direct support and more than 90 million children through bolstering government national school feeding programs. FAO has invested US$1 billion to support more than 40 million people in rural areas with time sensitive agricultural interventions. These activities were primarily focused on the 53 countries listed in the Global Report on Food Crises. The World Bank is providing a US$30 billion food and nutrition security package covering the 15 months from April 2022 to June 2023, including US$12 billion of new projects, which have all been committed ahead of schedule. This also includes US$3.5 billion in new financing for food and nutrition security in hotspots. In addition, the Bank has allocated US$748 million from its US$1 billion Early Response Financing modality of IDA's Crisis Response Window (CRW) to mostly address needs in hotspots and is mobilizing additional funds for the CRW. Funding for the IMF's Poverty Reduction and Growth Trust (PRGT) must also be mobilized to provide concessional financing to low-income countries facing balance of payment needs. The IMF's new Food Shock Window has so far supported Ukraine, Malawi, Guinea and Haiti, while nine countries facing acute food insecurity benefited from IMF financial support through new programs or augmentation of existing ones, with a focus on strengthening social safety nets and policies to help address the impact of the food crisis. The Global Alliance for Food Security (GAFS) is supporting greater crisis preparedness through the development and operationalization of multi-sectoral Food Security Crisis Preparedness Plans across 26 counties, which should be supported by governments and donors. GAFS also continues to monitor the severity of the food crisis and the financing of the global response through the Global Food and Nutrition Security Dashboard. We also welcome efforts by all parties to mobilize more funding for Africa's agricultural transformation, as noted in the Dakar Declaration(5) and we want to thank David Beasley, Executive Director, of the WFP, for the tremendous work done during his tenure.

2. Facilitate trade, improve the functioning of markets, and enhance the role of the private sector

Countries should minimize trade distortions, strengthen the provision of public goods, and enable the private sector to contribute meaningfully to improved food security outcomes. We repeat our urgent call for countries to (i) avoid policies such as export restrictions, which can impede access to food for poor consumers in low-income food-importing countries; (ii) support trade facilitation measures, to improve availability of food and fertilizer, (iii) support trade finance initiatives in a transparent and in non-discriminatory manner; and (iv) adhere to the commitments made at the WTO's 12th Ministerial Conference.(6) While countries have lifted some export bans on wheat and rice, new export restrictions and bans, particularly on vegetables, are hampering availability on global markets. Global food security can be strengthened if governments support both food producers and consumers in a smart and targeted manner, such as by strengthening the provision of public goods in ways that improve farm productivity sustainably. Countries can use e-voucher schemes for fertilizers and avoid large-scale public procurement and subsidized distribution schemes, either on farm inputs or farm products, that crowd out the private sector. The WBG's US$6 billion IFC Global Food Security Platform supports farmers to access fertilizers and other critical supplies while helping private companies make longer-term investments, focusing on improving the resilience of agri-food systems and fertilizer use efficiency. Countries should follow FAO's International Code of Conduct for the Sustainable Use and Management of Fertilizers to sustainably manage nutrients for food security.(7)

3. Reform and repurpose harmful subsidies with careful targeting and efficiency

Countries should reform and repurpose general universal subsidies towards temporary, better targeted programs for global food security and sustainable food systems, considering the key aspects of (i) efficiency, (ii) cost and fiscal sustainability, (iii) flexibility, (iv) administrative complexity, (v) equity, and (vi) strengthened resilience and sustainability. Most of the global social protection response to inflation is in the form of subsidies, half of which are untargeted, inefficient, and costly to already constrained governments. Support should be scaled up for countries to strengthen and deploy comprehensive, actionable and shock responsive social protection strategies. Policies and reforms supported by financing from IMF and the World Bank have focused on the transition from broad-based measures to more targeted approaches. Countries need to re-examine and reform their support to agriculture, which amounted to about US$639 billion per year between 2016 and 2018, and has since been on the rise. Of every dollar spent, only 35 cents end up with farmers.(8) Much of this support incentivizes inefficient use of resources, distorts global markets, or undermines environmental sustainability, public health, and agricultural productivity. Without ignoring the inherent trade-offs associated with large scale policy reforms (9), this funding should be reformed and repurposed in ways that strengthen the resilience and sustainability of the agri-food system, such as the adoption of good agricultural practices, research and innovation (including in fertilizer application efficiency and alternatives to synthetic fertilizers), extension and advisory services, improved infrastructure and logistics, and digital technologies that improve productivity sustainably. The FAO new science and innovation strategy and the agri-food systems technologies and innovations outlook, (10) together with the One CGIAR Initiative, plays a pivotal role across these areas to deliver global benefits of individual country reforms.(11)

