

## Amendments to Constitution should not be 'frivolous': Albert Area Rep.

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### II BILL FOR SECOND READING

#### 1. Belize Constitution (Eleventh Amendment) Bill, 2021.

Bill for an Act to amend the Belize Constitution, Chapter 4 of the Substantive Laws of Belize, Revised Edition 2011; to provide additional grounds for the disqualification of a person as a Member of the National Assembly; and to provide for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto.



Hon. Tracy Panton

## Business senator: Re-emerging 11th amendment moot point amidst Constitutional Review

By Michelle Sutherland

The much-publicized "Eleventh Constitutional Amendment Bill," once colloquially dubbed the "Shyne Amendment," appears to be back, but one social partner senator says that discussing such a Bill is a moot point while the country is going through a Constitutional Reform process.

The Bill, which aims

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Belize Constitution	
<b>BELIZE:</b>	
<b><u>BELIZE CONSTITUTION (ELEVENTH AMENDMENT) BILL, 2021</u></b>	
<b><u>ARRANGEMENT OF CLAUSES</u></b>	
1.	Short title.
2.	Amendment of section 58.
3.	Amendment of section 59.
4.	Amendment of section 63.
5.	Amendment of section 64.

## High Court Rules: Sections of Sugar Act Unlawful!



BSI's Attorney Godfrey Smith, SC

High Court Justice Patricia Farnese ruled that sections of the Sugar Industry Act are unlawful, unjustifiable, and null and void.

Certain provisions of the Act were challenged by Belize Sugar Industries Limited (BSI) and cane farmer Russel Navarro, who sought the court's declaration that certain sections of the Sugar Industry Act that regulate their private contractual interests are null and void because the provisions

are "discriminatory and violate their constitutional rights to equal protection, to work, and to free association."

BSI also claimed that the requirements to pay annual levies to the Sugar Industry Control Board (SICB) and an export levy violate their right to property. The Office of the Attorney General disagreed with BSI, saying that any violation is reasonable and in the interest of the public.

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## 'No Confidence' Motion dead on arrival

# NO-CONFIDENCE MOTION REJECTED

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**B**elize has two sugar mills producing and exporting sugar and molasses.

The older and larger operation, Belize Sugar Industries, owned by the ASR Group, is in Orange Walk at Tower Hill on the bank of the New River. The other, newer factory, which belongs to the Santander Group, is in the Cayo District near Belmopan within easy reach of the Belize River.

The Santander Group produces its own company-grown sugar cane, using mechanized ploughing and harvesting methods which put it ahead of the competition. Additionally, it is worth noting that Santander was never under the same rules as BSI, but rather operates under the Designated Processing Area (DPA) Act (formerly, the Export Processing Zone).

BSI, on the other hand, buys its sugarcane from a network of some 5,000 cane farmers who operate through their cane farmers' associations.

Last week, BSI had something to shout about. A Supreme Court ruling determined that they no longer need to provide financial support for the Sugar Industry Control Board, which is the government-run agency supervising the sugar industry in the North. Justice Patricia Farnese found that the existing Sugar Act law is flawed in requiring sugar factories to pay a tax based on how much sugar they export.

Justice Farnese ruled moreover that cane farmers are not required to be members of an association in order to function as cane farmers selling their produce to BSI.

The ruling is good news for small farmers many of whom who have fields of 10 acres or less.

Many of these are obliged to sell their cane through farmers with bigger quotas. Now any farmer with a truck or tractor will be able to deliver his own cane. The mill at Tower Hill receives sugarcane from more than 5,000 independent cane suppliers, and one among five of these are women.

The ruling is not good news for the government, however, which will now have to find the money to fund its Sugar Industry Control Board, since it can no longer look to funding from a tax on sugar exports.

The clarification in the law should help to stabilize the industry, and hopefully help also to resolve the disputes.

## Belize Constitution

**BELIZE:**

### BELIZE CONSTITUTION (ELEVENTH AMENDMENT) BILL, 2021

#### ARRANGEMENT OF CLAUSES

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5. Amendment of section 64.

**BILL**  
for

AN ACT to amend the Belize Constitution, Chapter 4 of the Substantive Laws of Belize, Revised Edition 2011; to provide additional grounds for the disqualification of a person as a member of the National Assembly; and to provide for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto.

(Gazetted .....2021).

Short Title.  
CAP. 4.  
14 of 1985.  
26 of 1988.  
42 of 1999.  
2 of 2001.  
39 of 2001.  
23 of 2005.  
13 of 2008.  
4 of 2010.  
11 of 2011.  
6 of 2021.  
\_\_ of 2021.

**BE IT ENACTED**, by and with the advice and consent of the House of Representatives and Senate of Belize and by the authority of the same, as follows:

1. This Act may be cited as the

#### BELIZE CONSTITUTION (ELEVENTH AMENDMENT) ACT, 2021.

and shall be read and construed as one with the Belize Constitution, which, as amended, is hereinafter referred to as the principal Act.

Amendment of  
section 58.

2. Section 58 (1) of the principal Act is amended by inserting the following new sub-paragraphs immediately after sub-paragraph (d)–

“(da) has served a sentence of imprisonment for more than twelve months, imposed by a court in or outside of Belize;

“(db) is under a sentence of imprisonment, or has served a sentence of imprisonment, imposed by a court in or outside of Belize, for an offence in relation to corruption or abuse of public office”.

Amendment of  
section 59.

3. Section 59(3)(a) of the principal Act is amended by inserting the words “**or convicted of an offence in relation to corruption or abuse of Belize Constitution public office**” immediately after the words “**or convicted of an offence relating to elections,**”.

Amendment of  
section 63.

4. Section 63(1) of the principal Act is amended by inserting the following new sub-paragraphs immediately after sub-paragraph (e)–

“(ea) has served a sentence of imprisonment for more than twelve months, imposed by a court in or outside of Belize;

“(eb) is under a sentence of imprisonment, or has served a sentence of imprisonment, imposed by a court in or outside of Belize, for an offence in relation to corruption or abuse of public office”.

Amendment of  
section 64.

5. Section 64(3)(a) of the principal Act is amended by inserting the words “**or convicted of an offence in relation to corruption or abuse of public office,**” immediately after the words “**or convicted of an offence relating to elections,**”.



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

Gracias Espíritu Santo.

R.M.L.

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# Amendments to Constitution should not be 'frivolous': Albert Area Rep.

"Amendments to the Constitution cannot be frivolous or spur of the moment consideration," Albert Area Representative Hon. Tracy Panton told The Reporter Thursday, when asked for her views on the ostensible return on the so-called "Shyne Amendment."

Panton explained that while she cannot know for certain, it is difficult to overlook the timing of this Bill being ordered by to return to the Constitution and Foreign Affairs Committee. Additionally, the Supplementary Orders for Friday's House Sitting shows that the

Bill is returning to the House for second reading.

On the question as to whether the sudden return of the Bill is a response to Leader of the Opposition Hon. Moses "Shyne" Barrow's No-Confidence Motion, Panton said, "It seems to have come outside of the legislative agenda. I don't know if it is a response to the No-Confidence motion, but there was no serious (public) discussion on it at this time."

Panton added, "The concern that I have is that earlier in this term, the Government made a commitment to the social partners and

the National Assembly that there will be a sober approach to amendments made to the Constitution of the country."

She further opined that the expectation is that the Government would have refrained as much as possible from Constitutional amendments, leaving space for the People's Constitution Commission (PCC) to conduct its work. However, even outside of the PCC's work, the Constitution is the country's supreme law, she underscored, adding that it cannot be subject to whimsical changes that are not

clearly guided by urgent public policy interests.

The amendment inserts the following to section 58(1) of the Constitution: "No person shall be qualified to be elected as a member of the House of Representatives who [...] has served a sentence of imprisonment for more than twelve months, imposed by a court in or outside of Belize."

The amendment also targets appointments to the Senate by amending Section 63. The Bill reads: "No person shall be qualified to be appointed as a Senator who [...] has

served a sentence of imprisonment for more than twelve months, imposed by a court in or outside of Belize."

Returning to recent history, the Eleventh was part of a set of Constitutional amendments presented by the government in the early months of their term in office. In 2021, in response to the Tenth and Eleventh amendments, in particular, the Social Partner Senators had objected to the government's piecemeal approach

to amending the supreme law. The senators had proposed, instead, that the government constitute a more comprehensive methodology. This ultimately led to the formation of the People's Constitution Commission (PCC), which has an eighteen-month mandate to provide recommendations on changes (if any) to the Constitution.

The full text of the Eleventh Amendment is reproduced in this issue of The Reporter.

## Business senator: Re-emerging 11th amendment moot point amidst Constitutional Review

*Cont'd from pg. 1*

to disqualify persons who, among other things, had served time in prison for more than 12 months from running for area representative was announced as returning to the Constitution and Foreign Affairs Committee on Thursday, August 10th.

Addressed to members of the Committee, the Clerks notice read: "Dear Honourable Members, I am directed by the Chairperson of the Constitution and Foreign Affairs Committee to kindly invite you to attend a meeting of the Committee tomorrow, Thursday, 10th August 2023... to further consider the Belize Constitution (11th Amendment) Bill, 2021."

