



PUP Sugar Smuggling Causes Price To Double For Belizeans!

Limited Sugar
1 bag Per Household
(Family)

Page 2

Commercial Banks Snob Central Bank Directives

Page 4

Another Victory For UDP In Concepcion



Page

Is BMDC Facilitating Informal Sugar Exportation?

Page 2

BNTU Objects Use Of Tax Payers Money To Broker Private Deal

Page 3

PUP Sugar Smuggling Causes Price To Double For Belizeans!



Sugar is being rationed in stores

Belize made history this week as the first sugar producing and exporting country to import sugar for its citizens to consume. The Belize Sugar Industries Limited announced in an unsurprising release that due to “market shortages created by unauthorized cross border trade” it has become necessary to temporarily import sugar for Belizean consumers.

Who will be importing the sugar? The Belize Sugar Industry Limited! That’s right, the manufacturer who is also a large farmer, exporter and local distributor is now going to be the importer. And, the price of the imported sugar is going to be double the price of the sugar they produce for the local market. There is no indication how much sugar will be imported by BSIL however the almost doubling of the price of sugar will be maintained until the imported supplies are depleted. Higher prices of commodities usually means slower sales and there is no telling how long it will take before the price of sugar normalizes.

Those who have been monitoring the industry are calling foul! First, they point out that BSIL monitors its distribution closely and is responsible for approving quotas of wholesalers. Therefore, BSIL was in the best position to prevent supply from reaching this desperate level. Secondly, they question how BSIL will be monitored to ensure they are not selling locally produced sugar for the price of more expensive imports. Thirdly,

if sugar needs to be imported, why not the government, a statutory body like Marketing Board or offer it openly to the private sector? There are also questions why it is that BSIL is not refining brown sugar that they have available in bulk storage. This is a practice that they have done in the past where brown sugar is re-melted and further processed into plantation white. Another consideration which was not even taken into account was the possibility that Santander could have supplied the sugar while BSIL had its shortfall.

It does not pass the smell test for consumers who are very aware that BSI has been trying to increase the price on sugar locally for quite some time. Consumers are already of the belief that the recent sugar shortage was an intentional play by industry stakeholders. Therefore, this move seems like an inevitable follow up designed to squeeze more out of consumers’ pockets.

BSI’s representative has floated the idea of increasing sugar prices numerous times as an answer to deter illegal sugar smuggling. That’s an idea that benefits only BSI. This importation of sugar, surely directly from another American Sugar Refinery company, is just a back door way to do what it has long proposed.

Government must reject this importation and increase of sugar prices. Consumers should not be forced to pay for government’s inability to crack down on illegal cross border trade.

Is BMDC Facilitating Informal Sugar Exportation?



The truck that was found loaded with sugar

In the early morning hours of Thursday, January 4, police and cane farmers intercepted a truck laden with sugar originating from BSIL/ASR. The truck was briefly detained by police and was later released. By Monday January 8, the same truck was found overturned on the Southern Highway. The destination for the sugar, to date, has not been determined. Multiple reports suggest that there is free movement of sugar to the southern part of the country, presumably to Guatemala.

And while the ASR/BSIL, locally produced sugar freely makes its way cross country, local supply is non-existent leading BSIL to having to import plantation white sugar. This will significantly drive up the cost of sugar and ultimately the Belizean public will have to take the brunt of it.

But how is it that such large quantities of sugar can be exported while there is a scarcity in country? Based on information provided to the Guardian Newspaper, wholesale agents purchase sugar from BSIL after they produce a list of invoices from retailers to whom they sell sugar to. While there is this type of control, not surprising the Belize Marketing and Development Corporation (BMDC) is the only entity that is allowed to buy an unlimited quantity of sugar.

This information would suggest that in fact BMDC is the entity that is somehow responsible for the informal exportation of sugar. Reports are that the truck which was detained had loaded the sugar in the Corozal village of Louisville. Presumably whoever supplied the truck got their sugar stock from the BMDC.

This kind of what appears to be a hustle with complicity of the BMDC has become common place. The very same kind of channeling is taking place with the importation of vegetables from Mexico. In this scenario a single individual is authorized to import the vegetables and these are specifically done for the BMDC which then hyper inflates the prices of the products and then sells it to retailers.

It would appear that the kind of hustling has executive sanctioning and it is taking place unabated and at the expense of the Belizean consumers.

The Guardian

Protecting Freedom Rights Democracy

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Another victory for UDP in Concepcion



Ricardo Karel Garcia and UDP Standard Bearer Martin Rivera

The United Democratic Party is registering another victory in the northern village of Concepcion in the Corozal Southwest division. Ricardo Karel Garcia was successfully nominated as a councilor candidate in the village on Sunday January 7 between 9a.m. and 12noon. No other candidate was nominated having Garcia automatically become the councilor.

The process became necessary as a former PUP councilor, Rosalva Rocsana

Moh, resigned in order to run as chairperson for the village. Moh was subsequently defeated when she ran for chairperson in the village when Noel Matu won the position on December 10.

With that, Moh attempted to rescind her resignation on December 12 but that was challenged by the UDP. That forced a nomination and election to be scheduled, however the PUP was a no-show in the contest and the UDP won the seat by default.

BNTU Objects Use Of Tax Payers Money To Broker Private Deal

The Belize National Teacher's Union issued a press release in which it categorically expressed its support for the actions taken by members of the Belize Sugar Cane Farmers Association to expedite negotiations with the Belize Sugar Industries Limited over a sugar production agreement. The statement was issued on January 8, 2023. It reads, "The Belize National Teachers' Union (BNTU), wishes to register its continuous support to the sugar cane farmers of the North, who have been requesting a formalized document that outlines palatable terms of agreement with ASR/BSI for this and future crop seasons."