Action is already under way to address underlying structural challenges in social protection and in the food and fertilizer markets, but more concerted action across these three key areas is needed to prevent a prolonged crisis. We are committed to working jointly and with impact to support the most vulnerable.

This is the third Joint Statement by the Heads of the Food and Agriculture Organization, International Monetary Fund, World Bank Group, World Food Programme, and World Trade Organization on the Global Food and Nutrition Security Crisis.

Ministry of Labour Re-Initiates HIV/AIDS Policy in the Workplace Initiative

Belmopan. February 9th, 2023

The Ministry of Labour, in collaboration with the National AIDS Commission (NAC), has reinitiated the HIV/AIDS Policy in the Workplace Initiative. As part of that engagement, the Labour Department and the NAC held a certified training seminar in Belize City on February 1st, 2nd, and 8th, 2023, for 12 Belizean companies and organizations. The program will be extended nationwide in the coming year.

During the closing ceremony held today, the Ministry of Labour and NAC signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with each participating company and organization. This signals a commitment to address HIV/AIDS as a workplace issue through the development and implementation of workplace policies and programs. The MOU seeks to ensure that businesses and organizations support the HIV/AIDS workplace initiatives and programs of the Government of Belize, the NAC, and the International Labour Organization (ILO). It will establish capacity development training, refresher training for all employees, a workplace testing initiative, and the development of an HIV and AIDS Workplace Policy. Furthermore, it calls for organizations to provide HIV/AIDS counseling and information, commemorate World AIDS Day, as well as attend and participate in HIV/AIDS in the workplace conferences and forums.

The ILO issued a code of practice on HIV/AIDS and the workplace in 2001. This code is critical and covers key principles that the Ministry of Labour uses as a guide along with Belize's National AIDS Policy.

The ministry applauds each organization that participated and signed the MOU, as this will create a better working environment for everyone, regardless of HIV status. Through capacity building and effective HIV/AIDS workplace policies, the ministry will continue to engage companies and organizations across the country in an effort to reduce HIV transmissions, HIV-related stigma, and discrimination.

Ends

FOR SALE

37.7 acres

along the Philip Goldson (Northern) Highway

near Mile 17 1/2

suitable for an industrial or housing project.

Bordered by the BWS Feeder Road and the Northern Highway.

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

Call Lawrence at phone 610- 4454 for more details.

SOCIAL SECURITY BOARD

TENDER NOTICE

Laboratory Services

The Social Security Board invites Laboratories to submit expression of interest to participate in the tender process for the provision of National Health Insurance (NHI) Laboratory Services for the **Orange Walk District.**

The forms for the expression of interest can be downloaded from the National Health Insurance Belize Facebook page: www.facebook.com/NHIBelize or picked up at the SSB office in Orange Walk Town.

Letters must be submitted in a sealed envelope labelled **"INTEREST FOR TENDER OF NHI LABORATORY SERVICES "** and received by the SSB office in Orange Walk Town no later than **4:00 p.m. local time on February 15th, 2023**. Kindly address the envelope to:

General Manager, National Health Insurance
Social Security Board, Bliss Parade
P.O. Box 18, Belmopan, Belize C.A.

Social Security Board: Safeguarding YOU, your FAMILY, your FUTURE!

