

*Belize's leading newspaper*

# GoB settles with Ashcroft Alliance's BISL

by Marco Lopez

BELIZE CITY, Mon. Aug. 22, 2022

Today, the Government of Belize announced that it signed a settlement agreement for US\$38.5 million with Belize International Services Limited (BISL)—a company owned by the Ashcroft Alliance and a Panamanian law firm—after the Caribbean Court of Justice's judgment on June 30, 2022, which ordered GoB to

**Please turn to** ▶ Page 14

*A Caribbean Court of Justice judgment handed down in June 2020 ordered the Government of Belize to pay Belize International Services Ltd. (BISL) – a company partially owned by the Ashcroft group—damages for breach of an extension contract, and the parties signed a settlement agreement today*



## Bail for police officers

*Officers charged with Derrick Uh's manslaughter to reappear in court on September 30 for disclosure*

COROZAL, Mon. Aug. 22, 2022

Four of the officers charged for the death of 20-year-old Derrick Uh were arraigned in the Corozal Magistrate's Court and released on bail last

Thursday. The officers—Inspector Isaias Sanchez, Sergeant Rosario Romero, PC Errol Peralta, and PC

**Please turn to** ▶ Page 15



*Four officers being taken to Corozal Magistrate's Court*

## OAS Secretary General commends Belize for setting example in the region

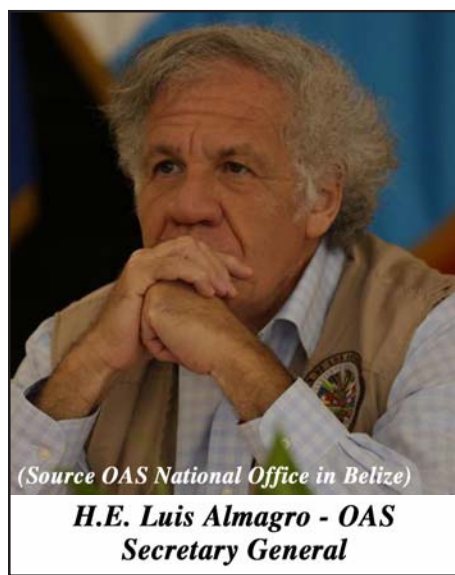
by Khaila Gentle

BELMOPAN, Mon. Aug. 22, 2022

Organization of American States Secretary General, H.E. Luis Almagro, arrived at the Philip Goldson International Airport on Sunday for an

official visit to Belize. As part of his trip, he met with the Prime Minister, Hon. John Briceno, as well as the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Hon. Eamon Courtenay, and on Monday, the

**Please turn to** ▶ Page 15



## UDP to protest despite being denied permit

*"We don't know how many people will come. I know I will be there, so that's one," said the UDP chairman, Michael Peyrefitte, to the media.*



**Senator Michael Peyrefitte – UDP chairman**

by Khaila Gentle

BELIZE CITY, Mon. Aug. 22, 2022

Despite having been denied an official permit, the United

**Please turn to** ▶ Page 14

## San Jose community gives FPIC to RRB project



*San Jose community members at meeting on Sunday*

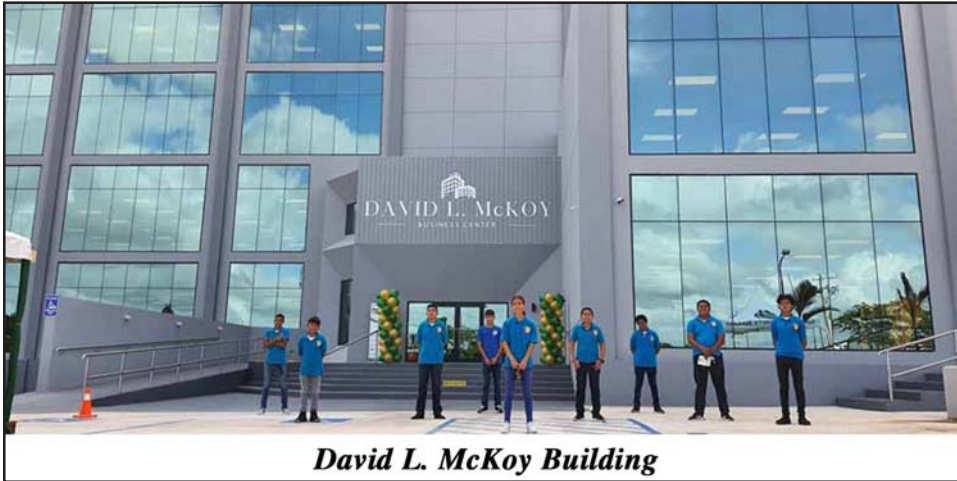
SAN JOSE, Toledo, Mon. Aug. 22, 2022

This weekend, residents of San Jose, Toledo, gave the Resilient Rural Belize Program (RRB), Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC), to implement programs in the community geared toward addressing the impacts of climatic and economic events on small farmers. The Government of Belize first entered into the agreement with the International Fund for Agricultural Development and received a loan from that organization. With a subsequent loan and grant from the

**Please turn to** ▶ Page 15

## SSB CEO: McKoy Building still a viable investment

**In an interview recently, Deborah Ruiz, CEO of the Social Security Board, told local media that a full audit will be done on the construction of the building after retrofitting work is completed, and admitted that the substandard quality of some portions of the structure could have been avoided.**



David L. McKoy Building

BELIZE CITY, Mon. Aug. 22, 2022

The CEO of the Social Security Board (SSB), Deborah Ruiz, told local media last week that the return on investment (ROI) for the David L. McKoy Building will be an estimated 5.6% per year—much more than the interest that would have been collected if the funds invested in the project had been left in the bank. She made the remarks when faced with questions from reporters about whether the funds used by the SSB to finance the construction of the building (in which commercial spaces will be rented to increase the SSB's reserves) were prudently spent. The matter has become a public concern after it became known that an additional 3 million dollars was being spent to retrofit the building, which had been constructed at an initial cost of approximately \$8 million—apparently because cost-cutting during the construction process had compromised the capacity of the structure to withstand a natural disaster such as a hurricane or earthquake.

The building, located on Bliss Parade in Belmopan, was designed by LAR Architects and Associates, whose principal is Luis Alberto Ruiz, the husband of the current CEO of the SSB. His design was ultimately used by the contractor, Fabros (Construction) Limited, which had submitted the lowest bid for the construction of the building, which was approved by the SSB board of directors (headed by Dough Singh under the Barrow administration). The current board, consisting of members appointed by the PUP administration after the general elections in 2020, terminated the arrangement with that company last year and hired a new firm, Anthony Thurton and Associates, who determined that the building did not meet the structural standards necessary to weather a major storm.

The SSB then approved a supplementary budget to fund the retrofitting of the building to address the structural deficiencies. Work that is currently being done to the building includes the creation of a support structure that is being attached onto the building—welded onto the existing steel frame—to create lateral stability. According to reports by 7News, remedial work is also being done on the glass walls of the building, on which

drywall is being placed because they are too thin and thus allow excessive light inside that makes the interior of the building unbearably hot. The beams of the building also had to be “fireproofed” and fire hydrants were installed. CEO Ruiz said that as soon as the retrofitting is complete, a full review will be conducted to determine what went wrong.

“When those works are done, it is the board's intention to do a full review to find out where the fault lies in the initial mistake, perhaps by not having the original architect of the board, versus the contract administrators who was on board working with the contract, or if the contractor was experienced, all of those things we will have to review and find what went wrong with the project,” Ruiz said.

She further explained, “The project supervisor was one engineer Mr. Robert Allen. From there they subcontracted out a tenure, and Mr. Fabro, Daniel Fabro from Fabros Limited, was awarded the contract, since that time, from my understanding, because I was not in the seat as the time ... what happens is that during the effects liability period, which is the period that the contractor has to maintain whatever services, the contractor administration had been reporting some deficiencies, and they were back and forth with the contractor. We had a new board came in play, and they were asking questions in terms of why the delays, the variation request and all of these things, and they felt that they were not getting satisfactory responses from the contract administrator, so his services were terminated.”

Two engineers from Anthony Thurton and Associates did the assessment of the building and forwarded their recommendations to improve the lateral stability of the structure.

“Not that the building was going to collapse or anything, but because we do have international clients in the building, and we needed to give them assurances that they are safe and so we are talking probability of a major storm, how the building would respond, so the engineers tested that, and they found that it was not up to par for a high-level hurricane, so they needed to

## Miss Stann Creek is Queen of the Bay 2022

by Khaila Gentle

BELIZE CITY, Sat. Aug. 20, 2022

On Saturday, at the Bliss Center for Performing Arts, 19-year-old Mazlin Hanson won the title of Queen of the Bay 2022 Designate. Hanson, who represented the Stann Creek District, will be officially crowned as this year's Queen of the Bay during next month's Tenth of September Celebrations, when reigning queen Druewel Jones will pass on the crown, robe, and scepter.

The 77th Annual Queen of the Bay

Pageant saw six contestants from across the country vying for the crown: Theyana Olivera, Miss Toledo; Elisha Martinez, Miss San Ignacio/Santa Elena; Ariane Novelo, Miss Belmopan; Kelsey Zetina, Miss Corozal; Rushelle Babb, Miss Belize; and Hanson, Miss Stann Creek.

Rushelle Babb of the Belize District was first runner-up, while Elisha Martinez was second runner up. Judges for this year's competition were Dr. Sharmayne Saunders, Mrs. Shanna



Ciego, Mrs. Patricia Grief, Dr. Dwayne Usher and former Belizean beauty queen, Sarita Morales.

The young women were judged on their eloquence, their walk, their talents, and of course, their curtsy. Mazlin Hanson also won the titles of Most Elegantly Dressed, Miss Eloquence, Most Talented, and Best Curtsy. In addition to being this year's Queen of the Bay, Hanson is also a member of Belize's 2022 Children's Parliament.

## Sedi lavishes praise on Lord Michael

by Evan X Hyde

Wilfred “Sedi” Elrington is a multimillionaire Afro-Belizean attorney-at-law. He was a Supreme Court judge during the UDP government of 1993-1998, during which he was also a senator and sat in the Dr. Manuel Esquivel Cabinet. Mr. Elrington was a three-time Cabinet minister (Foreign Minister) during the three terms in office (2008-2020) of UDP Prime Minister Dean Barrow. Mr. Elrington, as Foreign Minister, signed the so-called COMPROMIS of 2008 which committed the land and sea of Belize to International Court of Justice (ICJ) arbitration.

Mr. Elrington has been writing a weekly column in THE REPORTER. In the Sunday, August 7, 2022 issue of that newspaper, he titled his column: “Solving the Afro Belizean Crisis.” In that column, he refers to all the evils which have plagued Belize's Afro-Belizean population since slavery and colonialism, followed by “four continuous decades of discrimination, neglect, poverty, abuse and injustice.” One assumes that Mr. Elrington is referring to the post-independence years in Belize when he makes reference to “four continuous decades ...”

Amazingly enough, two weeks later, in the Sunday, August 21, 2022 issue

of THE REPORTER, under the heading, “Build the Port Quickly,” the same Mr. Elrington wrote the following paragraphs about Lord Michael Ashcroft. Mr. Elrington's opinions are contrary to those of the vast majority of Belizean citizens. I am stunned.

“The Ashcroft group has a good business track record in our country. It was Mr. Ashcroft who introduced the offshore financial industry into our country and the Ship's Registry. The Ashcroft group has also been very bullish in investing in our tourism, agriculture and banking sectors as well. And, their reputation for being shrewd, financially well-heeled investors is widely known nationally and internationally.

“They have displayed an affinity for our country which belies any suggestion that they are merely interested in exploiting us. They have been supportive of our nation's efforts in education, culture, health and sports over the years they have been investing in our country. They are among the very few investors who have shown neither hesitation nor reluctance to invest in our country.”

Do you believe Sedi?



# Girl, 8, knocked down by drunk driver in Ladyville

by *Khaila Gentle*

LADYVILLE, Belize District, Mon. Aug. 22, 2022

An 8-year-old girl has died after she and her mother were knocked down in Ladyville on Friday night. The driver accused of knocking them down, a resident of Guinea Grass Village in Orange Walk, who was allegedly driving under the influence of alcohol, has since been arrested.

According to police reports, 8-year-old Mercedes Elisabeth Campus and her mother were walking near Mile 9 on the Philip Goldson Highway when a Mazda pickup truck turning onto the highway from Poinsettia Street swerved into their path and knocked both of them down.

When police arrived at the scene, they found Campus, already deceased, along with her mother. Police also found the driver of the truck, 51-year-old Elias Reynoso, who, according to Police Communications Director ASP Fitzroy Yearwood, was highly intoxicated.

