

# Burnt remains found of Bzean American entrepreneur

**Taxi driver Jerome Crawford, 40, charged with murder of missing Belizean American, Owen Tucker**

by Charles Gladden

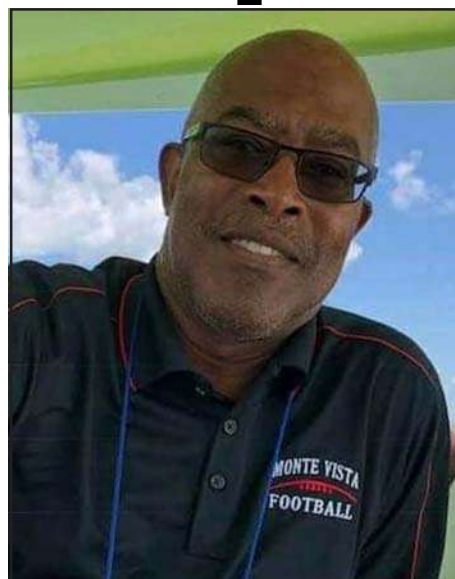
BELMOPAN, Mon. Nov. 28, 2022

Tuesday, November 22, was the last day that family members of Owen Reuben Tucker, 66, a Belizean American businessman, saw him alive. Tucker was reported missing, and the speculation was that he was dead, killed by his ex-

employee, Jerome Crawford, 40, a taxi driver of Belize City, over a money dispute. Crawford has now been charged with the horrible crime.

Tucker had recently purchased a property in Biscayne Village, Belize District, which is formerly known as

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**Owen Reuben Tucker, deceased**



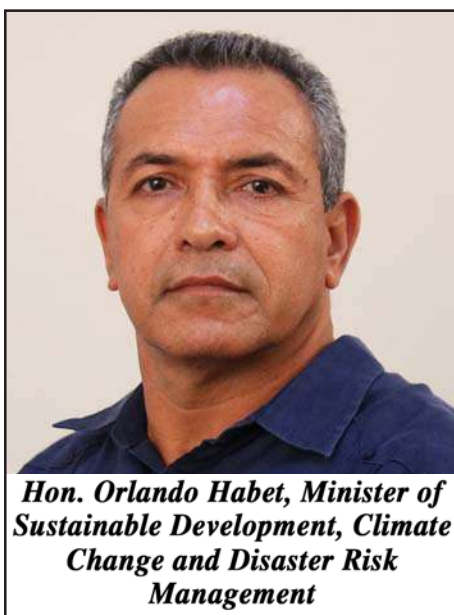
**Jerome Chester Crawford, charged with murder**

## NEAC rejects Waterloo again

by Kory Leslie (Freelance Writer)

BELIZE CITY, Belize, Thurs. Nov. 24, 2022

Following months of public discussion, and expressions of concern from various quarters, including the environmental community, the National Environmental Appraisal Committee (NEAC) has rejected Waterloo Investment Holdings Ltd.'s proposal for the construction of a cruise terminal, accompanied by expansion of the cargo capacity, at the Port of Belize Ltd. Last year, Waterloo and the Port of Belize submitted a proposal to the NEAC for the construction of a cruise terminal and



**Hon. Orlando Habet, Minister of Sustainable Development, Climate Change and Disaster Risk Management**

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## PM meets Maduro



**Prime Minister Briceño and President Maduro**

by Kory Leslie (Freelance Writer)

BELIZE CITY, Mon. Nov. 28, 2022  
The Prime

**PM Briceño visits Venezuelan prez to discuss Petrocaribe, debt and more**

Minister and a delegation consisting of Minister of Foreign Affairs, Hon. Eamon Courtenay; Financial Advisor, Ambassador Mark Espat; H.E. Ambassador Oscar Arnold; and Governor of the Central Bank of Belize, Mr. Kareem Michael, left the country last week en route to Caracas, Venezuela for a diplomatic visit with Venezuelan president Nicolas Maduro. While there, Hon. Briceño, who was invited by President Maduro in September of last year when the two

leaders attended the CELAC Summit in Mexico City, visited Maduro at his home in Miraflores Palace, where the two signed a joint declaration committing to the fortifying of relationships between Belize and Venezuela.

According to a press release issued on Monday by the Government of Belize Press Office, Prime Minister Briceño and President Maduro also agreed to work together in drafting agreements in trade, energy, tourism, communications, air connectivity, education, culture and housing. Future

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## The Saldivar saga



**John Saldivar**

**John Saldivar professes innocence at press conference**

BELIZE CITY, Mon. Nov. 28, 2022

Nine days and three Facebook posts after the United States Department of State (USDOS) designated John Saldivar as a "significantly corrupt" official, on Thursday, November 24, the Belmopan United Democratic Party politician appeared alone before the media to reaffirm his innocence. He said his unnamed attorney was

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## The Saldivar saga

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unavoidably detained in Court and then emphatically proclaimed, “I am *not* a corrupt person... You would almost want to say that, as the saying goes in Kriol, ma lala look like snake fu me, when it comes to corrupt acts. I have guarded my reputation.” He further concluded that since the US State Department declaration made no reference to the “tranches” he reportedly received from now convicted fraudster Lev Dermen, he is exonerated from any wrongdoing “in receiving campaign contributions.”

The question that follows is whether Lev Dermen got anything in exchange for those campaign contributions. Adhering to the official Saldivar narrative, the answer would be nothing. Speaking in his introductory remarks at his conference, Saldivar only said he took Dermen on a Coast Guard vessel to visit Coast Guard installations. However, once confronted with his admissions in a leaked audio recording in which he spoke of that boat ride, he admitted that perhaps he erred in judgment in using the U.S.-donated Coast Guard boat for such a purpose. In the recording he is heard saying, “... I kerr Lev and all ah these f\_#^&\*\_g Mormons pan wahn fishing trip out deh eena di Coast Guard boat and soh. That is how he was – according to Jacob [Kingston] asserting that ‘hey! Yoh f\_#^&\*\_g listen to me or else yoh could get f\_#\*\_k because I have friends all ova di world... That’s how my name come to be mentioned because Jacob saw me as one of those powerful friends that Lev Dermen had. Dah soh I di get di \$25,000 every month. That’s how my name come into it. Me get latta f\_#!@\_g money from Lev.”

As to a potential charge similar to that brought against former Works Minister Rene Montero for using public assets for personal gain, Saldivar

insisted that as the Minister, he had the authority to do what he did. Today, the Commissioner of Police disagreed and said the investigation has already started. The COMPOL said that Montero, like Saldivar, was the Minister and gave approval for use of public assets and was still charged.

As it relates to any other benefit that Dermen may have derived through affiliation with him, Saldivar claimed ignorance. For instance, regarding Dermen’s 2013 illegal acquisition of Belizean nationality, Saldivar says that occurred a year after his short stint as Minister of Immigration and he only became aware of it when it surfaced in the report from the Office of the Auditor General. Saldivar said Dermen never raised the matter with him. He did not deny, however, that he supported Dermen being named Honorary Consul to Las Vegas. In the end, Saldivar called on the Department of State to provide evidence of its claim that he “accepted bribes for the improper acquisition of Belizean immigration documents and interfered in public processes for his personal benefit during his tenure as a government official.”

Responding to the question of when will enough be enough for him to step aside rather than be haunted by all the controversy, Saldivar stated, “I think my troubles with respect to these things that dogged me and haunted me, started perhaps in 2015 with the Danny Mason saga. This is six years later, and I’m still a major player in the politics of Belize.” Saldivar is hoping to get the go ahead from a special UDP Committee that will review his case next month so he can run in a standard bearer convention to represent the UDP in the next general elections. He claimed that the fair-minded people of Belmopan still support him and ascribes his 2020 general election loss to the overall loss of support for the UDP at the time.

## PM meets Maduro

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commitments will reportedly also include a renewal of the Petrocaribe program, which was discontinued in 2019 following US sanctions against Venezuela, stagnation in oil production and other hardships within the country.

The release stated that “Petrocaribe was being renewed and expanded to cover products, in addition to petroleum, and that Belize would continue to be one of the beneficiaries”. Hon. Briceño welcomed the resumption of the program and commended the efforts of the former Venezuelan president, Comandante Hugo Chavez (now deceased) who originally founded the alliance in 2005. Upon his return, PM Briceño reiterated his high hopes for the return of Petrocaribe and stated in an interview that he doesn’t believe this would have any negative impact on Belize’s relations with the United States due to the US sanctions against Venezuela.

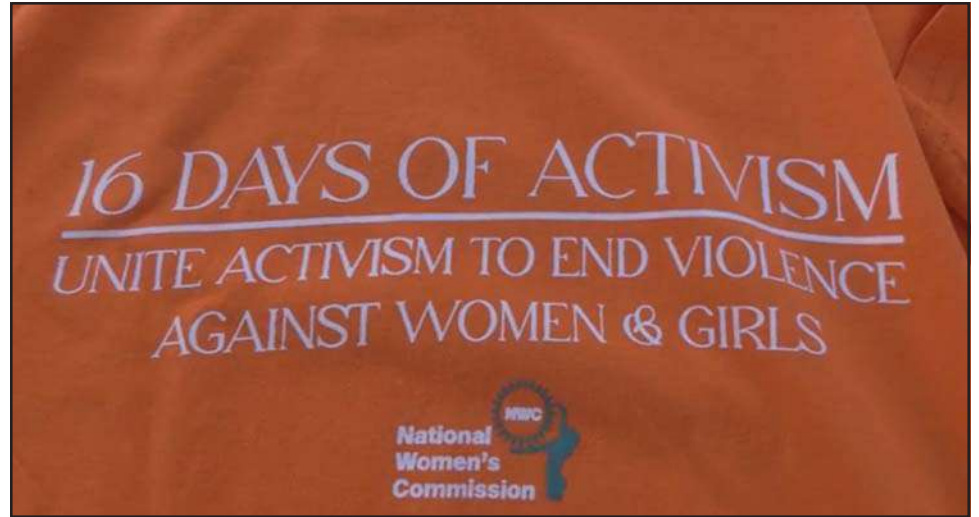
“When we met with Secretary of State Blinken, we mentioned about the possibility of Venezuela, our strengthened relationship. Talking about the possibility of the United States one day trying to ease up their restrictions,

especially for the region, for us in the Caribbean, the Petrocaribe program that has played a critical role in the entire region. And we discussed all of these issues with the Secretary of State. And if you were to follow the news, I think it was on Friday it was announced that I think Chevron was given the green light to start oil exploration. An American company to start oil exploration and extraction in Venezuela,” Hon. Briceño said.

The meeting reportedly also covered other key aspects of Belize’s debt to Venezuela and included negotiations to formalize a new agreement where that debt is concerned. A large debt reduction for Belize was reportedly addressed. Other key matters discussed included both parties’ respect for the Charter of the United Nations, international law and Bandung Principles which guide the Non-Aligned Movement. Talks were also centered on Venezuelan-backed relief, specifically through affordable housing, due to the aftermath of Hurricane Lisa, as well as fertilizer for farmers.

The Prime Minister has invited President Maduro for an official visit to Belize which will occur at a “convenient” time in 2023.

## 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence commence



by Charles Gladden

BELIZE CITY, Fri. Nov. 25, 2022

On Friday, November 25, Belize joined the international community in celebrating 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence, which will culminate on December 10, which will be observed as Human Rights Day.

Minister of Human Development, Families & Indigenous People’s Affairs, Hon. Dolores Balderamos García, noted in an interview with AMANDALA, “It’s an intractable problem, so it’s very difficult to address. I think the more awareness, the more we wear the color orange, we wear our buttons, the more we can fight it... we want to shine a light on this very difficult problem, but we believe that we’re making a difference when we bring this kind of activity to the gender-based violence against women and children. It never seems to end. We must never give up, because it is important for the human rights of our people.”

An event launching the days of activism was hosted at the House of Culture in Belize City by the National Women’s Commission, working in tandem with the Spotlight Initiative, multi-sectoral United Nations agencies, the Ministry of Human Development, Families and Indigenous People’s Affairs, and the Office of the Special Envoy.