KHMH workers make another public demand for supplies

By Britney Gordon

The Karl Heusner Memorial Hospital Authority Workers Union ("the union") is pleading for supplies to be delivered to the hospital following another shortage, but Minister of Health and Wellness alludes to possible miscommunication within the hospital.

According to the union, the hospital is undergoing yet another supply shortage, and thus hindering healthcare workers' ability to provide adequate medical assistance. The call to action echoes the cries of the union made back in October when the hospital was said to be in a "dire state".

Minister of Health and Wellness Kevin Bernard responded to the claim, stating, "We have been putting our very best efforts to ensure that … KHMH supplies are given to time."

Bernard added that some claims made regarding the state of the hospital's supplies may be misleading or "not necessarily true."

He explained that in some cases a requested medicine may be in a different form than what patients are familiar with rather than unavailable.

Bernard also noted that the time of a patient's arrival may impact the availability of medication, as the pharmacy may be closed within the hospital. "Sometimes the communication between the people at the hospital with the patient needs to be improved too. Not everything that we see or hear sometimes is the truth. But we have been doing our very best," He concluded.

Previously, the union expressed that working conditions were so unfit to provide care to patrons, the union was considering a strike. As a result, the administration had promised to work hand in hand with workers to ensure quality service and conditions.

Turkey's earthquake is one of the deadliest this century

Over 20,000 people have died and tens of thousands of others were injured by the devastating earthquakes that rocked Turkey and Syria on Monday.

Rescue teams are still desperately searching for signs of life beneath the rubble of collapsed buildings amid grim conditions, but days on from the massive tremblor, the chances of finding survivors lessen with every passing hour.

Here's what we know about the quake and why it was so deadly.

One of the most powerful earthquakes to hit the region in a century rocked residents from their slumber in the early hours of Monday morning around 4 a.m. The 7.8 magnitude quake struck 14.2 miles east of Nurdagi, in Turkey's Gaziantep province, at a depth of 14.9 miles, the United States Geological Survey (USGS) said.

A series of aftershocks reverberated through the region in the immediate hours after the initial incident. A magnitude 6.7 aftershock followed 11 minutes after the first quake hit, but the largest temblor, which measured 7.5 in magnitude, struck about nine hours later. More than 125 aftershocks have been recorded so far.

Rescuers are now racing against time and the elements to pull survivors out from under debris on both sides of the border. More than 5,700 buildings in Turkey have collapsed, according to the country's disaster agency.

Monday's quake was also one of the strongest that Turkey has experienced in the last century – a 7.8 magnitude quake hit the east of the country in 1939, which resulted in more than 30,000 deaths, according to the USGS.

A number of factors have contributed to making this earthquake so lethal. One of them is the time of day it occurred. With the quake hitting early in the morning, many people were in their beds when it happened, and are now trapped under the rubble of their homes.

Additionally, with a cold and wet weather system moving through the region, poor conditions have made reaching affected areas trickier, and rescue and recovery efforts on both sides of the border significantly more challenging once teams have arrived.

Temperatures have been bitterly low, plummeting several degrees below zero on several occasions.

With scattered showers and snow in the region set to continue, the elements are putting the lives of those trapped underneath the rubble – who have already gone days without food and water – at risk of hypothermia. Meanwhile, officials have asked residents to leave buildings for their own safety amid concerns of more aftershocks.

More than 5,700 buildings in Turkey have collapsed, according to the country's disaster agency, and questions have been asked about the integrity of structures in some areas of the affected regions.

Despite the mounting challenges, a structural engineer and humanitarian coordinator urged rescuers not to abandon hope as survivors could be found up to "weeks" after the massive earthquake hit the region. But other experts warn that the window for post-earthquake search-and-rescue is rapidly closing. Ilan Kelman, professor of disasters and health at University College London, said: "Typically, few survivors are pulled out after 72 hours – yet every life saved is essential and some people are extricated after many days."

He added: "Time is always the enemy, as seen in Turkey and Syria. People die due to immediate medical needs such as bleeding to death or succumbing to crush injuries; due to aftershocks that collapse precarious structures with people underneath; and due to the weather which has dropped below freezing at night and which has been cold during the day, so people die through hypothermia. Many die from lacking food and water while awaiting rescue."

