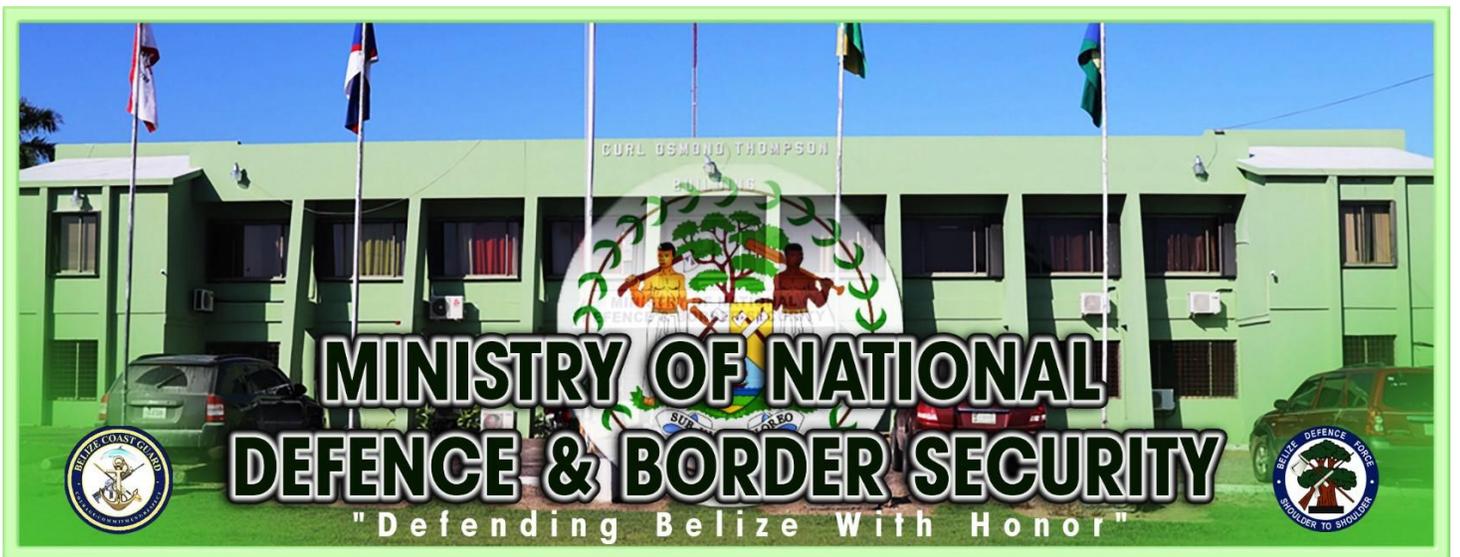


MINISTRY OF  
NATIONAL DEFENCE  
AND BORDER SECURITY  
2024 ANNUAL REPORT



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## **MINISTER'S MESSAGE**

As Minister of State for 2024 and now the substantive Minister of National Defence and Border Security, it is with great pride and honor that I reflect on the accomplishments of 2024 guided by our commitment to our mission, mandate and #planBelize. Having served for many years alongside the dedicated men and women of the Belize Defence Force and the Belize Coast Guard, I am proud of the strides made toward safeguarding Belize's sovereignty and security.



*Hon Oscar Mira*

This year, the Belize Defence Force strengthened its operational effectiveness through consistent border patrols, successful surgical operations, and joint missions with local and international partners. The BDF's focus on infrastructure, force modernization, and increased recruitment has enhanced the readiness and morale of our troops.

Similarly, the Belize Coast Guard excelled in expanding maritime security capabilities, conducting successful interdiction and surveillance operations, and deepening its youth outreach through the Sea Cadet Corps. Investments in fleet development and personnel training continue to position the BCG as a cornerstone of our maritime defense.

As we look to the future, I remain committed to ensuring that our Security Forces receive the support and resources necessary to continue protecting our nation. I express heartfelt gratitude to all service members for their unwavering dedication and to our regional and international partners for their continued collaboration. Together, we will uphold the peace and security that Belize holds dear.

Thank you.

