



PR#079-24

PRESS RELEASE

NEMO Responds to Fires Near San Pedro Columbia

Belmopan, May 20, 2024.

The Ministry of Blue Economy and Disaster Risk Management hereby informs that the National Emergency Management Organization (NEMO) has been responding to reports of wildfires affecting the village of San Pedro Columbia and adjacent communities in the Toledo District.

On May 16th, the Toledo District Emergency Operations Centre was activated, and an emergency meeting was held with representatives of the Fire Department, the Forest Department, the Ministry of Infrastructure Development and Housing, the Ministry of Transport, Belize Defence Force, Ya'axché Conservation Trust and Toledo Institute for Development and Environment (TIDE). Initial assessments were conducted, and a plan of action was created to provide immediate humanitarian support to affected families. NEMO maintained contact with the chairpersons and alcaldes of San Pedro Columbia, Crique Jute, Mafredi and San Antonio. Aerial reconnaissance was conducted on May 17th to confirm the extent of the fire, determine initial damage assessment, and assist in plans to contain the fire.

Based on the reconnaissance report received, the Ministry informs that there currently is no immediate fire threat to Crique Jute, Mafredi or San Antonio. NEMO and the affected communities will continue to work in coordination to monitor the fires over the next few days.

The Toledo District Emergency Operations Centre remains alert and prepared to provide immediate fire-fighting and humanitarian assistance.

NEMO advises that during the fire season, the public, schools, churches, statutory bodies, businesses, and government ministries must continue to review and update emergency preparedness activities and plans.

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