This year’s international campaign theme is “UNITE! Activism to end violence against women and girls and calls for global actions to increase awareness, galvanize advocacy efforts, and share knowledge and innovations.”

Eleanor Murillo, program officer for the National Women’s Commission, highlighted several events which will be taking place throughout the 16 days of activities, which started with last week’s Friday launching event, followed by a march throughout downtown Belize City. Additionally, among the activities is a candlelight vigil in remembrance of those who have lost their lives due to gender-based violence.

“Throughout the 16 days, it’s for us to amp up our education and awareness. It’s not for us to say we don’t do this all year long, from 16 days to 365; however, during this period we amp up our efforts and it’s a collaboration among government, NGOs, and other organizations,” said Murillo.

“... What we want is behavior change; every time you hear of a woman being stabbed or beaten, we cringe. We are putting in so much effort to see this is still happening, so we need to amp up our efforts even more, and so this period is to educate our public, all across the country,” she added.

## PUC explains utility rates

by Charles Gladden

BELIZE CITY, Thurs. Nov. 24, 2022

On Tuesday, November 22, the Public Utilities Commission (PUC) held a press conference at which its representatives explained the methodology that is used to determine fair rates to be charged for usage of electricity, water, and telecommunications.

In 1999, the Public Utilities Act was introduced—forcing government officials to hand over decision-making authority related to the rates charged by the three major utilities to the PUC, an autonomous body that is responsible for regulating the rates and distributing annual reports to the National Assembly.

Ernesto Gomez, the PUC’s Director



Ernesto Gomez, Director of Tariff, Standards, and Compliance, PUC

of Tariffs, Standards, and Compliance, told local media that the rates change based on the costs shouldered by the companies throughout the year.

“There are proposals that are set forward by the licensee, and in these proposals, they would cost the product that are going to be delivered. We are

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# National Children's Parliament debates Vocational Education

by Kory Leslie  
(Freelance Writer)

BELMOPAN, Belize, Fri. Nov. 25, 2022

Last Friday, there was a set of new, youthful faces inside the National Assembly building, where the National Children's Parliament was held. Fifty-one secondary and tertiary students went to Belmopan to debate a bill surrounding the topic, "Vocational Education Development" in a refreshing manner free of the usual contentious exchanges that the Belizean public has grown accustomed to.

Filling the role of Prime Minister was Tomas Serrut, who took an affirmative stance on the simulated bill and focused on the positive benefits of having a diversified education system that creates technical artisans:

"... the Education and Training Vocational Education Development Bill 2022 is moving our education system forward by means of introducing as well as increasing vocational training and high-quality education within secondary and tertiary institutions. Supplied with the tools necessary to offer the highest quality education, providing the means to become further economically



productive, and developing the potential for stronger livelihoods which fosters overall enhanced lives for Belizean youths. Initiating change in a wave of evolution in our developing education system, as all individual directions are different. We're not all in pursuit of academic activities and scholarly goals as our means of livelihood," said Serrut.

Those also in support of the bill, such as Raul Vargas, youth representative for Fort George; and Aoife Wade, youth representative for Belize Rural Central, also highlighted noteworthy arguments such as the

learning gap for children who may not be academically inclined and would fare better in vocational school. Likewise, Wade made reference to the devastation caused by Hurricane Lisa earlier this month, which further illuminated the need for technically trained professionals in Belize during times of natural devastation.

On the contrary side, Lily Pike took on the role of Leader of the Opposition and opposed the bill, stating, in essence, that there is no need to re-invent the wheel when many institutions already have curricula to support technical learning:

"I prefer a compromise. Why create something from scratch when you can instead develop what we already have? In quite a few institutions in Belize, these courses have already been embedded into their curriculum. You know these as technical schools, such as ITVET, Orange Walk Technical High School, and Ladyville Technical High. By providing accessibility and education, we not only help those who are not academically inclined, we also give a chance to those who love academic school to continue their education. Technical schools are available, they just need to be better," Pike stated.

Championing their colleague was Heather Leigh-Stewart, youth representative for Orange Walk West; and Diana Montes, youth representative for Toledo West, who argued that the country doesn't have the financial capacity to pay our already under-compensated educators who would need additional training and development to accommodate an increase of vocational institutions.

The bill was debated for just above two hours following months of preparation by the National Committee for Families and Children (NCFC).

## Willows Bank Road accident leaves 1 dead, 1 injured



Senior Superintendent Hilberto Romero, the Officer Commanding the Eastern Division

by Charles Gladden

WILLOWS BANK, Belize District, Mon. Nov. 28, 2022

One man, Juan Cantun, lost his life as a result of a road traffic accident that occurred on the Willows Bank Road on Saturday, November 26.

According to police, who went to the scene of the accident at around 8:35 p.m., Cantun was riding his motorcycle on the road when he hit 51-year-old Lloyd King of Double Head Cabbage, which caused him to fall off his motorcycle, and he sustained serious injuries as a result. Cantun was later taken to the Karl Heusner Memorial Hospital, but succumbed to his injuries

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## Belize City man killed in his yard

by Charles Gladden

BELIZE CITY, Mon. Nov. 28, 2022

Jerome Bennett, 25, was found motionless by police on Pitter Street after reportedly being shot multiple times by two unknown gunmen on Friday, November 25.

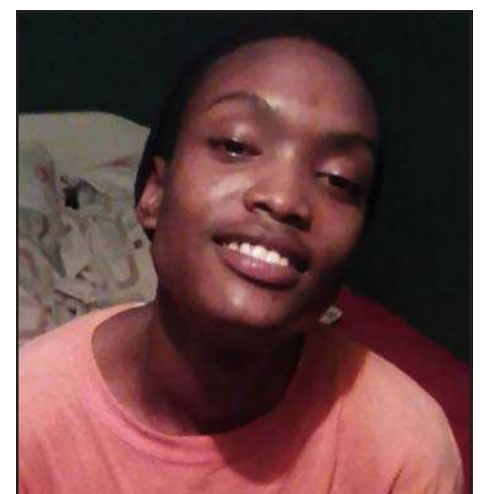
According to initial police reports, Bennett was in his yard about half an hour before midnight when he was approached by two male persons with firearms who fired shots in his direction. Bennett, who was severely wounded, was taken to the Karl Heusner Memorial Hospital, where he was pronounced dead on arrival.

Reports have also indicated that Bennett's family members were inside their home and were awakened by the

sound of gunshots being fired and discovered his body outside their home on the ground.

Senior Superintendent Hilberto Romero, the Officer Commanding the Eastern Division of the Police Department, told local reporters during an interview today, Monday, November 28, that several leads are being followed and one possibility is that Bennett's fatal shooting was the result of an argument he had over money with his assailants.

Senior Superintendent Romero was asked by a local reporter whether the shooting was gang-related, since the area is known to be a hot spot for gang activity. However, Romero responded by saying that they are following leads in the area and patrols are being



Jerome Bennett, deceased

conducted on Pitter Street.

Two persons have been detained following the fatal shooting.

## BDF soldier shot in the buttocks

by Charles Gladden

BELMOPAN, Mon. Nov. 28, 2022

A member of the Belize Defense Force (BDF) was shot in the buttocks at the Valentin Conservation Post along the Belize/Guatemala western border on Saturday, November 26, which is in the Chiquibul Forest Reserve area.

According to reports, at around 2:00 pm several BDF soldiers were at the Valentin Conservation Post when a single gunshot was heard injuring a soldier in the upper left region of his gluteus maximus. After being injured, the soldier was transported to the Western Regional Hospital, and listed in stable condition awaiting further medical

reevaluation.

During today's press conference with the Commissioner of Police, Chester Williams, and members of the local media, he expressed that police investigators along with BDF personnel went back to the location on Sunday, November 27, to determine who fired the shot and from where it was fired.

It has been suggested that the shot may have been fired from Guatemala's side, as Compol Williams confirmed with local reporters that all of the rounds from the officers who were present at the Valentin Conservation Post at the time of the incident were accounted for. Furthermore, the slug that caught the wounded soldier is still wedged inside

his buttocks, and once it is removed, it will be transported to the National Forensic Science Service for testing to determine the type of weapon used and the trajectory it was fired.

Williams noted that the distance between Valentin Post and the Guatemalan border is quite a distance for close-range weapons to reach their target and military rifles are more suited for long distances, which are plausible to be used.

Additionally, Compol Williams expressed that there is a simultaneous investigation that is conducted by Guatemalan counterparts to determine if the shot was fired in Guatemala, and the outcomes will be reported to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs if it was fired by a Guatemalan.

# NEAC rejects Waterloo again

Continued from Page 1



the residents of Port Loyola had not been fully informed of the potential impact of the project.)

This was affirmed by the Minister of Sustainable Development, Hon. Orlando Habet, who confirmed to KREM News that the project had been rejected, citing that the project would only target the bulk storage facility at the

a new tourism village at the Port of Belize – a proposal which was ultimately rejected late last year primarily because of questions and concerns that had not, in the view of the NEAC, been adequately addressed in the Environmental Impact Assessment submitted by the company. Last week, on Thursday, November 24, following a final round of public consultations, the NEAC unanimously denied the project the environmental clearance needed to proceed after a second attempt by the company to get the green light.

While the Waterloo developers argued that the cruise terminal project could generate jobs in the Port Loyola constituency, groups like Oceana and the Belize Coalition of Sustainable Fisheries, as well as many Belizeans, have been publicly expressing their concerns about the project, stating that the consultations have been insufficient, and that Waterloo did not meet the requirements for environmental clearance. (Others, such as UEF's YaYa Marin Coleman, noted that

Port should the project get approval. This is reportedly one of the main reasons that the NEAC did not see it fit to allow the undertaking to proceed.

Notably, Michael Ashcroft, who is the chairman of Waterloo Holdings, had vehemently objected to the initial rejection of the development last December and had written to Prime Minister John Briceño at the start of the year, claiming that the rejection of the project's EIA by the NEAC was in violation of the Treaty of 1982 between the GOB and the UK. Further, Ashcroft made mention of seeking compensation for the \$US 5M invested by Waterloo Holdings in the development of a plan for the project and claimed that the Barrow administration had assured their investors that the project would be greenlit as long as the EIA regulations were met.

It has yet to be announced whether Ashcroft will proceed with litigation now that the project has been rejected for the second time.

# Burnt remains found of Bzean American entrepreneur



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Crocland Eco Park, and had rebranded the establishment, which was renamed Washing Tree Rainforest Eco-Park and Resort, and was scheduled to open on January 25 of next year.

According to reports, Crawford, a former employee of Tucker who had a dispute with him about money, reportedly went to the establishment on the property, where Tucker was at the time, and fired his shotgun at him, killing him on the spot. He then proceeded to wrap Tucker's body in a rug and disposed of it at an unknown location. Police later searched Crawford's home in Belize City and discovered the 12-gauge shotgun allegedly used to murder Tucker. Crawford was detained by police and charges were levied against him; however,

he was uncooperative with authorities.

Based on reliable reports, Tucker's burnt body was found in the Belize River Valley area near Lemonal Village in the Belize District.

Before the discovery of Tucker's remains, Commissioner of Police, Chester Williams indicated during a media briefing that there is concrete evidence linking Crawford to the murder of Tucker.

"We believe that based on the evidence, we can prove those things to a court in a subsequent trial. Nonetheless, we are employing our best endeavor to be able to locate the body to then be without doubt or certainty, establish to the court that Mr. Tucker is dead. He died from unlawful harm, and the harm was caused by Mr. Crawford," he said.

"... We have direct evidence where

# Rare photos from the AMANDALA archives



On September 10, 1969, before UBAD marched for the first time in Belize City, Mrs. Dennis Young (now deceased), Harvard '68, installed teenager Sheldon Vasquez as Belize's first Miss Afro Honduras.



