



PR#174-25

## **PRESS RELEASE**

### **Statement by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs**

*Belmopan, September 16, 2025.*

The Government of Belize is aware of a press release issued by the Government of the Republic of Guatemala concerning recent events at the Sarstoon River over September 10 – 13, 2025.

The Government forthrightly rejects the bold attempt of the Government of the Republic of Guatemala to present alternative facts in order to seek to distort the narrative of what transpired at the Sarstoon.

Belize has no doubt about its sovereignty over its side of the Sarstoon River. The unalterable fact is that the boundary between Belize and Guatemala was established in the 1859 Treaty as the mid-channel of the Sarstoon River. The Sarstoon Island lies squarely within Belize's sovereign territory. Furthermore, the 1859 Treaty provides that the channels of the river are equally free and open to the vessels of both countries.

In any case, Guatemala's claim is before the International Court of Justice for adjudication and final settlement. The Government of Belize looks forward to the vindication of its position. In the meantime, both Belize and Guatemala are obligated to refrain from any action that may exacerbate the dispute.

Belize further refutes Guatemala's assertions that the Belize Defence Force acted in any provocative manner. Publicly available videos clearly show the professional, calm, and restrained conduct of Belize's military personnel, of which Belize is proud.

The tensions of the past week underscore the urgency of a mechanism for cooperation in the Sarstoon and maritime spaces. Finalising such a mechanism would be a clear demonstration of the commitment of the two countries to peace and security in the area.

Belize is committed to continuing to work with Guatemala to strengthen and expand bilateral relations on the basis of mutual respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of our countries.

**Ends**