Given that the social partner senators had originally objected to the 11th Amendment and the "piecemeal" approach to changes to the Supreme Law, the Reporter reached out to Business Senator Kevin Herrera who said, "I don't believe there is any value to discussing any individual amendment to the constitution while there is a process afoot to review the entire constitution."

Back when the bill was first introduced in 2021, Senator Herrera along with several other social partner senators had written to the Prime Minister questioning the piecemeal approach to changing the constitution. They had then proposed and asked the Prime Minister to conduct a full-fledged constitutional reform.

While they didn't receive any official response from the Prime Minister, shortly after the government announced that they would undertake a full constitution reform, thereby, resulting in the birth of the People's Constitution Commission. That group has been given the responsibility to review the constitution and make recommendations for changes.

We reached out to Senator Elena Smith of the National Trade Union Congress of Belize and she confirmed that the NTUCB was informed of the newest development and will be meeting in the upcoming days to discuss it.

The 11th Amendment provides additional grounds for the disqualification of persons as members of the National Assembly. It details that any member of the house who has served a sentence of imprisonment for more than twelve months, imposed by a court in or outside of Belize, is liable for disqualification. That also includes disqualification for an offense in relation to corruption or abuse of public office for which someone is convicted or serving a sentence.

While it is difficult to confirm, many Belizeans had viewed the amendment as targeting the Leader of the Opposition Moses "Shyne" Barrow, who was sentenced to 10 years in a US jail for the 1999 shooting at a Manhattan nightclub.



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## High Court Rules: Sections of Sugar Act Unlawful!

Cont'd from pg. 1

In May 2023, Statutory Instrument (SI) No. 62 of 2023, which granted authority to the Sugar Industry Control Board (SICB) to serve as the licensing body for all sugar imports and exports within Belize, was gazetted.

BSI objected to the regulations, saying that they were "retrograde, unnecessary, burdensome, and discriminatory." Back then, Minister of Agriculture Jose Mai argued that the intent of the new regulations was to "operationalize" the Sugar Industry Act.

In her ruling, Justice Farnese stated that "certain provisions of the Sugar Act violate BSI and Mr. Navarro's constitutional rights."

As to the provision that requires BSI to financially contribute to SICB's operations and its authorised agencies, Justice Farnese ruled it is an unlawful and justifiable deprivation of BSI's property in breach of the Constitution and is null and void.

Justice Farnese also ruled that particular subsections of Section 17 of the Act, which require cane farmers to belong to an association to deliver sugar cane, amount to "an unjustifiable interference with Mr. Navarro's right to freedom of association and right to work under Sections 13 and 15 of the Constitution and are null and void."

The High Court Justice also ruled that Navarro's right to freedom of association under Section 13 and his right to work under Section 15 of the Constitution were breached by Section 20, which authorises the Sugar Cane Production Committee (SCPC) to revoke the registration of any cane farmer who, in each of two consecutive crop years, fails to deliver at least 75 tonnes of sugar cane to a manufacturer.

The court also ruled that Section 31 of the Act, which requires BSI to pay 50% of the operational costs of the Sugar Cane Quality Control Authority (SCQCA) annually, is an unlawful deprivation of BSI's property in breach of the Constitution and is null and void.

BSI and Navarro were

represented by Senior Counsel Godfrey Smith, who told reporters earlier this week, "The Sugar Industry Control Board, which is at the heart of the sugar industry, has the ability to demand of BSI that it pay an annual levy of about 50% of its expenses, which amounts to something. Don't hold me to these figures, but it fluctuates around a million dollars annually for the operation of the Sugar Industry Control Board and its agencies, and that levy, that imposition, is unconstitutional."

Smith says that this particular ruling may have significant ramifications for the SICB. "The obvious implication is that you might have to return those monies, and I'm not quite sure going back for how long. So it has very significant ramifications. They are dealing with two private entities, and this is the only scenario in Belize in which the state, the government, intervenes and tries to regulate to such an extreme extent."

Smith stressed that the functions of the SICB should be supported by the Ministry of Agriculture. "Most of the functions of the SICB can be handled by the Ministry of Agriculture. That's what a ministry of agriculture exists for. So, as I said, lest I be misinterpreted, we are not attempting to say there is no need for regulation. There is a need for appropriate regulation where it is necessary, where it serves a specific purpose, and where there is a public interest."

In a brief statement, BSI said that "BSI is considering the impact of the ruling on its operations and that of industry stakeholders. BSI strongly believes that regulation should encourage positive reform and industry modernization. This is imperative if Belize's northern sugar industry is to thrive for the benefit of all its stakeholders."

Attorney General Anthony Sylvestre said that his office is reviewing the ruling and will advise Cabinet. Cabinet will then make a decision on its way forward.

## 'No Confidence' Motion dead on arrival

"Therefore, kindly be advised that in keeping with Standing Order 25(2a) based on the findings above, the No Confidence Motion, 2023, will not be placed on the Order Paper for the next House meeting, as it contravenes the abovementioned Standing Orders." These are the concluding words of the Speak of the House's August 10th letter to Leader of the Opposition Hon. Moses "Shyne" Barrow.

In a recent interview with the media, Barrow had expressed confidence that the motion would be included on the Order Paper for Friday's House Sitting. However, House Speak Hon. Valerie Wood's letter cited several areas where the motion failed to comply with the Standing Orders of the House of Representative.

"Kindly be informed that the Speaker of the House of Representatives has directed that the Private Member's Motion infringes Standing Order 38(5), in relation to the 5th Recital of the Motion, by imputing improper motives in respect of a Minister and a Minister of State and by making assertions of malfeasance against the Prime Minister, a civil wrong for which no court of law has made any such pronouncement," wrote Woods.


The Motion, according to the Speaker, also

breached Standing Order 38(2) for seeking to raise an issue that is currently before the courts.

"As you may be aware, on 11th July 2023, three companies filed a claim in which the claimants are asking the Court to pronounce the lawfulness of the Portico Agreement," Woods explained. "It is a cardinal principle of our constitutional democracy that Parliament will not engage in a debate on a subject matter which is before the Courts for determination."

While the No-Confidence motion will not be included on the Order Paper for Friday's House Sitting, the Supplementary Orders does show that Belize Constitution (Eleventh Amendment) Bill 2021 is returning for its second reading.





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# Sports giving Belizean athletes opportunities

By William Ysaguirre

Belize Lady Jaguars' star striker Jayda Brown has broken the glass ceiling by becoming the first Belizean women's futbolista to go pro! GKS Gornik Leczna professional women's soccer club of Poland announced last Friday, August 4, that Jayda has signed to play with them, and she is already in Poland in training for this upcoming season.

The 25-year-old caught Gornik scouts' attention when she played a season with Rochester FC of Minnesota in the United States women's soccer league. Jayda moved to Kentucky, USA in July 2022, when she was granted a full scholarship worth USD\$25,470 to study for her Masters in Educational leadership at Campbellsville University. Brown first came to Reporter Sports' attention in 2016 when she helped the Belmopan Comprehensive girls

win the National Secondary Schools Sports Association (NSSSA) football championship.

She went on to win four National Women's Amateur league (NAWL) championships with Jewel Fury FC, while on scholarship at Galen University. She is but the most recent of a platoon of Belizean athletes who have cashed in on their athletic prowess to earn university scholarships.

Nine universities have lined up with scholarship offers for Douglas Langford Jr, the 6'9" center who led the Belize under-17 basketball team to win the bronze medal at last week's Centrobasket championships hosted by the Belize Basketball Federation at the Civic Center last week from July 26-30. Langford was voted among the top five All Star players of the tournament. U.S. schools also reached out to Tevaughn Dawson, who scored



22 pts in the bronze medal match against Mexico.

Belize U-19 volleyball outside hitter Khaya Gordon left Belize on July 31 to take up a scholarship at Navarro College. A graduate of St Catherine's Academy and St John's Junior

prospects.

They are following in the footsteps of their national teammates Karym Coleman and Bryton Codd, who both won scholarships to play volleyball for Briercrest College in Saskatchewan, Canada. Upon their return home, Bryton and Karym partnered with Berisford Codd to establish the BK Sports Group, which for the past five years has been matchmaking between US and Canadian universities to find scholarship offers for talented Belizean athletes. Other beneficiaries of their program include Jaheim Ciego of Dangriga, who plays both basketball and



College, where she maintained a 4.0 Grade Point Average, Gordon caught the scouts' eyes when she won awards for Best Attacker and Top Scorer; as she led the Belize under-19 girls to the silver medal at the AFECVOL Central American U-19 volleyball championships hosted by the Belize Volleyball Association at the Civic on July 16-22.