A young Audrey Matura is all smiles next to UDP Leader, Rt. Hon. Dean Barrow. We're not sure if Miss Matura had already been appointed a UDP Senator by Mr. Barrow. (JENKINS)

# PUC explains utility rates

Continued from Page 2

also looking at historic, how much it costed them last year to deliver what they delivered, and as a result, this is reviewed by us. We go into detail by reviewing everything. We use the red-setting methodology, which we called the regulatory model. Once that is ordered and approved by the commission, then that becomes an order, and that is demanded that they deliver that service at a certain price. They are not allowed to set their price. Only the PUC sets rates," he said.

Additionally, the PUC is also responsible for the encouragement of implementation of infrastructural upgrades to ensure that customers are receiving reliable and sustainable service. Gomez noted that companies must submit a report for their yearly evaluation and this ensures that

customers are receiving a reasonable product for the amount they are paying.

"We are asking for quality, but if we ask for too much quality, it might be unaffordable. Our job is not just to accept. For example, we don't just accept what we get from electricity or what we get from water. We are supposed to design and develop the product we want. We want electricity that is twenty-four hours of service; we want to make sure that the people do not get more than twenty hours of blackout a year, and we want the frequencies and the voltages to be stable. So we define the product, and then the utility has to not only comply but put the infrastructure in place to be able to develop that product in that way. So whenever you see the rate, it is because we have checked all their components and all their investments," highlighted Gomez.

that is concerned, and again, [as] I said, we will try to do more to make the case stronger. I always believe that in any prosecution you can never have too much evidence; you can only have too little, so the more we get the better it's going to be for us," the Compol added.

Additionally, a Kia Sorrento, which police believe was used to transport Tucker's body from the location where

he was killed to Lemonal, has been impounded. A luminol test was conducted on the vehicle, and the results revealed that blood was in the trunk of the vehicle. Samples were taken for DNA testing.

It has been reported that no other persons were involved in this crime.

Crawford has been charged with murder.



# “Wealth untold!” Big decisions and referendums

Monday, November 28, 2022

Governments are elected to govern, and we often boast of our functioning “parliamentary democracy,” where free and open elections are held regularly, and all our changes of government following elections have been peaceful. And when a government is in power, it is expected to make decisions and create policies that see to the achievement of “our just objectives” through the implementation of those policies by the executive arm of government, whose hands at the “plough” are the various government departments, ministries and statutory boards. But there are certain decisions that are so big, the implications for the future well-being of the nation so huge, and the likely difficulty in reversing the effect of such a decision if it was found to be in error so enormous, that a referendum is worthwhile to get the people’s direct opinion on the issue. The matter of the Guatemalan claim has been one such issue; and even before our “Independence”, it was agreed by the former colonial power that any proposed settlement agreement to end the “Anglo-Guatemalan dispute” would first be put to the Belizean people in a referendum for their approval or disapproval. So, in a well-orchestrated exercise, Belizeans were invited to vote in a referendum to take the matter to the ICJ, and let the ICJ decide on our fate.

There have been other issues that have come up, with agitation from various groups, but achieving an official national referendum is not an easy task. Besides, our referendum law is curiously and craftily worded, allowing for a National Assembly “resolution” that “a certain issue or matter is of sufficient national importance that it should be submitted to the electors for their view through a referendum;” but it does not compel the government to act as directed by the will of the people in such a referendum. So, it is left to the political expediency of the government in power, whether it will risk the wrath of the people at a subsequent election, or choose to dutifully abide by their will as expressed in the results of the referendum.

The global environmental movement, further energized by the current international effort to limit the rate of global warming and its attendant catastrophic implications for climate-induced impacts everywhere, but especially on low-lying and coastal states such as Belize, has found much support and appreciation from the Belizean population. Over the past few years, there have been private referendum initiatives launched by Oceana to protect our fishery resources from rapacious fishing gear and techniques like shrimp trawling and gill nets, and to safeguard our barrier reef and tourist beach sites by calling for a moratorium on oil exploration in our sea bed; and they have proven successful in getting government to act in these areas, thus the banning of shrimp trawling (in December, 2010), the introduction of “Offshore Oil Moratorium Legislation” (in October, 2017), and the outlawing of the use of gill nets by fisherfolk (in November, 2020).

But there are other big issues that have been decided by government without a referendum, despite a strong undercurrent of concern and skepticism by individuals with scientific knowledge and background, whose viewpoints were casually brushed aside, while the political bosses pushed ahead with their grandiose plans. Two

such very big issues involve two of our national treasures which constitute part of our fabled “wealth untold”: our freshwater resources and the precious metal called gold.

Powerful politicians were hell-bent on the building of dams to utilize our rivers to generate cheaper electricity. All well and good. But damming a natural, pristine freshwater source, that thousands of residents have relied on for bathing and drinking and food/fishing for generations, is not something that a few politicians should decide without a full and healthy discussion and engagement with the people. There are many factors that give a plus and a minus to the decision, but the people were never given a chance to say “yea” or “nay.” It was just a powerful minister of government signing the deals with big multi-national companies, at what advantage to himself nobody knows; but now the residents along the length of those rivers will for the rest of their lives have to deal with compromised water quality, often making it unsafe to drink because of elevated mercury levels, and likewise the fish may be unhealthy for consumption because of said mercury levels due to stagnation of the water in the dam. Top-gallon floods were always a problem before the dam was constructed; and even with the dam, there have been major floods. Electricity rates would be much higher without the dam, according to experts, and floods more frequent. But the point here is, for better or for worse, the people should have been consulted for their approval in a referendum before such a colossal undertaking. What if one day the dam breaks? Perhaps one spinoff from a referendum exercise, given the public’s approval, would have been more constraints on the all-powerful minister in negotiating contract agreements with foreign construction companies.

Recently, there was the news of a prominent Belizean, Francis Gegg, getting in some trouble with illegal substances in a foreign country. Some years ago, his name was mentioned in a local news story about his involvement with a gold mining operation in the Ceibo Chico area for which he reportedly had a government permit. And then *Amandala* columnist Adele Ramos, in a May 2010 news story titled “Belize Has Unexploited Gold Areas?”, gleaned from a report by “geologist Jean H. Cornec, a founding director of Belize Natural Energy, which struck commercial oil in Belize in 2005,” that “a number of drainages in Belize have been reported to have alluvial gold,” and that “Three regions merit special consideration...: the Sittee-Raspaculo area, the Mountain Pine Ridge area, and Ceibo Chico.”

Lately, there have been efforts by a large foreign corporation to get mining permits to do massive limestone exploitation in the Manatee area.

Mining in all its forms is to be approached with caution in a small developing country like Belize, where our best long-term hope for survival and prosperity lies in the preservation of our healthy natural habitats on land and sea. As precious as quality freshwater resources are becoming in this new modern age, where some countries have to be importing fresh water, all forms of mining should be regarded with caution, because of the potential for contaminating of our streams, rivers and water table through the extraction process used in mining. And gold mining is one of the worst offenders in this area. Apparently, a number of permits have been given in the past, but this matter of gold mining should be thoroughly discussed with the Belizean people, and their approval sought before any such permit is even considered. As a matter of national policy, “we the people” should decide if we want anyone to try and remove that gold.

This is no joke, Belizeans. Our Jewel could forever lose its appeal if we allow our waters to be poisoned. They may say we are primitive. Let them be. Pristine is what we prefer to call it, and we’re holding on to what we have left. Everything labelled “foreign direct investment” seems to put a glitter in the eye of some politicians, but where this gold business is concerned, Belizeans need to be aware of what we are messing with. It’s bad enough already with the dams. If we go for gold, it could be “over”. It’s all there on the internet; just Google “environmental impact of gold mining”, and find out more on how gold mining “... is one of the most destructive industries in the world” and how it “... pollutes water and land with mercury and cyanide, endangering the health of people and ecosystems.”

This is the new age of technology, where some folks even work from home, and if a matter is important enough to seek a consensus from the people, and if the

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# UN-Belize Joint National Steering Committee Meets in Belmopan

by Kory Leslie (Freelance Writer)

BELMOPAN, Belize, Thurs. Nov. 24, 2022

The United Nations/Government of Belize National Steering Committee convened on Thursday, November 24, at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Belmopan. The meeting centered on providing strategic oversight of the UN Multi-Country Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework 2022-2026 (UNMSDCF), and Belize's Country Implementation Plan (CIP). The joint committee, which is responsible for steering the implementation of UN development systems in Belize, discussed the evolving national context, and national, regional, and international development processes and commitments aligned with Belize's national development plans and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

During their remarks to the media, representatives from both entities described their involvement in the planning and execution of the UNMSDCF since it was signed last year and the progress that has been made in the Country Implementation Plan. UN Resident Coordinator, Brigit Gerstenberg also shared that the Committee's collaboration has led to a financial landscape analysis, support to the GOB in implementing their Medium-term Development Strategy and the sourcing of resources for the accomplishment of the 2030 Agenda and SDGs.

"In this regard I wish to thank you for the several discussion rounds and presentations over the last two years about the priorities for sustainable development in Belize provided by the government, and the exchange that we had with UN agencies about it. We are very much committed to further analyze



Meeting of the UN/Belize Joint National Steering Committee

and adopt actions on how we can assist with the multifaceted UN expertise and experience under the different mandates," the UN Resident Coordinator said.

H.E. Amalia Mai, CEO in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Foreign Trade and Immigration, remarked that despite the last two years being filled with setbacks, including inflation attributed to the Covid-19 pandemic and the war in the Ukraine, numerous floods, and destruction at the hands of Hurricane Lisa, there were still positive outcomes due to Belize's collaboration with the UN:

"Through all the travails and the good times, the UN has been a constant partner working closely with the government, to contribute their expertise and support in addressing challenges head on. Never losing sight of the vulnerable population who are at ever-greater risk of marginalization during these periods of crisis. We also recognize the role of the UN system in the global development architecture and the exceedingly good relations that have

characterized Belize's relations with the UN system. The relationship is visible across a wide spectrum of key sectors such as Education, Human Rights, Citizen Security, Health, among others," she said.

The Country Implementation Plan will serve as a roadmap until the end of 2023, with implementation having started since the beginning of 2022. It reportedly supports the government and the country in realizing its development objectives in programs aligned with the UN's strategic priorities under the MSDCF, which include: Economic Resilience and Shared Prosperity, Equality and Well-Being, Resilience to Climate Change and Shocks, Sustainable Natural Resource Management and Peace, Safety, Justice and the Rule of Law.

The budget of the CIP for 2022-2023 is estimated to be US \$51M. Thus far, the National Joint Steering Committee has secured funding of approximately US \$33.3 M, which represents 65% of the budget.



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## "Wealth untold!" Big decisions and referendums

Continued from Page 5

people demand it, then it should not pose a great challenge for those in authority to start the process of education and consultation, culminating in the holding of a referendum. That is, if they consider the will of the people to be important.

P.S. It is left to be seen whether the question of massive seafloor dredging in connection with the Waterloo proposed cruise port development will need to reach the referendum stage. It has been reported that the National Environmental Appraisal Committee (NEAC) has once again rejected that company's proposal.

## Willows Bank Road accident...

Continued from Page 3

while there.

King was also taken to the Karl Heusner Memorial Hospital but was listed in a stable condition.

The cause of the accident is still unknown at this time. Police are investigating.

"There is an increase in fatal accidents involving motorcycles. Again, we

encourage the drivers of these motorcycles to respect the speed limits, to respect the traffic laws. Sometimes we look around to see some of this is based on reckless driving or behavior. We encourage them to follow the rules in an effort to try to minimize these accidents," said Senior Superintendent Hilberto Romero, the Officer Commanding the Eastern Division of the Police Department, at a police press briefing this week.

# Mission accomplished - CARICOM stakeholders welcome loss & damage win from climate summit

*(Sharm El Sheikh, Egypt)*  
Stakeholders from Caribbean small island developing states (SIDS) have welcomed the decision to establish a loss and damage response fund from the recently concluded United Nations Climate Conference (COP27) in Egypt.

