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## **PRESS RELEASE**

### **Ministry of National Security Concludes Investigation into Allegations of Misconduct within the Belize Defence Force**

*Belmopan. June 1, 2020. 3:30 p.m.*

The Ministry of National Security hereby confirms that the investigation into the alleged reports of extortion, maltreatment, sexual assault, and sexual advances at Training Company has concluded.

The investigation recognizes that some progress was made in response to the victims of the alleged misconduct and highlights the need for more targeted organizational and strategic changes for progress to continue. Furthermore, the investigation points to some wrongdoing and negligence by personnel within the units involved. These are being addressed internally by the Belize Defence Force and the Belize Police Department where appropriate.

A critical part of this process of institutionalization is standardizing terminology and policy implementation design across all military services. A number of findings indicate that policy must be given a more permanent place within the military organization and culture. The recommendations cover the spectrum of strategic proposals to specific actions that would improve prevention, victim response, and accountability.

The Belize Defence Force will continue to move forward in its efforts to eliminate the cases of misconduct by holding its members to the highest standards of ethical conduct to preserve the credibility and moral authority necessary to carry out its mission. These infractions are an anathema to the values and ethics of the Belize Defence Force.

**Ends**

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