Reynoso was taken into police custody, but he refused to give blood and urine samples. He has since been charged with manslaughter by negligence, causing death by careless conduct, driving without due care and



**Mercedes Elisabeth Campus**

attention, failure to provide a valid driver's license, and failure to provide blood or urine specimen.

"There was no way the child could have gotten out of the way of the raging vehicle. The driver was driving very recklessly," said ASP Yearwood.

# BHA hopes monkeypox is taken as seriously as COVID-19

by *Khaila Gentle*

BELIZE CITY, Fri. Aug. 19, 2022

While the Ministry of Health & Wellness, in its continued surveillance of monkeypox, has yet to report any cases of the virus in Belize, those in the hospitality industry believe that the time for getting ahead of the viral outbreak is now. The industry is still recovering from the devastating effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, and one of its stakeholders, the Belize Hotel Association (BHA), is hoping that a similar situation can be avoided when it comes to monkeypox.

According to the president of the BHA, this can, hopefully, be done by implementing necessary health guidelines as soon as possible.

"Hopefully, we will take something like this much more seriously than we did COVID in the early days and get the necessary programs in place, whether it's through the Ministry of Health and then in cooperation with the Ministry of Tourism," said BHA president, Reynaldo Malik, to reporters on Friday.

"Any business, whether it's in tourism or any business in general, we take this very seriously, and whatever the guidelines that they come up with, I hope it's soon that we start to exercise those guidelines," he added.

While monkeypox has yet to be identified in Belize, several neighboring countries, as well as numerous states in the Caribbean, have reported cases.

At the beginning of this month, Jamaica confirmed its first locally transmitted case of the virus. Earlier, in July, the Mexican state of Quintana Roo reported its first case in Chetumal City, which is often frequented by Belizeans.



**Reynaldo Malik—President, Belize Hotel Association**

During that same month, on July 23, the World Health Organization declared monkeypox a public health emergency of international concern. The United States of America, the source of a large percentage of Belize's tourist population, has also been affected by the virus.

Unlike the SARS-CoV-2 virus, which spreads through the air, the monkeypox virus is primarily transmitted through close contact—prolonged physical contact or direct contact with body fluids and lesions—or contact with contaminated materials such as bedding.

A person infected with the virus may display signs and symptoms that include a rash made up of pus-filled blisters, muscle aches, headaches, fever, fatigue, and other flu-like symptoms.

The virus is closely related to smallpox (not chickenpox), with both

Please turn to **Page 4**

# Belize City woman is missing

by *Charles Gladden*

BELIZE CITY, Mon. Aug. 22, 2022

The local authorities are asking the general public to be on the lookout for 24-year-old Annyssah West, a Belizean domestic of Belize City, who was reported missing over the weekend.

West was last seen last Monday, August 15, at about 1:15 p.m. as she left her home en route to visit a friend. West is described as being of brown complexion, and of slim build. She is said to be of Creole descent and stands about 5 feet 7 inches tall, with black, natural hair.

The name "Andrew, Jr" is tattooed on her left shoulder, and she was last seen wearing a blue and white tie-dye blouse, blue and white pants, and multicolor Puma slippers.

If you have seen Annyssah West,



**Annyssah West, missing**

please call 922 or contact the nearest police station.

# Ladyville businessman drowns in Gales Point

by *Charles Gladden*

LADYVILLE, Belize District, Mon. Aug. 22, 2022

Benigno Betancourt, 46, a tour guide of Ladyville, lost his life after jumping into a lagoon while on a canoe trip during a visit to Gales Point. He reportedly disappeared under the surface of the water, and a number of hours passed before his motionless body was found.

The proprietor of Manatee Lodge, where Betancourt and his family had apparently been staying, told local authorities that Betancourt was on a family trip with eighteen adults and five children when he took a group out to go canoeing in a lagoon. Family members of Betancourt said that he jumped out of the canoe to check the depth of the lagoon for them and did not re-emerge.

About a minute later, when he did not resurface, his family members dived in and attempted to locate him, but his motionless body was not found until after 4:00 p.m. by family members, who attempted to perform CPR to revive him, but to no avail.

The body was transported to the Southern Regional Hospital, where Betancourt was pronounced dead on



**Benigno Betancourt, deceased**

arrival by medical officials.

A post-mortem examination will be conducted on Betancourt's body to officially determine the cause of his death.

"We know that we have several post-mortems lined up ahead of Mr. Betancourt, but I'm certain as soon as the doctor performs that examination, the findings will be made public," said the Communications Director of the Belize Police Department, ASP Fitzroy Yearwood.

# Drunken son assaults father and burns house

**A Dangriga man has been detained by police after allegedly assaulting his father with a machete and setting his home on fire.**

by *Charles Gladden*

DANGRIGA, Stann Creek District, Mon. Aug. 22, 2022

Charges are yet to be levied against Michael Flores, 24, a Belizean construction worker of Pen Road, Dangriga Town, after he supposedly assaulted his father with a machete while intoxicated, and set his father's home on fire in the early hours of

Sunday morning.

Initial reports have indicated that at around 1:00 o'clock that morning, Flores, while under the influence of alcohol, arrived at the home of his father, Santos Flores, 51, located in the Wageirale Area of Dangriga Town, and began arguing with him. It was then that Michael Flores reportedly picked up a

Please turn to **Page 6**

## Dangriga man charged for Pungas' murder

BELIZE CITY, Fri. Aug. 19, 2022

Today, almost a month after Ronald "Pungas" Gill was stabbed to death, a resident of Dangriga identified as Devin Parchue was charged with the murder. Parchue, 28, is said to have approached Gill while he was buying food from a restaurant which he frequented in the town. The two, the owner of the restaurant told local media, got into an altercation which led to Parchue stabbing Gill in the body multiple times. Gill reportedly died on the scene, according to an eyewitness.

Police have been piecing together information since the incident occurred and have arrested and charged Parchue, who some reports say is a distant relative of Gill. On July 23, Gill reportedly left his home located in the Lakeland area of Dangriga to go buy food from an establishment located on George Price Drive in the town. That is when the men got into a heated argument that led to Gill's murder.

"Pungas", as Gill was affectionally known by family and friends, was a



**Devin Parchue, charged for murder**

Belizean artist, songwriter, and performer who worked with the Heights of Vibes Studio and with other musicians from across Belize before having a run-in with the law and later relocating from Belize City to his hometown of Dangriga. He is remembered as a peace-loving, jovial soul, who loved to have a good time and make others around him laugh.

## Candle caused fire that killed Merlene Hendy

**A well-known food vendor of San Ignacio Town, sixty-two-year-old Merlene Hendy, was burnt to death in her home, and fire personnel investigators say that the fire may have been caused by a lit candle.**

by Charles Gladden

SAN IGNANCIO TOWN, Cayo District, Mon. Aug. 22, 2022

Fire personnel have said that a lit candle was possibly the cause of the fire that burnt the home of, and ultimately killed, sixty-two-year-old Merlene Hendy, whose surname had initially been listed as "Wellington" in reports before being confirmed as "Hendy" in the National Fire Service's official report. Hendy perished in a blaze that gutted her home at the corner of 18th Down Street and Swallow Drive, which she had shared with her grandson as well as her daughter and her daughter's children.

As mentioned in Friday's edition of AMANDALA, at around 11:00 p.m. on Wednesday, August 17, Rupert Hendy, son of the deceased, was called to the scene by neighbors of Merlene Hendy who also reside on 18th Down Street and Swallow Drive, and who saw the thick clouds of smoke coming from his mother's home. According to Rupert Hendy, when he arrived at the scene, authorities attempted to prevent him from entering the home. However, he slipped past them, and saw his already deceased mother on the floor of the house, and her body was still burning.

"She was already dead, and she was burnt up, completely naked, her clothes burnt off, all her hair everything – I saw her with my own eyes, and it hurt me very [badly]. We live in Cayo for many years, I'm 34, and that makes me 34 years here," Hendy said.

Kenneth Mortis, Station Supervisor at the National Fire Service, met with local reporters and informed them that the fire was a result of a lit candle in Hendy's home, since the home had no electricity.

"What we came up with [was] the timing that the fire occurred, Ms. Hendy was asleep and eventually family members got alerted of such. Some managed to come out of the building unscathed, while Ms. Hendy woke up in a bit of a disoriented state and was overcome by smoke and heat. Unfortunately for her, she was literally at the exit of the door as to where the investigators found her, and that is where we concluded that she probably passed out, became unconscious, and then she succumbed as a result of the heat and the smoke inhalation... We're kind of like leaning towards a candle, as we have learned that the building had no electricity. We did manage to confirm that Ms. Hendy habitually used a candle as a means of light. Unfortunately, at this moment, the family doesn't want to believe that a candle was left in the room. That's what the investigators came up with, and that's what we're leaning towards," he said.

Hendy's son mentioned that the family had called the fire station in San Ignacio about 4 times before getting a response, after which they waited for a fire truck



**Merlene Hendy, burnt to death**

from Benque Viejo Town, which arrived at the scene approximately 25 minutes later.

In reference to those claims, Mortis said, "We didn't have to wait for a truck in Benque! The Cayo District, mainly the San Ignacio, is equipped with three fire trucks, and we dispatched those trucks. The fire wasn't [an] overwhelming fire that posed an additional threat to neighbouring structures. That was a fire that the San Ignacio Town could have handled on their own. They received the call, and they responded."

Mortis added, "I'll always go back to the one question: who did they call? I mean I've said it time and time again, and I'll continue to say it: we are being paid taxpayers' money to do a job, so we are at a station waiting for an emergency. At 11:15 p.m., what could we have possibly been doing? We don't train at night. I'm not going to go in a debate and say it's 25 minutes or not, but my ultimate question would be, who did they call and where did the call go from there?"

One of Hendy's children, forty-one-year-old Shantel Hendy, reportedly made attempts to break down her mother's room door when she saw thick smoke and heard her mother yelling that there was a fire.

"The door itself was one of those old original mahogany doors. The locking mechanism was a heavy-duty locking mechanism, so if one individual tried to break down the door and wasn't successful, then they should have probably thought about a battering ram or probably get somebody heavier, you know. There are a lot of factors why the door couldn't be broken by one individual, let alone that door behind it; it now has heat. It now has, probably water was applied, the wood expanded more than normal. Those would have been the factors to contribute [to] why they couldn't break down that door successfully," said Mortis.

Hendy would be commonly seen by the locals of San Ignacio Town in front of the Victor Galvez Stadium, where she sold her famous local rice and beans on the weekends.

## Police seeking suspect for Corozal murder of US retiree

**The Commissioner of Police, Chester Williams, said that they are searching for one person who possibly played a part in the execution of a US retiree, Rodney Wayne Rushing, in Corozal Town.**

by Charles Gladden

COROZAL, Mon. Aug. 22, 2022

Corozal police are seeking one person who they believe is connected to the slaying of 66-year-old Rodney Wayne Rushing, a U.S. retiree living in Belize, who was executed in front of his home on Consejo Road in Corozal Town on Wednesday night.

According to Friday's issue of the AMANDALA, as many as nine gunshots were heard sometime after 8:00 p.m. that night by residents of the area, who saw two unknown male persons running from the scene. When they made checks, they saw Rushing's grey Hyundai Tucson SUV parked inside the yard with the driver's side door open, and Rushing's lifeless body was found approximately 10 feet away from the vehicle in a face-down position.

Gunshot wounds were visible on his head, his upper back and the right side of his abdomen, as well as his right leg, and his right thumb. Rushing was transported to the Corozal Community Hospital, where he was pronounced dead on arrival.



**Rodney Rushing, deceased**

Commissioner of Police, Chester Williams, told local reporters they are seeking one person who had frequently visited Rushing at his home.

"We have one person we're looking at who from what investigation is showing was constantly at the house. Certainly, the person knew the expat had money, and robbery have been the motive. So we're looking for the person who's always at the house with him," said Commissioner Williams.

## BHA hopes monkeypox is taken as seriously as COVID-19

Continued from Page 3

belonging to the Orthopox family of viruses. Because of this, the smallpox vaccine is estimated to be 85% effective against monkeypox, according to reports by the World Health Organization (WHO). A study published by the Centers for Disease

Control and Prevention, however, has shown that the immunity provided by the vaccine does decline over time.

Last Wednesday, the Ministry of Health announced that it had tested a total of seven persons, and the latest reports are indicating that the results of testing on all seven samples were negative.

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# The legacy of political favoritism

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia:

“**Cronyism** is the practice of partiality in awarding jobs and other advantages to friends or trusted colleagues, especially in politics and between politicians and supportive organizations. For example, cronyism occurs when appointing ‘cronies’ to positions of authority regardless of their qualifications. This is in contrast to a *meritocracy*, in which appointments are made based on merit.”