“We have literally exhausted all of our efforts ... to bring home the climate action commitments our vulnerable people desperately need,” said the Hon. Minister Molwyn Joseph of Antigua and Barbuda, chair of the Alliance of Small Island Developing States (AOSIS), in a statement issued Sunday (November 20). “Our Ministers and negotiators have endured sleepless nights and endless days in an intense series of negotiations, determined to secure the establishment of a loss and damage response fund, keep 1.5° alive, and advance ambition on critical mitigation and adaptation plans,” he added.

AOSIS has represented the interests

of some 39 SIDS and low-lying coastal developing states for more than two decades in climate negotiations and sustainable development processes.

Labelled a breakthrough decision, the agreement to establish a loss and damage fund forms a part of a package of decisions from the international negotiations. It follows years of deliberations on the call for financial support to help developing countries respond to post-climate-related impacts, including livelihoods loss; and the addition of loss and damage to the COP agenda for the first time. However, even as stakeholders celebrate, they are mindful of the work ahead to



**CCCCC COP27 3 – Dr. Colin Young, Executive Director of the (CCCCC) presents at COP27**

operationalise the fund.

Executive Director (ED) of the Caribbean Community Climate Change Centre (CCCCC), Dr. Colin Young, said while the hard-fought-for loss and damage decision was certainly welcomed, it is now time to ensure the fund becomes operational and benefits SIDS and other developing countries. “The details will need to be worked out; the criteria established, and the funding sources identified. The design of the fund must be fit for purpose and not repeat the mistakes of other funds that are very difficult to access and take years,” said the ED, who was present in Egypt from November 6 to 18.

UnaMay Gordon, former principal director for the Climate Change Division of Jamaica and current chairperson of the Board of Directors of the CCCCC who herself has been on the frontlines at many global climate negotiations, agreed. “This was a great step forward, but it is the first step. Eyes will now focus on the construction of the transitional committee and the beginning of their deliberations. I do hope the fight for loss and damage gets easier from here on,” she noted, fresh from her participation in the Egypt COP. “It should not be so hard to agree on something everybody agrees needed to be addressed. But as I said earlier, good sense must prevail,” added Gordon.

AOSIS, meanwhile, has long championed financial support for loss and damage in the developing world and only last month published a briefing document detailing how a ‘fit-for-purpose multilateral fund designated as an operating entity of the UNFCCC Financial Mechanism’ should work.

AOSIS’ membership (roughly 39 countries) which includes Caribbean SIDS, have called for the design and operationalisation of the fund to include important concepts such as “climate justice” when taking action to address climate change as outlined in the Paris Agreement; and flagged the need for an operating entity that is built to provide predictable support for ex-post response to loss and damage. Beyond that, AOSIS has maintained that the programming of support should take a “country-owned, country-driven, gender-responsive approach” and “with operational modalities that realise enhanced direct access, especially through existing regional and national entities.”

*First published by CCCCC*



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NAGIN LAD BA MSc MAAT FCCA**

Nagin Lad is a qualified Chartered Certified Accountant and Registered Auditor. He has a BA (Hons) degree in Accounting from the University of Kent and an MSc in Accounting and Finance from De Monfort University. Mr. Nagin is also a member of the Association of Accounting Technicians (MAAT), a Fellow of the Association of Certified Fraud Examiners (ACFE).

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## “¡Riqueza incalculable!” Grandes decisiones y referéndums

Lunes, 28 de noviembre de 2022

Los gobiernos son elegidos para gobernar, y con frecuencia nos jactamos de nuestra “democracia parlamentaria” en funcionamiento, donde se llevan a cabo elecciones libres y abiertas con regularidad, y todos nuestros cambios de gobierno posteriores a las elecciones han sido pacíficos. Y cuando un gobierno está en el poder, se espera que tome decisiones y cree políticas que aseguren el logro de “nuestros objetivos justos” a través de la implementación de esas políticas por parte del brazo ejecutivo del gobierno, cuyas manos en el “arado” son los varios departamentos gubernamentales, ministerios y juntas estatutarias. Pero hay ciertas decisiones que son tan grandes, las implicaciones para el bienestar futuro de la nación tan enormes, y la probable dificultad de revertir el efecto de tal decisión tan enorme si se descubre que tiene errores, que vale la pena un referéndum para obtener la opinión directa de la gente sobre el tema. El asunto del reclamo guatemalteco ha sido uno de esos temas; e incluso antes de nuestra “Independencia”, la antigua potencia colonial acordó que cualquier acuerdo de solución propuesto para poner fin a la “disputa anglo-guatemalteca” se sometería primero al pueblo beliceño en un referéndum para su aprobación o desaprobación. Entonces, en un ejercicio bien orquestado, se invitó a los beliceños a votar en un referéndum para llevar el asunto a la CIJ y dejar que la CIJ decida sobre nuestro destino.

Ha habido otros temas que han surgido, con agitación de varios grupos, pero lograr un referéndum nacional oficial no es una tarea fácil. Además, nuestra ley de referéndum está redactada de manera curiosa y astuta, lo que permite una “resolución” de la Asamblea Nacional de que “cierta cuestión o asunto es de suficiente importancia nacional como para someterlo para la opinión de los electores a través de un referéndum”; pero no obliga al gobierno a actuar según lo indique la voluntad del pueblo en dicho referéndum. Por lo tanto, se deja a la conveniencia política del gobierno en el poder, ya sea que arriesgará la ira de la gente en una elección posterior, o elejirá acatar debidamente su voluntad expresada en los resultados del referéndum.

El movimiento ambiental global, impulsado aún más por el esfuerzo internacional actual para limitar la tasa de calentamiento global y sus consecuencias catastróficas concomitantes para los impactos inducidos por el clima en todas partes, pero especialmente en los estados costeros y de baja altitud como Belize, ha encontrado mucho apoyo y reconocimiento entre la población beliceña. En los últimos años, Oceana ha lanzado iniciativas privadas de referéndum para proteger nuestros recursos pesqueros de equipo de pesca y técnicas rapaces como la pesca de arrastre de camarones y redes de enmalle, y para salvaguardar nuestra barrera de arrecifes y playas turísticas al pedir una moratoria en la exploración de petróleo en nuestro lecho marino; y han demostrado ser exitosos en lograr que el gobierno actúe en estas áreas, por lo tanto, la prohibición de la pesca de arrastre de camarones (en diciembre de 2010), la introducción de “Legislación de moratoria del petróleo en alta mar” (en octubre de 2017) y la prohibición del uso de redes de enmalle por parte de los pescadores (en noviembre de 2020).

Pero hay otros grandes temas que han sido decididos por el gobierno sin referéndum, a pesar de una fuerte corriente de preocupación y escepticismo por parte de personas con conocimientos y antecedentes científicos, cuyos puntos de vista fueron casualmente dejados de lado, mientras los jefes políticos seguían adelante con sus grandiosos planes. Dos de estos grandes temas involucran dos de nuestros tesoros nacionales que constituyen parte de nuestra legendaria “riqueza incalculable”: nuestros recursos de agua dulce y el metal precioso llamado oro.

Los políticos poderosos estaban empeñados en la construcción de represas para utilizar nuestros ríos para generar electricidad más barata. Todo muy bien. Pero represar una fuente de agua dulce natural y prístina, en la que miles de residentes han dependido para bañarse, beber y comer/pescar durante generaciones, no es algo que unos pocos políticos deban decidir sin una discusión y un intercambio completo y saludable con la gente. Hay muchos factores que le dan un más o menos a la decisión, pero a la gente nunca se le dio la oportunidad de decir “sí” o “no”. Era solo un poderoso ministro de gobierno que firmaba acuerdos con grandes empresas multinacionales, a qué beneficio para sí mismo nadie lo sabe; pero ahora los residentes a lo largo de esos ríos tendrán que lidiar por el resto de sus vidas con la calidad del agua comprometida, lo que a menudo hace que no

sea segura para beber debido a los niveles elevados de mercurio, y del mismo modo, el pescado puede no ser saludable para el consumo debido a dichos niveles de mercurio debido al estancamiento del agua en la presa. Grandes inundaciones siempre fueron un problema antes de que se construyera la presa; e incluso con la represa, ha habido grandes inundaciones. Las tarifas de electricidad serían mucho más altas sin la represa, según los expertos, y las inundaciones serían más frecuentes. Pero el punto aquí es que, para bien o para mal, el pueblo debería haber sido consultado para su aprobación en un referéndum antes de tan colosal iniciativa. ¿Y si un día se rompe la presa? Tal vez una consecuencia del ejercicio de un referéndum, dada la aprobación del público, habría sido más restricciones para el todopoderoso ministro en la negociación de acuerdos contractuales con empresas constructoras extranjeras.

Recientemente, hubo noticias de un prominente beliceño, Francis Gegg, que se metió en problemas con sustancias ilegales en un país extranjero. Hace algunos años, su nombre fue mencionado en una noticia local sobre su participación en una operación de extracción de oro en el área de Ceibo Chico para la cual supuestamente tenía un permiso del gobierno. Y la entonces columnista de Amandala, Adele Ramos, en una nota de mayo de 2010 titulada “¿Belize tiene áreas de oro sin explotar?”, recopiló de un informe del “geólogo Jean H. Cornec, director fundador de Belize Natural Energy, que encontró petróleo comercial en Belize en 2005”, que “se ha informado que varios drenajes en Belize tienen oro aluvial”, y que “Tres regiones merecen una consideración especial...: el área de Sittee-Raspaculo, el área de Mountain Pine Ridge y Ceibo Chico”.

Últimamente, ha habido esfuerzos por parte de una gran corporación extranjera para obtener permisos de minería para realizar una explotación masiva de piedra caliza en el área de Manatee.

La minería en todas sus formas debe abordarse con cautela en un pequeño país en desarrollo como Belize, donde nuestra mayor esperanza de supervivencia y prosperidad a largo plazo radica en la preservación de nuestros hábitats naturales saludables en tierra y mar. A pesar de lo valiosos que se están volviendo los recursos de agua dulce de calidad en esta nueva era moderna, en la que algunos países tienen que importar agua dulce, todas las formas de minería deben considerarse con cautela, debido al potencial de contaminación de nuestros arroyos, ríos y manto freático a través del proceso de extracción utilizado en la minería. Y la minería de oro es uno de los peores infractores en esta área. Aparentemente, se han otorgado varios permisos en el pasado, pero este asunto de la extracción de oro debe ser discutido a fondo con el pueblo beliceño, y debe buscarse su aprobación antes de siquiera considerar dicho permiso. Como cuestión de política nacional, “nosotros, el pueblo” deberíamos decidir si queremos que alguien intente sacar ese oro.

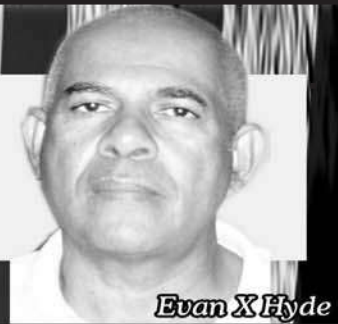
Esto no es broma, beliceños. Nuestra Joya podría perder para siempre su atractivo si permitimos que nuestras aguas sean envenenadas. Puede que digan que somos primitivos. Déjenlos. Prístino es como preferimos llamarlo, y nos estamos aferrando a lo que nos queda. Todo lo etiquetado como “inversión extranjera directa” parece poner brillo en el ojo de algunos políticos, pero en lo que respecta a este negocio del oro, los beliceños deben ser conscientes de en qué nos estamos metiendo. Ya es bastante malo con las represas. Si vamos por el oro, podría ser el “final”. Todo está en Internet; simplemente busquen en Google “impacto ambiental de la minería de oro” y obtengan más información sobre cómo la minería de oro “... es una de las industrias más destructivas del mundo” y cómo “... contamina el agua y la tierra con mercurio y cianuro, poniendo en peligro la salud de las personas y ecosistemas.”

Esta es la nueva era de la tecnología, donde algunas personas incluso trabajan desde casa, y si un asunto es lo suficientemente importante como para buscar el consenso de la gente, y si la gente lo exige, entonces no debería representar un gran desafío para las autoridades iniciar el proceso de educación y consulta, culminando con la realización de un referéndum. Es decir, si consideran importante la voluntad del pueblo.