And while they expressed support, they had strong words to the Government who in trying to

arrive at a resolution, pledged to use tax payers dollars to support the cane farmers. The release notes that, "we therefore wish to register our discontent on the manner in which the Government has dealt with the situation. In no way do we support the use of a million dollars of our tax payers' dollars as bargaining power for a band aid fix to the issue of the fair-trade dispute between BSI/ASR and BSCFA."

The use of 1 million dollars from tax payers comes as a sore point for BNTU as the Government has yet to honor their promised salary increment to teachers. Additionally there are concerns from other quarters where workers have been unable to receive their income tax returns from government. Then there is the issue of retired public officers

Mayor's Wife Abuses Benque Town Board Finances



Receipt showing that nothing was paid for services received

It appears that the administration of the Benque Viejo Town council is playing it fast and loose with the finances of the municipality.

The Guardian Newspaper has been forwarded a receipt issued in the name of Deysi Rosales from the Benque Viejo del Carmen Town Council which shows that she paid absolutely nothing for a one year vehicle license, transfer of ownership of a motor vehicle and new license plates.

Rosales is reportedly the wife of the sitting mayor of the town and residents complain that she was given preferential treatment by not being charged and that ought not to have happened.

The special treatment is reflecting that the town board was deprived of revenue, possibly illegally since there are no provisions in the town board act to allow for these kinds of gestures by the municipality.

It is unclear who gave the

authorization to not charge the mayor's wife for the services which she received from the municipality but one thing is clear, the staffers who processed the transaction knew that there was something untoward. With that someone took the decision to make a copy of the receipt that was provided to the mayor's wife in the event that proper accounting is requested they can demonstrate how it is that the finances of the council were handled in this instance.

This is not the first time that financial irregularities have surfaced at the Benque Viejo town council. Last year after an audit was conducted, it was found that the Mayor would often request that he be provided with blank checks from the town council whenever he travelled out of the municipality. To date it is unclear how much and for what purpose the checks were used for.

and Belize Defense Force soldiers who are unable to collect their pension benefits.

BNTU's release was issued before a final agreement was arrived at between ASR/BSIL

and the BSCFA. Of note is that the signed agreement does not specify any arrangement for Government to assist cane farmers (see story on page 9).



Commercial Banks Snob Central Bank Directive

CENTRAL BANK of BELIZE
www.centralbank.org.bz
PRESS RELEASE
Central Bank Announces Updates to Online Transaction Fees

Domestic Bank	Electronic Funds Transfer			Instant Funds Transfer		
	Previous	Adjusted (3 Jan 24)	Current (5 Jan 24)	Previous	Adjusted (3 Jan 24)	Current (5 Jan 24)
Atlantic Bank Limited	\$2.00	\$1.00	\$1.75	\$3.00	\$1.00	\$2.50
Belize Bank Limited	\$2.50	\$2.50	\$1.75	\$3.00	\$3.00	\$2.50
Heritage Bank Limited	\$2.50	\$0.50	\$2.50	\$3.00	\$0.75	\$3.00
National Bank of Belize Limited	\$1.00	\$1.00	\$1.00	\$3.00	\$1.00	\$1.00

The fees being charged by commercial banks as released by the Central Bank of Belize

In December of last year, the Central Bank of Belize announced that it would be implementing what is known as 'Practice Direction number 7.' It is basically a directive from the Central Bank to the commercial banks to reduce their fees which are charged to customers. The lowering of fees were to have become effective on January 2. While all banks complied with the direction on the first day, the Belize Bank would not be so compliant. On the very day when

the directive was to have become effective, the Belize Bank took the matter to the Supreme Court and sought an injunction until the matter goes to judicial review. That injunction was granted and immediately following, the banks reverted to their old fees or just nominally lowered the fees.

Based on a release issued by the Central Bank, there was adjustments for just a couple of days. Atlantic Bank reduced their charges on Electronic transfers on January 3 from 2 dollars to 1

dollar but two days later it was back up to \$1.75. The Belize Bank was charging \$2.50 and that did not change but on January 5 it was at \$1.75. Heritage bank made a drastic adjustment from \$2.50 to 50 cents but by January 5 it was back to \$2.50. The National Bank of Belize who had the lowest rates at \$1.00 did not make any adjustment.

Then there were the charges for Instant Funds Transfers, initially Atlantic Bank started at

\$3.00 went to \$1.00 and raised it back up to \$2.50. Belize Bank made no adjustment from \$3.00 initially but by January 5 it was reduced to \$2.50. Heritage Bank showed the greatest change initially from \$3.00 to 75 cents and reverted back to \$3.00. The National Bank is the only bank that has made significant efforts where they were charging \$3.00 and adjusted to \$1.00 per transaction and have kept it that

UNITED DEMOCRATIC PARTY

Stephen Laurie | Adlene Estero | Cindy "J" Farjado | **Hubert "A" Lucas** Mayoral Candidate | Dwayne Sampson | Anthony Garbutt | Frank Caliz

VOTE UDP 7

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ABDEL COWO ✓



SANDRA LANZA ✓

VACANCY NOTICE

A Port with a Global Perspective

Assistant Security Supervisor

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

Reports to: Chief Security Officer

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

Primary Responsibilities:

The Assistant Security Supervisor shall be responsible to the CSO for the performance of his shift; in particular he shall be responsible for the following functions:

- a) Assist with the supervision of a security shift as assigned by the CSO
- b) Assist with patrol and control pier, transit sheds, compounds, office and low berth etc.
- c) Control of Entry and Exit Points of Compounds
- d) Surveillance of cargo from ship to delivery
- e) Ensure that deposits to the bank are done safely
- f) Perform boarding of ships for security purposes under ISPS code.
- g) You are to be verse with the Port Surveillance System and Security Manual.
- h) Assist with training with all security personnel.
- i) Any other duties of a related nature that may be assigned from time to time.