- CNN News

Nicaraguan prisoners freed: 222 opposition figures deported to US

Nicaragua has released 222 of the 245 opposition prisoners it was holding.

The freed prisoners, who are critics of President Daniel Ortega, have been deported to the United States.

The US state department welcomed the move, which it said had been made "unilaterally" by the Nicaraguan government.

Among those freed are opposition politicians who had planned to run against Mr Ortega in the 2021 election but who were jailed in its run-up.

With his fiercest opponents in prison, Mr Ortega won a fourth consecutive term in the election. He has been in power without interruption since 2007.

Nicaraguan opposition sources said that those freed have been stripped of their Nicaraguan nationality and an official from the Nicaraguan judiciary described them as "traitors" who had been deported.

"The deportees were declared traitors to the homeland and sentenced for different crimes and banned perpetually from publicly serving the Nicaraguan state as well as from holding positions of public office, with their citizens' rights perpetually suspended," magistrate Octavio Rothschuh said.

The Biden administration, which described the 2021 election in Nicaragua as "a pantomime", had been pressuring the Nicaraguan government to release the prisoners. The US said they had been arbitrarily detained.

The US state department said that the US had helped arrange their charter flight to Dulles airport, near Washington DC.

"Some of these individuals have spent years in prison, many of them for exercising their fundamental freedoms, in awful conditions and with no access to due process," it said in a statement.

While there has been no official confirmation yet of who is on the flight, members of the influential Chamorro family, which has long opposed the government of President Ortega, are reportedly among those released.

Cristiana Chamorro, whose mother Violeta defeated Daniel Ortega in the 1990 election, was one of those who had planned to stand against Mr Ortega in the 2021 polls.

She was seen by many in the opposition as their best hope of defeating Mr Ortega.

But shortly after she announced she would run for president, prosecutors accused her of money laundering. She was subsequently sentenced to eight years in prison.

Her brother, Pedro Joaquín Chamorro, who was also sentenced last year, is reportedly also among the freed prisoners.

A student opposition umbrella group, Nicaraguan University Alliance, said two of its members, Lesther Alemán and Max Jerez, were also on board the plane headed to the US.

Students were at the forefront of anti-government protests which rocked Nicaragua in 2018 and the two student leaders remained vocal critics of the government led by President Ortega and his wife, Vice-President Rosario Murillo, until their arrest in 2021.

Members of the Nicaraguan University Alliance said they would continue to fight for the rights of those sent to the US so that they "can return from exile and exercise their rights fully".

- CNN News

Improved collaboration necessary for natural disasters in Region – CARICOM Secretary-General

The first regional launch of a plan to ensure that every person on the planet is protected by early warning systems by 2027, was held in Bridgetown, Barbados, on Monday, 6 February.

Leaders from the Caribbean and the United Nations attended the event which was aimed at mobilising Prime Ministers to support the Early Warnings for All initiative (EW4ALL) in the face of mounting climate hazards. Attendees included Prime Minister of Barbados, the Hon. Mia Mottley, Prime Minister of Saint Lucia, the Hon. Philip Pierre, Deputy Secretary-General of the United Nations, H.E. Amina Mohammed, and Executive Director of the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency (CDEMA) Ms. Elizabeth Riley.

The United Nations News said the initiative calls for investment across disaster risk knowledge, observations and forecasting, preparedness and response, and communication of early warnings, with particularly priority placed on vulnerable communities. It outlines initial new targeted investments of $ 3.1 billion between now and 2027, equivalent to a cost of just 50 cents per person per year. The World Meteorological Organization (WMO) and the UN Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR) are co-leads in the plan's implementation.

CARICOM Secretary-General, Dr. Carla Barnett, spoke at the event and pointed out that collaborative effort was necessary to improve early warnings for all of the various natural disasters that the Region experiences.