The Belize's senior men's volleyball team aim to win the Gold at the AFECVOL Central American senior men's volleyball championships, which the Belize Volleyball Association is hosting at the Civic this week August 6-12. Four of the players are on scholarships at U.S. universities. Star

outside hitter Francis Hauze and middle blocker Edgar Martinez are both studying graphic design on full scholarship at Calumet College St. Joseph in Whiting, Indiana, where Hauze was voted Freshman of the Year in 2022. Hakan Godoy, awarded Best Blocker at the AFECVOL U-23 championships last year, is studying for his Bachelors in Electrical Engineering at Benedict College in South Carolina, where another rising star, Cameron Petillo, is studying management. Belize's U-19 outside hitter Eliazar Mejia of Punta Gorda will also join the Tigers at Campbellsville University in Kentucky, USA. Star hitter Ernest Broaster Jr also has scholarship

volleyball, is now on scholarship to pursue his Associate's degree at Highland Community College in Freeport, Illinois. Ryan Usher will study Biology while he plays for the Mustangs at Mount Mercy College in Iowa, USA.

In July 2022, football phenom Kaite Jones of Orange Walk won a 3-year scholarship worth USD\$19,000 per year, to pursue her Associate's degree in agriculture at North Oklahoma College. Her soccer prowess has now won her a transfer to the Lady Bucks of Motlow College in Knoxville, Tennessee. Kaite had played international friendlies with the Lady Jaguars against the Lady Bucks, who visited Belize in 2018.

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# Tracking Global Financial Stability Risks From Higher Interest Rates

Tobias Adrian, Hiroko Oura

Interest-rate increases by global central banks to contain the biggest inflation outbreak in four decades generated strains for banks in the United States and Europe this year. Rate hikes are generally positive for lenders if they can collect more on lending than they pay depositors, but this time was different. Some banks lost money on bond holdings—even from safe US Treasuries. This rattled some customers, who quickly made withdrawals, amplified by technology and social media. A number of banks failed.

Our Financial Sector Assessment Program is a crucial pillar of our surveillance that closely tracks financial stability risks for individual countries and gauges how resilient they may be. FSAPs also assess whether the financial sector supervision, regulation, crisis management tools, and safety nets—like emergency liquidity support and deposit insurance—follow international best practices.

FSAPs always “stress test” potential risks to banks, and more recently have enhanced the risk assessment of non-bank financial intermediaries, such as pension managers, insurers, and asset managers.

Our work is taking place amid continued central bank interest-rate increases, and the potential for borrowing costs to remain higher for longer than investors, businesses and households expect. This could increase financial stability risks and weigh on growth, as we noted in July.

## Market volatility and runs

Rapid monetary policy tightening could make bond and interest-rate derivatives markets volatile. Even the value of safe US Treasury securities drop by as much as 30 percent when yields go up by 400 basis points—the actual shock to 10-year Treasury note yields since 2020.

Before March, we emphasized the risks

from such shifts in bond markets to non-bank financial companies. Many of them have large investments in bonds and suffer from valuation losses. Especially, investment funds could face rapid redemptions—runs—as their customers can quickly exit unprofitable funds.

Runs are rare for pension and life insurance companies as policyholders must incur penalties with early withdrawal. However, companies that use derivatives and other complex transactions to boost returns may suffer from margin calls as they would be required to provide cash should those instruments lose value—as occurred for some UK pension funds last year.

Then, the events in March reminded us of the importance of bank runs. The regulatory reforms after the global financial crisis required banks to hold more cash and bonds. Further, in many countries after the global financial crisis, banks can now borrow more easily from central banks to avoid selling bonds into falling markets. Yet, in the case of the Silicon Valley Bank, these safeguards did not work well. The value of its bond holdings slumped amid rapid monetary tightening, hitting earnings, capital, and cash buffers. Depositors saw these strains and withdrew funds. The bank was not prepared to access central bank liquidity in time and failed, as did other US lenders.

## Better gauges

Seeing these episodes, we see three important evolutions for FSAP risk assessments:

Risk analyses should pay more attention to potentially vulnerable smaller financial companies, starting with assessing business models and risk management related issues. For example, the US authorities relaxed stress testing requirements for small- and medium-sized banks in 2019, which was criticized in the 2020 US FSAP rec-

ommendations. As a result, the Federal Reserve’s annual stress test and the 2020 US FSAP omitted Silicon Valley Bank and other regional banks.

Analyses should closely investigate the interlinkages of asset market stress, financial companies’ earnings, and their run risk, especially for banks. Standard FSAP stress tests consider stress on bank capital and run risks separately, but do not fully account for their interaction.

FSAPs should continue the efforts to better understand the funding risk spillovers across financial companies—called systemwide liquidity risks. For example, bond market turbulence could trigger liquidity stress in some companies and then spill over to the whole ecosystem as they sell off their assets, reducing their prices, and withdrawing funding from one another. Several FSAPs applied a simple, new systemwide liquidity stress testing tool, including Türkiye, Jordan, Chile, and the Philippines. Moreover, the 2022 Mexico FSAP took a more tailored and looked at the impact of capital outflows as global policy rates and financial conditions tightened. Similarly, the 2020 US FSAP examined how turmoil in

corporate bond markets is amplified or mitigated by investment funds, banks, and insurers.

The FSAP will also continue to incorporate evolving international standards on regulation and supervision, and crisis management. Previous FSAPs for the United States and Switzerland highlighted the regulatory and supervisory shortcomings revealed in the bank failures earlier this year. They underscored that while principles underlying post-global

financial crisis regulatory reforms remained appropriate, financial supervisors may have lacked the willingness, legal backing, and resources to put problematic banks back on track.

## FSAP in 2023

This year, our program covers four economies with systemically important financial sectors that must be assessed every five years: Belgium, Finland, Sweden, and Türkiye. Botswana, Ecuador, Kazakhstan, Iceland, Jor-

dan, Maldives, and Panama will also participate voluntarily. Preparation for 2024 FSAPs is also underway, including mandatory cases like China, Indonesia, Japan, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Saudi Arabia, and Spain.

In-depth and comprehensive surveillance of the financial sector now should be even more valuable than usual, given the increased attention to financial stability in a major global monetary tightening cycle.

## Cabinet Brief for August 10th 2023

Belmopan, 10th August 2023.

The Cabinet, chaired by Prime Minister Hon. John Briceño, met on 8th August 2023.

Cabinet considered and approved the joint plan from the Attorney General’s Ministry and the Ministry of E-Governance for a program to strengthen the civil registry. This will achieve a more efficient civil registry program, modernizing and improving all services of the Vital Statistics Unit through the establishment of a pertinent legal policy framework, simplified procedures and an inclusive and accessible online service.

Cabinet discussed the issue of the growing number of Belizeans

who are suffering from mental health and wellness issues as well as substance abuse and drug addiction. Cabinet called on the ministers responsible for Health and Wellness, Human Development and Home Affairs to oversee an intensive study to provide more rehabilitation services.

Cabinet gave its approval for the tabling of a National Assembly loan and guarantee motion to enable the Development Finance Corporation to enter into a loan agreement with the Caribbean Development Bank. The US\$12.5 million loan will be guaranteed by the government for a line of credit at the fixed concessionary rate of 0.75% per annum. This loan will facilitate the

financing of sub-loans to micro, small and medium enterprises for agricultural and industrial credit.

With a view to addressing the rapidly growing energy demands of Belize’s flourishing economy, Cabinet supported the tabling of a National Assembly loan motion in support of a US\$77 million loan from the Saudi Fund for Development, at the fixed concessionary rate of 2% per annum, to finance the construction of a 60MW utility-scale solar energy plant.

Finally, Cabinet reminds Belizeans of this year’s national celebrations theme, “Hope Ignited! Hands United; Vision Renewed: Belize @ 42”.



## VACANCY

The Social Security Board invites applications from suitably qualified persons to fill the role of **SENIOR INTERNAL AUDITOR** at its SSB Headquarters in Belmopan.

**MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS:**  
Bachelor’s degree in Business Management, Finance, Accounting, or other closely related discipline, with (2) two years’ audit supervisory experience.  
OR  
Associate Degree in Business Management, Finance, Accounting, or other closely related discipline, with (3) three years’ audit supervisory experience.

Visit our website at [www.socialsecurity.org.bz/careers/](http://www.socialsecurity.org.bz/careers/) to view further details and requirements on this position.

**APPLICATION PROCEDURE:**  
Application packages containing application letter, resume, two (2) recent letters of recommendation, copy of degree, and other relevant academic credentials and current police record or receipt for record may be submitted via email **no later than 3:00 PM local time on August 16, 2023** to:

General Manager, Human Resources, SSB Headquarters, Belmopan at: [odakers@socialsecurity.org.bz](mailto:odakers@socialsecurity.org.bz)  
Copy emails to: [seholder@socialsecurity.org.bz](mailto:seholder@socialsecurity.org.bz)

Email subject line: “Application for Senior Internal Auditor—Finance/Accounting”

**APPLICATION DEADLINE: August 16, 2023**

## Defense attorneys support crown counsels' call for higher salaries

By Michelle Sutherland

The Association for Defense Attorneys has come out to show their support to Prosecutors and Crown Counsels who have been advocating for improved salaries and allowance from the Government.

The release stated, "The association shares the concern of the Prosecutors and Crown Counsel and wishes to draw attention to another issue. That being the failure to provide adequate salaries to the magistrate and responsibility allowance to police prosecutors in the magistrate Courts."