Monday, August 22, 2022

Nothing is as simple as it seems, and there are many angles to a topic, but for sure, Belizean citizens are running out of patience with the carelessness, incompetence, indiscipline and confusion that seems to have our whole society in a state of stress and frustration bordering on despair. If it’s not one thing, it’s the other. The surging crime wave – robberies, home invasions, rapes, cold-blooded murders; and then there are the repeated reports of accidental fires and set fires, so many poor folks getting burnt out, losing everything, sometimes with deadly consequences. Additionally, fatal road accidents continue at a rapid rate, especially from motorcycles; and we still have to deal with the epidemics, from Covid-19 to now monkeypox, and what next? Yet, more and bigger “skyscrapers” keep going up everywhere it seems, even while poor people are crying about low wages and rising prices. It’s for real as Marley sang, “... hunger and starvation, lamentation” in the land.

But, nothing is as simple as it seems. And with all this obscene wealth on display all around us, the question must be asked: If there are so much riches in this land, why are so many people so poor? Something is not adding up. Is there a scale with one setting for some people, and a different setting for others? Are we all Belizeans, or what? Granted, the more educated, skilled and industrious individuals will make more money than the low-skilled laboring folks. Fair enough. But where did it all go wrong, where so many are unemployed, and even the hard laboring person is struggling just to get the basic necessities for living?

There are global issues, like oil, and everything that happens in this little Belize is connected to everything else in some way or the other. And, like the seemingly insoluble gang problem, the mess that we as a nation have found ourselves in is so complicated and frustrating that it is tempting to just throw our hands up in the air, and like some of our religious folks may say, leave it to God.

But Allah/God helps those who help themselves. So we must figure out a way to turn things around where they have been going wrong for so long.

In 2008, the new UDP government embarked on a campaign to return “honesty, transparency and accountability” to government, a noble objective. Unfortunately, their efforts, if indeed they were once sincere, were considered by the electorate to be a dismal failure in the 2020 general elections. So the PUP is now in control, while the UDP seems to be falling apart.

Belizeans are blessed that, even as the Opposition is currently floundering in confusion and inner turmoil, the PUP leaders have been steadily making progress in advancing their PlanBelize goals. But, “once bitten, twice shy”; and

the Belizean people are still keeping watch to ensure that our PUP leaders stay on track and don’t fall into bad habits like their predecessors. Already, there are signs of developing arrogance with some ministers, and a tendency toward stifling citizen freedoms and muzzling dissent from political opponents in the name of crime prevention.

Nevertheless, on a scale of 1 to 10, considering the tremendous handicap they started with in November 2020, we would be tempted to give this PUP government a passing grade, perhaps even an 8 for what they have accomplished so far. But that said, the job of referees in a game is to blow the whistle when infractions occur, and otherwise “let the game play.” So, those with “thin skin” better consider the nature of the profession and make adjustments going forward.

With all that has gone wrong over the years and is still going wrong, despite the corruption and hard times and hunger, Belizeans are resilient and we tend to help out each other in times of stress; but it is the murders, the reckless loss of life at such an alarming rate, and so many young citizens with productive years ahead of them, that keeps our communities seemingly in a perpetual state of grieving. We can’t continue like this. Each time we think we may be making progress, something terrible happens, like the recent tragedy with Derrick Uh in Corozal, and Leroy Cus in Belmopan.

The Commissioner of Police recently reiterated something he has said before, and the full weight of its implications has perhaps not been acknowledged. Cronyism has always been a sticking thorn in our politics. Whether it is for favors, or jobs, or contracts, or perks of different sorts, politicians will try to use their influence to pressure public servants to do their bidding, even when it is outside the scope of their authority. So that there are a number of people with jobs and positions in different government departments who got there only because of the nod of a politician and the acquiescence of a senior public officer. This has been going on for years, and maybe that’s why there has long been the complaint of lackadaisical service from certain public officers who think they are untouchable. Shockingly, in the past UDP administration, when a certain minister was in charge of both the Police and BDF, it has been revealed that aspiring young police recruits needed a letter from the said minister to fortify their recruitment efforts. This practice was unprecedented, and it is suggested that therein may lie the seeds of the current low morale and some negative elements within the Police Department. There is a constant “house cleaning” taking place, confessed the Commissioner, where almost every week one or more officers are being expelled from the force. But with over 2,000 officers in the Police Department, he acknowledged that this long developing problem will not go away quickly.

Now, corruption and cronyism have always been problems for political administrations to one degree or another. But if there is one department whose members we absolutely must hold to a higher standard, because they are the day-to-day watchdogs for all the rest of us, that would be our Police Department. And, as the evidence indicates, that department has also now been compromised by having some individuals in positions due to political favoritism instead of merit, which can only lead to the demoralization of the rank and file, the seeds of incompetence, leading to the development of networks of rogue officers within the Department.

As committed, accessible and engaged as he might be, with this huge administrative problem not of his making, the present Commissioner of Police has become a lightning rod to absorb the repeated complaints of a frustrated public due to perceived police failures, incompetence or outright abuses. It is a formidable task indeed, to address the scourge of crime and violence, especially that associated with illegal drug sales by competing gangs, while monitoring and controlling the conduct of police officers, when there are apparently a number of “bad eggs” within his own team of men charged with carrying out this important duty.

The legacy we have inherited from the adventurous power mania of one Police Minister will not be easily or quickly erased. It will take time, unless a hasty, drastic and reckless approach is attempted, which could result in a mass of weapon-trained individuals being abruptly tossed out into the ranks of the unemployed, to perhaps bolster the strength of existing gangs. This is a serious problem that cannot be solved overnight. Our old folks used to say, “When yo hand eena taiga mout, tek it out slow.” (When your hand is in tiger’s mouth, take it out slowly.) Which is what it appears the current Commissioner is attempting to do. Keep watch, Belizeans!



(estb. 1969)

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# Record number of ICDF & MOFA scholars to head to Taiwan

by Khaila Gentle

BELIZE CITY, Sun. Aug. 21, 2022

This year, a total of 52 Belizeans were awarded scholarships to study in Taiwan. On Saturday, August 20, an orientation was held, during which the scholarship recipients were officially congratulated by Taiwan Ambassador David Kuan-Chou Chien. The 2022 awardees will be receiving scholarships from Taiwan MOFA & ICDF.


Also present at the ceremony were the Governor General of Belize, H.E. Dame Froyla Tzalam; Special Envoy for the Development of Families and Children, H.E. Rossana Briceño; Minister of Education, Hon. Francis Fonseca, and Ministry CEO, Dian Maheia.

CEO in the Ministry of Immigration, Dr. Gilroy Middleton; and CEO in the Ministry of Sustainable Development, Dr. Kenrick Williams, both alumni of the Taiwan Scholarship Programme,



Source – Embassy of Taiwan in Belize

spoke with the 52 recipients about their own personal experiences studying in Taiwan.



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## CWU marks 60 years in existence at AGM



(Source: Christian Workers Union)

CWU holds its Annual General Meeting

by Khaila Gentle

BELIZE CITY, Mon. Aug. 22, 2022

This past Saturday, the Christian Workers Union held its Annual General Meeting (AGM) and marked sixty years since its formation. The union, which was established in 1962, has 1,200 members, and while it is most known—especially in recent months—for safeguarding the rights of its stevedore members who are employed by the Port of Belize Ltd., the CWU's membership includes persons from both the private and public sectors, such as the Belize Port Authority, the Central Bank of Belize, the National Institute of Culture and History (NICH), the Development Finance Corporation (DFC), and the Belize City Council.

During Saturday's meeting, members endorsed nominees to fill vacancies on the union's executive board. In addition to its president, Evan "Mose" Hyde,

the CWU board is currently comprised of 1<sup>st</sup> vice president, Antonio Elias Heredia; 2<sup>nd</sup> vice president, Colleen Hamilton; treasurer, Ella Waight; organizer, Stephany Gongora; trustee, Leonora Flowers; trustee, James Neal; and trustee, Windfield Dennison.

Sista Yaya Marin Coleman was the guest speaker at this year's AGM. According to a press release from the CWU, she urged members who attended the meeting to increase their engagement with the union in an effort to keep CWU leadership accountable and transparent. She also highlighted the urgent need for self-examination—not just for the union but for all Belizeans—particularly during the current, challenging times.

This year's AGM was the first in-person meeting held in two years and was held under the theme "CWU! Together we continue to strive, to stand, to solidify as we fight for justice."

## Drunken son assaults father...

Continued from Page 3

machete and assaulted his father, after which he set his father's home on fire and fled the scene.

Michael Flores was subsequently captured by Dangriga police, but charges have not yet been levied against him, as police are waiting for an official

report from the National Fire Service to determine the cause of the fire.

The interior of Flores' uninsured home was extensively damaged by the fire. The estimated cost of the damages is yet to be determined.

Santos Flores, who was hospitalized after the attack, has been listed as being in a stable condition.

Ernestine



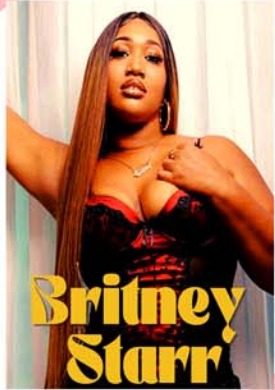
Supa G



TR Shine



Cozmo Boy



Britney Starr



Jalmito



King Rome

# MARTINS FEST

SUNDAY SEPTEMBER 11TH

MAHOGANY STREET

STARTING FROM 10 IN THE MORNING

★ Sweet Pain Band 3.0 Chico Ramos ★

★ PAPA JOHN ★ YG ★ J MONEY ★ XKLUSIVE Soundz ★

★ BLUE  
★ STEEL

THERE IS GOING TO BE A KIDS ZONE WITH RIDES, BOOTHS FROM VARIOUS BUSINESSES AND ORGANIZATIONS. FOOD WILL BE ON HAND ALL DAY MAHOGANY STREETS FLAVORS AND QUALITY.



## El legado del favoritismo político

De Wikipedia, la enciclopedia libre:

“El amiguismo es la práctica de parcialidad en la concesión de puestos de trabajo y otras ventajas a amigos o colegas de confianza, especialmente en la política y entre políticos y organizaciones de apoyo. Por ejemplo, el amiguismo ocurre cuando se nombran a “amigos” para puestos de autoridad, independientemente de sus calificaciones. Esto contrasta con una meritocracia, en la que los nombramientos se hacen en función del mérito”.

Lunes, 22 de agosto de 2022

Nada es tan simple como parece, y un tema tiene muchos ángulos, pero sin duda, a los ciudadanos de Belize se les está acabando la paciencia con el descuido, la incompetencia, la indisciplina y la confusión que parece tener a toda nuestra sociedad en un estado de estrés y frustración al borde de la desesperación. Si no es una cosa, es la otra. La creciente ola de delincuencia: robos, allanamientos de morada, violaciones, asesinatos a sangre fría; y luego están los repetidos informes de incendios accidentales e incendios provocados, tanta gente pobre sufriendo fuegos, perdiéndolo todo, a veces con consecuencias mortales. Además, los accidentes de tráfico mortales continúan a un ritmo acelerado, especialmente de motocicletas; y todavía tenemos que lidiar con las epidemias, desde Covid-19 hasta ahora la viruela del mono, ¿y qué sigue? Sin embargo, más y más grandes “rascacielos” siguen construyéndose en todas partes, incluso cuando la gente pobre llora por los bajos salarios y el aumento de los precios. Es real, como cantó Marley, “... hambre y hambruna, lamentación” en la tierra.

Pero, nada es tan simple como parece. Y con toda esta obscena riqueza exhibida a nuestro alrededor, la pregunta debe hacerse: si hay tanta riqueza en esta tierra, ¿por qué tanta gente es tan pobre? Algo no cuadra. ¿Existe una balanza con una configuración para algunas personas y una configuración diferente para otras? ¿Somos todos beliceños, o qué? Por supuesto, las personas más educadas, calificadas y laboriosas ganarán más dinero que los trabajadores poco calificados. Me parece bien. Pero, ¿dónde salió todo mal, donde tantos están desempleados, e incluso la persona que trabaja duro está luchando solo para obtener las necesidades básicas para vivir?

Hay temas globales, como el petróleo, y todo lo que sucede en este pequeño Belize está conectado con todo lo demás de una forma u otra. Y, al igual que el aparentemente insoluble problema de las pandillas, el lío en el que nos encontramos como nación es tan complicado y frustrante que es tentador levantar las manos en el aire y, como algunos de nuestros amigos religiosos pueden decir, déjenlo a Dios.

Pero Allah/Dios ayuda a aquellos que se ayudan a sí mismos. Así que debemos encontrar una manera de cambiar las cosas donde han ido mal durante tanto tiempo.

En 2008, el nuevo gobierno UDP se embarcó en una campaña para devolverle al gobierno “honestidad, transparencia y rendición de cuentas”, un noble objetivo. Desafortunadamente, sus esfuerzos, si alguna vez fueron sinceros, fueron considerados por el electorado como un rotundo fracaso en las elecciones generales de 2020. Entonces, el PUP ahora tiene el control, mientras que el UDP parece estar desmoronándose.