## **ABBREVIATIONS**

AORs	Areas of Responsibility
ATOI	Air Traffic of Interest
BAS	Belize Audubon Society
BATSUB	British Army Training Support Unit Belize
BCG	Belize Coast Guard
BDF	Belize Defence Force
BPD	Belize Police Department
CABEI	Central American Bank for Economic Integration
CBDF	Commander, Belize Defence Force
CDS	Chief of Defence Staff
DTO	Drug Trafficking Organization
EEZ	Exclusive Economic Zone
FCD	Friends for Conservation and Development
FOB	Forward Operating Base
FOE	Forecast of Events
FY	Financial (Fiscal) Year
G4	Finance and Logistics Staff Officer
GPS	Global Positioning System
HADR	Humanitarian Aid and Disaster Response
ICJ	International Court of Justice
ITVET	Institute for Technical and Vocational Education and Training
JCET	Joint Combined Exercise Training
JETs	Joint Enforcement Teams
JIATF-S	Joint Interagency Task Force South
JIOC	Joint Intelligence and Operations Center
JRTC	Joint Readiness Training Center
JSVPR	Joint Sexual Violence Prevention and Response
MNDBS	Ministry of National Defence and Border Security
MOE	Ministry of Education
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
NEMO	National Emergency Management Organization
NSDS	National Security and Defence Strategy
OPO	Operation Order
OCDS	Office of the CDS
OW	Orange Walk
PACT	Protected Areas Conservation Trust
PANAMAX	Multinational Military Exercise Focused on Panama Canal Security
PKO	Peace Keeping Operations
PRO	Public Relations Officer
SAR	Search and Rescue

SEMAR	Secretaría de Marina (Mexican Navy)
SMEE	Subject Matter Expertise Exchange
SOTF	Special Operations Task Force
SUT	Small Unit Tactics
TAOR	Tactical Area of Responsibility
TCV	Troop-Carrying Vehicle
UAS	Unmanned Aerial Systems
UN	United Nations

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

In 2024, the Ministry of National Defence and Border Security (MNDBS) advanced its strategic objectives through sustained interagency coordination, regional partnerships, and commitment to national sovereignty and public safety. The Ministry, through the Belize Defence Force (BDF), the Belize Coast Guard (BCG), and the Office of the CDS (OCDS), made significant strides in enhancing operational readiness, increasing training capacity, and improving infrastructure and welfare support for personnel.

The Belize Defence Force continued its vital role in defending Belize's borders and supporting national development. Through sustained patrol operations across northern, western, and southern areas of responsibility, the BDF helped deter illegal activities and maintain peace and order. The Force also conducted targeted surgical operations, supported joint missions with international and local partners, and made critical progress on key strategic objectives, including improved living conditions, force modernization, and increased recruitment.

The BCG recorded a year of operational and institutional growth, expanding its maritime security capabilities and interagency collaboration. The BCG strengthened coastal surveillance, interdiction, and search and rescue operations, while also advancing its training programs and youth engagement through the Sea Cadet Corps. Investments in fleet development and professional military education further positioned the Coast Guard as a key maritime security partner in the region.

The OCDS served as a strategic conduit between formations, ensuring that military operations were aligned with national priorities. The OCDS advanced policy implementation, coordinated with key security stakeholders, and facilitated defence diplomacy engagements across Central America and the wider region. Its leadership helped guide the Ministry's long-term vision for modernization, accountability, and institutional growth.

Despite persistent challenges related to logistics, infrastructure, and personnel resourcing, the Ministry and its formations remained resilient and mission focused. Looking ahead, priorities for 2025 include continued modernization, regional defence cooperation, force development, and strategic investment in human capital and military infrastructure.

## **MISSION STATEMENT AND PRIORITIES OF THE MINISTRY**

### **Vision Statement**

Poise a robust and equipped BDF to respond to all threats, thus making valuable contribution to national and regional security.

### **Mission Statement**

To provide effective support to the BDF, to enhance their ability to defend our sovereignty, territorial integrity, and uphold the Constitution.

### **Roles**

Implement defence policy on:

- Morale
- Welfare
- Accountability,

To enhance the defence forces' operational capabilities, and

To promote defence diplomacy.

# **BELIZE DEFENCE FORCE ANNUAL REPORT**



## **1. INTRODUCTION**

1.1 Purpose: This document summarizes the achievements of the BDF from April 1, 2024, to March 12, 2024. It highlights key accomplishments, challenges, ongoing and future projects, and presents recommendations for continued growth and success.

1.2. Breakdown: The achievements will be presented in a comprehensive Operational Synopsis, highlighting the country's key problem areas and the BDF's ongoing patrol efforts to combat illegal activities. This will be followed by an overview of Special Operations targeting incursions from the west and south, as well as Joint Operations with local agencies and foreign military personnel. Crisis Operations will also be covered, showcasing the BDF's support for whole-of-government initiatives. The report will summarize Training and Welfare efforts, infrastructure projects, and the acquisition of new kit and equipment. Finally, recommendations will be provided on the necessary steps to help the Force continue excelling and achieving its strategic objectives.

## **2. MISSION AND VISION**

2.1 Mission: The BDF is a potent pillar under the National Security Umbrella capable of conducting military as well as non-military operations to detect, deter, and defeat threats to Belize, both internal and external, with support from local, regional, and international partners to ensure the Sovereignty and Territorial Integrity of Belize.