According to the association, while the request for an increase in salaries and allowances came after a foreigner with minimum experience was hired at a salary way above what is paid to Crown Counsel and Prosecutors, the association says

that further salary agitation among the public service is expected. They say that rumors of several more "high" salaries for additional foreigners being recruited in the court system will further compound the problem.

At the end of July, a group calling themselves Concerned Judicial and Legal Service Officers of the Attorney General wrote to the government citing what they feel was a need for the "urgent correction" of salaries for Judicial and Legal Officers.

In their letter, the group said that given the current remuneration climate for existing judicial and legal officers, the morale within the service is at an all-time low. Not only were the Judicial and Legal Officers of the notion that they are of lesser value, or unworthy of an

increase but believed that the developments were an "insult" to those that have made a decision to dedicate their time and interest in building a cadre of attorneys who offer their services to the government.

In mid-July the Director of Public Prosecution, on behalf of Crown Counsels, had written to the government requesting an increase in their salaries and allowances. The letter had pointed out that entry-level positions taken up by foreign attorneys were being paid at a higher rate than senior crown counsels who have been working up to 36 years in the field.

This, according to the Crown Counsels, has left them feeling insulted, marginalized, devalued, overlooked, and disrespected. They ended by giving the government until the end of July to make the necessary adjustments.

## PUP throws collective support behind PM Briceño

By Michelle Sutherland

Declarations of full confidence in Prime Minister John Briceño's leadership flooded social media on Wednesday from several arms of the Peoples United Party, all of which come ahead of the tabling of a "No Confidence" Motion that is expected to be brought to the House of Representative on Friday.

The press statements, issued by the National Executive of the People's United Party, Belize Youth Movement, the People's United Party Northern Caucus, the Order of Distinguish Service, Marshalls

Community Service Corps, and the United Women's Group all expressed their Unwavering support and declaration of full confidence in the Prime Minister.

The Office of the Secretary General of the PUP also issued a press statement saying that "As the leading political party in Belize, the PUP stands united in recognizing the exceptional leadership, dedication, and vision demonstrated by our esteemed Prime Minister." They went on to highlight areas of progress and growth which they say includes the economy, infrastructure growth, healthcare, education, and social

welfare.

While nearly all of the press releases contained similar statements, they all served to discredit comments made by the leader of the Opposition Moses "Shyne" Barrow suggesting division within the PUP.

Barrow, in one of his interviews, had expressed his desire to get support from PUP members to support his "No-Confidence" motion in the house. According to Barrow, several PUP ministers had publicly denounced their support for the controversial Definitive Agreement and as such he was hoping that they would step out to support his motion.

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**BWS**  
Belize Water Services

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+501-222-4757 Ext. 1408  
[pr@bws.com.bz](mailto:pr@bws.com.bz)  
[www.bws.bz](http://www.bws.bz)

### NOTICE TO MINORITY SHAREHOLDERS

No.: 202306-23-1

**ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING:**

Notice is hereby given that the 22nd Annual General Meeting of Belize Water Services Limited (BWS) will be held at the SCA Mercy Center Auditorium on Friday, August 25, 2023, commencing at 7:00 p.m.

Shareholders who wish to appoint a proxy, may submit written questions to [shareholderinfo@bws.com.bz](mailto:shareholderinfo@bws.com.bz) by 3:00 p.m. on Monday August 21, 2023.

**DIVIDENDS:**

The Board of Directors of BWS is pleased to announce dividends of 7.5 cents (\$0.075) per share (equivalent to 5%) for the year ending March 31, 2023.

Shareholders are reminded that this year's dividend payments are being paid via direct deposit to your bank or credit union account. If you have not yet provided BWS with your banking information, please email, call or WhatsApp message us to obtain the banking update form. The completed form must be returned to BWS no later than Monday July 17, 2023. Direct Deposit payments will be processed by August 11, 2023.

For shareholder information, kindly contact us at:  
Email: [shareholderinfo@bws.com.bz](mailto:shareholderinfo@bws.com.bz); Telephone: +501-222-5155; or send a WhatsApp message to 613-5382.

**BWS: Delivering Water and More...**

# Ashcroft Accuses Mark Lizarraga of Unconscious Bias

In a letter dated August 2, 2023, attorney for Waterloo Investment Holdings Ltd., Senior Counsel Godfrey Smith, says newly appointed NEAC Tribunal member, Chairman of Belize Telemedia Limited Mark Lizarraga, may suffer from an unconscious bias, and, thus, should recuse himself from the appeals body.

Lizarraga was recently appointed to the Appeals Tribunal, which is a three-member panel consisting of three members responsible for reviewing an appeal case involving Waterloo Holdings Limited. The case pertains to the Department of the Environment's denial of environmental clearance for the Cruise Ship Port and Cargo Expansion Project proposed by Waterloo Holdings Limited.

Lizarraga was appointed to represent the private sector. But, Smith says that the private sector was not consulted about Lizarraga's appointment. Smith says that "our client has confirmed with the Belize Chamber of Commerce that it was neither consulted on nor involved in any way with your appointment as the so-called 'Private Sector Representative'."

Smith points out that the Environmental Impact Assessment (Amendment) Regulations is intended for the government to have one appointee on the tribunal. Now the Briceño Administration has two, according to Smith. He explains this by telling Lizarraga that he works at the pleasure of the Prime Minister.

"Furthermore, our client has verified that as a director of Belize Telemedia Ltd. appointed by the prime minister you receive a substantial six-figure salary to serve as Chairman of the Board of Directors and do so entirely at the prime minister's pleasure."

Prime Minister John Briceño revealed pieces of the government's plan to pass legislation related to the Port of Magical Belize port project. In a recent interview, Briceño said, "The idea is that we're moving away from this issue of the definitive agreement; we want to have legislation that can cover any kind of investment, especially when it comes to this type of cruise tourism."

Waterloo interpreted the Prime Minister's statement as a plan to effect Portico Enterprises Ltd.'s Definitive Agreement. Waterloo is of the view that the Prime Minister is in favor of Portico's project and against its port project.

"Further, the prime minister's recent public pronouncement makes it clear that he intends for the Portico project to proceed and will be introducing fresh legislation to assist Portico to the detriment of the Appellant."

Smith tells Lizarraga that "the prime minister's negative disposition towards the Appellant places you in a conflict of interest, dependent as you are on the largesse of the prime minister to continue to receive your remuneration as his director on the board of directors of Telemedia, which is majority owned by the Government of Belize."



SC Godfrey Smith Attorney for Waterloo

Smith says that these circumstances can cause an "unconscious bias to creep into and taint your consideration of the Appellant's project under appeal to the Tribunal on which you now serve."

Lizarraga is asked to recuse himself.

In a recent interview, Smith said that "The recent revelations have shown that, as Waterloo suspected, the deck was always stacked against it, in favour of Portico. We believe that the tribunal process is part of that stacking of the deck."

Smith explained that "They actually changed the law because they said that the private sector representative, the senator representing the private sector, was a family relation to a consultant for Waterloo. But what did the government do? It didn't amend the law to say [that] in such cases of conflict, we'll go back to the private sector and ask them to name somebody else. The minister then names that person, thereby securing for itself two of the three persons on the tribunal."

According to Smith, Waterloo has no interest in delaying the process, but it will not allow



Mark Lizarraga

a consultant for Waterloo.

That appointment was then offered to Lucy Flemming, who has contributed articles to local newspapers, including the San Pedro Sun, where she expressed her insights on Belize's potential as a cruise port. Flemming stepped down after two weeks. Her successor was

Paul Hunt, who also stepped down after pressure from Waterloo. The government then appointed Lizarraga, who remains under sustained pressure from Waterloo to step down. The third member is Professor Terrance Hughes, recognised for his scientific proficiency in environmental and natural resource management.

## Weh Wi Ga Fi Seh

Wi don paas migl a di yaa: How tingz?

### Di Kriol ... nais nais!

Tudeh, wi soh hapi hapi fi big op wahn nais nais nais plays weh di kuk op sohn deh-aan Kriol food! Wi di tel unu bowt "Di Kriol Kitchen and Lounge." Ih deh pahn "Youth for the Future Drive" eena Bileez Siti, rait neks tu di Chrafik Dipaatment ayrya.

**Di Kriol** jos oapm op di ada day! Sohn a wi fahn di Kriol Kongs! mi dehdeh fi salibrayt wid di oana and wid di manija ahn adarels pipi hoo mi dehdeh fi di oapnin. Di oana da **Miz Laurajeon Flowers**. Miz Laurajeon Flowers mi geh di aidyaa fi opan "Di Kriol Restaurant and Lounge" sayk a ih preshos mama. Her ma paas weh, bot mi put di faiya eena Miz Laurajeon fi staat op **Di Kriol**. Pahn tap, wi big op di manija, **Miz Sherlette Gamboa**...lat a wi kaal Miz Sherlette, Miz Sherlz. Az manija, Miz Sherlz di ron tingz karek karek, di mek shoar aal di food nais nais nais ahn evriting dehdeh wen yu step een er aada food. Pahn tap, yu ku aalwayz kaal fi aada er geh dehn sheshal a di day. Kaal 227-3273 er Whatsapp 628-4907. Sohn a di nais nais Kriol food weh yu ku bai da **Di Kriol**:

\*rais ahn beenz wid difrant kain a meet

\*schoo beenz ahn kuknat rais wid difrant kain a meet

\*okro ahn beef

\*kow fut soop

\*split peez

\*taakos (poak, beef, chikin)

\*terki wing

Soh ...dat da jos fi teez unu! Yu waahn moa? Noh fret: Jos kaal di nomba dehn wi don put da tap, er, beta yet, step intu **Di Kriol** fi wahn nais nais taim---ahn food! Wi big op dehnya too laydi dehn. Dehn di promoat **Kriol kolcha** eena dehn food ahn wid di nayhn a dehn restorant ahn dehn lov a Kriol kolcha!