Los beliceños tienen la bendición de que, incluso cuando la Oposición actualmente se tambalea en la confusión y la agitación interna, los líderes del PUP han progresado constantemente en el avance de sus objetivos de Plan Belize. Pero, “una vez mordido, dos veces tímido”; y el pueblo beliceño sigue vigilando para asegurarse de que nuestros líderes PUP se mantengan encaminados y no caigan en malos hábitos como sus predecesores. Ya hay signos de arrogancia en desarrollo con algunos ministros y una tendencia a sofocar las libertades de los ciudadanos y amordazar la disidencia de los opositores políticos en nombre de la prevención del delito.

Sin embargo, en una escala del 1 al 10, considerando la tremenda desventaja con la que comenzaron en noviembre de 2020, estaríamos tentados a darle a este gobierno PUP una calificación aprobatoria, tal vez incluso un 8 por lo que han logrado hasta ahora. Pero dicho esto, el trabajo de los árbitros en un juego es hacer sonar el silbato cuando ocurren infracciones y, de lo contrario, “dejar que el juego siga”.

Entonces, aquellos que se ofenden fácilmente deben considerar mejor la naturaleza de la profesión y hacer ajustes en el futuro.

Con todo lo que ha ido mal a lo largo de los años y sigue yendo mal, a pesar de la corrupción, los tiempos difíciles y el hambre, los beliceños somos resistentes y tendemos a ayudarnos unos a otros en tiempos de estrés; pero son los asesinatos, la pérdida imprudente de vidas a un ritmo tan alarmante, y tantos ciudadanos jóvenes con años productivos por delante, lo que mantiene a nuestras comunidades aparentemente en un perpetuo estado de duelo. No podemos seguir así. Cada vez que pensamos que podemos estar progresando, sucede algo terrible, como la reciente tragedia con Derrick Uh en Corozal y Leroy Cus en Belmopán.

El Comisionado de Policía reiteró recientemente algo que ha dicho antes, y tal vez no se haya reconocido todo el peso de sus implicaciones. El amiguismo siempre ha sido una espina clavada en nuestra política. Ya sea por favores, trabajos, contratos o gratificaciones de diferentes tipos, los políticos intentarán usar su influencia para presionar a los servidores públicos para que cumplan sus órdenes, incluso cuando esté fuera del alcance de su autoridad. De modo que hay una cantidad de personas con trabajos y cargos en diferentes departamentos gubernamentales que llegaron allí solo gracias al visto bueno de un político y la aquiescencia de un alto funcionario público. Esto ha estado sucediendo durante años, y tal vez por eso existe desde hace mucho tiempo la denuncia del servicio negligente de ciertos funcionarios públicos que se creen intocables. Sorprendentemente, en la pasada administración UDP, cuando cierto ministro estaba a cargo tanto de la Policía como de la Fuerza de Defensa de Belize, se reveló que los aspirantes a jóvenes reclutas de la policía necesitaban una carta de dicho ministro para fortalecer sus esfuerzos de reclutamiento. Esta práctica no tenía precedentes, y se sugiere que allí pueden residir las semillas de la baja moral actual y algunos elementos negativos dentro del Departamento de Policía. Hay una constante “limpieza”, confesó el Comisionado, donde casi todas las semanas uno o más oficiales son expulsados de la fuerza. Pero con más de 2000 oficiales en el Departamento de Policía, reconoció que este problema de larga evolución no desaparecerá rápidamente.

Ahora bien, la corrupción y el amiguismo siempre han sido problemas para las administraciones políticas en un grado u otro. Pero si hay un departamento cuyos miembros deben ser asesorados a un estándar más alto, porque son los perros guardianes del día a día para todos los demás, ese sería nuestro Departamento de Policía. Y, como lo indica la evidencia, ese departamento ahora también se ha visto comprometido al tener algunos individuos en posiciones debido al favoritismo político en lugar del mérito, lo que solo puede conducir a la desmoralización de la base, las semillas de la incompetencia, lo que lleva al desarrollo de redes de oficiales deshonestos dentro del Departamento.

Por más comprometido, accesible e involucrado que sea, con este enorme problema administrativo que no es de su creación, el actual Comisionado de Policía se ha convertido en un pararrayos para absorber las repetidas quejas de un público frustrado debido a las percibidas fallas policiales, la incompetencia o los abusos absolutos. De hecho, es una tarea formidable abordar el flagelo de la delincuencia y la violencia, especialmente la asociada con la venta de drogas ilegales por parte de pandillas competidoras, al mismo tiempo que se monitorea y controla la conducta de los oficiales de policía, cuando aparentemente hay una serie de “huevos podridos” en su propio equipo de hombres encargados de llevar a cabo este importante deber.

El legado que hemos heredado de la aventurera manía de poder de un Ministro de Policía no se borrará fácil ni rápidamente. Tomará tiempo, a menos que se intente un enfoque precipitado, drástico e imprudente, que podría dar lugar a que una masa de individuos entrenados en armas sea arrojada abruptamente a las filas de los desempleados, para quizás reforzar la fuerza de las pandillas existentes. Este es un problema grave que no se puede resolver de la noche a la mañana. Nuestros ancianos solían decir: “Cuando tienes la mano en la boca del tigre, sácala despacio”. Que es lo que parece que el Comisionado actual está tratando de hacer. ¡Manténganse alertos, beliceños!



# From the Publisher



Evan X Hyde

There was a very bad mistake in my Tuesday column last week, the Tuesday newspaper being printed only online. I caught the mistake when I read over the column when it was reproduced in our Friday hard copy edition.

For decades, from the 1980s, I had a secretary by the name of Odessa Robinson Smith who typed all my material. It ended up that she was the only one who could read my terrible handwriting. I think Odessa migrated to New York after the coronavirus pandemic began, so I have been doing my own typing since then, and I hate it.

In any case, on Tuesday I typed that “hundreds” of Japanese had been killed by the Hiroshima and Nagasaki atomic bombs in August of 1945. It should have been “hundreds of thousands”

instead of hundreds — hundreds of thousands in each of the cities.

Anyway, my column today, apart from seeking to correct that Tuesday error, is intended to flesh out an aspect, a very important aspect, of the John Kennedy assassination in 1963 which I had not mentioned in my Friday column.

When Miguel Ydigoras Fuentes, an army general, was elected President of Guatemala in 1958, I was just a child, maybe eleven years old. Fuentes was very aggressive where the Guatemalan claim to British Honduras was concerned, and there was great concern in the majority black Belize City, where many people felt the ruling People’s United Party (PUP), which Rt. Hon. George Price had taken over from Hon.

Leigh Richardson and Hon. Philip Goldson in 1956, was not hostile enough to said claim.

The United States administration of President Dwight D. Eisenhower, had cut a deal with the Fuentes administration to have Cuban exiles trained on a coffee estate in Guatemala for an invasion of Cuba, which Fidel Castro had taken over by revolution in January of 1959.

John Kennedy found this plan for a so-called Bay of Pigs invasion of Cuba by Cuban exiles on his desk when he assumed the presidency of the United States in January of 1961.

Fuentes later claimed that in return for his allowing Guatemala to be used to train the Cuban exiles, the U.S. government had promised him support

for Guatemala’s claim to the British colony. There is no doubt that he was very aggressive where the Belize claim was concerned, and Philip Goldson, who had entered into a coalition with Herbert Fuller’s National Independence Party (NIP) in 1958, was using his newspaper, THE BELIZE BILLBOARD, the leading newspaper in British Honduras, to counter Fuentes’ rhetoric and activities, such as trying to cross the Benque Viejo border, and boost the morale of alarmed Belizeans.

Anyway, when the Cuban exiles finally invaded Cuba in April of 1961, there was a critical moment in the invasion when the Cuban exiles needed air cover from the U.S. government. One assumes it was the American “deep state” which had come up with the original invasion plan during the Eisenhower administration. When that “deep state,” and the Cuban exiles, called for the air cover in desperation, Kennedy refused.

The Cuban exiles were then overwhelmed by the Cuban defenders, led by Fidel himself, and about 1300 of them ended up prisoners in Cuban jails. Castro later exchanged them for American farm tractors.

Figuring out why President Kennedy refused the air cover is not for me to try to do. What we know is that there were Cuban exiles and members of the American deep state who became very, very angry with Kennedy and his decision. Students of the Kennedy assassination believe that Kennedy’s decision to refuse to provide the Bay of Pigs air cover contributed substantially to the assassination conspiracy against him.

It’s interesting to note that Fuentes’ decision to host the training of the Cuban exiles in Guatemala, sparked a nationalist rebellion in the Guatemalan army in late 1960, led by Marco Antonio Yon Sosa and Luis Turcios Lima. Many scholars view that army rebellion as the beginning of the Guatemalan civil war, which lasted for thirty-six years.

That civil war may have contributed to Great Britain’s being able to push through political independence for Belize, because the Guatemalan civil war was very bloody and out of control in 1981, and the rest of the world looked favorably on Belize’s quest for self-rule.

Well now, here we Belizeans are presently confronted by this International Court of Justice (ICJ) arbitration. My personal opinion is that we are in the hands of the Americans. You will say, of course, what do I mean by that. Well, can you deny that we were in the hands of the British until 1981?

In closing, I would like to say that there are some Belizeans here who focus exclusively on the activities and dangers of the Mexican cartels. These Belizeans never mention the American Mafia, but there is such a thing as cross-border crime.

I have a teacher named Clinton Canul Luna. You know that. But I also have a white American teacher named Jeff. He knows a lot more than I do, so I spend time listening to him.

Power to the people.

## FROM THE PUBLISHER en Español

Hubo un error muy grave en mi columna de los martes la semana pasada, el periódico de los martes siendo impreso solo en línea. Me di cuenta del error cuando leí la columna cuando se reprodujo en nuestra edición impresa del viernes.

Durante décadas, desde la década de 1980, tuve una secretaria de nombre Odessa Robinson Smith que mecanografiaba todo mi material. Resultó que ella era la única que podía leer mi terrible letra. Creo que Odessa emigró a Nueva York después de que comenzara la pandemia de coronavirus, así que he estado usando el teclado yo desde entonces y lo odio.

De todos modos, el martes escribí que “cientos” de japoneses habían muerto por las bombas atómicas de Hiroshima y Nagasaki en agosto de 1945. Debería haber sido “cientos de miles” en lugar de cientos. Cientos de miles en cada una de las ciudades.

De todos modos, mi columna de hoy, además de tratar de corregir ese error del martes, pretende desarrollar un aspecto, un aspecto muy importante, del asesinato de John Kennedy en 1963 que no había mencionado en mi columna del viernes.

Cuando Miguel Ydígoras Fuentes, general del ejército, fue elegido presidente de Guatemala en 1958, yo era apenas un niño, de unos once años. Fuentes fue muy agresivo en lo que respecta al reclamo guatemalteco de Honduras Británica, y hubo una gran preocupación en la Ciudad de Belize que era de mayoría negra, donde muchas personas sintieron que el gobernante Partido Unido del Pueblo (PUP), cuyo mando el Muy Honorable George Price había tomado del Honorable Leigh Richardson y el Honorable Philip Goldson en 1956, no era lo suficientemente hostil a dicho reclamo.

La administración de los Estados Unidos del presidente Dwight D. Eisenhower había llegado a un acuerdo con la administración de Fuentes para entrenar exiliados cubanos en una finca

de café en Guatemala para una invasión de Cuba, que Fidel Castro había tomado por revolución en enero de 1959.

John Kennedy encontró este plan para la llamada invasión de Cuba mediante la Bahía de Cochinos por exiliados cubanos en su escritorio cuando asumió la presidencia de los Estados Unidos en enero de 1961.

Fuentes luego afirmó que a cambio de permitir que Guatemala se usara para entrenar a los exiliados cubanos, el gobierno de Estados Unidos le había prometido apoyo para el reclamo de Guatemala sobre la colonia británica. No hay duda de que fue muy agresivo en lo que respecta al reclamo de Belize, y Philip Goldson, que había entrado en una coalición con el Partido de la Independencia Nacional (NIP por sus siglas en inglés) de Herbert Fuller en 1958, estaba usando su periódico, THE BELIZE BILLBOARD, el principal periódico en Honduras Británica, para contrarrestar la retórica y las actividades de Fuentes, como intentar cruzar la frontera de Benque Viejo, y levantar la moral de los beliceños alarmados.

De todos modos, cuando los exiliados cubanos finalmente invadieron Cuba en abril de 1961, hubo un momento crítico en la invasión cuando los exiliados cubanos necesitaron cobertura aérea del gobierno de los Estados Unidos. Se supone que fue el “estado profundo” estadounidense el que ideó el original plan de invasión durante la administración de Eisenhower. Cuando ese “estado profundo” y los exiliados cubanos pidieron desesperadamente cobertura aérea, Kennedy se negó.