PD Queda por ver si la cuestión del dragado masivo del lecho marino en relación con el propuesto desarrollo Waterloo del puerto de cruceros deberá llegar a la etapa de referéndum. Se ha informado que el Comité Nacional de Evaluación Ambiental (NEAC por sus siglas en inglés) ha rechazado una vez más la propuesta de esa empresa.



# From the Publisher



Evan X Hyde

In September, the Guatemalans disrespected Belizeans when their soldiers uprooted Belizean flags from the Sarstoon River island and took the flags to Guatemala City.

A few days ago, the Guatemalans again disrespected Belizeans when they described Belize's recent approach to the International Court of Justice (ICJ) to turn back Honduras' claim to the Sapodilla Cayes as "deplorable." "Deplorable," because Guatemala says the Sapodilla Cayes are theirs, even though the cayes have never been recognized as such by the regional or international community.

A few years ago, then Guatemalan president, Jimmy Morales, massed troops on Guatemala's border with Belize because he claimed to believe that a Guatemalan youth trespassing in Belize had been murdered by Belizean soldiers. These were a frightening few days for Belizeans.

What we are about today is establishing a pattern, a pattern where the militarily superior Guatemalans speak and behave disrespectfully to Belizeans about our 8,867 square miles of Jewel.

Now Russia's invasion of and war with Ukraine has proved that the

technology of modern military equipment can enable a smaller, weaker nation to neutralize the size advantage of a larger one.

But in order for such modern military technology to have an effect, the smaller nation must have fighting morale, which Ukraine has demonstrated that it does. This is not the case with Belize, where most citizens, it seems to me, still have a mental dependency on the British where any Guatemalan emergency is concerned.

There is an old cliché which says that you cannot have your cake and eat it too. Belizeans who have migrated to the United States believe they still have a vital stake in Belize, the nation-state. I agree, but successive Belizean governments have indicated that they do not hold the Belizean diaspora in high regard where the ICJ and the Belizean constitution are concerned.

The new Belize government elected two years ago has done a lot of talking about changing "competencies" and other technical matters in education, but there has been almost nothing said by their spokesmen about African and Mayan history.

Well, the truth of the matter is that

the Maya are the best jungle fighters in Belize's little army, and the fearless Garifuna (of African origin) comprise probably the largest percentage of that army.

The truth about Maya history in this region is important if one wishes to expose the injustice and cruelty of the military/corporate oligarchy in Guatemala. There was a very bloody civil war fought in Guatemala between 1960 and 1996, and while there were ideological issues involved, the ethnic issue was large. Guatemala is a racist nation, and the large, probably majority, Maya population is considered and treated as inferior.

We come now, in this brief essay, to the so-called Creole population of Belize, a population which features many spokesmen who refuse to consider themselves African, as such. What is the reality? British pirates and business investors brought our African ancestors here in chains for a specific purpose from the seventeenth to the nineteenth centuries: our ancestors worked the forests here, the British made a lot of money, and our women and children had to dump our waste into open sewers in Belize Town.

There were rebellions by our

ancestors in 1894, 1919, 1934, and 1950, and after we achieved self-government in 1964, we believed that we were about to inherit these 8,867 from the British enslavers and colonizers. In 1964, we Belizeans knew almost nothing about something called "corporations." And we knew next to nothing about the international Cold War, a fight for ideological control of the post-colonial world.

The Creoles, by 1964, had developed a superiority complex with respect to the Maya and the Garinagu. This was a complex which was created and nurtured by the British. That is why I have said that you must read Peter Ashdown's essay on "Creole Historiography" in order to understand what has gone on here since 1964.

I hope that Audrey Matura's new organization will encourage discourse and debate about some of these issues which the academics controlled by the Roman and Anglican churches pretend do not exist. In a way, I don't blame the present academics for being scared: the Roman and Anglican Churches are used to maintain European supremacy by the neoliberal corporations.

'Nuff said.

## FROM THE PUBLISHER en Español

En septiembre, los guatemaltecos faltaron el respeto a los beliceños cuando sus soldados arrancaron banderas beliceñas de la isla del río Sarstún y las llevaron a la Ciudad de Guatemala.

Hace unos días, los guatemaltecos volvieron a faltarle el respeto a los beliceños cuando describieron el reciente acercamiento de Belize a la Corte Internacional de Justicia (CIJ) para revertir el reclamo de Honduras sobre los Cayos Sapotillos como "deplorable". "Deplorable", porque Guatemala dice que los Cayos Sapotillos son suyos, a pesar de que los cayos nunca han sido reconocidos como tales por la comunidad regional o internacional.

Hace unos años, el entonces presidente de Guatemala, Jimmy Morales, reunió tropas en la frontera de Guatemala con Belize porque afirmó creer que un joven guatemalteco que se encontraba ilegalmente en territorio beliceño había sido asesinado por soldados beliceños. Estos fueron unos días aterradores para los beliceños.

De lo que tratamos hoy es establecer un patrón, un patrón en el que los guatemaltecos militarmente superiores hablan y se comportan de manera irrespetuosa con los beliceños sobre nuestras 8,867 millas cuadradas de la Joya.

Ahora, la invasión de Rusia y la guerra con Ucrania han demostrado que la tecnología del equipo militar moderno puede permitir que una nación más pequeña y más débil neutralice la ventaja de tamaño de una más grande.

Pero para que esa tecnología militar moderna tenga efecto, la nación más pequeña debe tener una moral de lucha, y Ucrania ha demostrado que la tiene. Este no es el caso de Belize, donde la mayoría de los ciudadanos, me parece, todavía tienen una dependencia mental de los británicos en lo que respecta a cualquier emergencia guatemalteca.

Hay un viejo cliché que dice que no puedes tener tu pastel y comértelo también. Los beliceños que han emigrado a los Estados Unidos creen que todavía tienen un interés vital en Belize, el estado-nación. Estoy de acuerdo, pero los sucesivos gobiernos beliceños han indicado que no tienen en alta estima a la diáspora de Belize en lo que respecta a la CIJ y la constitución de Belize.

El nuevo Gobierno de Belize elegido hace dos años ha hablado mucho sobre el cambio de "competencias" y otros asuntos técnicos en la educación, pero sus voceros no han dicho casi nada sobre la historia africana y maya.

Bueno, la verdad del asunto es que los mayas son los mejores luchadores

de la jungla en el pequeño ejército de Belize, y los intrépidos garifunas (de origen africano) constituyen probablemente el mayor porcentaje de ese ejército.

La verdad sobre la historia maya en esta región es importante si uno desea exponer la injusticia y la crueldad de la oligarquía militar/corporativa en Guatemala. Hubo una guerra civil muy sangrienta en Guatemala entre 1960 y 1996, y aunque hubo cuestiones ideológicas involucradas, la cuestión étnica fue grande. Guatemala es una nación racista, y la gran población maya, probablemente la mayoría, es considerada y tratada como inferior.

Llegamos ahora, en este breve ensayo, a la llamada población criolla de Belize, una población que cuenta con muchos voceros que se niegan a considerarse africanos, como tal. ¿Cuál es la realidad? Los piratas británicos y los inversores comerciales trajeron aquí encadenados a nuestros antepasados ??africanos con un propósito específico desde el siglo XVII hasta el XIX: nuestros antepasados ??trabajaron los bosques aquí, los británicos ganaron mucho dinero y nuestras mujeres y niños tuvieron que arrojar nuestros desechos en alcantarillas abiertas en el Municipio de Belize.

Hubo rebeliones de nuestros antepasados ??en 1894, 1919, 1934 y 1950, y después de que logramos el autogobierno en 1964, creímos que estábamos a punto de heredar estas 8.867 de los esclavizadores y colonizadores británicos. En 1964, los beliceños no sabíamos casi nada acerca de algo llamado "corporaciones". Y no sabíamos casi nada sobre la Guerra Fría internacional, una lucha por el control ideológico del mundo poscolonial.

Los criollos, para 1964, habían desarrollado un complejo de superioridad con respecto a los mayas y los garinagu. Este fue un complejo que fue creado y alimentado por los británicos. Por eso he dicho que hay que leer el ensayo de Peter Ashdown sobre "Historiografía criolla" para entender lo que ha pasado aquí desde 1964.

Espero que la nueva organización de Audrey Matura aliente el discurso y el debate sobre algunos de estos temas que los académicos controlados por las iglesias romana y anglicana pretenden que no existen. En cierto modo, no culpo a los académicos actuales por estar asustados: las iglesias romana y anglicana son utilizadas para mantener la supremacía europea por parte de las corporaciones neoliberales.

No hace falta decir más.

## Vladimir Putin's speech at the Valdai Foundation



by Clinton Canul Luna

On October 27, 2022, the president of Russia, Vladimir Putin, gave a speech at the Valdai Discussion Club Foundation which I find to be of much interest. Permit me, our dear readers of this column, to present to you Part 1 of such speech:

Ladies and gentlemen, friends,

I had the opportunity to know what was discussed here during the last few days. It was an interesting and substantive discussion. I hope you will not regret coming to Russia and communicating with each other. I'm glad to see you all. We have used the platform of the Valdai Club to discuss, more than once, the important and serious changes that have already taken place and are taking place throughout the world, the risks posed by the degradation of global institutions, the erosion of the principles of collective security and the replacement of international law by "rules". I was tempted to say "we are clear who came up with these rules", but perhaps that would not be an accurate statement. We have no idea who invented these rules, what they are based on, or what they contain. It seems that we are witnessing an attempt to impose a single rule by which those in power - we were talking about power, and now I am talking

about global power - could live without following any rules and could get away with it. These are the rules that we hear them constantly, as they say, insisting, that is, talking about them incessantly.

The Valdai debates are important because various assessments and forecasts can be heard in them. Life always shows how successful they were, since life is the most severe and objective teacher. Thus, life shows how accurate our forecasts of previous years were. Unfortunately, events continue to follow a negative scenario, which we have discussed more than once during our previous meetings. In addition, they have become a major system-wide crisis that has affected, in addition to the political-military sphere, the economic and humanitarian spheres. The so-called West, which is of course a theoretical construct as it is not united and is clearly a very complex conglomerate, but I will still say that the West has taken a number of measures in recent years and especially in recent months that are designed to aggravate the situation. In fact, they always seek to aggravate the situation, which is also nothing new. This includes fomenting the war in Ukraine, provocations around Taiwan, and destabilizing world food and energy

markets. Of course, the latter was not done on purpose; there is no doubt. The destabilization of the energy market was the result of a series of systemic mistakes made by the Western authorities that I mentioned earlier. As we can see now, the situation was further aggravated by the destruction of the pan-European gas pipelines. It is something totally alien to reality, but nevertheless we are witnessing these sad events. Global power is exactly what the so-called West has at stake in its game. But this game is certainly dangerous, bloody and, I would say, dirty. It denies the sovereignty of countries and peoples, their identity and uniqueness, and tramples on the interests of other States. In any case, although denial is not the word used, they are doing it in real life. Nobody, except those who create these rules that I have mentioned, has the right to keep their identity: everyone else must comply with these rules.

In this regard, let me remind you of Russia's proposals to our Western partners to build trust and a system of collective security. In December 2021 they were released again. However, in the modern world, doing nothing cannot work. Whoever sows winds reaps storms, as the saying goes. The crisis has taken on a global dimension and has affected the whole world. Don't be under any illusions about it. Humanity is at a fork: continue to accumulate problems and end up crushed by their weight, or work together to find solutions. Humanity is at a fork: keep piling up problems and end up crushed under their weight, or work together to find solutions — even imperfect ones, as long as they work—that can make our world a more stable and secure place. I have always believed in the power of common sense. For this reason, I am convinced that, sooner or later, both the new centers of the multipolar international order and the West will have to start a dialogue on an equal footing on a common future for all of us, and the sooner the better, of course. In this regard, I will highlight some of the most important aspects for all of us.