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

1. Knowledge of current security threats and patterns;
2. Recognition and detection of weapons, dangerous substances and devices;
3. Recognition of characteristics and behavioral patterns of person who are likely to threaten security;
4. Techniques used to circumvent security measures;
5. Crowd management and control techniques;
6. Security-related communications;
7. Operations of security equipment and systems;
8. Testing, calibration and maintenance of security equipment and systems;
9. Inspection. Control, and monitoring techniques, and
10. Methods of physical searches of persons, personal effects, baggage, cargo, and ship's stores.

Job Qualifications/Requirement:

- An Associate's Degree, with 3 years proven experience as supervisor or relevant role.
- Must possess a valid driver's license.
- Computer literate.
- Familiarity with company policies & legal guidelines of the field.
- Working Knowledge of public safety

Skills/Competencies:

- Excellent communication & interpersonal skills.
- Team oriented, ethical, and punctual (On Call)
- Outstanding organizational & leadership skills.
- Strong reporting skills
- Critical thinking skills

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

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

Email to:

jobapplications@portofbelize.com

Closing date for receipt of applications is Friday, January 19, 2024.

Licensed Gun Killer Failed Special Branch Vetting



Cornelio Martinez

On the early morning hours of Sunday, January 7, an altercation in Bella Vista Village in the Stann Creek District resulted in the killing of 34-year-old Christon Marion Logan. He was allegedly shot and killed by 34-year-old broker, Cornelio Martinez who used a licensed firearm in the commission of the crime. There are reports that Martinez is also the holder of a license for a semi-automatic rifle.

Information that has been provided to the Guardian Newspaper by multiple sources suggest that the killing could have been prevented. One person told the Guardian, "that young man Martinez who kill my cousin I blame the police for it. I say I blame the police is because it's not one, two or three times people report that Martinez point gun on them. I personally had called the

police in Independence village once when the said Martinez pointed his gun on a young man from Monkey River, the police never showed up!"

This is one of multiple reports that suggest that Martinez was short tempered and ought not to have been issued a firearm license. This is bolstered by a Police Special Branch vetting of Martinez which recommended that he not be given a gun license. Apparently Martinez even had run-ins with police officers and at all times displayed a character that would have ultimately led him to commit himself. There are suggestions that like many others who have received their firearms recently, it is likely that he paid large sums of money to police intermediaries for the firearm licenses to be approved.

Belizean American Killed In Bella Vista

Police have formally arrested and charged Cornelio Martinez, a 39-year-old, Belizean broker of Independence Village and Ernesto Martinez, a 33-year-old also a Belizean broker of Independence Village for the crime of murder.

Police report that on Sunday, January 7, 2024, at about 2:58 a.m., police responded to a report in Bella Vista Village, Stann

Creek District. Upon arrival, they observed a male person motionless on the ground in front of Heart Beatz Nightclub. He was later identified as Christon Marion Logan, a 34-year-old, Belizean of a U.S.A. address. Initial investigations revealed that Logan and his female companion departed the establishment and were heading towards his vehicle when an exchange of

Guns Everywhere! Blood On Their Hands!



Kareem Musa



Chester Williams

The Minister and Commissioner of Police are once again under fire for questionable approval of gun licenses after the last homicide of 2023 and first homicide of 2024 were both committed by licensed gun owners.

The last person killed in 2023 was Trevor Brown who got into an altercation after bumping into a "Mr. Pascassio's" truck in the parking lot of Thirsty Thursday night club. The hard talk resulted in Pascassio pulling out his licensed firearm and Brown doing the same with an unlicensed weapon. A shootout ensued in the parking lot with many innocent bystanders around. Brown was shot dead and Pascassio survived multiple shots. The first person murdered in 2024 was Christon Logan who got into an altercation with Ernesto Martinez inside a bar in Bella Vista Village in the Stann Creek District. The fight ended up outside the bar where Ernesto's brother Cornelio Martinez pulled out his licensed firearm and shot Logan dead in a most ruthless manner. In both cases the licensed firearm holders were allegedly under the

influence of alcohol.

Both killers had backgrounds that makes the issuance of gun licenses to them questionable. Commissioner Chester Williams approved the licenses for both men. These are only the latest questionable gun licenses approved by Williams under the leadership of Kareem Musa before his power was stripped and turned over to a board.

Before the board moves forward there needs to be an audit of the gun license registry and an investigation into allegations of a criminal gun license enterprise. Evidence continue to pile up showing the Commissioner approving and renewing gun licenses for individuals with criminal background and criminal charges. The last time he was caught in a lie, the Commissioner claimed he was presented with fraudulent vetting from a senior police officer. However, to this day, no charges has been filed against the unnamed officer who tabled the fake vetting.

How can the department responsible for citizen security be making the public less safe by flooding the nation with guns?



Ernesto Martinez



Christon Logan

words occurred between him and Cornelio Martinez and Ernesto Martinez. During the exchange the altercation escalated where Cornelio Martinez drew his licensed firearm and fired a gunshot at Logan hitting him to the leg. He fell to the ground and as he did, his assailant stood over him and fired several more

times at Logan, killing him on the spot

Family members say that Logan had gone to Heat Beatz night club in the village earlier that night and left but he would later return in the company of other friends. During the course of his second visit, he got involved in the deadly altercation.