"The Region has been bearing the brunt of global warming and therefore, it is no surprise that our Heads of Government have provided leadership for initiating the implementation of this plan in the Caribbean. We are all acutely aware of the developmental setback that a few hours of severe weather inflicts on small states. This is, of course, in conjunction with slow onset climate impacts like sea level rise and accelerated drought/flood cycles," the Secretary-General said.

Early warning, she pointed out, requires a wide spectrum of support. She said the time is ripe to have a fresh look at capacity-building.

- Caricom Today

NOTICE

BELIZE CITY

Estate of NESTOR ADRIANO VASQUEZ, deceased.

STATUTORY NOTICE TO CREDITORS

NOTICE is hereby given pursuant to Section 36 of the Administration of Estates Act, Chapter 160 of the Laws of Belize, Revised Edition 2020 that all creditors having any claim or demands upon or against the Estate of **Nestor Adriano Vasquez,** late St. Edward Street, Belize City, Belize who died on the 19th day of April 2021 and in whose estate Grant of Administration with will Annexed has been granted by the High Court of Belize to Administrator, **Jules Adrian Vasquez** of number 4 Edward Street, Belize City, Belize and Administratrix, **Marydelene Vasquez** of No. 86 Bella Vista, Belize City, Belize, may lodge such claims or demands with the said **Jules Adrian Vasquez and Marydelene Vasquez C/O MARINE PARADE CHAMBERS LLP** Attorneys-at-Law of Cor. Sr. Caritas Lawrence St. and Marine Parade Blvd., 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 Administrator and Administratrix shall proceed to distribute the assets of the said **Nestor Adriano Vasquez,** deceased, amongst the parties entitled thereto, having regard to all the claims or demands of which particulars are lodged and the Administrator and Administratrix shall not be liable for assets of the deceased or any part thereof so distributed to any person or persons whose claims or demands they shall not then have had notice.

DATED this 8th day of February , 2023

MARINE PARADE CHAMBERS LLP
Per: Hector D. Guerra
Attorneys-at-Law

Vacancies exist at **Mopan Technical High School** for the following teaching posts to commence duties on **1st April, 2023**:

Position:

1. **One Full-Time Agriculture Science Teacher**
2. **One Temporary Chemistry/Science Teacher (1st April – 30th June, 2023)**

Qualifications:

- Minimum is a Bachelor's Degree in Education in subject area. Associates Degree will be considered.
- Full Teacher's License
- Prior teaching experience would be an asset

Salary:

Commensurate with education and experience and in accordance with Government Pay Scales.

Application Process:

All applications must be complete to be considered. Deadline for applications is Friday, February 17th, 2023.

Documents Required:

Application letter, along with a notarized copy of social security card, birth certificate, original transcripts, diploma, medical certificate, police record, curriculum vitae, two references, and where applicable, marriage certificate and letter of release. No electronic copy will be accepted.

Address Applications to:

Secretary
Board of Management
Mopan Technical High School
Benque Viejo Del Carmen
Cayo District
Tel: 823-2028

BELIZE, 2023

IN THE HIGH COURT – PROBATE SIDE.

STATUTORY NOTICE TO CREDITORS

IN THE ESTATE OF SYLVIA JANE DIAZ

Deceased Late of **No. 20 C Kelly Street, Belize City, Belize 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 persons having claims as creditors against the above-named deceased or her estate, are required to lodge any such claim(s) with **BEVERLY JEAN LESLIE**, Administratrix of the above-mentioned Estate, c/o Bradley Ellis & Co. LLP of No. 52 Regent Street, Belize City, Belize, within three (3) months from the first publication of this notice after which date the Administratrix shall proceed to distribute the assets of the estate among the beneficiaries entitled thereto having regard only to such claims of which the Administratrix will then have had notice.