Current events have overshadowed environmental issues. Oddly enough, this is what I would like to talk about today first. Climate change is no longer at the top of the agenda. But that fundamental challenge has not disappeared; it is still with us and growing. The loss of biodiversity is one of the most dangerous consequences of the alteration of the environmental balance. This brings me to the key point for which we have all gathered here. Isn't it equally important to maintain cultural, social, political and civilizational diversity? At the same time, the smoothing over and erasing of any and all differences is essentially what the modern West does. What's behind this? First of all, the decline of the creative potential of the West and its desire to stop and block the free

development of other civilizations. There is also an openly commercial interest, of course. By imposing their values, their consumption habits and their standardization on others, our adversaries—I will be careful with my words—try to expand the markets for their products. The objective in this way is, in short, very primitive. It is remarkable that the West proclaims the universal value of its culture and worldview. Although they do not say it openly, which they often do, they behave as if it were so, as if it were a fact of life, and the policy they carry out is designed to demonstrate that these values must be accepted unconditionally by all other members of the international community. I would like to quote Alexander Solzhenitsyn's famous speech at the Harvard commencement ceremony, delivered in 1978. He said that typical of the West is "a continual blindness of superiority"—and that it continues to this day — that "supports the belief that vast Regions around the planet must develop and mature to the level of today's Western systems." This he said in 1978. Nothing has changed. In the almost 50 years since then, the blindness that Solzhenitsyn spoke of, and which is openly racist and neo-colonial, has taken on particularly distorted forms, particularly after the emergence of the so-called unipolar world.

What do I mean? The belief in one's own infallibility is very dangerous; it is only one step away from the desire of the infallible to destroy those they do not like, or as they say, to nullify them. Think about the meaning of this word. Even at the height of the Cold War, the height of the confrontation of the two systems, ideologies and military rivalry, it did not occur to anyone to deny the very existence of the culture, art and science of other peoples, their opponents. It didn't even occur to anyone. Yes, certain restrictions were placed on contacts in the fields of education, science, culture and, unfortunately, sports. But, nevertheless, both the Soviet and the American leaders understood that it was necessary to treat the humanitarian field tactfully, studying and respecting your rival, and sometimes even borrowing from him in order to maintain a basis of solid and productive relations at least for the future. The Nazis once burned books, and now Western "guardians of liberalism and progress" have gone so far as to ban Dostoevsky and Tchaikovsky. And what happens now? The so-called "annulment of culture" and in reality - as we have said many times - the real annulment of culture is

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# They should have debated spanking

by Colin Hyde

Congratulations to all the young leaders who participated in the parliamentary exercise in the National Assembly Building. No, no, no, not Children's Parliament. The story I have says that hiding its head in the sand didn't help the ostrich escape danger. Really, that's like believing that what you don't know can't hurt you. I say, if you'll escape danger, you have to face it head on.

The UN definition of youth is 15-24 years. I like to think of youth as 13 to 18 years, 19 to 21 as pre-adult, and 22 to 28 as young adults. Anyway, the young people who participated in the parliament are not children.

I don't think I'm as brave as the little boy who revealed on his first public appearance that the emperor had on no clothes, but if that naked emperor struts down the promenade parade after parade, somebody has to speak up. If we want these "children" to respect us, we have to acknowledge the biology. The law, respects, protects the bodies of youth the same way it protects children. I know it's a bother for some people to explain things, but we have to. You're a youth, but for special reasons the state gives you the protection it gives a child.

That out-of-the-box, vocational education was a tame topic they gave our young people to discuss. It would

have been great to have our young people debate corporal punishment. I am certain that Belizeans from end to end would have been on the edge of their seats to hear their arguments. And after they had debated on the pros and cons, it would have been nice to have a vote, with a division. Of course that division would just have been for the formality of it, because, thanks to our present system, it would have been along "party" lines.

If we had gone with the sash kaad, it would have been good if a conscience vote had been taken prior to the debate, and after that, when they were filing out of the aisles, they voted again, just to see if any "swaying" took place during the debate. But, I expect the nay on the belt, heavy slippers, and shooti broom would have been near unanimous — one, because they are the ones who bear the brunt of that, and two, because the indoctrination against whipping is huge. Even the churches are timid on this critical Bible principle. But what should we expect. They are chasing weed. Whoa there, weed, now that would have been a topic.

## Tell Guatemala fu leave Belize alone

The more you live, the more you see things you can't believe. Well, well, well, Guatemala hibbing words at Belize for our acknowledging Honduras's weak

claim to the Sapodilla islands. Guatemala has never had any real claim to those islands. It is just because we are not the type to deny our neighbors, them, why they got to know and enjoy those white, sandy beaches and crystal clear waters. Now if they had owned those islands, they would have had them under full military guard, even from their own who don't belong to the dignitaries' class.

The *Krem News* headline said, "Guatemala calls Belize's late move to take Honduras to the ICJ DEPLORABLE", and all I can think about is their "face." I think we should have a talk about deplorable. It begins with renegeing on the 1859 treaty. It continues with renegeing on the "exchange of notes" in 1931. It gets taken up a notch with putting that un-neighborly claim in their constitution. The list of deplorable things our neighbour to the west and south has done to us is long. They have face to turn such a charge on us.

The *KREM News* story said Guatemala said it "laments the move and finds it deplorable, particularly because Belize's submission to the ICJ was made on November 16, only days away from December 8, when Guatemala is set to make its final submission in the written phase of the process regarding its own territorial claim to Belize." But we know why Guatemala is putting on this show. See, by us acknowledging the feeble Honduras claim, Guatemala's claim gets even more exposed for the absolutely empty thing that it is.

A friend of mine who makes sure I am well-educated sent me a copy of the facts we presented, and they're darn airtight. Don't let anybody come and tell you we have to wait to hear the other side, because there isn't any. The presentation explains that our Sapodilla Cayes are "approximately 75 kilometers east of the Belizean mainland town of Punta Gorda", and mentions the most prominent ones - "Northeast Sapodilla Caye, Frank's Caye, Nicholas Caye, Hunting Caye, Lime Caye, Ragged Caye, West Ragged Caye and Seal Caye."

The paper explains that the UK had over 200 years of uninterrupted possession of the islands, and that since 1981 we have been in charge. The evidence includes *exercises of jurisdiction by magistrates over the Sapodilla Cayes; expressed statements confirming sovereignty, including as expressed in official maps; protests against conduct on the part of other States that was inconsistent with British sovereignty; the construction of lighthouses; the granting of licences and concessions in relation to natural resources; the regulation of land ownership, fishing and entry to the*

*Sapodilla Cayes; and the performance of military activities in and around the Sapodilla Cayes.*

Belize declared that Honduras never exercised sovereignty over the cayes, that "prior to 1981, it repeatedly acknowledged British sovereignty", that "it was only in 1981, with the independence of Belize from the United Kingdom imminent, that Honduras first made a claim to the Sapodilla Cayes", and that "since Belize succeeded in 1981 to the sovereignty of the United Kingdom over the Sapodilla Cayes, Belize has continuously exercised exclusive sovereignty over the Sapodilla Cayes."

## I like ORANGE, but I think the discussion is on the surface

I'm not going to insert myself in the middle of this ORANGE thing, because I know where I'm not wanted, but from the edges I have to throw dyaahn two cents, that a lot of numbers and a proper engagement would help the cause.

They've been doing these activism days to deter violence against women for some time now. It would be good to have a presentation of the statistics compiled by the Belize Crime Observatory (BCO) on all crimes considered as gender violence. Our young lions and lionesses in the tertiary institutions could research the data from the years before the BCO came into existence. We also need our young educated talent to find a way to get data from those who have never entered the system. We need to know how our efforts, our type of activism, have put a dent on violence against women.

We've seen "gender violence" derail the candidacy of a man who dedicated his life to serving Belize in the political arena. Yes, I'm talking about Mr. Faber. The last time Mr. Faber faltered and it ended up in the public domain, he claimed he was a victim too. He was invited to Channel Seven's UNCUT show to explain why, but when he attempted to do so, even though he explained that the "other" victim, his fiancée, had given him full license, the show's host, Mr. Vasquez, declared he was victimizing the victim, and shut him down. It is tricky turf. But if we stay off it, we won't get to the root of anything.

I understand the culturing process first hand. I also understand that we train young men to fight wars. Indeed, these days we train young women to fight in wars too. We see young women in kickboxing. I'll bow out with this. We need to see those statistics. The only way we'll know this activism is getting the job done is if we are shown the numbers.



## VACANCY


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Applications should be emailed to [recruitment@rjlsc.org](mailto:recruitment@rjlsc.org) no later than **Friday 9th December, 2022 by 4:00 p.m. Atlantic Standard Time.**



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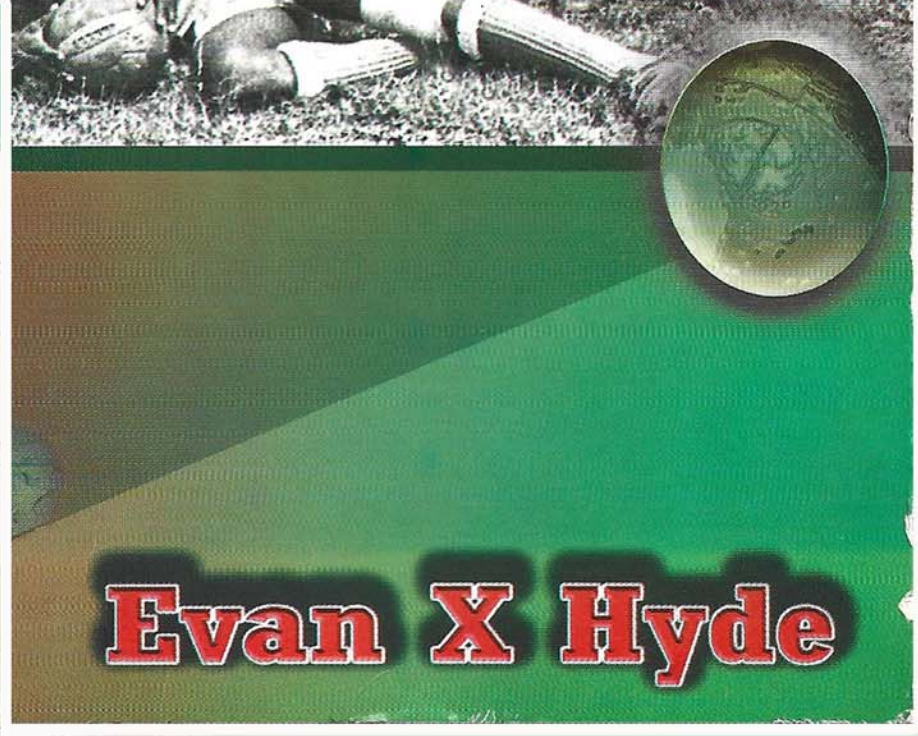
Ludwig Lightburn after he defeated New Orleans' Ralph Dupas, the no. 2 lightweight contender in the world, at New York City's Madison Square Garden in 1955. This was Lightburn's first nationally televised fight in the U.S. It was also seen in Mexico and Canada, and broadcast worldwide on shortwave radio. (The ring announcer is Johnny Addie.)

**Evan X Hyde**

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# 1-1 in San Ignacio; Altitude vs Verdes on Saturday in Independence for PLB championship

BELIZE CITY, Mon. Nov. 28, 2022

It was a 1-1 stalemate yesterday at the Norman Broaster Stadium in San Ignacio, where defending champions, Verdes FC, were held to a 1-1 draw by visiting regular season leader Altitude FC from Mango Creek, Independence, in the first leg of the home-and-away championship finals of the Premier League of Belize (PLB) 2022-2023 Opening Season.

The action was very intense and physical from the opening whistle on a heavy pitch due to earlier rains at the Norman Broaster, and referee Efren Guy had his hands full maintaining control in a game where some players added to his difficulties with well performed theatrics, feigning serious injury to gain the advantage of a free kick and the penalizing of opponents.