2.2 Vision: An enhanced combat-ready, dedicated, and professional force capable of providing credible deterrence to threats, both internal and external. The BDF shall maintain and enhance healthy partnerships with local Law Enforcement Agencies and other partners to ensure the Rule of Law while engaging with neighbours and International Partners to contribute to regional and Hemispheric Security. The BDF shall be robust and agile to incorporate new technology, embrace change, and develop its Human Resources and core competencies to contribute to the security, stability, and prosperity of Belize.

### 3. FORCE PRIORITIES (STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES)

3.1 Improve the living conditions of the soldiers.

3.2 Strengthen the operational bases in the North, West and South.

3.3 Conduct battalions live firing exercise

3.4 Ensure a force well-kitted and equipped.

3.5 Training in alignment with operational commitments.

### 4. OPERATIONS

4.1 Routine Operations: The Force maintains an average of 233 regular soldiers on routine operations, with an additional 34 on standby duties and 102 volunteer soldiers performing guard duties across the country.

The distribution of personnel by area of responsibility is as follows:

<b>REGULAR ELEMENT</b>			
<b>TAOR</b>	<b>DEPLOYED</b>	<b>STANDBY</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
NORTH (OW)	27	8	35
CENTRAL	44	8	52
WEST	85	8	93
SOUTH	77	10	87
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>233</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>267</b>
<b>VOLUNTEER ELEMENT</b>			
<b>TAOR</b>	<b>NIGHT GUARDS</b>	<b>DAY GUARDS</b>	
Eyles Camp/Corozal Drill Hall	16	8	
Militia Hall	12	6	
FWC/Dangriga	16	9	
Belizario/MNDBS/NEMO	26	9	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>32</b>	



#### 4.2 Operational Synopsis:

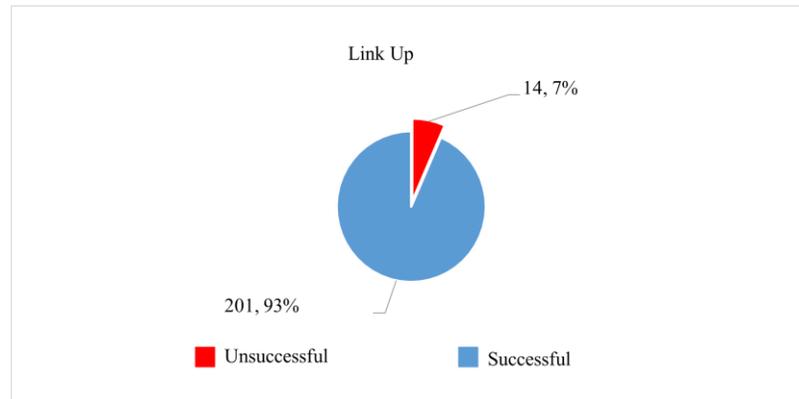
- Northern and Western Area of Responsibility: The most significant challenges continue to stem from illegal activities along the Western border, including unauthorized cattle ranching, illegal construction, fencing, cultivation, and encroachments.
- Southern Area of Responsibility: The deep South of the country which includes all the villages Southwest of Punta Gorda remain hotspots for illegal aircraft landings, illegal crossings, and the cultivation of illicit crops
  - Belize's commitment to regional security is underscored by its active participation in Multinational initiatives. Notably, the BDF deployed as part of the Multinational Security Support Mission to Haiti aimed at restoring stability and supporting democratic processes in the region.

4.3 Special Operations: The Special Operations Task Unit, along with members of various infantry units, conducted a series of precision operations across the AORs, leading to the destruction of coca plantations and marijuana fields, and the disruption of illicit aircraft landings and incursions.

The following table summarizes other major operational incursions and counteractions in 2024:

<b>Serial</b>	<b>Illegal Activity</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Counteraction</b>
1	Bridges	4	Destroyed
2	Coffee Plantations	2	Destroyed
3	Marijuana Plantations	13	Destroyed
4	Huts	2	Destroyed
5	Pumpkin Farms	2	Destroyed
6	Palm Trees	40 (acres)	Destroyed
7	Shed/Corrals	2	Destroyed
8	Farm	1	Destroyed
9	Cocoa Plants	3	Destroyed
10	Cocoa Lab	1	Destroyed
11	Gates	3	Destroyed
12	Illegal Logging	55	Reported
13	Fence	5	Destroyed
14	People	19	Detained
15	.22 Rifle	1	Confiscated
16	16 Gauge Cartridge	8	Confiscated
17	.22 Handgun	1	Confiscated
18	.22 Live Rounds	7	Confiscated
19	Shotguns	3	Confiscated
20	Illegal Plane Landings	3	Secure Landing Site/Plane

4.4 Adjacency Zone Link-up Patrols: The BDF, in collaboration with the Guatemalan Army, conducted a total of 215 patrols along the border. Of these, 201 were successful, and 14 were unsuccessful. The unsuccessful patrols were primarily due to impassable terrain caused by weather conditions and/or the Guatemalan Army's failure to show up.