DATED this 9th day of February, 2023

BRADLEY ELLIS & CO. LLP
Attorneys-at-Law for
BEVERLY JEAN LESLIE,
Administratrix of the Estate of
Sylvia Jane Diaz

BELIZE CITY,

Estate of KEITH TERENCE BURLEIGH BALDERAMOS, deceased

STATUTORY NOTICE TO CREDITORS

Pursuant to Section 36 of the Administration of Estates Act, Chapter 197 of the Substantive Laws of Belize, Revised Edition 2011, NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that all creditors and other persons having any claims or demands upon or against the Estate of KEITH TERENCE BURLEIGH BALDERAMOS, late of #14 Bally Gardens, Philip Goldson Highway, Belize District, Belize, are required to send particulars in writing of their claims or demands to the Administratrix of the said estate, **MARLITA ESPAT of #14 Bally Gardens, Philip Goldson Highway, Belize District, Belize**, and to send such particulars not later than the **11th day of May, 2023**, AND NOTICE IS HEREBY ALSO GIVEN that at the expiration of the last mentioned date, the Administratrix will proceed to distribute the assets of the said KEITH TERENCE BURLEIGH BALDERAMOS, deceased, amongst the parties entitled thereto having regard only to the claims or demands of which particulars have been delivered and the Administratrix will not be liable for the assets of the deceased or any part thereof so distributed to any person or persons of whose claims or demands she shall not then have had notice.

DATED this 9th day of February, 2023.

PHILIP ZUNIGA, S.C.
Attorney–at–Law for the Administratrix

Belize:
February 2023

INSURANCE ACT
CHAPTER 251
LICENSING UNDER PARTS II, III, AND IV

In accordance with Section 175 of the Insurance Act, Chapter 251, Laws of Belize, RE 2020, the General Public is hereby notified that **only the following persons have been provided with an Insurance Licence to carry on insurance business in Belize during the year 2023**. All licensees mentioned herein have been provided with an **Insurance License Certificate**. In addition to the licence certificate, individual insurance intermediaries were issued an Insurance Intermediary Card, which must be produced upon simple demand by any member of the public.

Only Licence Certificates for the Year 2023 are valid. Persons conducting insurance business without a valid insurance license are in contravention of the Insurance Act and should be reported immediately to the **Office of the Supervisor of Insurance and Private Pensions at #2 Toucan Avenue, Belmopan, Belize** or by calling at **501-822-3808** or through email to: **osipp@mof.gov.bz**

A. Insurance Companies licensed under Part II

1. AtlanticInsuranceCompanyLimited
2. BlueCreekInsuranceCompany **(New)**
3. CGUnitedInsuranceCompanyLimited
4. GuardianGeneralInsuranceLimited
5. HomeProtectorInsuranceCompanyLimited
6. HolyRedeemerCreditUnion(ConditionalLicence)
7. InsuranceCorporationofBelize
8. RF&GInsuranceCompanyLimited
9. RF&GLifeInsuranceCompanyLimited
10. Sagicor Life Incorporated
11. Scotia Insurance Caribbean Limited

B. Association of Underwriters under Part III

1. Lloyds

C. Corporate Insurance Agents licensed under Part IV

1. Atlantic Bank Limited
2. Belize Bank Limited
3. Belize Credit Union League
4. Blue Creek Credit Union
5. Belize Insurance Center (InsuranceAgent) Ltd.
6. La Inmaculada Credit Union Limited
7. Santiago Castillo Limited
8. Simpson's Insurance Agency Limited
9. Westrac Limited

D. Individual Insurance Agents under Part IV

ATLANTIC INSURANCE COMPANY

Anna Dyck	Esteban Cano	Westrac Limited
Marisa Azueta	Guadalupe Matus	Atlantic Bank Limited
Phillip Gallaty Jr.	Santiago Castillo Limited	

GUARDIAN GENERAL INSURANCE

Amy Forte	Candice Meighan	Carol Panton
Dawn Henry	Derick Perera	Iris Sosa
Karen Gill	Nikita Smith	Olga Herrera
Rodney Card	Ryan Simpson	Saira Manzanero
Tessa Usher	Vikky Murga	Simpson's Insurance Agency Ltd.