Los exiliados cubanos fueron entonces superados por los defensores cubanos, encabezados por el mismo Fidel, y unos 1300 de ellos terminaron presos en cárceles cubanas. Castro luego los cambió por tractores agrícolas estadounidenses.

Averiguar por qué el presidente Kennedy rechazó la cobertura aérea no me corresponde a mí. Lo que sabemos

es que hubo exiliados cubanos y miembros del estado profundo estadounidense que se enfadaron muchísimo con Kennedy y su decisión. Los estudiosos del asesinato de Kennedy creen que la decisión de Kennedy de negarse a proporcionar cobertura aérea para Bahía de Cochinos contribuyó sustancialmente a la conspiración de asesinato en su contra.

Es interesante notar que la decisión de Fuentes de albergar el entrenamiento de los exiliados cubanos en Guatemala provocó una rebelión nacionalista en el ejército guatemalteco a fines de 1960, dirigida por Marco Antonio Yon Sosa y Luis Turcios Lima. Muchos estudiosos ven esa rebelión del ejército como el comienzo de la guerra civil guatemalteca, que duró treinta y seis años.

Esa guerra civil puede haber contribuido a que Gran Bretaña pudiera impulsar la independencia política de Belize, porque la guerra civil guatemalteca fue muy sangrienta y estaba fuera de control en 1981, y el resto del mundo veía con buenos ojos la búsqueda de la autodeterminación de Belize.

Bueno, aquí nosotros, los beliceños, nos enfrentamos actualmente a este arbitraje de la Corte Internacional de Justicia (CIJ). Mi opinión personal es que estamos en manos de los estadounidenses. Ustedes dirán, por supuesto, qué quiero decir con eso. Bueno, ¿pueden negar que estuvimos en manos de los británicos hasta 1981?

Para terminar, me gustaría decir que hay algunos beliceños aquí que se enfocan exclusivamente en las actividades y peligros de los cárteles mexicanos. Estos beliceños nunca mencionan la mafia estadounidense, pero existe el crimen transfronterizo.

Tengo un maestro que se llama Clinton Canul Luna. Ustedes lo saben. Pero también tengo un profesor estadounidense blanco llamado Jeff. Él sabe mucho más que yo, así que paso tiempo escuchándolo.

¡Poder al pueblo!

## Biden's mouth is writing checks US military can't cash



by Clinton Canul Luna

Permit me, our dear readers of this column, to present to you the following, which I find to be of much interest. Below is Part 1 of Scott Ritter's "Two-Front War: Biden's mouth is writing checks the US Military can't cash," which was posted on Youtube by RonPaulLibertyReport on July 4, 2022:

Thank you very much, Daniel, for the introduction. Thanks for the old person ramp. Had this conference been held about 10 years ago, I would have just hopped up on stage, but I want to thank Dr. Paul for having me here. Thank you, Dan. Dan, I do have a problem with you. You put me at a table with Mr. Gerald, and you suckered me into believing that I was with somebody where I could lower my language standards. I want to apologize to Gary, Nina and Joe. You're very important sponsors. For anything I might have said there, I didn't realize you were so important. To the people out last night that were very courteous and stopped talking, that third beer was not a good idea, so, but I'm very happy to be here.

I'm going to start off by a little bit of theatrics, because the topic here is writing checks your body can't cash. Where'd I get that line from? I got that line from a movie that came out 30 some odd years ago, **Top Gun**, and it's a great movie. When **Top Gun** came out, I was going through flight school, Marine Corps, aviator and I went and saw that movie; that was my movie.

There's a great scene in there, a guy named Cad, because you know, you're neighbor pilots, you don't have real names. You have Maverick and Cad and Goose and Iceman. And, my name was Sleepy, but I won't tell you that one, but we got a scene where Cad, the carrier air group commander, is chewing out Maverick and he said, "Son, your ego is writing checks your body can't cash!" I love that line, because that pretty much defined my military career. Everywhere I went, I would have people say "Ritter, your brain's writing checks your body can't cash; you got to tone it down a little bit." The reason why I bring that up is ... Here we are today taking a look at what's going on in the world, and we have a president who likes to believe he's a Maverick. One of the reasons why I put these glasses on is that, oh, Joe likes to wear these kind of glasses; he's an aviator. He doesn't fly, he's never served, he hasn't done any of that, but he puts it on because Joe thinks he's an aviator. Joe thinks he's Maverick. Well, Joe, I'm here to tell you your ego is writing checks America's body can't cash, and that's just a statement of fact.

The first check that we're being asked to cash right now deals with Ukraine. It's a very dangerous situation. Daniel hit it right on the head. We're not just talking about, you know, a transformative moment in geopolitical history in Europe.

We're talking about if this thing goes south, we don't wake up tomorrow and I want to re-emphasize that, ladies and gentlemen, because somehow, today, in 2022 we have forgotten the lessons that I knew when I was in the military in the 1980s, that thermonuclear war is a reality, and it's a reality that means the end of humanity, all humanity, and it's not going to be instantaneous. It will be for some people to get the 500,000-degree sun tan, you know. Flash, BOOM, you're done. But for most of us, it's going to be a very lingering death, starvation, radiation, it ain't going to be pretty, but it will be terminal for everybody.

So, we need to take this serious. We can joke about Joe Biden, you know, because sometimes it appears he is a joke, but he's the commander-in-chief of the United States of America, our country. He's a man who has taken an oath that many here have taken, to uphold and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign and domestic. He's the commander-in-chief of our military, and he's got us involved in some things right now in Europe that are very worrisome. Let's talk about why we're doing what we're doing in Europe. There's this organization called NATO, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, formed in 1949 during the Cold War. Ostensibly a defensive alliance. At one time it was a legitimate defensive alliance whose purpose was to protect Europe from the potential of any Soviet aggression and aggression from Eastern European countries who we believe wanted to gobble up the rest of Europe. They had

no such designs. NATO was always premised on a false assumption, but that doesn't matter. NATO existed, it was there for a reason, and it served as the foundation of America's engagement in Europe for decades. In 1992, the Soviet Union went away. Actually it went away in December of 1991, and with it every reason for NATO to continue to exist. There was literally no reason for NATO to exist after that, and yet we continued to promote it, and not just promote its continued existence, but we promoted its expansion, its redefinition, and what did it become? It stopped being an organization that focused on the security of Western Europe, and it started being an organization that talked about expanding European Transatlantic power on a global stage, a global platform. It stopped being a defensive military alliance and it became an offensive regime-change-promoting alliance. One only needs to look at NATO engagement in Kosovo and Serbia in the 1990s, in Libya, Afghanistan, Iraq. These are not defensive, and with the exception of Kosovo, they don't even deal with Europe. So, NATO is a problem.

(To Be Continued)

[fincasolan@gmail.com](mailto:fincasolan@gmail.com)

August 21, 2022

Finca Solana

Corozal Town

## No charges for Leroy Cus murder

by Charles Gladden

BELMOPAN, Mon. Aug. 22, 2022

A post-mortem exam done on the body of Leroy Cus, an 18-year-old graphic designer at the Belize City branch of Brodies who was stabbed to death while walking to his home in Belmopan after a day of work last Wednesday, has determined that his death was caused by hypovolemic shock and internal and external exsanguination due to multiple penetrating stab wounds to the chest.

The Friday issue of AMANDALA reported that Cus, who was originally from San Pedro Colombia in Toledo, was ambushed and killed during a robbery attempt near St. Anne's Anglican Primary School on the central walkway in Belmopan while on his way home from work sometime after 7:00 p.m. He was found later that night by his two older brothers, and was reportedly clutching two of his debit cards in his left hand, which was pressed against his chest, when he was found. There were multiple stab wounds in his left forearm, his left bicep, the left lower side of his chest, and his left ear and also two stab wounds on the upper left side of his back.

When interviewed last Friday, Commissioner of Police, Chester Williams said that investigators have found what is believed to be the murder weapon and have detained one person



Leroy Cus, deceased

who they believe played a role in the Toledo teen's death,

"The investigation is ongoing. We are hoping that we will get some leads very shortly. We have detained one person last night [and] we've recovered a knife which we believe is the murder weapon, but there are certain things that we must do. The knife will be checked by forensics to see [if] there's blood on it, and if there is blood, whenever we have the post-mortem of young man Cus, they're going to extract blood samples and we'll send the knife and the blood sample for DNA testing to ascertain, if the blood is on the knife is that of Mr. Cus," said Commissioner Williams.

No one has been charged as yet in connection with the death of Leroy Cus.

## Two men charged for separate firearm offenses

by Charles Gladden

BELIZE CITY, Thurs. Aug. 18, 2022

This week, two men were charged for separate firearm offenses.

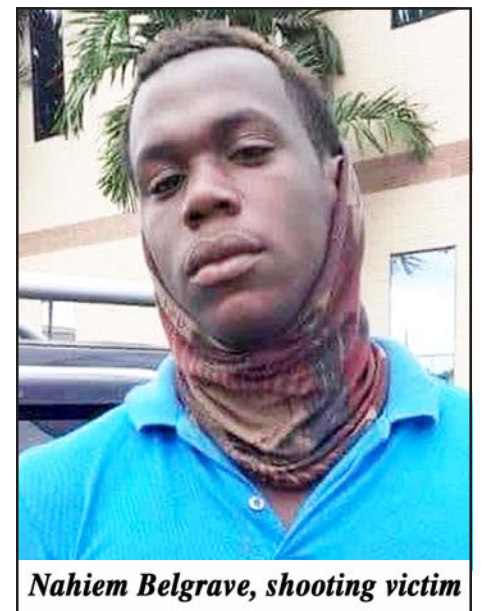
Firstly, 25-year-old Kevin Lanza, a resident of Antelope Street Extension, was arrested and charged for shooting 19-year-old Nahiem Belgrave, a resident of Kelly Street, on Tuesday night.

On Tuesday night, Belgrave was socializing with a few companions on Raccoon Street Extension when Lanza emerged from one of the alleys in the area and fired several shots in his direction, which wounded him twice in the back.

Belgrave was taken to the Karl Heusner Memorial Hospital (KMH) for medical treatment and survived the attempt on his life.

While the motive for the shooting is yet unclear, Lanza was charged with the use of deadly means of harm and wounding.

Meanwhile, in the western part of the country, Brandon Cho was busted with a 9mm Taurus firearm on Wednesday while police were conducting mobile



Nahiem Belgrave, shooting victim

patrols in the Santiago Juan Layout area of San Ignacio Town.

Police officers discovered the firearm, which contained a magazine with 4 live rounds of ammunition, while conducting a search on Cho.

He was arrested and charged with the offense of kept firearm without a gun license and kept ammunition without a gun license.

# Rotten “ignore” culture to blame for Uh, Cus tragedies

by Colin Hyde

We won't know the story behind the tragic death of young Derrick Uh until a thorough investigation is completed—if he was beaten up, if they forgot him in the van, or if they wanted to punish him so they deliberately left him there, thinking that after his punishment he would be better for it, pray God, not knowing he would suffocate to death. There are many questions out there, as there also are in regard to the tragic death of young Leroy Cus in Belmopan. One certain thing is that in both cases there was major departmental failure.

Former ministers of police, Mike Peyrefitte and John Saldivar, have come down hard on the present minister and the commissioner, but they have no right to talk. Re: the Uh death, I understand that that police van was ferrying prisoners for 8 years, and re: the Cus murder, for decades the Police Department in Belmopan has been getting complaints that in the late evening and night evil men lurk near the pathways between the Belmopan Bus Stop and Site Seven and Bird Site, and prey on people.

I have heard people blame police failure on the greater population the officers are drawn from, but the real culprit is our culture of “ignore”; that is the story behind our inability to

address our problems. In a piece in the *Reporter* last week, Neri Briceno wrote about the “cancel culture” coming to Belize. Well, that's compounding a felony, for we are already mired in a culture that slows and blinds our path to progress.

I don't know if it started with the British. Maybe it did. Maybe those masters sent here from England thought it a great tool to keep the colonial subjects in their place. The “ignore” culture certainly was here, suffocating our growth, under the PUP, and it was adopted completely by the UDP. In this culture, our leaders deliberately block us out. They are proud to say they don't read newspapers and they don't listen to newscasts. How unlike the great Caliph of Baghdad, who dressed like a civilian and went about in the late evening so that he could hear what his people were saying, not to punish those who weren't kissing his backside, but so that he could address their problems.

The top brass apparently didn't know that their van was a death trap. If they did, the top brass in the department are guilty of gross neglect and inhumanity. I don't think they knew. And the reason they didn't is because in the culture of “ignore,” it is easy for the obvious to escape you. In the culture of “ignore,” you practice line management to the extreme. Line

management is good for the chain of command, and terrible for the flow of ideas. Line management won't have a suggestion or comments box, and if it does it is just for show. Line management doesn't want to hear anything, because line management knows everything. This is how we do it, and if you don't like it, get the hell out.