Silvaana Udz, Ed.D da fahn Bileez. If yu waahn tel shee bowt sohnting sheshal fu put eena dis Kriol aatiki, eemayl: sudz142@gmail.com Vizit: [www.nationalkriolcouncil.org](http://www.nationalkriolcouncil.org)

#### RF&G LIFE INSURANCE COMPANY LTD.

Date: August 7, 2023

Elbert Perez for Anna Perez of # 4 Marcos Canul Street, San Ignacio Town, Cayo District, Belize C.A. having made written declaration that Policy 5000014000 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.

# Domestic violence on the increase

By Michelle Sutherland

Domestic violence reports across the country have increased by 7.1 % when compared to the same period last year, data from the Belize Crime Observatory informs.

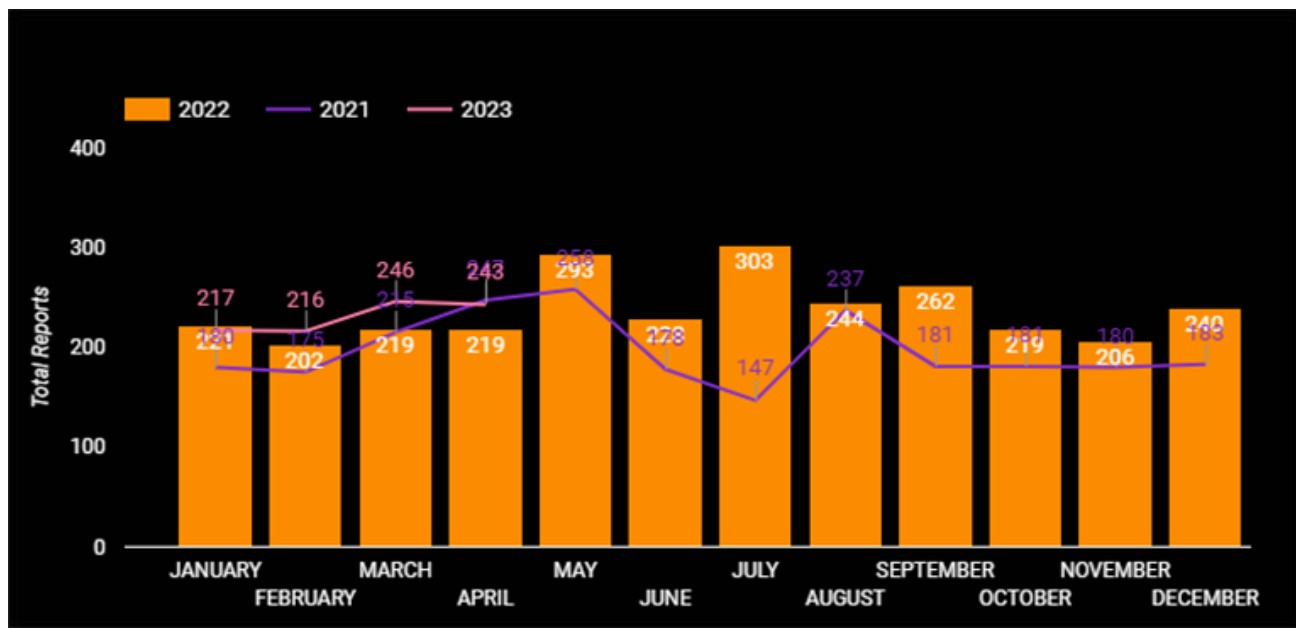
Data shows that in the first four months of 2023, a total of 922 reports were lodged at the Belize Police Department, either seeking court action or for future reference.

While domestic violence against females has increased by 1.3 % (708), domestic violence among men has also increased by more than 30% (211).

While data for May, June, and July are still being compiled, the BCO is reporting that for the month of January, there were 217 reports of domestic violence. There were 216 reported domestic violence cases for the month of February. That's up more than 20% from 2021's 175 cases and up from last February's 202 cases.

The month of March recorded another increase in cases: 246 when compared to 215 cases in 2021 and 219 for the previous year. The figure for the month of April was 243.

The data is also revealing that persons between the ages of 30-34 are more susceptible to experiencing



domestic violence, followed by those from 25-29 and 20-24. However young victims between the ages of 20-24 are responsible for filing the most reports requesting court action against the perpetrators.

As it relates to cases, the website has noted an increase in the number of cases filed for further court action. That figure has experienced a 22.3% increase and currently stands at 362 cases in total.

The Belize Crime Observatory is also reporting that domestic violence is most prevalent in the Belize District with 453 cases already being reported for the period January to April 2023. That is followed by the Cayo District with 227 reported cases and Orange Walk with 119 cases, Stann Creek with 59, Corozal with 37, and Toledo with 27.

That data, however,

took an interesting turn when it comes to cases that actually ended up in court for legal action.

The Cayo District had the highest number

with 137 cases, 81 cases for Belize City, 60 for Orange Walk, 45 for Stann Creek, 21 for Corozal, and only 18 for Toledo.

The majority of cases filed so far were for harm, followed by common assault damage to property, threatening words, aggravated assault, and wounding.

We will be following up with the Belize Crime Observatory for an update for the months of May, June, and July.

## People's Constitution Commission Reviews Key Initiatives and Unveils Upcoming Events

The People's Constitution Commission (PCC) convened on August 4, 2023, to deliberate on critical matters aimed at enhancing the constitution-building process. The meeting, held in Belize City, saw active participation from esteemed commissioners, fostering productive discussions on various important subjects.

The following key topics were discussed during the meeting:

- PCC Communications Budget:** The Commission engaged in a comprehensive review of the Communications Budget, acknowledging the paramount importance of effective communication in ensuring the public's informed engagement with the education and consultation process. The allocated budget will enable the PCC to employ innovative communication strategies that promote transparency and inclusivity.
- Additional Staffing of the Secretariat:** Recognizing the increased workload as the constitution reform process progresses, the Commission deliberated on bolstering the Secretariat's staffing. By augmenting the Secretariat with skilled professionals, the PCC aims to streamline its operations and maintain the highest standards of efficiency.
- PCC Zone Updates and Discussions:** The Commission received updates from various PCC Zones, reflecting the dynamic and participatory

nature of the constitution reform process across different zones. These updates underscore the engagement of diverse communities and their valuable contributions to shaping the constitution.

4. **Technical Committee Updates and Discussions:** In pursuit of thoroughness and expertise, the Technical Committees' progress was reviewed, emphasizing the significance of their insights in crafting a robust and comprehensive constitution. The Technical Committee members' commitment to meticulous research and analysis was commended.

In addition to these discussions, the PCC is excited to announce the forthcoming release of a comprehensive calendar of events. This calendar will feature an array of public lectures and educational activities planned across the zones. These events aim to foster public awareness, engagement, and understanding of the constitution reform process, reaffirming the PCC's dedication to inclusivity and public participation.

The People's Constitution Commission remains committed to ensuring that the constitution-building process reflects the aspirations and values of all Belizean citizens. By fostering open dialogue, transparency, and collaboration, the PCC aims to establish a constitution that resonates with the nation's collective vision for a just and equitable society.

# S U D O K U

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

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



# Chronic stress can affect your health

## One activity can help

These days, many people find it hard to unplug. Inflation, global warming and gun violence are on the rise. Bullies proliferate on social media. The 24/7 news cycle constantly blares distressing news, and people often face difficult personal or professional situations.

About half of Americans said they experienced stress within the past day, according to a Gallup Poll survey from last October, a finding that was consistent for most of 2022. Personal finances and current and political events were major sources of stress for one-third or more of adults, a survey from CNN in partnership with the Kaiser Family Foundation found in October.

Stress isn't inherently bad, said Richard Scrivener, a personal trainer and product development manager at London's Trainfitness, an education technology company. Stressing your muscles through weight training, for example, leads to beneficial changes. In addition, short-term stress in healthy people typically isn't a hazard. "But if stress is continuous, especially in older or unhealthy individuals, the long-term effects of the response to stress may lead to significant health issues," Scrivener said.

### Can stress make you sick?

Stress occurs when you face a new, unpredictable or threatening situation, and you don't know whether you can manage it successfully, said clinical psychologist Dr. Karmel Choi, an assistant professor in the Center for Precision Psychiatry at Harvard Medical School and Massachusetts General Hospital in Boston.

