



PR#214-23

PRESS RELEASE

Cabinet Brief

Belmopan, 5th October 2023.

The Cabinet, chaired by Prime Minister Hon. John Briceño, met on 3rd September 2023.

- Cabinet gave its approval for the introduction of legislation on a number of amendments to the Criminal Code Act, Chapter 101 and the Summary Jurisdiction (Offence) to amend the following: expanding the definition of aggravated assault to protect prosecutors, judicial officers, public officers, members of the media, teachers, elected officials and security-related personnel, by upgrading the use of threatening words or behavior from a petty offence to a serious offence and increasing the penalty to up to five years imprisonment.
- Cabinet gave its approval for a number of reforms to the criminal justice system, namely the introduction of a Criminal Procedure (Plea Discussion and Plea Agreement) Act to establish a system of plea discussion and plea agreements in criminal procedure to address the backlog of criminal cases; the repeal of the Penal System Reform Act to make new and expansive provisions relating to alternative sentencing to expand the options of available alternative sentences that can be passed on convicted persons; and the introduction of the Criminal Records (Rehabilitation of Offenders) Act to establish a system for the expungement of criminal records where a conviction is removed from one's criminal record after a specific period of time and after certain rehabilitation requirements have been met.
- Cabinet gave its full support for amendments to the National Accreditation Council of Belize Act to ensure that the quality of education delivered and brought to Belize meets standards and allows for the assessment of qualified persons.

- Cabinet gave its approval for the integration of emergency medical response and emergency search and rescue in the mandate of the National Fire Service. Firefighters will be trained in emergency search and rescue, including extrication, rope rescue, confined space and swift water rescue. In addition, Cabinet gave its approval for an intake of 60 new firefighters.
- Cabinet approved the introduction of legislation of a Carbon Markets Initiative Bill to outline the rules, modalities and procedures for interested parties to engage in the sale, trade and purchase of carbon credits in Belize and to proceed with public consultations.
- Finally, Cabinet wishes all Belizeans a safe and happy Indigenous Peoples' Resistance Day.

Ends