You can't tell me that in a department of 2,000 officers there wasn't one person who knew that van was a death trap. But you can tell me that those at the top were ignorant, didn't see that a breakdown could be disastrous. You can tell me that because in the culture of “ignore”, only a tragedy leads to a cure.

In the book *Cheaper by the Dozen*, written by Frank and Ernestine Gilbreth, the breadwinner of the family, the dad, earned money by improving designs of buildings and bridges submitted to the government, and showing how savings on time and other inputs could be made. His was a well- remunerated job that provided enough income for the dozen while the mom directed a household with support staff. Taking care of a dozen children is a task for giants, not for – if you want to know who can't handle a job like that, go and ask L. Wade.

When it comes to safety, we have a bad culture, and if the death of young Uh is a case of terrible negligence, there aren't words to describe the failure in Belmopan that led to the murder of young Cus.

They don't need to cut down any trees. A law should have been passed a long time ago: six months for anyone found in a tree beside the path in those areas where criminals have been preying on innocent citizens for decades. What is so difficult about getting a couple officers to patrol these hot spots between 4:00 p.m. and 11:00 at nights? Really, over the years the police in Belmopan must have received dozens of complaints about predators lying in wait for people at the very spot young Leroy Cus lost his life. Did he have to die to make the authorities aware of their terrible failure?

We are all victims here, victims of this terrible culture of “ignore”. This week we grieve for two young men who paid with their precious lives.

### I think Mahler needs to smoke weed

Going not from experience, but from the cool of Peter Tosh, I am recommending marijuana for Mr. Mahler, to help him simmer down. Why

did he get upset when Shyne Barrow dropped a flag at the white-owned BET show? Brother, if Mr. Shyne unfurls a thousand flags, that shouldn't get to you. That brother has a niche, and in that space, only that space, he can shine.

My, my, I can't tell you how disappointed I am with Mahler, for him getting so snappy with Miss Courtney. So, there were some vacant spaces at the grounds at the music fest. We're not going to debate that. Audrey said so, and she put up pictures to prove it wasn't a packed yard. Braa, so what, it was the first time. Is it true that our artists got some tidy chum? I'm glad.

But I'm not glad about how you lost your cool with Miss Courtney. Praises there is a ready remedy to turn your churlishness into a good tranquilo. I didn't hear you calling out to legalize it. What, are you afraid of the church?

### Pehreh wasting himself

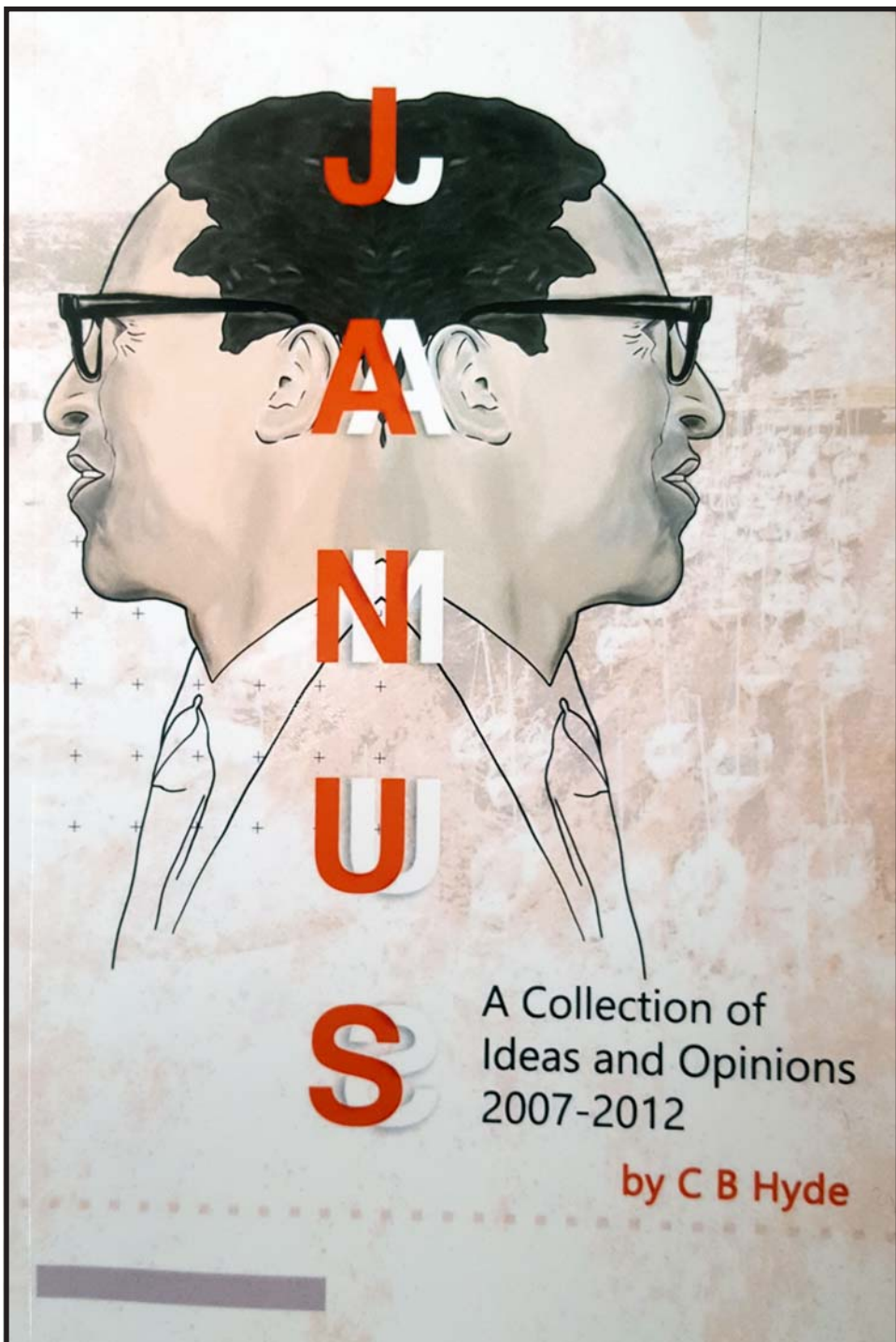
My calculator is telling me that all this relentless bombast from Pehreh adds up to Dean Barrow and Michael Finnegan promising him Queen's Square. He's doing what those devils want alright, but I have to warn him that if he continues wasting himself with the corrupt wing, Queen's Square will be no sure thing. We all know the saying, if you lie wid daag you will rise with flea. No one can daub brush on Pehreh for a couple sofas only he can fit in, and some used laptops, but he's hanging with a wrong crowd.

Braa, it appears you learned nothing from the episode with the lady, the one whose charge led you to brag that in a single day you earned the, ehm, pittance she was haggling over. That cost you more than the votes Francis dusted you by. You need to be more cagey, Pehreh. I know that all politicians are rotten arrogant, but man, defending the defenseless, sorry, you have to let those bohgaz slip to their political oblivion.

### Divisions needed for Carnival

At the beginning, this Carnival thing was a spectacle for all, but now it is a rated show, not for everyone. I wouldn't encourage any parent to take their children to watch from the street side, or on television. I say we need some divisions here. We should have a parade for children in the morning, a parade for sober adults in the afternoon, and after a two-hour break, loose adults can be let loose.

Properly, they should take their rude game to San Pedro or Placencia. I bet they wouldn't be tolerated in Hopkins.



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# REGIONAL & INTERNATIONAL

## Pakistan's Imran Khan charged: What happens next?

Former prime minister must appear before an anti-terrorism court to face charges after allegedly 'threatening' Pakistani officials.



Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf's supporters gather in Rawalpindi on Sunday to protest Imran Khan's removal from government [Sohail Shahzad/EPA-EFE]

by Abid Hussain

Published On 22 Aug 2022 22 Aug 2022 (ALJAZEERA)

Islamabad, Pakistan – Pakistan's political temperature shot up another notch when former Prime Minister Imran Khan was charged by police under anti-terrorism laws after making accusatory comments during a public rally.

While he has not responded to the charges himself, his lawyers appealed for pre-arrest bail on Monday at the Islamabad High Court, which granted Khan protective bail until Thursday, when he is likely to appear before an anti-terrorism court in the capital.

Why was Imran Khan charged?

In a speech on Saturday evening in Islamabad to protest the arrest and alleged torture of his Chief of Staff Shahbaz Gill, Khan is accused of "threatening" state officials and promising to mount a legal challenge after Gill was arrested on August 9.

Khan singled out senior Islamabad police officials and a female judge who earlier in the week approved detaining Gill for two days. Gill faces sedition charges after he was accused of inciting mutiny against the country's powerful military.

He accused police of torturing Gill in custody and said the charges against his ally were part of "a conspiracy" to

pit his party against the military. Police have denied the torture allegations.

"When I asked Islamabad police 'tell me what did you do [to Gill]', I was told that 'we did nothing. We got a boot from behind [to follow orders]'," Khan said in his address.

Islamabad police denounced Khan's comments and warned anybody "threatening the police or making false accusations will be dealt with according to the law".

Pakistan's media regulatory authority in a statement on Sunday accused Khan of levelling "baseless allegations" and "spreading hate speech" against "state institutions and officers", and placed a ban on live broadcasts of his speeches on national television.

Pakistan's Interior Minister Rana Sanaullah also delivered a news conference on Sunday in which he said the government is exploring options to file a case against the former prime minister for his "provocative speech".

The slow buildup in the standoff reached a crescendo on Sunday night when a formal police report was filed against Khan.

Full article can be found at : <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/8/22/pakistan-explainer-imran-khan-charges>

First published by [www.aljazeera.com](http://www.aljazeera.com)

## Haiti: Spike in weapons smuggled into country from US



Special Agent Anthony Salisbury displayed some of the weapons seized that had been destined for Haiti

by Vanessa Buschschiüter

BBC News

US officials say there has been a surge of high-powered weapons being smuggled from Florida to Haiti.

The Caribbean country has been rocked by brutal gang warfare in which hundreds of people have been killed in the past six weeks alone.

A US federal agent said that the number of weapons illegally shipped to Haiti had risen to unprecedented levels.

Haitian police have complained about being outgunned and outnumbered in their fights with gang members.

US Special Agent Anthony Salisbury, who is in charge of Homeland Security Investigations, told reporters at a news conference in Miami that "not only have we seen a marked uptick in the number of weapons, but a serious increase in the calibre and type of firearms being illegally trafficked".

He added that the Department of Homeland Security was ramping up efforts to stem the flow of illicit weapons.

According to Mr Salisbury, there is an alarming trend of high-powered weapons being smuggled from ports in South Florida to the US. "In the wrong hands, these weapons are easily capable of

causing mass casualties," he warned.

In June, the UN Security Council voted to ban the sale of small arms and ammunition to "non-state actors" in Haiti, but the flow of illegal arms seems to have only increased.

On Saturday, customs officials at a port in the Haitian capital seized containers full of ammunition and weapons.

The paperwork for the containers said they were destined for the Episcopal Church of Haiti.

The Episcopal Church has issued a statement saying that it had not been expecting any shipments, but police have since arrested a priest in connection with its investigation.

Haiti is not the first violence-wracked country to complain about the flow of illegal weapons from the US.

Mexico has long demanded that the US do more to combat arms trafficking, pointing out that the vast majority of weapons used in crimes come from the US.

Last year, the Mexican government took the unusual step of suing some of the biggest US gun manufacturers, accusing them of "facilitating the unlawful trafficking of their guns to drug cartels and other criminals in Mexico".

First published by BBC Latin America.

## Climate change forces indigenous islanders in Panama to relocate

Some 2,000 islanders in Guna Yala will become one of the first indigenous communities in Latin America to relocate because of climate change.

Islander Magdalena Martínez, who has campaigned for new housing on the mainland, tells the BBC how she feels about leaving the island she grew up on.

The Panama government estimates all islands of the Guna people could be under water by 2050, based on forecasts by an independent group of scientists, although others think the islands may not all be submerged until the end of the century.

Video by Grace Livingstone and Ellen Tsang

Video can be viewed at: <https://www.bbc.com/news/av/world-latin-america-62497711>



Islander Magdalena Martínez

[www.bbc.com/news/av/world-latin-america-62497711](https://www.bbc.com/news/av/world-latin-america-62497711)

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# Bill Russell, who transformed pro basketball, dies at 88

Continue from page 38, Friday, August 19, 2022, AMANDALA issue #3579

by **Richard Goldstein**

www.nytimes.com, July 31, 2022

## A Changed View of Boston

As the Celtic players from Russell's rookie year retired, Auerbach found superb replacements, most notably Havlicek at forward and, at guard, Sam Jones and K.C. Jones, Russell's old college teammate.