HOME PROTECTOR INSURANCE

Aeesha Bradley	Amareli Patt	Ariel Aguilar
Blanca Flowers	Dean Dennis Flowers	Florence Williams
Guillermo Medina	Harry Moreno	Ian Chi
Jose Izaguirre	Joyce Longsworth	Julio Blanco
Kayla Bryant	Lecimarco Luna	Lilia Marin
Lorena Guzman	Melonie Woodye	Miriam Hoy
Raul Gilharry	Rianna Bush	Rosalyn Tzib
Sheena Rodriguez	Steven Cal	Thalia Avilez
Tsung Chang Wu		

INSURANCE CORPORATION OF BELIZE

Maretha McCullock	Nestor Hernandez	Hiram Ochaeta

RF&G INSURANCE COMPANY

April Smith Echeverria	Clara Noble	Claudio Azueta
Ena Martinez	Farrah Marchand	Gigi Godfrey
Isabell Bardalez	Jairo Vasquez	John Friessen
Julien Ferguson	Kira Pinelo	Marlena Ramclam
Marlon Kuylen	Neville Forrester	Roselia Zabaneh
Sandra Johnson	Blue Creek Credit Union	Belize Bank Limited
Belize Credit Union League	Mirror Enterprises Ltd. (Jorge Espejo Sr.)	
La Inmaculada Credit Union	L3G's & Associates (Yadira & Fatima Chi)	

RF&G LIFE INSURANCE COMPANY

Christiani Vargas	Danielle Herrera	Daphne McFadzean
Deon Robinson	Dishon Smith	Ena Martinez
Ermelinda Mahitani Guerra	Immanuel Westby	Jorge Rosalez
Kayli White	Magdalene Okondo	Maria Coyi
Marsha White	Mayeli Hoy	Melissa Skeen
Ricardo Magana	Ruben Marin	Sasha Reneau
Shantel Lofter		

SAGICOR LIFE INC.

Amy Forte	Candice Meighan	Carol Panton
Dawn Henry	Derick Perera	Karen Gill
Marlene Forrester	Marsha Gill	Olga Herrera
Paul Schmidt III	Rodney Card	Ryan Simpson
Saira Manzanero	Shakera Young-Forrester	Simiona Nicholas
Stephen Bermudez	Tessa Usher	Vikky Murga
Yaennis Escolona	Zeidie Thompson	

Belize Insurance Center (Insurance Agent) Ltd.
Simpson's Insurance Agency Limited

SCOTIA INSURANCE CARIBBEAN LIMITED

Belize Bank Limited

CG UNITED INSURANCE COMPANY LIMITED

Marsha Gill Belize Insurance Center (Insurance Agent) Ltd.

E. Individual Insurance Sub-agents licensed under Part IV

BELIZE INSURANCE CENTRE (Insurance Agent) Limited

Andrea Corredor Martha Castillo

SIMPSON's INSURANCE AGENCY LIMITED

Jennifer Arzu Williams Linda Caldera

F. Brokers licensed under Part IV

BROKER

1. **Diversified Life Solutions Brokers Limited**
2. **McLean Insurance & Risk Solutions Limited**

Special Notice on Banks and other Financial Institutions acting as agents of Insurance Companies.

No Bank or Bank Official shall exercise any undue pressure or influence in any manner whatsoever upon a borrower to place insurance in any particular insurance company for the security of the Bank.

All clients of Financial Institutions have a choice of insurer and should not be obligated to insure with a particular insurer only because the financial institution is providing such person with insurance premium financing or a loan.

Clients of a financial institution feeling coerced in placing insurance with a company against his/her will should notify the Supervisor of Insurance immediately.

Any notification to the Supervisor can be made via email to **osipp@mof.gov.bz,** or by post at **#2 Toucan Avenue, Belmopan.**

Update on Licensing information on Insurers and Intermediaries can be found on

Complaint Forms

Complaint Forms are also available at https://osipp.gov.bz for anyone wishing to file a complaint against any of the licensee in respect to their conduct of insurance business.

(Alma D. Gomez)
Supervisor of Insurance