Make Belmopan *Vibrant Again!*



Jacklyn Burns

For Mayor



Victor Orellana



Beverley Hope



Jose Linarez



Paul Casey



Cristina Chacon



Leslie Zelaya

Were The Cane Farmers Duped?

On January 8 Belize Sugar Industries Limited and the Belize Sugar Cane Farmers Association signed on to a sugar cane delivery agreement after months of agitation and stalemate. It was the first time that attorneys for both parties came together in the same room to conclude the negotiations.

Four days earlier, on January 4, the Government of Belize had given its undertaking that it would provide a million dollars to the BSCFA for fertilizer if the organization was unable to secure Fairtrade financing. Additionally Government undertook to pay throughput and terminal handling charges during a period of three months while CEO in the Ministry of Agriculture conducted an

assessment of these fees.

Apparently there was great contention by the cane farmers over O'brien's work and this caused a delay in the signing. So it was that the negotiations were pushed for 4 more days. By the time it was done it apparently had farmers not necessarily gaining much ground. While the January 4 proposal had it that the Government would be paying for the additional shipping costs of sugar at the port of Big Creek, while O'brien did his work, the signed agreement will see the cane farmers paying for these costs.

O'brien's analysis will determine whether terminal handling charges and throughput fees, which are costs disputed by

the BSCFA are justified as port charges. He will also determine whether terminal handling fees are indeed charge to and payable by BSI. An analysis of the actual costs of stevedoring and throughput fees incurred by BSI in shipping through the Port of Big Creek as compared to Port of Belize City will also be determined.

Now while there was the signing of the agreement between BSIL and BSCFA there was none signed with the Government of Belize for them to live up to their commitments which the Prime Minister gave on January 4. Those commitment included as mentioned before, the paying of the throughput fees and terminal handling fees while O'brien did

his study. Now the farmers will be paying for it from their sugar cane income. Then there is the issue of the million dollar promise by Government and a promised commission of inquiry on the sugar industry. Both only remain as promises as there was no actual signing onto these agreements with the Government.

So while BSIL is now content that operations are as close to normal as they can possibly get it, the outstanding matters are now with Government which is left to be seen if they will live up to the promises. Already the Belize National Teachers Union has expressed concern about the use of tax payers money to put a band aid solution to the private dispute.

PUBLIC AUCTION SALE Belize City, Sandhill & Orange Walk Town, San Jaoquin Village

BY ORDER of the Mortgagees, Messrs. Heritage Bank Limited, Licensed Auctioneer Fitzgerald A. Joseph will sell the following properties on Site on Saturday the 27th January, 2024 starting at 9:00 a.m.

Registration Section
Queen Square West

Block
45

Parcel
1457



Being a property with two wooden houses. Building One: Ground Floor: Living room, bathroom, 1 bedroom. First floor: Living room, dining, kitchen, 2 bedrooms, bath & entry porch. Building Two: Living, dining, kitchen, two bedrooms and entry porch together with a lot containing 447.221 square meters situated near Neal's Pen Road Ext. along Krooman Road, Belize City, Belize the freehold property of Keith Harris at 9:00 a.m.



Being Lot No. 6 containing 3,539.96 square yards situated in Sandhill Village, Belize District, Belize the freehold property of Armando Morales at 9:30 a.m.



Being a three bedrooms bungalow house with two bathrooms, porch, kitchen, living, dining and laundry rooms together with a fully fenced lot being Lot No. 8 containing 2,193.79 square yards situated in Sandhill Village, Belize District, Belize the freehold property of Armando Morales at 10:00 a.m.

Registration Section
Ann Gabourel

Block
4

Parcel
1473



Being bungalow cement house having three bedrooms, bath, living, kitchen, dining, and the storeroom having 308 square feet together with a fully fenced yard containing 416.61 square yards situated at the Cor. San Joaquin & Yo Creek Streets, Ann Gabourel Layout, North of Orange Walk Town, Belize the freehold property of Roberto Carlos Vasquez at 1:00 p.m.

MEGA AUCTION SALE

Licensed and Certified Auctioneer, Sheldon N. C. Arnold will sell the following properties with reserve prices.

BELIZE DISTRICT PROPERTY -TO BE AUCTIONED AT HUMMINGBIRD FURNISHING COMPOUND IN THE CITY OF BELMOPAN ON TUESDAY JANUARY 23RD. 2024 AT 11:00AM



Location: Lot No. 295, Mile 16, situated in Maxboro area, Belize District.

Description: On the property is a single storey residence having four bedrooms, two and a half bathrooms, living, dining, office, kitchen, utility, garage and storeroom. Building has a total area of 3772 sq.ft being the freehold interest of Rodolfo Gutierrez.



Location: Parcel 11-100-246/1 situated in Belize Rural North 1, Maskall Village, Belize District.

Description: land contains 676.302 sq. m. being the leasehold interest of Ammon Alex Brackett.

ORANGE WALK DISTRICT PROPERTIES -TO BE AUCTIONED AT HUMMINGBIRD FURNISHING COMPOUND IN THE CITY OF BELMOPAN ON TUESDAY JANUARY 23RD. 2024 AT 11:00AM



Location: Block 4 Parcel 140/1, Yo Creek Village, Orange Walk District.

Description: On the property is a single storey residence having 4 bedrooms, 1 bathroom, living, dining and kitchen, the floor area 1313sq.ft, lot measures, 1599.27 sq.yds, being the leasehold interest of Florentino Cal.



Location: ALL THAT pieces or parcels of land being Parcel #1237, Block #4, Orange Walk Town, Orange Walk District.

Description: On the property is a two storey building having on the lower level a store room, the upper level has a three bedroom, two bathrooms apartment. Being the Freehold Interest of Richard Vellos.