The Celtics won N.B.A. titles in Russell's last two seasons, when he was their player-coach. He capped his career with a triumph in the 1969 N.B.A. finals over a Laker team that had obtained Chamberlain and also featured Jerry West and Elgin Baylor.

Russell could not easily shake his memories of Boston during his playing days, when the fate of the city's de facto segregated schools became a national story.

"To me, Boston itself was a flea market of racism," Russell wrote in "Second Wind." "It had all varieties, old and new, and in their most virulent form. The city had corrupt, city-hall-crony racists, brick-throwing, send-'em-back-to-Africa racists, and in the university areas phony radical-chic racists (long before they appeared in New York)."

But as time passed the city changed, and so did his perception of it.

Russell helped promote Boston with a radio spot in the weeks leading up to the 2004 Democratic National Convention, which was held there. "I think there are a lot of things that are happening to make it an open city, where everybody's included and there's nobody that's deemed unworthy," he said.

Boston honored Russell in 2013 with a bronze statue in City Hall Plaza.

In his late years, Cousy became remorseful over his failure to speak out against the racism Russell faced when they were teammates, and in February 2016 he sent him a letter expressing regret.



Russell coached the Sacramento Kings in 1987. Credit...Icon Sportswire / Getty Images

As related by Gary M. Pomerantz in his book "The Last Pass: Cousy, Russell, the Celtics, and What Matters in the End" (2018), Cousy did not hear from Russell until two and a half years had passed. Then Russell phoned him.

Cousy asked Russell if he had received the letter.

"Russ said he had," Pomerantz wrote. "Nothing more was said about it. Coos had hoped their conversation would rise to a more substantive level. Still, he had made his last pass to Russ. He felt at peace."

Russell worked as an ABC Sports commentator for N.B.A. games in the early 1970s, his high-pitched cackling laugh on the air showing viewers a side of him that only his teammates had seen. Then he returned to coaching.

He became coach and general manager of the Seattle SuperSonics in 1973, taking over a team that had never been in the playoffs in its six seasons, and led them to a pair of playoff berths in his four seasons there.

He became the coach of the Sacramento Kings in 1987, but was removed in March 1988 with the team mired at 17-41; he was named vice president in charge of basketball operations. He was fired from that post in December 1989.

Long after his N.B.A. career had ended, Russell made himself more accessible and capitalized on commercial opportunities.

In 1999, he agreed to a public ceremony at the Fleet Center—the successor to Boston Garden—for the 30th anniversary of his last championship team and his retirement as a player as well as the second retirement of his number. The event was also a fund-raiser for the National Mentoring Partnership, whose programs he had helped develop as a board member.

"There are no other people's kids in this country," he told the crowd. "They're the children of the nation, and I refuse to be at war with them. I'll always do anything I can to make life better for a kid."

He made commercials, signed autographs for serious collectors (for a fee) and delivered motivational speeches.

Russell married for the fourth time, to Jeannine Fiorito, in 2016. His first marriage, to Rose Swisher, ended in divorce, as did his second marriage, to Dorothy Anstett. His third wife, Marilyn Nault, died in 2009 at 59.

Russell had three children from his first marriage—William Jr., Jacob and Karen Kenyatta Russell. William Jr., known as Buddha, died in 2016 at 58. Russell's brother, a playwright and screenwriter under the name Charlie L. Russell, died in 2013 at 81. Complete information on survivors was not immediately available.

Russell was uncompromising when it came to his principles. "There are two societies in this country, and I have to recognize it, to see life for what it is and not go stark, raving mad," he told Sport magazine in 1963, referring to the racial divide. "I don't work for acceptance. I am what I am. If you like it, that's nice. If not, I couldn't care less."

He was also an immensely proud man.

"If you can take something to levels that very few other people can reach," he told Sports Illustrated in 1999, "then what you're doing becomes art."

Full article can be found at: <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/07/31/sports/basketball/bill-russell-dead.html>

First Published by the New York Times.

# Mexico missing students: Former top official arrested over probe

by **Leo Sands**

BBC News

Mexico's former attorney general has been arrested in connection with the disappearance of 43 students in 2014.

Jesús Murillo Karam, who led an inquiry into the atrocity, has been charged with forced disappearance, torture and the obstruction of justice.

The students vanished while travelling by bus through the city of Iguala on their way to a protest in Mexico City.

Other than bone fragments recovered from three of them, nothing is known of their fate.

Municipal police opened fire on buses carrying the students on the evening of 26 September 2014 - but what happened next is disputed.

Their mysterious disappearance sent shockwaves around the world and triggered widespread protests in Mexico against impunity and state complicity in organised crime.

Jesus Murillo Karam, who was arrested on Friday, led a controversial 2015 investigation into what happened to the students that blamed members of a cartel who were accused of killing them and burning their remains.

His findings, which were endorsed by then President Enrique Peña Nieto, were criticised by independent experts and relatives of the missing students for errors and for not apportioning any blame to the armed forces.

In a tweet, Mr Karam's Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI), which is no longer in power, accused those behind Friday's arrest of being politically motivated.

He is the highest-profile government official to be arrested in connection with the disappearance of the students so far.

Investigators believe the students were detained by corrupt police officials and then handed over to a drug cartel who mistook them for members of a rival gang before killing them.

On Thursday, a truth commission established by current President Andrés Manuel López Obrador accused soldiers of bearing some responsibility for the massacre - at least through negligence, if not directly.

"Their actions, omissions or participation allowed the disappearance and execution of the students," said Alejandro Encinas, who is the commission's head as well as Mexico's deputy interior minister,

according to AFP news agency.

But the full role of military personnel required further investigation, he added.

Earlier this year President López Obrador revealed that navy members were being investigated for allegedly tampering with evidence, including at the garbage dump where human remains were found.

On Friday, he called for any soldiers or officials involved in the disappearance to face justice.

"Publicising this atrocious, inhuman situation and at the same time punishing those responsible helps to prevent these deplorable events ever happening again," the Mexican leader said, according to AFP news agency.

First published by BBC Latin America.

# GoB settles with Ashcroft Alliance's BISL

Continued from **Page 1**

pay damages to those entities. The ruling was handed down more than two years ago, under the Barrow administration, and was the last of a series of lawsuits taken through the Belize judicial system against the Government of Belize by the company, BISL, after a 2005 extension agreement signed with its owners was found to be unlawful by the then UDP administration.

The company, BISL, was contracted in 1993 to manage two registries for Belize, the International Merchant Marine Registry of Belize (IMMARBE) and the International Business Companies Registry (IBCR), and was given an extension in 2003 to operate from that year until 2013. Two years later, in 2005, they were given a subsequent extension to operate from 2013 to 2020. The government, however, considered the 2005 extension unlawful after taking over control of the registries in 2013.

The company then filed a claim on March 26, 2015, against the government for damages caused by a breach of the contract, but in October 2016, current acting Chief Justice Michelle Arana ruled in favor of the government, deeming the

agreement to be unconstitutional, illegal and void. The case was taken to the Court of Appeal, where the Justices of Appeal dismissed the appeal and affirmed the ruling of then Justice Arana.

The company finally got a favorable ruling after seeking redress at the highest appellant court, the Caribbean Court of Justice (CCJ), which ruled that the government acted unlawfully when it seized control of the two BISL registries. The court further ordered that damages be assessed by the Supreme Court and paid to the claimant in its judgment.

As far as we are aware, that court hearing never happened, but an out-of-court settlement between the current administration and the Ashcroft Alliance-owned company was reached today and announced in a press release.

"Today, the Government of Belize and BISL signed a settlement agreement resolving this matter. Under the terms, the government, subject to National Assembly approvals, will pay BISL a total of US\$38.25 million (BZ\$11.5 million to be paid in Belize Dollars) in full and final settlement of BISL's claim, which BISL will then discontinue," the release from the government states.

Waterloo Investment Holdings

Limited (Waterloo owned 50% of BISL) has fought the government along with co-owner Morgan y Morgan law firm all the way to the highest court in the land to secure the damages in this case.

Waterloo, incidentally, is once more making overtures to the government of Belize as it seeks the approval of an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) to begin construction of a major cruise and cargo port at the Port of Belize Limited compound and surrounding areas.

While the development is being rejected by many in the public and in the environmental community, the PUP administration has once again given leave to the NEAC (National Environmental Appraisal Committee) to review the new application submitted by Waterloo. The signing of this agreement for a settlement of the Waterloo subsidiary's claim, which was hanging over Belizeans' heads, is taking place at a time when the company is once again seeking the green light to embark on a multi-million-dollar enterprise that would have questionable impact on the people of Belize. A total of USD \$38.5 million will have to be paid to the company from the taxpayers' pockets—a company, which as mentioned, is owned by the Ashcroft Alliance and a major Panamanian law firm.

In an interview today, Prime Minister Hon. John Briceño said that his government will go to the House of Representatives this Wednesday to approve a supplementary budget to finally pay off the debt. He pointed out that if the award is not paid and is allowed to balloon in size due to the accumulation of interest, as much as \$180 million dollars and aggregated interest payments of \$17,000 daily could have been owed by the people of Belize to the company. He says that a team was set up about 6 months ago to negotiate with the representatives of BISL to come to a final agreement on the matter.

The PM said that the UDP's acquisition of BISL by way of "strongarming" the

company has caused some "incalculable" damage to the country, but he went on to point out that BISL has been generating considerably large profits, which will now go into the coffers of the people of Belize.

"It affects direct investments. You look at Belize as not following the rule of law, and we can go down the road, but the truth of the matter is that since the acquisition in the past 7 years, we collected as a government a little over \$95 million dollars—the US, US dollars in revenue over 7 years, and of that it cost the government a little under US\$9 million dollars to run those operations, so in effect about 85, 86 million dollars US profit," the PM said.

Those profits were, however, spent well before the Barrow administration was replaced by the current PUP government, the PM said.

"It is unfortunate that the previous government spent all the money. They did not save any money; they did not put anything in sinking fund, knowing full well that it will have to be paid," the PM said. He also indicated that all the documents related to the transaction will be presented in short order.

"The US\$38.5 million in total, that includes their fees and everything, so they would not be able to come back and say, 'well you owe me this'; it ends there, so it was important for us to get it over quickly. Cabinet agreed to it, to the terms last week Friday. Today we sign the settlement deed, and then on Wednesday we go to the House to approve the settlement and also the supplementary budget to be able to pay them off," the Prime Minister explained. He said that they have until November 1 to make the payment in full.

When asked where the government is going to find the money to make the payment, he said, "It's easier for government to borrow from itself than to be able to pay the 6% that the court mandates you to pay; government pays 3.5%, so it's a no-brainer."

## SSB CEO: McKoy Building...

Continued from **Page 2**

improve, so that was put before the board," Ruiz said.

According to reports, an assessment done by engineers indicated that when a simulation was done to determine whether the building could withstand Category 1 hurricane winds, it was discovered that there would be "multiple column failure with even 115-mile-an-hour winds." The engineers thus concluded, based on the results of the simulation, that "the building as is would not resist a storm as per design codes."

Other recommendations were also put forward by the company to the SSB board of directors, which approved a supplemental budget to cover the costs of the retrofitting. This is expected to cost about 3 million dollars on top of the 8.2 million already spent on the structure.

There have been assertions by some members of the public that Fabros (Construction) Limited had never undertaken a building project of such a scale, and that its bid of approximately \$6 million was unrealistically low. Ultimately, the cost of building the structure was approximately \$8.4 million, after the approval of some variation orders—meaning, according to some estimates that the building was constructed at a cost of \$130 per square foot.

The owner of Fabros Limited, Daniel Fabro, thus pointed out to that the shortfalls in construction could be traced to what he called the desire for a "champagne building on a beer budget".

There are even indications that the contractor was encouraged to purchase low-priced materials (including glass)—with some of those materials being sourced directly from China. In the letter to the SSB Board of Directors, Fabio had noted, "SSB knew that some items purchased from China would not have test certificates and other similar documentation available, but that we were

to ensure that all items purchased were of the best available quality."

He additionally noted that the project was completed without a set of plans approved by the Central Building Authority.

The structural deficiencies resulting from those missteps are now being addressed through a retrofitting exercise that carries a \$3 million price tag—resulting in a total cost of a little over \$11 million for the building.

Nonetheless, even with the additional funds being spent, however, Ruiz says that the return of investment of this building will far exceed the interest that would be generated if the funds remained in a bank account.

"Even though additional funds were put into the project, based on our return of investment calculations at our investment services, we have simply just delayed the amount, but in terms of the return that is expected, we will still be getting more than if the money was sitting at the bank," CEO Ruiz said.

In total, the building is costing around 11.1 million dollars of Belizean workers' money; but as reported by the CEO, the SSB still believes the building is a sound and viable investment.