When you're physically or emotionally stressed, your body snaps into fight-or-flight mode. Cortisol rushes through your system, signaling your body to release glucose. Glucose, in turn, provides energy to your muscles so you are better prepared to fight off a threat or run away. During this cortisol rush, your heart rate may rise, your breathing may become rapid, and you may feel dizzy or nauseated.

If you truly needed to fight or flee a predator, your cortisol levels would drop back down once the conflict was over. When you're chronically stressed, however, those levels stay elevated.

### Stress can be good for you, and here's why

Remaining in that heightened state is no good since high levels of cortisol

can exacerbate health conditions such as cardiovascular disease, diabetes and chronic gastrointestinal problems, according to the Cleveland Clinic. Stress can also cause or contribute to anxiety, irritability, poor sleep, substance abuse, chronic distrust or worry, and more.

### How to relieve stress

Luckily, there are many ways to combat stress. Keep a daily routine, get plenty of



sleep, eat healthy foods, and limit your time following the news or engaging in social media, recommends the World Health Organization. It also helps to stay connected with others and to employ calming practices such as meditation and deep breathing. One of the most successful tools, though, is physical activity.

"Exercise is remarkably effective for managing psychological stress," Choi said. "Exercise doesn't remove what's causing the stress, but it can boost mood, reduce tension and improve sleep — all of which are impacted by stress — and ultimately this can support people to approach their challenges in a more balanced way."

Numerous studies back up the positive effect of exercise on stress. Physical activity, and especially exercise, significantly reduced the symptoms of anxiety in a study published in *Advances in Experimental Medicine and Biology*, for example. Similarly, a *Frontiers in Psychology* study of university students found that regularly engaging in low- to moderate-intensity aerobic exercises for six weeks helped alleviate their depressive symptoms and perceived stress.

### Get moving to release feel-good chemicals

The reason exercise is so effective in squashing stress is fairly simple. Exercise causes your body to produce more endorphins, which are neurotransmitters that boost your

mood. Movement also combats elevated levels of the stress hormone cortisol while improving blood flow.

Jessica Honig, a clinical social worker in Phoenixville, Pennsylvania, said exercise empowers her clients because they realize that, through movement, they hold the key to reset and lessen their stress. "It's also one of the best ways to pause — to break up or revive energy from a spiraling, unproductive mindset," she said.

What types of exercise are best? While studies show aerobic exercise, such as swimming, running, dancing and boxing, may be the most efficient at getting mood-boosting endorphins rushing through your body, gentler forms of physical activity work, too. Think yoga, strength training and walking. In addition, sometimes less is more.

"What we're seeing from the data," Choi said, "is you actually need to move less than the recommended guidelines to see positive effects on mood."

Since stress loads may change weekly or even daily, Scrivener said it can be helpful to alter your exercise based on your mood. Feeling a cheery 8 on a scale of 1 to 10? Then go for a run. Barely hitting a 3? Opt for something gentle. "This could be a 15-minute stretch followed by a light cycle for 15 minutes, or a 30-minute swim followed by a sauna session," he said.

### Make exercise a social activity

Since social engagement is a powerful protective factor for positive mental health, Choi encourages exercising with others. Studies also have shown being out in nature boosts your mood, so exercising outside with friends may provide even more benefits.

Scientists continue to study the link between stress and physical activity. A small study published recently found that combining mindfulness and physical activity can improve sleep and help regulate emotions more than either alone, Choi said. She also warned that people need to be careful not to go overboard on exercise or rely on it exclusively for coping with challenges. Doing so can backfire and create more stress.

It's also important to remember that humans are geared to release stress physically, no matter their age, said Honig, the social worker. "We see in children the permission to throw their body into pillows to release intense emotions," she said. "We do not outgrow a need to physically release stress. We merely lose the outlets and social normalization of it."

# GRASSROOTS

## RECOGNITION OF SHOTOKAN AND PETER WARREN



By Hon. Gilroy Usher

Mr. Michael “Chips” Noralez, former Councilor at Belize City Council, male and female athletes including Mr. Lawrence Sylvester former C.E.O. with the government of Belize, Attorney Phillip Zuniga, and Mr. Simeon Joseph Jr.,

parents, other invited guests, and members of the media. Another warm welcome to everyone to the Chiste Garcia Auditorium in Dangriga for this training workshop that is organized by the Belize Shotokan Karate Association with Dr. John Nunez as Chairman/Chief Instructor.

Although not as popular as the other sports in the county, Shotokan has a place in Belize because it offers more diversity in sports and more opportunities for our people to uplift themselves.

Some persons are gifted in basketball, football, cricket, cycling or other sports, while others are gifted in Shotokan karate.

It is therefore good to know that more than 40 years ago Dr. John Nunez realized the benefits of Shotokan to Belizeans and the country and almost single handedly pioneered the development of the sport in Punta Gorda.

It was as a result that dedication to something they believe in that Gichin Funakoshi and his son Gigo Funakoshi developed Shotokan from various martial arts over 100 years ago.

Over the years the development of Shotokan was promoted in other parts of

the country by the chairman / instructor as follows: Belize City - Leonard Nunez; Dangriga-Simeon Joseph, and Placencia-Robin McCohen.

Hats off to those persons for spearheading the development of the sport in their respective communities. The commitment of yourselves and the athletes to the sport will go a long way in getting other Belizeans to support the discipline as athletes, trainers, fans, and sponsors.

Today, along with Hon. Rodwell Ferguson Minister of Youth, Sports, and Transport, who could not be present for the opening of the training camp as a result of prior government commitments, I express tremendous gratitude to Mr. Peter Warren from Barbados for taking time out of his busy schedule to be at this Shotokan training camp in Belize.

Mr. Warren is no ordinary visitor to Belize. He is one of the most senior Shotokan instructors in the Caribbean and Central America. The highest level in Shotokan is 10 degrees. Mr. Warren has 8 degrees in the sport which is only 2 degrees from the top, and during his visit to the country, he will be offering instructions and training to members of Belize Shotokan Karate Association.

Hats off to Mr. Peter Warren for traveling to Belize to assist in promoting and developing the sport.

We must also give thanks to the Belize Shotokan Karate Association, the sponsors, and all others who made the visit possible.

I want to assure parents and others that while Shotokan promotes self-discipline, self-defense, good health, and ambition with a clear mind, every effort is made to ensure the safety of the athletes. For that reason new athletes do not participate in combat until



(L-R) Dr. John Nunez, Hon. Gilroy Usher, and Mr Peter Warren

after two years of training.

It is also good to remember that one of the best ways to attract more athletes, sponsors, and fans to Shotokan and other sports is by making full use of the media including the various radio and television stations and the newspapers as well as social media including Facebook.

For a wider appeal across the country Shotokan has to make the wider public aware of its excellent work in the country through the media.

Finally, as the Minister of State for Youth, Sports, and Transport, I will share the good works of the Belize Shotokan Association in getting our youth to direct their energy and talent into positive activities, and request that G.O.B. and the National Sports Council (NSC) show support for Shotokan by making the first financial contribution to the association as soon as possible.

May you all have a very successful training camp; display good sportsmanship at all times, and may the best athletes get the recognition they deserve for proving they are a cut above their competitors.

As we strive to develop Shotokan to the highest possible level in Belize, we should remember these words of Virat Kohli, “Self-belief and hard work will always earn you success.”

Thank you.

**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.**





# FUN FACTS!

## China Built A Solar Farm Shaped Like A Panda

In a display of China's commitment to ramping up renewable energy resources, the country just finished a 250-acre solar farm in the shape of a panda. The effort is partially a PR campaign as China continues to lead the world in renewable energy investment.

The first phase of the solar power plant was recently completed, adding 50MW (of the total 100MW) to the electricity grid in Datong, China. The panda shaped plant was proposed in May of 2016 by Panda Green Energy's largest shareholder, China Merchants New Energy. It was quickly approved as a way to build support for sustainable energy development with Chinese youth.

To create the visual effect of darker and lighter solar panels, Panda Green Energy used both darker monocrystalline silicon and lighter thin film cells. This allowed the energy company to stagger



the solar panels in an array that mimics the coloring and shape of a giant panda.

The new solar power plant in Datong will replace burning 1 million tons of coal in the next 25 years as China flexes its ability to make rapid improvements in its energy system.

There are three general types of solar panels used in the world today: Monocrystalline silicon, polycrystalline, and thin film. The first two are generally more common, with

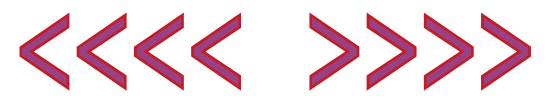
polycrystalline panels the most popular for residential solar panels in America. On the other hand, thin film performs better in low light situations but is less effective than the monocrystalline and polycrystalline options.

This is just the first of 100 panda-shaped solar plants planned across China and Asia in the coming years. This past May, Fiji announced a smaller panda shaped solar farm.