STANN CREEK DISTRICT PROPERTIES - TO BE AUCTIONED AT HUMMINGBIRD FURNISHING COMPOUND IN THE CITY OF BELMOPAN ON TUESDAY JANUARY 23RD. 2024 AT 11:00AM



Location: Lot No.38 situated in Sarawee Village, Stann Creek Valley Road, Stann Creek District

Description: land comprising 928.135 square metres being the freehold property of Nicholi Fernandez.



Location: Lot #125, situated in Independence Village, Stann Creek District.

Description: On the property is a two storey building having 2 bedrooms, one bathroom apartment on the lower level, while the upper level has a 3 bedroom, 1 bathroom apartment. The property is held in the Freehold Interest of Michael Hobbs.

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Terms - Cash 10% Deposit, Balance in 14 days
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BROTHER AGAINST BROTHER

Usher Family Feud Intensifies: Allegations, Rifts, and Political Implications



Gilroy Usher Jr

The conflict within the Usher family has intensified, spiraling into a heated battle between Gilroy Usher Jr. and his brother, Dorian Usher. This discord has been fueled by allegations of financial mismanagement, threats, and the looming specter of political consequences.

Initially stemming from a legal dispute involving Gilroy Jr., who faced property damage charges related to their father's business, the feud has extended beyond the courtroom, unfurling dramatically across social media platforms.

On Facebook, revelations surfaced from a private conversation between the brothers, shedding light on a purported financial irregularity of \$50,000. Gilroy Jr. accused Dorian of mishandling election-related funds, alleging a failure to reimburse constituents and implying potential misuse of these finances. Given their father's prominent role as Minister of State, this conflict carries weighty political implications.

In response to Gilroy Jr.'s social media allegations, Gilroy Sr. intervened on Facebook, lauding his son Dorian's integrity and commitment. He recounted a history of trust dating back to electoral events around 2007, where Dorian demonstrated excellent performance in

entrusted responsibilities within the constituency. Gilroy Sr. emphasized Dorian's record of honesty and hard work, spanning over 13 years of involvement in electoral processes, attributing these traits to his son's character even before entering electoral politics in 2023.

Furthermore, Gilroy Sr. clarified that he had engaged Dorian in voluntary assistance with funds for the Belize City Council before Dorian's active involvement in politics. Throughout Gilroy Sr.'s extensive political tenure in Port Loyola, Dorian willingly and freely contributed alongside his siblings, showcasing a longstanding dedication spanning more than a decade.

Adding fuel to the fire, Gilroy Jr. escalated the conflict by addressing a letter to the Chairman of the People's United Party (PUP). The letter contained serious allegations against Dorian, including claims of derogatory behavior, inflammatory statements against the Party, disruptive conduct within the constituency committee, and even alleged threats directed at Gilroy Jr. himself. Gilroy Jr.'s plea urged the Party to reconsider Dorian's candidacy, underlining the crucial necessity for candidates of unblemished character to serve the Party and



Dorian Usher

the community.

This familial rift, surpassing personal boundaries, has entwined itself within the political landscape, casting a shadow over the impending Belize City Council elections. The public

airing of grievances and profound allegations hint at an underlying divide within the Usher family, sparking concerns regarding potential implications for both the family and the Belizean political sphere.



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Administrator
379 Buttonwood Bay Blvd
Belize City, Belize C.A.
Phone: (501) 223-1901/223-1903
Fax: (501) 223-3434

