



PR#32-22

PRESS RELEASE

Essential Services Arbitration Tribunal Delivers Ruling on Trade Dispute

Belmopan, January 27, 2022. 6:30 p.m.

Today, the Essential Services Arbitration delivered the following decisions on the trade dispute between the Christian Workers Union and the Port of Belize Limited:

1. The Port of Belize Limited is directed to forthwith confirm the primary stevedores as Registered Stevedores;
2. The Port of Belize Limited is directed to promote the 28 Secondary Substitutes to Primary Substitutes and invite them to participate in Port of Belize Limited's insurance scheme as from the 27 January 2022. Further the Port of Belize Limited is directed to pay their share of contributions to the retirement savings for the 28 stevedores from the 13 July 2021 being the date when the dispute was brought to the attention of the Minister; and
3. That the parties forthwith commence negotiations for payment under the Redundancy Package as agreed between the parties on the 6 March 2020.

The Essential Services Arbitration Tribunal was established on July 28, 2021, to deliberate and decide on a trade dispute matter referred to it by Hon. Oscar Requena, minister responsible for labour.

The Christian Workers Union (the Union) wrote, pursuant to section 15 of the Settlement of Disputes in Essential Services Act, Chapter 298 Laws of Belize revised edition 2011 (the Act) invoking 21 days' notice by its members who work at the Port of Belize Ltd (PBL) to take industrial action against the Port of Belize Ltd (PBL). Below is an extract of the letter:

- *“Despite various attempts, including with the involvement of your Ministry, a number of outstanding matters between CWU and PBL remain unresolved. Included in these matters are the redundancy package for Stevedores with the move of bulk sugar exports from the Belize City Harbour to the Port of Big Creek, filling of the Container Gangs and a date to resume stalled negotiations for a new Collective Bargaining Agreement for PBL staff.”*

Since the notice of dispute, the Labour Department has played a pivotal role in transitioning the matter through respectful dialogue and mediation to the Essential Services Arbitration Tribunal.

The Essential Services Arbitration Tribunal will follow its oral ruling today with a written ruling in the coming days. The Labour Department thanks the parties and the members of the Tribunal for their work and active participation in this important quasi-judicial process.

The members of the Tribunal are:

Mr. William Lindo	- Chair, nominated by the Minister
Mr. Fermin Olivera	- nominated by the Minister
Mr. Wilfredo Galvez	- nominated by the Minister
Mr. Marcello Blake	- nominated by the Belize Chamber of Commerce and Industry
Mr. Hubert Enriquez	- nominated by the National Trade Union Congress of Belize

Ends