"I think it could have been avoided if we had all our ducks in a line, in terms of what is the whole concept of the building, a contractor who has some experience and a supervisor who is able to interpret both designs, the contract documents and coordinate all of that. So obviously there may have been a flaw there that we need to find out what that is. What I have given assurances is that as soon as we are completed with the building, the retrofit works should be finished by the end of September, and then we will start the process of a full review of what happened and find out who is responsible for what and take any avenues to recover... that decision will be determined by the board," Ruiz noted.

## UDP to protest...

Continued from **Page 1**

Democratic Party is planning to stage a protest on Tuesday against what it calls the failures of the current administration. The protest will be held in front of the Shell Gas Station located on Central American Boulevard, which is owned by the Prime Minister, Hon. John Briceño, and which, according to UDP chairman Michael Peyrefitte, is a symbol of not only the high cost of fuel, but also the high cost of living in the country.

The party has made at least two attempts to obtain a permit for the protest from the Belize Police Department. A letter issued to Chairman Peyrefitte on August 18 by the Officer commanding the Eastern Division, ACP Howell Gillett, however, cites the current State of Emergency in the Southside of Belize City and other "operational priorities" as the reason the party's permit request was denied. According to that letter, the Police Department would be unable to provide adequate security for the event. On Friday, August 19, the UDP issued a press release calling upon Belizeans to "stand up" against corruption and high cost of living.

"The United Democratic Party, the Opposition, rejects this autocratic,

authoritarian move by the government to infringe upon our Constitutional right to protest this government's failed policies which are responsible for high gas prices, high cost of living, corruption, crime, and a dramatic deterioration in the quality of life for Belizeans," said the release.

Today, Senator Peyrefitte told the media during a press conference that the party will be attempting to protest legally, even without a permit. He also said that the protest will be a peaceful one.

"The word protest is not bad. We're not talking about disrupting the business of that gas station. We're not talking about disrupting the flow of traffic," he said.

He then added that, if there is any police response during the protest, there will be no resistance, and the party plans to follow all orders from law enforcement.

While it remains to be seen how many persons will turn up to the protest, Peyrefitte says that he, for one, will be there.

"We don't know how many people will come. I know I will be there, so that's one," he said.

According to Peyrefitte, the UDP is also planning on taking its protest to other parts of the country, noting that successful protests never occur in just one area.

## San Jose community gives FPIC to RRB project

**Continued from** ▶ Page 1

Green Climate Fund, the government is now implementing the RRB program.

The organization, which is operating for a six-year period that ends in 2024, sought the indigenous community's approval to begin to implement its development project under its mandate.

The release issued today states, "the RRB Programme had to implement the legally required process of the Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) — a process that is a relatively new practice in Belize. The RRB Programme's FPIC process road map was developed drawing on IFAD, and GCF requirements, international instruments such as UNDRIP, the Caribbean Court of Justice Ruling of 2015, and the Maya of Southern Belize FPI Consultation Protocol."

An Indigenous People's Plan and FPIC agreement were developed along with the community, the joint release from the Government, Green Climate Fund, and IFAD stated.

It said, "This output of the consultation process is not a simple yes or no, but an agreement and plan that specifies the way forward, including how the project will be implemented, benefits shared, how conflict may be resolved (grievance mechanism), and how additional consent if that were necessary, will be obtained."

Consultations are said to have begun as early as January 2022.

The program is being implemented by its Programme Management Unit, which acts through the Ministry of Finance, designated as the lead program agency, and seeks to implement two components under the project activities, which include: 1. A matching grant to support small holder farmers with co-financing investment to improve agricultural production in volume and quantity and to invest in safeguarding food security from existing and projected climatic impact, and 2. The possibility of funding to upgrade rural roads for the project.

During his presentation to the community yesterday, Minister of Rural Development, Oscar Requeña said a

road to transport the produce cultivated by the community to the market is on the top of the list, adding that the RRB chose to work with San Jose because of the community's productivity.

"We recognized that San Jose is a very productive community. You produce cacao, you produce vegetables, your produce gains, your produce livestock and you are also getting into cardamon and other grains, so we have to find a way to support you so that you can also help yourself. I am happy to be a part of this historic day, because today we are witnessing the first FPIC agreement coming out of San Jose, where you as a community recognized that you want development in your community, but we must go through the process to consult to engage you. You have given approval, and now we will work forward to implement the project, of course continuing the consultation process as we go along." Minister Oscar Requeña stated.

At the time the government of Belize and the representatives for the Maya communities in Toledo are still before the Caribbean Court of Justice trying to implement the consent order which directs that the parties agree on a framework for free, prior, informed, consent. At the last hearing, the parties were told to meet and try to mend their relationship after the Maya leaders and government were publicly at odds following the submission of an FPIC protocol by the government which the Maya communities considered to be unilateral.

The leaders of the Maya Leaders Alliance and Toledo Alcaldes Association were reportedly at the Sunday signing of the FPIC.

"I also want to recognize the Chairman of the Alcaldes Association and also the staff of the Maya Leaders Alliance who are here. We thank you for being here, because, ladies and gentlemen, this is a very important process in which we as a people must come together, we must work together, we must join our hands together to bring development for the people of Toledo District," Minister Requeña said.

## Bail for police officers

**Continued from** ▶ Page 1

Alrick Borland—were all indicted on a manslaughter charge for the death of Uh, who passed away in the back of a police van as a result of heatstroke and suffocation. Following an adjournment, the sitting magistrate granted the four officers bail and ordered them to return to court on the 30<sup>th</sup> of September for disclosure. No plea with taken at this first hearing.

Norman Rodriguez, attorney for one of the officers, PC Errol Peralta - who was the driver of the van—told reporters that bail in the sum of \$10,000, and two sureties of \$5,000 each was granted.

"It was the same across the board for all four officers. The court was minded to grant bail that the defendants had to produce a property paper or house lot or some documents related to property. We made further submission, and the court considered those submissions and ended up giving them signed bail," Rodriguez said. He added, "They are to surrender their documents, they are not to apply for any other documents without the permission of the court, and they are to sign in every Monday between 6:00 a.m. and 9:00 a.m. at the Corozal police station," he said.

Rodriguez, who said that he believes justice should be granted, noted that it is important that due process takes place so that it can be determined who is truly culpable. "I know that the public wants justice for the young man, and I believe that justice should be granted or given, but the summary of fact on which these four defendants were charged – there is one, or part of a statement that stands out in my mind, that Peralta drove the police vehicle to park it and this is what it says, 'unaware that there was someone inside'," Rodriguez emphasized.

He went on to say that while he, like so many others in the country, is pained by the type of death suffered by Uh and the grief experienced by his family, the Police Department must prosecute those that are guilty. "I feel real pain for the family. He was a promising young man, and it touches me when young people innocently are deprived of their lives, but at the end of the day, if you are going to prosecute, prosecute those that are guilty; don't drag innocent people and compound the problems," Rodriguez said.

Currently, an audit is being conducted at the Corozal Police Station, Police Commissioner Chester Williams said in an interview on Friday. The Research, Planning, Legal Affairs, and Compliance (RPLAC) branch of the Police Department will reportedly

carry out the audit to ascertain if any others were culpable and to determine what were the systematic breakdowns that could have caused Uh's death.

He also gave an update on an internal investigation being carried out within the Police Department, and indicated that the officers who were suspended have now been placed on interdiction, with the exception of the officer who holds the rank of inspector (Officer Sanchez), who has to face the Security Services Commission.

During Friday's interview, COMPOL Williams said, "Since then you would know that three of those officers were on suspension pending the outcome of the investigation. The suspension will now be upgraded to interdiction, and so they go to interdiction with half pay. As it relates to Mr. Sanchez, who falls under the Security Services Commission, I only have the power by law to put him on five days administrative leave, and then it's the Services Commission that will have to suspend him from duty."

That commission, however, is presently not in operation, since a new commission has not yet been constituted by the current administration, COMPOL Williams went on to note.

"I am hoping that one is going to be constituted very shortly, and then once that is done, we can go through the process of having him on suspension the right way. The investigation also shows that there were a number of administrative breaches by some other officers within the Corozal police formation, and so those officers will be dealt with by means of our internal disciplinary process," Williams said.

Commissioner Williams further noted that, after an audit is carried out to determine what systematic failures led to the incident, persons found culpable in that audit will also be dealt with internally. Then, in reference specifically to Sergeant Rosario Romero, who was along with PC Peralta in the van that was driven and parked at the police station in Corozal, he stated, "I will only say this much, that as the senior person in the vehicle that went to the station, he could have ensured that the proper process was followed when the vehicle was handed over at the station, and so I would want to think that internally he would have something to answer."

There is no evidence at this time to point to the officer commanding the Corozal police station as having any responsibility for Uh's death, but a definitive conclusion will be reached based on the facts gathered during the internal audit. For now, the accused officers are out on bail until the end of September, when they will return to court.

## OAS Secretary General...

**Continued from** ▶ Page 1

media attended a press briefing that followed the Secretary General's meeting with Prime Minister John Briceño.

It was held at the Leigh Richardson building in Belmopan. There, the Prime Minister noted that his meeting with the Secretary General was a fruitful one that focused on a wide range of issues pertaining to both Belize and the wider region.

Secretary General Almagro, in speaking to the press, congratulated Belize in its handling of the COVID-19 pandemic and commended the country for setting an example when it comes to democracy and human rights in the region.

While the Prime Minister and the Secretary General have met before, including earlier this year at the Summit

of the Americas, this is Almagro's first time visiting the country since Hon. Briceño took office.

"Belize is playing a relevant role in the region, and is bringing together parties that will be talking about or trying to bring solutions to some cases and that we may face and have been facing in the region. So, for us, it is extremely relevant to have this meeting and to come and visit Belize because of that role..." said the Secretary General.

In that same vein, the Secretary General also addressed Belize's ongoing amnesty program, commending the Government for making an effort to legitimize persons that have already long been integrated into the county.

During his visit, Almagro also traveled down to the OAS office located in the Adjacency Zone to show

support for peacekeeping in that area. Back in 2003, the organization opened an Office in the zone through the signing of the first Agreement on the Promotion of Confidence-Building Measures by Belize and Guatemala. According to the OAS, the main purpose of the office is to verify and follow up on incidents that occur in the Adjacency Zone, as well as to monitor the entire area to detect incidents at the onset stage and prevent their escalation. It also serves to "promote a culture of peace" among the parties involved.

According to Prime Minister John Briceño, the work that the OAS has been doing in the Adjacency Zone over the years has been quite successful, considering that, up to date, there has been no serious crisis in the area apart from minor incursions.

H.E. Luis Almagro, a Uruguayan lawyer and diplomat, is the 10th Secretary General of the OAS. He is currently serving his second term as Secretary General, after having been reelected by member states in March 2020.



# Sales Agents

## BELIZE CITY

- \* Puma Roundabout
- \* Puma, 2 Mls.
- \* Shell Service Station, C.A. Boulevard
- \* Community Drug Store
- \* William Supermarket, C.A. Boulevard
- \* Fuel Logistics/Bel-China
- \* Puma Freetown
- \* Cambranes
- \* J & K Supermarket
- \* Twin Supermarket, 5526 St. Thomas Street
- \* Tow Tow Grocery Store, Mahogany Street
- \* Julie Wong Store, Belama (by police station)
  - \* JB's Store, Mahogany Street
  - \* 88 Shopping Center, C.A. Boulevard
  - \* Freetown Drug Store
  - \* Publics, Philip Goldson Highway
  - \* Buca Shell, Philip Goldson Highway
  - \* James Brodie & Co., Albert St., and Philip Goldson Highway
  - \* 1<sup>st</sup> Choice Pharmacy
  - \* Save-U Supermarket

## PLACENCIA

- \* Placencia Office Supplies

## LADYVILLE

- \* Puma Service Station
- \* Shell Service Station
- \* Low's Supermarket

## ORANGEWALK

- \* One Stop Service Station
- \* People's Store

## BENQUE

- \* Eduard Cambranes
- 6 Diaz St., Benque

## CAYO

- \* Amini Habet
- C/o Shell Service Station
- San Ignacio
- \* Venus Store

## BELMOPAN

- Dakers Stationery & Books
- \* Hydes Mini Market
- \* First Choice Variety Gift Shop
- \* Shell Service Station
- \* Medicare Plus Pharmacy

## STANN CREEK

- \* Xaibel Service Station
- \* S & S One Stop
- C/o Uno Belize
- \* St. Vincent Convenience Store

## COROZAL

- \* Aguilar Car Care Products # 60 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Corozal Town
- \* Xiomara Alcala c/o Corozal Farmer's Supplies # 99 - 5th Avenue, Corozal Town
- \* Elena Castaneda WE Store Gabriel Hoare Market #A8 6th Avenue, Corozal Town

## SAN PEDRO

- Rocks Shopping Center

## INDEPENDENCE

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- \* King's Texaco
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