Emails: nbedran@bbmcenter.com

UNITED DEMOCRATIC PARTY

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Glan Rivero

Gabriel Zetina

Ana Lilla Rodriguez

WILFREDO ALAMILLA
Mayoral Candidate

Yakarells Hernandez

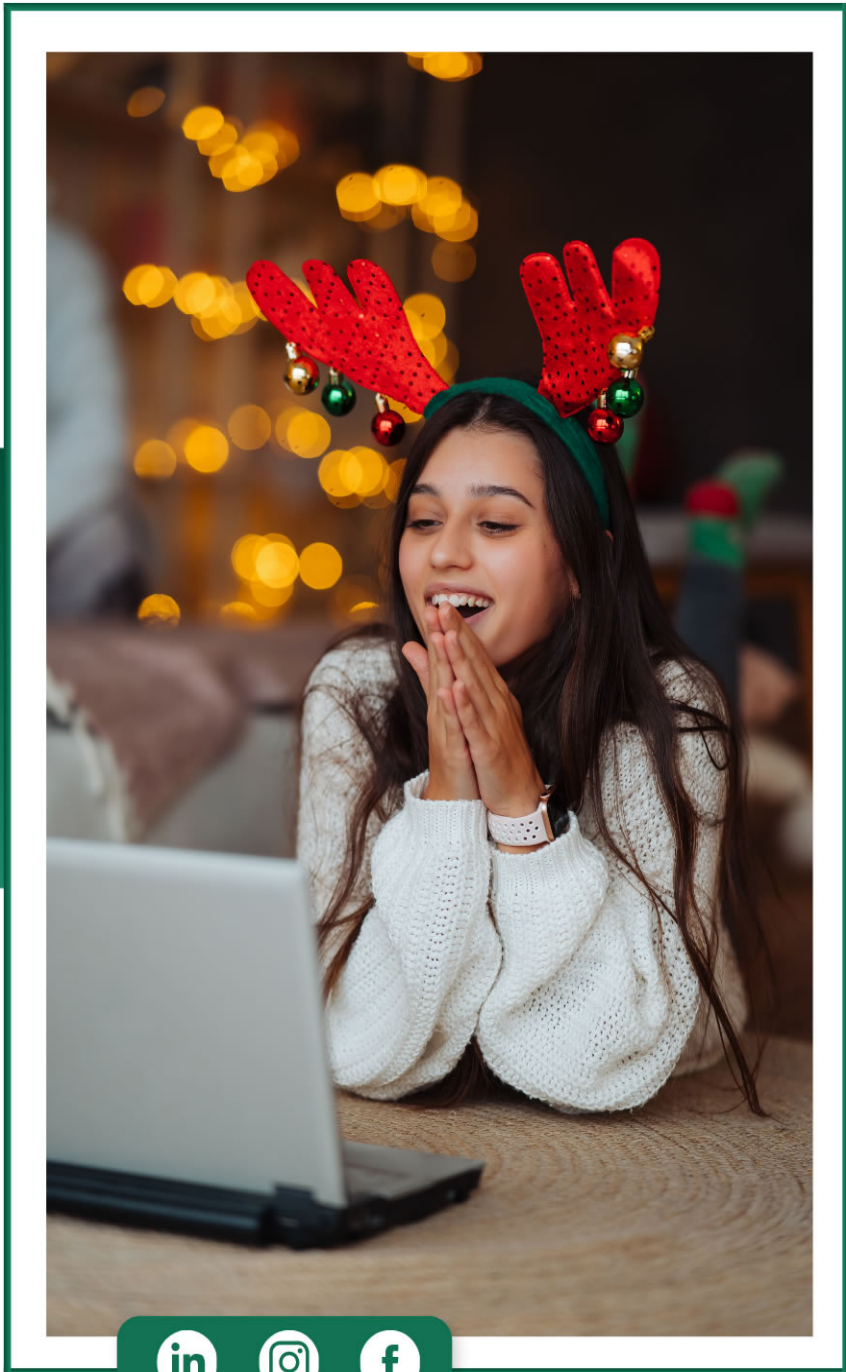
Abner Diaz

Byron Duarte



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When Your BLU Chickens Have Come Home To Roost



Cane farmers openly blamed the Prime Minister for misgivings in the sugar industry

Last week Wednesday, the nation witnessed how PUP Agriculture Minister Mai got confronted and roughed up by a hostile crowd of distraught sugar cane farmers, that surrounded his vehicle outside the SIRDI headquarters in Buena Vista, Corozal.

Nothing about that incident was unexpected though and in reality, that's what happens when politicians, just for political reasons and expediency, inject themselves in the middle of a private commercial matter and make fake promises to voters that they know fully well they cannot fulfill.

While in opposition, with

much empty bluster and false bravado, wasn't it this Prime Minister Briceno and the BLU PUP that promised to solve the sugar issues within 100 days of assuming office? Weren't they the ones who made so many outlandish promises to the cane farmers, in particular, and Belizean voters, in general, simply to get themselves elected?

Well then it is no wonder that the sugar cane farmers and their leaders have had so many harsh words for this Prime Minister and his Cabinet of minions over the past few days despite a so-called compromise agreement being signed. In reality, all that phantom agreement does is kick

the can down the road a couple of years when the vexing matters will just flare up again.

Not to be dissuaded or outdone, Minister Henry Charles, in a recent radio interview, charged into the discussion like the proverbial bull in a China shop as he tried to blame having multiple sugar associations on the previous UDP government.

However, he should know better, perhaps more than anyone else since he is both a lawyer and the minister responsible for constitutional affairs that the government was being threatened with legal action since the sugar legislation violated the principle of freedom of association in

the Constitution. The last UDP government simply had no choice but to amend the sugar legislation to permit freedom of association. The same exact thing was similarly done to allow lawyers to not have to belong to the Bar Association.

The Minister then even went further, maligned foreign direct investments such as the ASR investment and made a not-so-veiled threat that maybe government would have to eventually take over the mill. Well, if he wants to oversee the end of the sugar industry and for it to go the way of the citrus industry and to collapse or self implode, then he is on the right track.

This bunch of untalented BLU PUP politicians will never learn from their multiple mistakes. We can expect them to continue with their false promises and then try to hide and cover them with the smoke and mirrors of their illusionary compromises and agreements. Don't worry - Belizeans won't be fooled again - we know and can clearly see when the fake BLU chickens have come home to roost.

ANGELIE PEREZ **JASON STAINE** **VICTOR MIGUEL** **HORACE ALFORD**

LEON GUILD **ALISHA CRAIG** **BRIAN AUDINETT**

TYRONE LOURIANO **SAMSON JACOBS** **TATTIYANNA YOUNG**

NELMA MORTIS
MAYORAL CANDIDATE

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MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS 2024

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Your Horoscope

Aries Mar 21 – Apr 19

Can you handle the truth? It's possible that the answer to this question is no -- you've potentially been lying to yourself in order to protect your heart from having to deal with unpleasant realities. Unfortunately, even though you wish you didn't need to, you've probably known the truth all along. Since it doesn't match up with your desired version of life, your stubborn flame might have refused to illuminate the genuine situation. The more you've told yourself this fantasy, the harder your fall to reality might be. Fortunately, by the end of the week, you'll be able to recover and take action to rebuild your romantic desires. Be strong, Aries!

Taurus Apr 20 – May 20

Discussing your love life with a friend may only leave you feeling more confused than ever and possibly even second-guessing your own heart! Avoid making any significant decisions about your love life because of what a friend does or doesn't say to you. Ask yourself why this person has so much weight in your life decisions. Are you giving away your power -- not to mention your personal romantic happiness? In other news, you might decide to focus more on your personal growth later in the week than love. Consider the benefits of signing up for an adult education class or making plans to travel abroad. It should be a great idea!