This is part of China's larger Belt

and Road Initiative along the historic Silk Road. This initiative, a foundation of Xi Jinping's foreign policy, aims to place China as a leader in external policy in Asia. The initiative is underpinned by trillions of dollars of infrastructure investment China intends to build along the historic silk road that connects Asia to Europe.

China is anticipated to spend \$150 billion per year on the 68 countries that have agreed to the initiative.



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# Preschool educators Think Equal with UNICEF

By William Ysaguirre

Early childhood education is critically important for the Ministry of Education, and has now received help through a partnership with the Think Equal group of the United Kingdom and the United Nations Children's Education Fund (UNICEF), which the ministry launched at the Best Western Biltmore Plaza Hotel in Belize City on Wednesday afternoon, August 9.

The lessons and principles learnt in early childhood and preschool years have proven to be the most enduring. They stay with us the longest, UNICEF's

Alison Parker noted. Nursery rhymes are easier to remember than how to solve math problems. Children have a sunny disposition; they believe that anything can happen. The aim of the "Think Equal" program is to nurture this optimistic, positive view of the world, for our children to grow up to become young people who have a high opinion of others, to hold others in high regard. Today's educators have an obligation to place greater emphasis on this social and cultural appreciation of others, to break the cycle of violence which plagues our



Think Equal supports early childhood education in Belize.

society, Parker affirmed. The Think

**SOCIAL SECURITY BOARD**  
BELIZE

# NOTICE

TO THE GENERAL PUBLIC

## SSB BRANCH OFFICE CLOSURE

The Social Security Board (SSB) hereby informs the general public that the branch offices will be closed on the following dates from 8:00 a.m. to 10:00 a.m.

**August**

- 11<sup>th</sup> Santa Elena Branch Office
- 18<sup>th</sup> Corozal Branch Office, Orange Walk Branch Office
- 25<sup>th</sup> Belize City Branch Office, San Pedro Branch Office

**September**

- 8<sup>th</sup> Belmopan Branch Office, Dangriga Branch Office
- 15<sup>th</sup> Independence Branch Office
- 18<sup>th</sup> Punta Gorda Branch Office

These closures are necessary to conduct a training exercise for the staff to ensure that our human resources are better equipped in the workplace. The training will also be of benefit to you our most valued customers, the staff families and their community.

Thanks for your unwavering support.

*Social Security Board: Safeguarding You. Your Family. Your Future!*



Education Minister Hon. Francis Fonseca

Equal Program will help our very young children to learn the important life skills of how to get along with others.

Parker also invited the private sector to partner with UNICEF and ministry educators in this initiative, as the skills sought by modern industry are the same skills that the Think Equal program will teach to our children at the earliest age.

The Think Equal program was created to bridge the learning gap left by the pandemic when children had to miss in-person classroom instruction for two years. But they were watching many other videos, images and programs on multimedia entertainment which were sometimes often undesirable examples. Primary school teacher

Kimberly Heusner explained why her colleagues have welcomed the Think Equal program, as it offers them a series of lesson plans for Infant I and Infant II, which will make their life easier, which will give them back an hour each day when they won't have to prepare a lesson plan. The lessons are also entertaining and engage the students' interest, which makes classroom management much easier for the teacher. Minister of Education Hon. Francis Fonseca said MoECST looks forward to many years of successful partnership with Think Equal. Educating young people has been his passion for more than 20 years, for the early formative years

Cont'd on pg. 14

# Preschool educators Think Equal with UNICEF

Cont'd from pg. 13

from three to five years of age offer a real opportunity to shape and guide the children's value system which they will carry with them throughout their lives. The Think Equal program offers training for our teachers, equipping teachers with the skill to recognize and manage the social and emotional development of their pupils.

"Think Equal" helps to tackle the root causes of social instability, such as crime, violence and

poverty, because it instills in the very young students from those early years, the right attitude of respect for discipline, respect for others' abilities, of who they are and their value to society.

Fonseca cited the seven critical pillars of the new curriculum, for the children to develop good character, to develop their emotional intelligence, grow their communications skills and form critical and cognitive thinking. They also must learn to work

together with their peers to overcome challenges, and to appreciate the multi-cultural diversity of our people. They also need to acquire digital literacy, to have practical competence in the use of technology to enhance the quality of life, make life better for our people. They must also learn how critically important the environment is to the sustainable development of the Belizean economy and society.

Think Equal's founder Leslee Udwin also attended the program launch.





**Atlantic Bank**  
FREETOWN BRANCH



## NEW & PRE-OWNED AUTO LOAN FAIR

**SATURDAY, AUGUST 26, 2023**  
9:00 AM - 2:00 PM  
**BRODIES PARKING LOT**  
PHILIP GOLDSON HIGHWAY, BELIZE CITY

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### RFP - Installation of Service Entrance at UNDP Location

**Type of Contract: Civil Works**  
**Period of assignment/services: 3 months (September-November)**  
**Deadline for RFP submission: August 22, 2023 @ 4:00pm**

**Background:**  
The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) is looking for a Contractor to Install a Service Entrance at David L. Mckoy Business Centre compound, Bliss Parade, Belmopan. The Service Entrance will be installed as per the design and specifications provided by Belize Electricity Limited (BEL), to facilitate onsite charging of an electric vehicle at UNDP.

**Scope of Work and Responsibilities:**  
The contractor is expected to complete the following based on the Statement of Works (SOW) and the specifications provided by BEL (Underground Standards):

1. Trench
2. Backfilling
3. Supply and install PVC conduits.
4. Supply and install lead lines inside conduits.
5. Installation of detectable tape
6. Supply of material and construct of all manholes, concrete slabs, and transformer plinth

**Submission of Application Package:**  
This specific tender is managed via the new supplier portal system of UNDP. If you are interested in submitting a bid for this tender, you must subscribe following the instructions in the [user guide](#). If you have not registered a profile with this system, you can do so by following the link for [Supplier Registration](#).

If you already have a supplier profile, please login to the [Supplier Portal](#), then search for the negotiation using the reference number **UNDP-BLZ-00027-1**, following the instructions in the [user guide](#).

[https://procurement-notice.undp.org/view\\_negotiation.cfm?nego\\_id=9235](https://procurement-notice.undp.org/view_negotiation.cfm?nego_id=9235)

OR

<https://www.ungm.org/Public/Notice/208799>

**Assistance in Registering:** Call ICT Focal Point at **822-2688** during normal working hours.

### PUBLIC NOTICE

#### Lodgement of an EIA Report and Public Consultation

For  
**Angel Fish Caye LLC**

#### For the Construction and Operation of a Small Resort Facility on Angelfish Caye, Stann Creek District, Belize

The General Public is hereby informed that an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) report for a small tourism accommodation facility to be located on Angelfish Caye, situated 10 miles southeast of Hopkins Village, within the South Water Caye Marine Reserve, Stann Creek District, was submitted to the Department of the Environment (DOE) by Angel Fish LLC Limited. The EIA report will be reviewed by the National Environmental Appraisal Committee (NEAC) before a final decision is taken by the DOE.

The General Public is hereby informed that the revised EIA report is available for public review, free of charge, and can be examined from 4<sup>th</sup> - 25<sup>th</sup>, August 2023 (Monday- Friday) during normal working hours (8:00 am to 5:00 pm) at the Ignacia Cacho Library in (Dangriga Town), Hopkins Berties Library (Hopkins Village) and the Placencia Village Council Office, Stann Creek District and at the DOE's Office located at 7552 Hummingbird Highway, Belmopan. The revised EIA report is also available on the DOE's website at link: <https://doe.gov.bz/download/angel-fish-caye-llc-eia-july-2023/> and the Annexes <https://doe.gov.bz/download/angel-fish-caye-llc-annexes-july-2023/>. The Supplemental Information and previous EIA report can be found at link: <https://doe.gov.bz/download/angelfish-eia-supplementary-information/> and <https://doe.gov.bz/download/angel-fish-caye-llc-eia/>. The public is invited to submit their comments in writing on or before the 25<sup>th</sup> August, 2023, to the DOE Office in Belmopan or email: [envirodept@environment.gov.bz](mailto:envirodept@environment.gov.bz); [ciaunit@environment.gov.bz](mailto:ciaunit@environment.gov.bz), and link: <https://forms.gle/pUqS1rvbv7ktRmZx6>

Kindly be informed that a hybrid (in-person and virtual) public consultation for the EIA report will be held on August 24<sup>th</sup>, 2023, commencing at 6:30 pm. The in-person consultation will be held at Belizean Dreams Resort in Hopkins Village, Stann Creek District and an online link will be provided on August 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2023, for those who will participate virtually. The consultation will also be streamed live via the Government of Belize Press Office Facebook Page.

The General Public is invited to attend in person or participate online, to make comments, ask questions, seek clarification, and/or provide input regarding this proposed project.

# The Righters Write

## Human Rights, Prevention and Peace

Contributed by the Human Rights Commission

On December 10th of this year, the world will observe the 75th anniversary of the Universal

Declaration of Human Rights. To commemorate this milestone, the UN Office of the High

Commissioner for Human Rights, OHCHR, has been conducting a series of activities throughout the year. One of these is the “HR75 Spotlight” which features monthly articles highlighting “a wide range of human rights issues, enshrined in the Universal Declaration, in need of concrete and urgent action from States and other duty bearers” (ohchr.org).