Near the end of the first half, Altitude's right defender Collin Westby was red-carded, but the Altitude squad, under coach Wilmer Avila, retained their



Photo: William Ysaguirre

**Rene Leslie of Altitude FC**

composure and battled on with the one-man disadvantage.

It seemed like home standing Verdes would cruise to a 1-nil victory when they took the lead through left side striker Luis Ibarra (71') from a cross goal ground pass from Jesse August on the right wing that evaded Altitude goalkeeper Oscar Palomino. But second half substitute



Photo: William Ysaguirre

**(l to r) Jesse August and Luis Ibarra of Verdes FC**

Rene Leslie brought new energy to the now one-man Altitude forward line, and his efforts were rewarded by a loose ball from an Andres Orozco shot that Verdes goalie Woodrow West couldn't handle in the fading light, and Leslie pounced on the rolling ball at the edge of the goal box and drained it inside the right goal post; 1-1 ball game at the 78th minute.

Coach David Perez and his Verdes team tried hard to capitalize on their one-man advantage, but Altitude was not giving an inch, as they held on till the long whistle for the 1-1 draw.

In Leg 2 of the Finals next Saturday night in Independence, home standing Altitude FC will again be without the services of defender Collin Westby who will be serving a suspension due to his ejection from game one yesterday.

A champion will be declared in Leg 2 of the Finals this Saturday. And PLB secretary Wilhelm Miguel confirmed today that the "away-

goal rule" will NOT be in effect for the Finals. A winner must emerge on the field for the championship; so if game 2 also ends in a draw of any kind, it will be on to overtime, and then penalties if necessary.

PLB Finals Leg 2 schedule:  
**Saturday, December 3**  
 7:30 p.m. – Altitude FC vs Verdes FC  
 – M.A. Stadium in Independence

## SHC is Western Zone champs

**Sacred Heart College (SHC) boys and girls will represent the west in the upcoming Central Secondary Schools Sports Association (CSSSA) Nationals in Punta Gorda.**



**Sacred Heart College male and female basketball teams**

by Charles Gladden

SAN IGNACIO TOWN, Cayo District, Mon. Nov. 28, 2022

On Saturday, November 26, the male and female Sacred Heart College (SHC)

teams in San Ignacio Town, Cayo, became the champions of the Western Zone High School Basketball Tournament and will represent the west in the upcoming National Secondary Schools Sports Association (NSSSA)

basketball championships in Punta Gorda on December 16 and 17.

In the first game of the tournament, SHC girls vanquished Belmopan Baptist High School with a score of 34 - 6, and thus advanced to the

championship round. And in game two, SHC boys soundly defeated their competition, Belmopan Comprehensive School, with a score of 54 - 27. In game

# WHO renames monkeypox as 'mpox'

by Jamie Gumbrecht, CNN

The World Health Organization announced Monday that "mpox" is now the preferred name for monkeypox.

"Both names will be used simultaneously for one year while 'monkeypox' is phased out," the organization said.

The Biden administration said they "welcome the change" and the US will use the mpox name "from this point forward."



Monkeypox was named in 1970, more than a decade after the virus that causes the disease was discovered in captive monkeys, the organization said. But monkeypox probably didn't start in monkeys – its origin is still unknown – and the virus can be found in several other kinds of animals. The name was created before WHO published best practices for naming diseases in 2015.

Scientists and experts have pushed since the start of the recent outbreak to change the name to avoid discrimination and stigma that could steer people away from testing and vaccination. Stigma has been an ongoing concern as the outbreak has largely affected men who have sex with men. In the United States, Black and Hispanic people have been disproportionately affected, data from the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention show.

"We must do all we can to break down barriers to public health, and reducing stigma associated with disease is one critical step in our work to end mpox," U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Secretary Xavier Becerra said in a statement.

This summer, New York City Health Commissioner Dr. Ashwin Vasan sent a letter to WHO to urge it to act quickly on a new name, saying there's "growing concern for the potentially devastating

and stigmatizing effects that the messaging around the 'monkeypox' virus can have on these already vulnerable communities."

In August, WHO encouraged people to propose new names for monkeypox by submitting suggestions to its website. WHO said Monday that the consultation process included experts from medical, scientific, classification and statistics advisory committees "which constituted of representatives from government authorities of 45 different countries."

"The issue of the use of the new name in different languages was extensively discussed. The preferred term mpox can be used in other languages," WHO said in its statement.

WHO said Monday that "monkeypox" will remain searchable in the International Classification of Diseases in order to allow access to historic information, and the one-year period when both will be used allows time for publications and communications to be updated.

So far, more than 81,000 monkeypox cases in 110 cases have been reported to WHO in the recent outbreak. WHO says the global risk remains moderate, and outside of countries in West and Central Africa, the outbreak continues to primarily affect men who have sex with men.

# Ecuador gangs: Gunmen storm hospital in attempt to kill teen

by Mattea Bubalo, BBC News

Police in Ecuador have arrested seven gunmen who stormed a hospital in an attempt to kill a teen being treated there.

Gang members took nurses hostage and exchanged fire with police before they were detained.

All hostages were freed and no one was injured, officials said.

The 17-year-old target of the attack, known as "Dirty Face", is thought to be a rival gang member who is in intensive care recovering from bullet wounds.

The gunmen held five staff members hostage for more than an hour, one employee told local newspaper El Diario.

Video circulating on social media appears to show balaclava-clad men holding guns and briefly shoving a screaming woman through one of the hospital's exit doors before dragging her back into the building.

Other hospital employees at the hospital in the town of Chone, in western Ecuador, said they had locked themselves in rooms while the gunmen

broke down doors in search for the teenager.

"They didn't know the hospital layout, it seems, and that's why these delinquents were roaming through the entire hospital," Homero Andrade, who represents employees at the hospital, told El Diario.

"Thanks to God and to the police we're still here to tell the tale," Mr Andrade said.

Ecuador's President Guillermo Lasso also thanked the police, saying that their intervention had saved lives.

The president shared footage on Twitter showing armed officers poised to enter the building ahead of the arrests.

Gang violence in Ecuador has grown sharply in recent years, including gruesome tactics such as decapitations, and there has been a series of deadly prison riots.

Analysts think that this spike in violence is partly due to violent Mexican cartels expanding to Ecuador where they recruit local gangs to smuggle cocaine.

President Lasso has declared a state of emergency multiple times since he took office last year, in an attempt to

# Vladimir Putin's speech at the Valdai Foundation

Continued from Page 10

the eradication of everything that is alive and creative and stifles free thought in all areas, be it the economy, politics or culture. Today, liberal ideology itself has changed beyond recognition. If at the beginning, classical liberalism was understood as the freedom of each person to do and say what they wanted, in the 20th century, liberals began to say that the so-called open society had enemies and that the freedom of these enemies could and should be restricted if not nullified.

An absurd point has been reached where any alternative opinion is declared subversive propaganda and a threat to democracy. Everything that comes from Russia is branded as "Kremlin intrigues". But look at yourself. Are we really that omnipotent? Any criticism of our opponents—any—is perceived as "Kremlin intrigues", "the hand of the Kremlin". This is crazy. What have they come to? Use your brain, at least, say something more interesting, present your point of view conceptually. Not everything can be blamed on Kremlin intrigues. All this was prophetically predicted by Fyodor Dostoyevsky in the 19th century. One of the characters in his novel *Demons*, the nihilist Shigalev, described the brilliant future he envisioned as follows: "Starting from limitless freedom, I end with limitless despotism." This is what our Western adversaries have come to. Another character in the novel, Pyotr Verkhovensky, echoes him, speaking of the need for universal betrayal, denunciation and espionage, and stating that society does not need talents or greater abilities: - Cicero has his tongue cut out, Copernicus gets his eyes gouged out and Shakespeare gets stoned. This is what our Western adversaries come to. What is this but western culture cancelled? These were great thinkers, and frankly, I'm grateful to my helpers for finding these quotes. What can be said to this?

History will surely put everything in its place and know who to override, and it will definitely not be the great works of the universally recognized geniuses of world culture, but those who for some reason have decided that they have the right to use world culture as they see fit. Their self-esteem has no limits. In a few years no one will

remember their names. But Dostoevsky will live on, as will Tchaikovsky. Pushkin, however, much they would have liked otherwise. Standardization, financial and technological monopoly, the erasing of all differences is what underlies the Western model of globalization, which is neo-colonial in nature. His goal was clear: to establish the unconditional dominance of the West in the world economy and politics. To do this, the West put at its service all the natural and financial resources of the planet, as well as all the intellectual, human and economic capacities, alleging that it was a natural characteristic of the so-called new global interdependence. Here I would like to recall another Russian philosopher, Alexander Zinoviev, whose centenary of birth we will celebrate on October 29. More than 20 years ago, he said that Western civilization needed the entire planet as a means of existence and all the resources of humanity to survive at the level it had reached. That's what they want, that's exactly how it is. But as soon as non-Western countries began to reap some benefits from globalization, especially the big nations of Asia, the West immediately changed or abolished many of those rules altogether. And the so-called sacred principles of free trade, economic openness, equal competition, even property rights, were suddenly, completely forgotten. They change the rules on the fly, the moment they see an opportunity for them. Here is another example of substitution of concepts and meanings. For many years, Western ideologues and politicians have told the world that there is no alternative to democracy. It is true that they were referring to the Western style, to the so-called liberal model of democracy. They arrogantly rejected all other variants and forms of government of the people and, I want to emphasize it, they did so with contempt and disdain. This form has been configured since colonial times, as if everyone were second class, while they were exceptional. It has been this way for centuries and continues to this day.

(To Be Continued)

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

November 27, 2022

Finca Solana

Corozal Town

# SHC is Western Zone champs

Continued from Page 13

three, Our Lady of Guadalupe (OLOG) girls cruised past the scoreless Mopan Technical, with the final score being 23 - 0, and the OLOG male team defeated Mopan boys with a 42 - 30 score.

In the tournament finals, SHC girls defeated OLOG girls with a 21 - 13 score. The SHC boys also dominated OLOG boys and blew them away from contention with a 35- point win: 61 - 26.

Elvis Usher, head coach for both the male and female SHC teams, stated, in response to the victory, "It feels great,

and the hard work and dedication that the students gave throughout the time that we were practically showed out. It's the first time both males and females are going together, so that should be a nice experience on its own. We have three more weeks to prepare for nationals, and I believe we should be okay by that time."

In the awards ceremony following the games, SHC's Tayshaun Haylock and Jahleeny Belisle received the tournament's Most Valuable Player (MVP) Award for males and females, respectively.

tackle the sharp rise in violence.

In early November, he said attacks

by increasingly powerful drug gangs were a declaration of war.



Ukraine has prepared for more Russian attacks against energy and other critical infrastructure on Monday in what appears to be a weekly pattern, and warned of possible evacuations from the capital.

Estonia's foreign minister joined counterparts from six Baltic and Nordic nations — in the largest delegation to visit Ukraine since Russia launched its full-scale war — to pledge electric generators, warm clothes and food. The goal is to help Ukrainians cope with their coldest months of need and keep their resolve high.

“Russia is weaponising civilian energy security, and it is truly shameful,” Estonian Foreign Minister Urmas Reinsalu said in Kyiv.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy warned late Sunday that Russian troops “are preparing new strikes, and as long as they have missiles, they won’t stop.” He met Monday with senior government officials to discuss what actions to take.

“The upcoming week can be as hard as the one that passed,” he predicted.

Russia has been carrying out massive missile bombardments on Ukraine’s energy infrastructure roughly weekly since early October, with each barrage having a greater effect than the last as damage accumulates and a frigid winter sets in.

Kyiv says the attacks, which Russia acknowledges target Ukrainian infrastructure, are intended to harm civilians, making them a war crime. Moscow denies its intent is to hurt civilians but said last week their suffering would not end unless Ukraine yielded to Russia’s demands, without spelling them out.

NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg insisted Russian President Vladimir Putin was intent on using frost, snow and ice to his advantage, not just on the battleground but against Ukrainian civilians.

