



PR#149-23

## PRESS RELEASE

### Re-establishment of the Essential Services Arbitration Tribunal

*Belmopan, June 27, 2023.*

Hon. Oscar Requena, the Minister of Labour, received a letter dated June 9, 2023 from the Christian Workers Union (CWU) invoking a 21-day notice to institute industrial action against the Port of Belize Limited.

In their letter, the Union stated, “Despite various attempts, including the involvement of your Ministry, there remains a live trade dispute between Christian Workers Union and Port of Belize Limited. This dispute stems from Port of Belize Limited refusal to abide by the Tribunal’s Award directing that parties forthwith engage in negotiations to determine the terms of payment under the March 6, 2020 agreement.”

In July 2021, the CWU reported to the minister a trade dispute, including the matter of the redundancy package for stevedores. The minister, in accordance with sections 11 and 12 of the Settlement of Disputes in Essential Services Act, referred the said dispute to the Essential Services Arbitration Tribunal for settlement. Having heard and determined the matter, the tribunal handed down its award in January 2022. The reported dispute in the Union’s letter dated June 9, 2023, is on the same basis as the dispute reported in 2021.

The ministry re-established the Essential Services Arbitration Tribunal on June 23, 2023, and the matter stated in the union’s letter dated June 9, 2023 has been referred to the tribunal for a decision on any questions as to the interpretation of the award in accordance with Section 14 of the aforementioned act.

The Members of the tribunal are:

- Attorney William A. Lindo, Chairman (Government’s Representative)
- Fermin Olivera (Government’s Representative)
- Wilfredo Galvez (Government’s Representative)
- Marcello Blake (Employers’ Representative)
- Hubert Enriquez (Workers’ Representative)

The tribunal will hold its first meeting on Wednesday, June 28, 2023 in Belize City.

The ministry encourages all parties involved to continue to engage in constructive dialogue in order to resolve this matter in a peaceful and lawful manner. The ministry is confident that the tribunal will provide a fair and impartial decision that will benefit all parties concerned.

### Ends

For more information, please contact:

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