The July publication is titled “Human rights, prevention and peace” which we feature in this

space.

### Care and support systems: A matter of human rights

(Taken from ohch.org)  
“We need to radically reshape our understanding of support and care systems,” said UN Human Rights Chief Volker Türk in his statement to Member States on transforming support and care systems. “The economic and social value of care work must be recognized.”

Türk added the COVID-19 pandemic proved that our care systems are not prepared to deliver for the times we live in.

“This unpaid or underpaid work is socially unrecognized, reinforcing exclusion and discrimination faced by women and girls

throughout their lives,” he said. “At the same time, the voices of those giving and receiving care – older people, those with disabilities, children or the sick – including those who are women, have not been heard, or worse, ignored.”

According to UN Human Rights, international human rights law recognizes everyone’s human rights to health, education, social protection, and participation in public life for all. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) provided a basis for all these rights in 1948. Other human rights treaties that followed further elaborated on these rights.

As part of Human Rights 75, an initiative held this year to celebrate

the 75th anniversary of the UDHR, Türk “calls on States to take concrete steps towards establishing support and care systems that are human rights-based, gender-responsive, disability-inclusive and age-sensitive.”

### Ignored & invisible

Women and girls with disabilities are both the recipients of support and care, and the providers of support and care, according to Rosario Galarza, Intersectionalities Officer at the International Disability Alliance.

“Despite the rising demand, the support needs of most persons with disabilities worldwide are not being met,” she said. “This became a crisis during the COVID-19 pandemic, with severe and sometimes fatal consequences for persons with disabilities.”

Galarza stressed the need for governments to invest more heavily on support systems to help women and girls with disabilities live a life free of violence and to participate more fully in their daily lives.

“Women and girls with disabilities have the right receive support and care, the right to give support and care and the right to self-care on an equal basis with others,” she said. “These rights are the key to unlocking the unrealised promise of autonomy, independence, and full participation in society for women and girls with disabilities around the world.”

Domestic work is a type of care system that is often undervalued. Novelita Palisoc has been a domestic worker for over 19 years in the Philippines and Qatar. She was responsible for doing many tasks as a domestic worker such as being a nanny, a cleaner, a chauffeur and a laundry worker — all at the same time.

“I earned so little, had no social benefits,

experienced violence and even sexual harassment,” she said. “I did not say anything before because I thought I owed everything to my employers and had no right to demand for my rights or to express my grievances. Instead, I kept silent.”

Palisoc later confided in a friend about her work issues and was invited by her to join a domestic worker’s union where she took workshops to learn more about her rights as a domestic worker.

“Through trainings and seminars, I became educated and empowered,” she said. “I learned that as a domestic worker, I have rights which should never be denied or begged for; that my employers have responsibilities; and more than anything else, that I deserve respect and dignity.”

As a member of the International Domestic Workers Federation Executive Committee, Palisoc helps represent the interests of domestic workers.

“We all deserve to be free from shame, from abuse, from silence. And we all deserve justice, dignity, and respect,” she said.

Through these experiences she was able to find her voice and now empowers other domestic workers by informing them about their rights and how to defend these rights, by helping them negotiate their benefits, by combatting illegal recruitment, and by empowering women to speak up against violence and harassment in the world of work.

Older people who are giving care to family members or to the community are also facing many economic and social challenges. Idah Nambeya is a Zambia-based Senior Advisor to the Grandmothers to Grandmothers campaign at the Stephen Lewis Foundation (SLF), which is a global movement to raise awareness and funds in support of

African grandmothers.

According to the SLF, African grandmothers have stepped in to care for the more than 15 million children orphaned by AIDS across Africa and have become one of the most vulnerable groups affected by the pandemic.

“Grandmothers are experiencing a depletion of their resources, in every sense – economic, emotional and physical – because of the challenges they face in struggling to support orphans and vulnerable children (OVCs),” she said. “They have been draining their small savings, tilling small plots of land while holding off property grabbers, and studying new skills to earn more income.”

But, with the support of community-based organizations, grandmothers are developing innovative savings and income-generating activities and initiatives. They are also building a movement to ensure that government policies, programmes and strategies integrate their needs and rights, including income security, pensions and grants, land and inheritance rights, eliminating violence against women, and improving access to healthcare.

“Care and support should not merely be seen as an act of charity,” Türk said. “It’s a matter of human rights. Both those providing and receiving care and support have rights. That means support and care systems must respect and advance the enjoyment of human rights for all.”

**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.**

## NOTICE

### GOVERNMENT OF BELIZE TREASURY BILLS ISSUE NUMBER 9/2023

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, 16 August 2023 and will be redeemed on Wednesday, 15 November 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](mailto:bids@centralbank.org.bz) or at the designated drop off box no later than 12:00 noon on Friday, 11 August 2023.

The Auction in the Central Securities Depository System (CSD) will be open from 10:00 am to 12:00 pm on Wednesday, 16 August 2023.

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

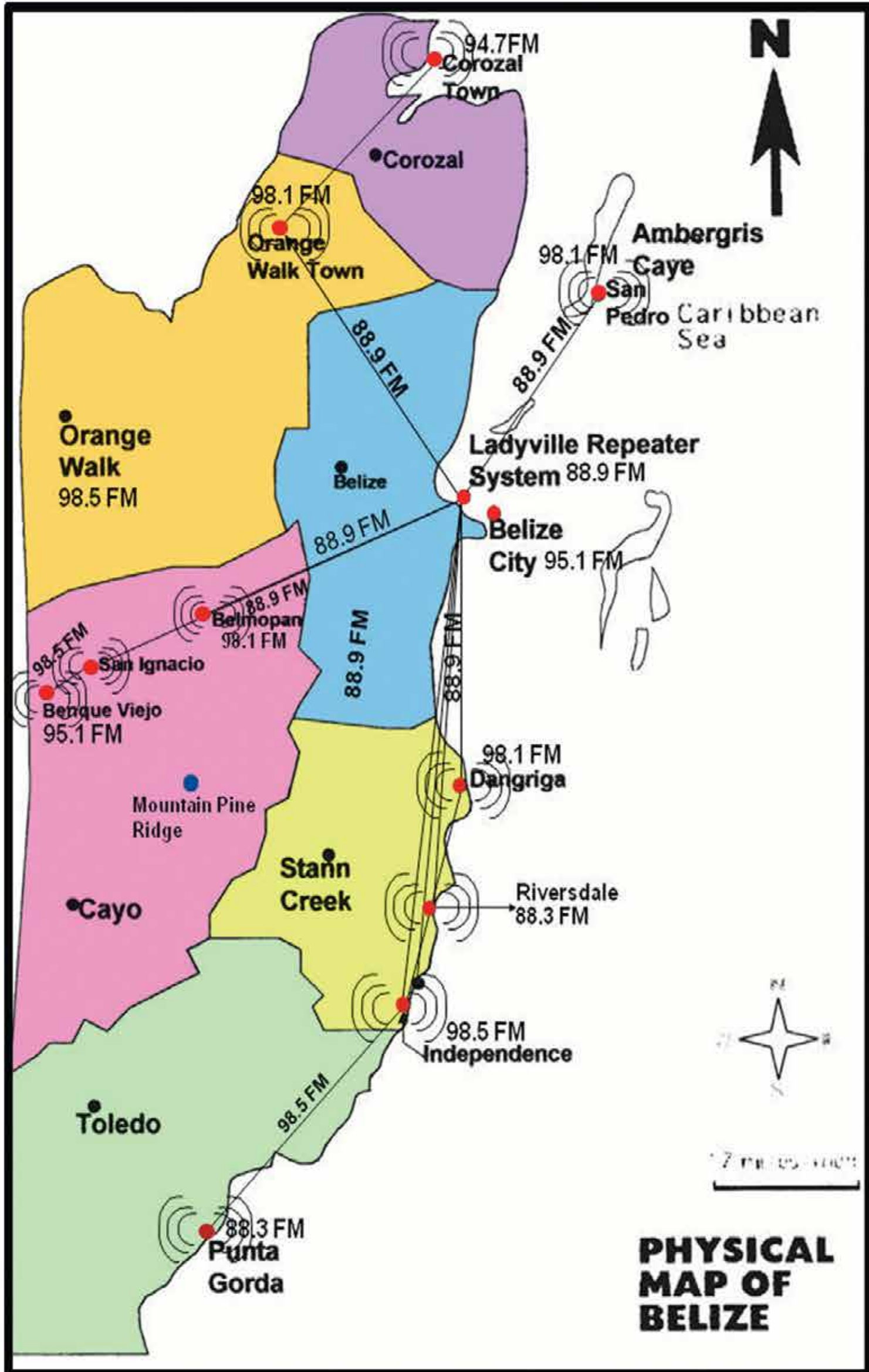
Bank: Central Bank of Belize  
Account: GL1CORP0402627

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

CENTRAL BANK OF BELIZE

Notices are placed on Central Bank of Belize Website ([www.centralbank.org.bz](http://www.centralbank.org.bz))

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