“President Putin is now trying to use the winter as a weapon of war against Ukraine, and this is horrific and we need to be prepared for more attacks,” he said

## Mauna Loa: World’s largest active volcano erupts in Hawaii

by Sam Cabral - BBC News

The world’s largest active volcano, Hawaii’s Mauna Loa, has erupted for the first time in almost 40 years.

The lava flow is mostly contained within the summit, but residents have been placed on alert and were earlier warned about the risk of falling ash.

The US Geological Service (USGS) has said the situation could change rapidly.

The volcano’s alert level has also been upgraded from an “advisory” to a “warning” - the highest classification.

No evacuation orders have been issued and populated areas are unlikely to be impacted at this stage, emergency officials say.

Mauna Loa, located inside Hawaii Volcanoes National Park, covers half of the US state’s Big Island. The volcano rises 13,679ft (4,169m) above sea level and spans an area of more than 2,000 sq miles (5,179 sq km).

It erupted at 23:30 local time on Sunday (09:30 GMT Monday) at Moku’âweoweo, the volcano’s summit caldera. Calderas are hollows that form beneath the summit at the end of an eruption.

It followed a series of warnings that an eruption was possible after a spate of recent earthquakes in the region, including more than a dozen reported tremors on Sunday.

An advisory for ashfall - which can contaminate water supplies, kill vegetation and irritate the lungs - was in effect for the surrounding area overnight but has since been lifted.

“Based on past events, the early stages of a Mauna Loa eruption can be very dynamic and the location and advance of lava flows can change



World's largest volcano erupts for first time since 1984

rapidly,” the USGS said.

If the eruption migrates beyond the walls of the summit caldera, lava flows could “move rapidly downslope”, it added.

According to the USGS, Mauna Loa has erupted 33 times since 1843. The previous eruption in 1984 sent lava flows within 5 miles of Hilo, the island’s most populous town.

But the Big Island’s population has more than doubled since 1980 to around 200,000 residents and Hawaii’s civil defence agency has warned residents could face a “lava disaster”.

“These lava flows rarely present a risk to life, but they can be extremely destructive to infrastructure,” said Dr Jessica Johnson, a British volcano geophysicist who has worked at the Hawaiian Volcano Observatory.

She warned the lava flows posed a risk to Hilo and Kona, another major population centre, adding that the volcanic gasses could cause breathing problems for locals.

Mauna Loa is the world’s largest active volcano. There are other larger volcanoes but these are classified as dormant, meaning they have not erupted for a long time, or extinct, meaning they are almost certain not to erupt in future.

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## NATO says Russia using winter as a weapon in Ukraine war

Ukraine prepares for more Russian attacks against energy and other key infrastructure as Western officials pledge to boost support.

on the eve of a two-day meeting of NATO foreign ministers in Bucharest, Romania. “That’s the reason why NATO’s allies have stepped up their support to Ukraine.”

Kyiv Mayor Vitali Klitschko said some of the city’s 3 million people might have to be evacuated to where essential services would be less prone to shutdowns caused by missile attacks.

For weeks, Russia has been pounding energy facilities around Kyiv and other Ukrainian cities with missile raids, usually on Mondays at the work week’s beginning, resulting in outages of power and water supplies.

With temperatures hovering around freezing, and expected to dip as low as -11C (12F) in little more than a week, international help was increasingly focused on items like generators and transformers to make sure blackouts that affect everything from kitchens to operating rooms are as limited and short as possible.

The power situation was so dire that Ukraine’s energy trader — in normal times an exporter — tested importing electricity from neighbouring Romania.

Russian President Vladimir Putin “continues trying to make Ukraine a black hole — no light, no electricity, no heating to put the Ukrainians into the darkness and the cold,” said European foreign policy chief Josep Borrell, who is leading a meeting of European Union ministers in Bucharest, Romania, to help Ukraine with its humanitarian crisis.

“So we have to continue our support providing more material for the Ukrainians to face the winter without electricity.”

National grid operator Ukrenergo said on Monday it had been forced to resume regular emergency blackouts in areas across the country after a setback in its race to repair energy infrastructure.

Units at several power stations had to conduct emergency shutdowns and demand for electricity has been rising as snowy winter weather has set in, a Ukrenergo statement said.

“Once the causes of the emergency shutdowns are eliminated, the units will return to operation, which will reduce the deficit in the power system and reduce the amount of restrictions for consumers,” it said.

Along the front lines in the east of Ukraine, the looming winter is ushering in a new phase of the conflict, after several months of Russian retreats, with intense trench warfare along heavily fortified positions.

With Russian forces having pulled back in the northeast and withdrawn across the Dnipro River in the south, the front line on land is only about half the length it was a few months ago, making it harder for Ukrainian forces to pinpoint weakly defended stretches to attempt a new breakthrough.

Zelenskyy described heavy fighting west of the Russian-held eastern city of Donetsk, where Moscow has focused its assault even as it has withdrawn troops elsewhere. Both sides claim huge casualties with little change in positions.

In its evening update on Monday, Ukraine’s armed forces General Staff said Russia kept up heavy shelling of key

targets Bakhmut and Avdiivka in Donetsk province, and to the north, bombarded areas around the towns of Kupiansk and Lyman, both recaptured recently by Kyiv.

On the southern front, it said, Russian forces had reinforced positions in occupied territory and were heavily shelling towns on the west bank of the Dnipro River, including Kherson, abandoned by Moscow earlier this month.

It said Ukrainian forces had damaged a rail bridge north of the Russian-occupied southern city of Melitopol that has been key to supplying Russian troops dug in there.

The Kremlin denied Russia had any plans to withdraw from the Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant, Europe’s largest, which it has controlled since early in the war near the front line on a reservoir on the Dnipro river.

The head of Ukraine’s nuclear power operator, Petro Kotkin, had said on Sunday there were signs Russia might pull out. But Kremlin spokesperson Dmitry Peskov responded on Monday: “There’s no need to look for signs where there are none and cannot be any.”

Russia says it has annexed the area and put the plant under the control of its nuclear power agency.

The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), the UN’s nuclear watchdog, has called for the plant and surrounding area to be demilitarised to prevent a nuclear disaster.

In Kherson, which has lacked electricity and heat since Russian forces abandoned it earlier this month, regional governor Yaroslav Yanushevych said 17 percent of customers now had electricity and other districts would be hooked up soon.

Russian forces who withdrew have been bombarding from across the river, killing dozens of civilians, Ukrainian officials say.

Liliia Khrystenko, 38, recounted to the Reuters news agency how her parents were both killed last Thursday when their building was hit while she was inside with her young son.

“I heard my father screaming, telling me to call an ambulance, because my mother was wounded. But I couldn’t call an ambulance, because the (mobile) connection was gone,” she said through tears outside the building.

“I went outside with my child, and my mother was lying in the building entrance, face down, covered in blood. And my father was sitting by her side, saying he was going to die.”

Khrystenko’s mother’s body lay on the street for a day before being removed. Her father had been hit in the liver by shrapnel, and medics were unable to revive him in the hospital.

On the diplomatic front, efforts to weaken Russia’s ability to fund its war in Ukraine faltered on Monday when envoys of EU governments failed to agree on a price cap on Russian seaborne crude oil, diplomats said.

Poland, they said, had insisted the cap be set lower than others wanted. “There is no deal. The legal texts have now been agreed but Poland still can’t agree to the price,” one said.

# From the border... to the Boulevard;



# From the Hondo... to Mahogany!

## Sugar and Cream

Corozal Town - Orange Walk Town - Belize City

New Year's Day

2023



## Who will win?

## 32<sup>nd</sup> Annual kren FM

## CYCLING CLASSIC

## New Year's Day 2023!!



|          |  |          |   |
|----------|--|----------|---|
| 1991     | Michael Lewis (first)<br>Ernest Meighan (second)       | (Ladies) | Lori Harkey (first)   |
| 1992     | Francisco Flores (first)<br>Fitzgerald Joseph (second) |          | Shalini Zabaneh (second)<br>Carlos Hernandez (first)        |
| 1993     | Derrick Mahler (first)<br>Orlando Chavarria (second)   | (Ladies) | Carlos Manuel Hernandez (second)<br>Shalini Zabaneh (first) |
| 1994     | Douglas Lamb (first)<br>Ronald Sutherland (second)     |          | Anthea Sutherland (second)<br>Marco Salas (first)           |
| 1995     | Robert Mariano (first)<br>Gustavo Carillo (second)     | (Ladies) | Juan Rojas (second)<br>Shalini Zabaneh (first)              |
| 1996     | Nigel Matus (first)<br>Ian Smith (second)              |          | Patricia Chavarria (second)<br>Geovanni Choto (first)       |
| 1997     | Fred Usher (first)<br>Michael Lewis (second)           | (Ladies) | Byron Pope (second)<br>Kaya Cattouse (first)                |
| 1998     | Francisco Flores (first)<br>James Frampton (second)    |          | Shalini Zabaneh (second)<br>David Henderson (first)         |
| 1999     | Ernest Meighan (first)<br>Skip Spangenburg (second)    | (Ladies) | Gregory Lovell (second)<br>Shalini Zabaneh (first)          |
| 2000     | Ariel Rosado (first)<br>Quinton Hamilton (second)      |          | Patricia Chavarria (second)<br>Byron Pope (first)           |
| 2001     | Miguel Perez (first)<br>Shane Vasquez (second)         | (Ladies) | Carlos Lopez (second)<br>Shalini Zabaneh (first)            |
|          | (Ladies) Karen Rosito (First)                          |          | Gabrielle Lovell (second)                                   |
| 2002     | Amlita Knowles (second)<br>Barney Brown (first)        | 2015     | Hector Rangel (first)<br>David Santos (second)              |
|          | Hugo Rostrain Monterosa (second)                       | (Ladies) | Alicia Thompson (first)<br>Kaya Cattouse (second)           |
| (Ladies) | Ann Marie Bennett (first)                              | 2016     | Joel Adan Borland (first)<br>Gregory Lovell (second)        |
| 2003     | Douglas Lamb (first)<br>Frank Cannon (second)          | (Ladies) | Alicia Thompson (first)<br>Kaya Cattouse (second)           |
| (Ladies) | Fiona Humes Gonzalez (First)                           | 2017     | Ron Vasquez (first)<br>Brandon Cattouse (second)            |
| 2004     | Marlon Castillo (first)<br>Mateo Cruz (second)         | (Ladies) | Alicia Thompson (first)<br>Kaya Cattouse (second)           |
| (Ladies) | Fiona Humes-Gonzalez (first)                           | 2018     | John DeLong (second)<br>John DeLong (second)                |
| 2005     | Claudett Maheia (second)<br>Michael Lewis (first)      | (Ladies) | Alicia Thompson (first)<br>Kaya Cattouse (second)           |
| (Ladies) | Shane Vasquez (second)                                 | 2019     | John DeLong (First)<br>Clayton Travis (Second)              |
| 2006     | Marinette Flowers (first)<br>Scottie Weiss (first)     | (Ladies) | Kaya Cattouse (First)<br>Nicole Gallego (Second)            |
| (Ladies) | Marlon Castillo (second)                               | 2020     | Oscar Quiroz, Jr. (First)<br>Joslyn Chavarria, Jr. (Second) |
| 2007     | Alicia Thompson (first)<br>Marinette Flowers (second)  | (Ladies) | Alicia Thompson (First)<br>Nicole Gallego (Second)          |
| (Ladies) | Shane Vasquez (first)                                  | 2021     | <b>NO RACE (DUE TO COVID)</b>                               |
| 2008     | Marlon Castillo (second)<br>Shalini Zabaneh (second)   | 2022     | Brandon Cattouse (first)<br>Derrick Chavarria (second)      |
| (Ladies) | Neo German Camacho Villegas (first)                    | (Ladies) | Gabrielle Gabourel (first)<br>Kaya Cattouse (second)        |
| 2009     | Edward Reyes (second)<br>Shalini Zabaneh (first)       |          |   |
|          | Alicia Thompson (second)                               |          |   |
|          | Marlon Castillo (first)                                |          |   |
|          | Gregory Lovell (second)                                |          |   |