Gemini May 21 – Jun 20

Oh, the things you do for love! This week you're in real danger of losing out on a major opportunity in order to maintain a relationship or get a new one off the ground. On Monday, Mercury in your partnership sector will be at a square to inspirational Neptune, currently in your career sector. As you discuss professional goals with your mate or crush, you may notice them attempting to talk you out of pursuing your ambitions. This might be due to them feeling like they wouldn't get enough time from you -- or simple jealousy of your accomplishments. Don't shrink yourself! Real love lifts you up, it shouldn't tear you down.

Cancer Jun 21 – Jul 22

This could turn into a week of major developments in your love life, so get ready! A New Moon lands in your partnership sector on Thursday, opening the door for a brand-new romantic alliance that has commitment potential. Be sure to socialize as much as possible so that you're in the best position to meet a possible special someone. With Mars in your partnership sector making a sweet link to lucky Jupiter in your friendship sector this Friday, friends are sure to benefit your love life! If you're already in a relationship, you and your sweetheart can practically begin anew in the best, healthiest way for your overall partnership. Sweet!

Leo Jul 23 – Aug 22

You might not be sure what you can trust anymore in the name of love. Mercury is in your romance sector and, on Monday, will make a harsh link to cloudy Neptune, now in your 8th House of Intimacy and Shared Resources. This could bring disheartening news about your lover -- something as difficult as discovering that they have been unfaithful or lying about a financial matter. If single, you might find that a potential date is misrepresenting their ideals or preferences to you. No matter how clever or insightful you are, you may still fall for it. Be careful and be sure to vet love interests before you meet in person.

Virgo Aug 23 – Sep 22

Love is in the air! A New Moon signals happy surprises in your romance sector on Thursday, creating the opportunity for you to meet a gorgeous stranger and fall head over heels in love in the blink of an eye. You never know when you're going to meet someone -- as long as you trust in the divine timing of the universe, you can count on that happening when it's meant to be. If there was ever a "meant to be" time, Virgo, that time is this week. If you're already in a relationship, you and your partner might decide to try for a baby (or adopt a fur-baby). Congratulations, either way!

Libra Sep 23 – Oct 22

Solid foundations are the key to stable romance, whether you're in a relationship or not. If you and your sweetheart are living together, you'll both have a lot of thoughts on improving your shared home comforts. If you're dating someone, you might be signing a lease together. This should be a positive decision for both of you -- and for your love connection! If you're totally single, the cosmic focus is on building a secure base for yourself. In fact, you're on track to ensure that you're so solid, anyone who might want to come into your life better be at your level or above. You won't settle!

Scorpio Oct 23 – Nov 21

Soulmate or cellmate? This week, Scorpio, you might have some trouble knowing the difference and being honest with yourself about where you presently stand in matters of the heart. It's possible that you'll find out someone you adore has been misrepresenting their intentions in some way. The level of this illusion (or lie) can be minor or major -- either way, it'll probably send chills of disappointment down your spine. If you're completely single, you may feel stuck in a hopeless fantasy that someone you are obsessed with is actually going to give you the time of day. Snap out of it!

Sagittarius Nov 22 – Dec 21

Mercury is in your sign, which normally brings a strength to communication matters. This Monday, however, Mercury will

stumble into an abrasive square to murky Neptune. As a result, you might be speaking to yourself in a language that doesn't really serve you -- especially as it relates to your love life. Don't make any important decisions that tie into your emotional security this week, since you may not be thinking clearly. Fortunately, it's temporary. You'll be back to your usual mental and romantic gymnastics in no time!

Capricorn Dec 22 – Jan 19

You're quite possibly the celestial favorite this week when it comes to all matters -- including romantic ventures! A New Moon lands in your sign on Thursday, creating this green light relating to anything you'd like to initiate in your life. Then, on Friday, Mars -- also in your sign -- makes a gorgeous link to expansive Jupiter, currently in your true love sector. This is about as abundant as you can get in matters of the heart. You might have multiple people interested in you. Contrastingly, you might be planning a whole lot of loving with the one person who has your heart!

Aquarius Jan 20 – Feb 18

Invisibility isn't always a superpower. You might feel invisible this week, so much so that

you feel entirely overlooked when it comes to love. Most of your energy is undercover these days, so that might account for this feeling that you're not being fully seen and heard by a lover or love interest. The best thing you can do is go with the flow by highlighting self-reflection and spiritual pursuits. Getting what you want in love isn't impossible, but if there isn't a spiritual connection involved, it'll be twice as hard. And if you're stuck in a romantic fantasy, you are really only fooling one person: yourself.

Pisces Feb 19 – Mar 20

You're more likely than most to let the wind blow you in one direction or another at present, rather than take decisive action. This is due to your mutable nature. On one hand, it offers you remarkable versatility as well as an open mind and heart. On the other hand, when the going gets rough, you might not want to choose a specific path, because you get so caught up in worrying that you might hurt someone. When it comes to your love life, if you don't choose, then a choice will be made for you. Thankfully, as long as you remain flexible, you can bend without breaking.



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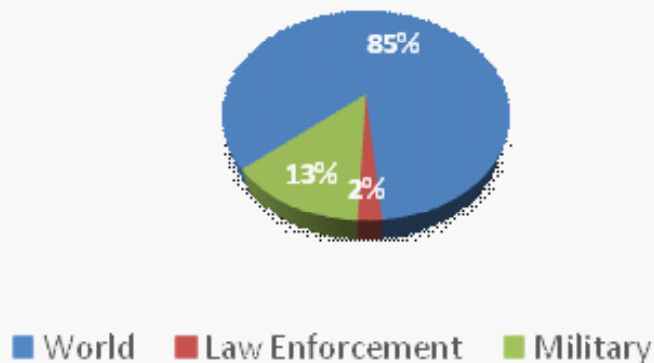
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Guns in Belize

2017 Global Firearm Ownership



There has been much discussion on the availability of firearms (guns), and the types of guns, in Belize. One local media house kept requesting an audit of the gun license registry, however, such an audit will only provide us with the number and types of guns registered in Belize. My personal discussions with some media persons indicate that no information is available on the number of guns in Belize. The removal of the evaluation of gun/firearm license applications from the virtually sole discretion of the Commissioner of Police was urgently needed. Nevertheless, that was the nature of the beast “Frah Fillo kill Wappy”.

Given the current challenges obtaining information on the number of registered guns, I explored the internet on firearms in Belize and found the 2018 Small Arms Survey Report(SAS) at <https://www.smallarmssurvey.org/>. The SAS is an independent research project located at the Graduate Institute of International

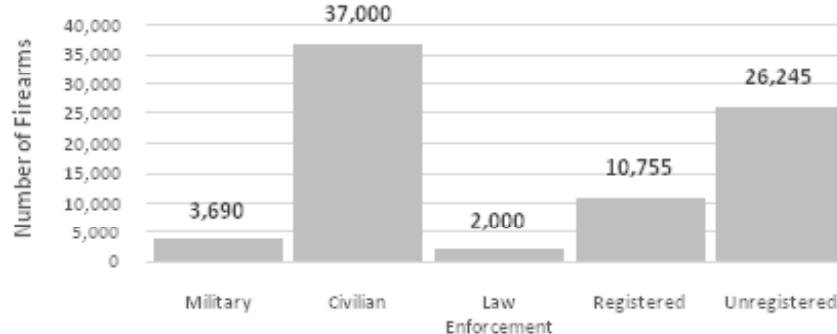
Nations Press Conference on 18 June 2018.

The SAS results reported that at the end of 2017 there was a combined total of 1,013 million firearms globally. Civilians possessed 857 million, Military 133 million, and Law Enforcement 22.7 million firearms.

The SAS used data supplied by 181 countries/territories, forty-nine figures were estimated using analogous comparison. The data was taken from national firearms registration statistics, and general population surveys about firearm ownership for 56 countries/territories. While the SAS discussed types of guns it did not provide estimates on the availability of types of guns. The preparers of the SAS advise that the accuracy of the estimates is based on the available data and estimation methods.

The SAS reported that at the end of 2017 there was 42,690 guns in Belize. Civilians possessed 37,000 guns of varied types, there were 3,960 military firearms,

2017 Estimate of Firearms in Belize



in the possession of civilians, 29% were registered, and 71% were unregistered. Note that the number of unregistered firearms was 13.1 times greater than law enforcement firearms, 7.1 times greater than the military firearms, and 2.44 times greater than the registered firearms. Is it possible that the number of unregistered firearms is the reason it is so difficult to solve crimes involving firearms?

The 2017 estimates of guns in Belize were calculated using the most recent reliable survey of households and individuals that was adjusted for annual increase to make results comparable and aligned to the reporting year.

The metric used for comparing the relative gun availability is the per capita value. In 2017 based on per capita gun availability, Taiwan (Rep. of China), Indonesia, Christmas Island, Holy See, Nauru, and Solomon Islands had the lowest per capita gun availability of zero, while the United States of America had the highest 120.5. With a per capita gun availability of 10.1, Belize ranked 146 among the countries

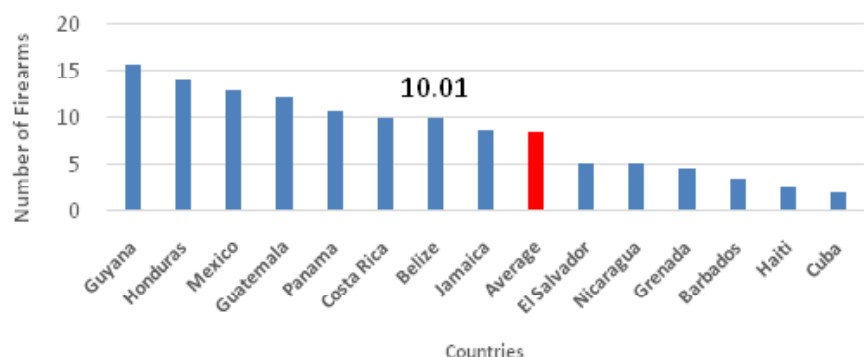
and territories surveyed. This rating puts Belize in the above average category for Central America and selected Caribbean countries.

The establishment of the Gun(Firearm) Licensing Commission is most welcome. The Commission should review, revise, and or replace, the current gun policy and develop a framework for the sensible legitimate possession of guns in Belize. Existing licenses should be reevaluated, and new applications assessed to ensure that the licensee can handle guns responsibly.

Review of the Guatemalan statistics on firearms indicate that the Guatemalan military had 43.5 times more firearms than the Belize military, and civilians in Guatemala had 55.7 times more firearms than civilians in Belize. So, it will be more than challenging for us to invade Guatemala, “even if we wanted to”.

All statistics for this article were taken from the June 2018 Briefing Paper “Estimating Global Civilian-Held Firearms Numbers.”

Civilian Firearms per 100 persons



and Development Studies in Geneva, Switzerland. The 2018 SAS was discussed at a United

and 2,000 firearms were used by law enforcement officers. Of the 37,000 firearms that were

Liquor License Notice

Notice is hereby given that under the **Intoxicating Liquor License Ordinance Chapter 150** of the Laws of Belize, Revised Edition 2023, that **Ernesto Vellos** is applying for the renewal of a **Restaurant Liquor License** for the year 2024 to operate “**One Love Bar and Grill**” located in Hopkins Village, Stann Creek District.

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Mayoral Candidate



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