4.5 Joint Operations: A total of 35 targeted joint operations were successfully conducted between January and December 2024. These joint patrols were conducted mostly with the Belize Police Department, Forestry Department, Immigration Department, FCD, and BAS and were aimed at deterring illegal activities throughout the country. These operations include:

Number	Operations	Date	Location
1	OPO - Northern Seals 01/24	11-13 Jan 24	Chetumal
2	OPO – Belize - USA delegation visit southern operations	11,12 Jan 24	Punta Gorda
3	OPO - Weapon security	30-Jan-24	Price Barracks
4	Operation Demolition	6-Feb-24	Monkey River
5	Operation Control Douglas Cause	19-May-24	Bze-Mex Border
6	GANSEF Technical Meeting	13-14 Mar 24	Biltmore Plaza
7	Operations Order- Northern Seals	10-12 Mar 24	BDF/MEX Border
8	French Television Channel M6 Documentary	15-17 Mar 24	Belize
9	Incisive gallop 01/24	19- 31 Mar 24	Machaquilha/Ed Cent
10	Warning Orders- Operation Auxilium	19-21 Apr 24	SOE for Belize

<b>Number</b>	<b>Operations</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Location</b>
11	OPO- Northern Seals	19-21 Apr 24	BDF/MEX Border
12	Sarstoon FOB Media Visit	25-Apr-24	Sarstoon FOB
13	OPO- Ammunition Escort	1-May-24	PGIA
14	OPO- Weapon Escort	2-May-24	Echelon
15	Doyle's Delight Expedition	4-May-24	Doyle's Peak
16	Operational Ammunition	13-May-24	Echelon/Pbks
17	Deployment Orders Landmark	14-May-24	Lagoon Real Estate
18	OPO- Operational Ammunition	16,17,20 May 24	Pbks
19	OPO- Northern Seals	23-25 May 24	BDF/MEX Border
20	OPO- Coca	19-20 Jun 24	Graham Creek
21	OPO Warning Orders- Operation	25-Jun-24	Belize City
22	OPO- Northern Seals	25-Jun-24	SOE in Belize
23	OPO – Northern Seals 07/24	29 Jun – 01 Jul 24	Bze/ Mex Border
24	OPO- Operation Rursus Pedere	16-30 Jul	Rio Blanco
25	OPO- Operation Rursus Pedere	16-30 Jul	Caballo CP
26	OPO – Northern Seals 08/24	23-25 Aug 24	Bze/ Mex Border
27	Special Bridge destruction	06-10 Sep 24	Machakil Ha
28	OPO- Quality Quest (LEC)	09-07 Sep 24	Belmopan
39	Incisive gallop 02/24	23 Sep -07 Oct 24	Machaquilha
30	OPO – Northern Seals 09/24	25-27 Sep 24	Bze/ Mex Border
31	OPO – Northern Seals 10/24	22-24 Oct 24	Bze/ Mex Border
32	Operation Grinch 01/24	22 Nov – 24 Dec 2024	Belize Country wide
33	Operation Absconditus 01/24	19 Nov - Ongoing	Graham Creek AO
34	Operation Northern seals 11/24	24 26 Nov 24	Bze/Mex Border
35	Operation Northern seals 12/24	21 Dec - 23 Dec 24	Bze/Mex Border

4.6 Crisis Operations: The BDF played a critical role in supporting the Government during national emergencies, particularly in response to widespread flooding and fires. During Tropical Storm Sara, the BDF deployed 58 soldiers along with most of their transportation assets, including Hinos and vessels, to assist with rescue operations, relief efforts, and the restoration of affected areas.

The Force deployed personnel and resources to assist with firefighting efforts, containment, and evacuation operations in affected areas.

Their swift and effective response highlighted the Force's unwavering commitment to national service and its ability to mobilize quickly and efficiently in times of crisis.

## 5. TRAINING

5.1 Local Training: The Force successfully conducted 30 local training courses, encompassing promotions and skills development. Additionally, a recruit training intake was carried out, resulting in the successful passing of 117 soldiers who now support the infantry battalions in fulfilling their operational commitments.

5.2 Foreign Training Forecast of Events: A variety of international training courses were conducted in collaboration with several foreign agencies, both domestically and overseas. The BDF deployed 87 officers and 62 soldiers to participate in these courses, while 60 officers and 14 soldiers took part in various seminars. These training initiatives were aimed at strengthening operational capabilities and preparing personnel for a wide range of missions. The courses included:

<b>International Training 2024-2025</b>	<b>Length of Course</b>	<b>Number trained</b>
▪ French Lang Course	4 months	2
▪ National Security Intelligence Course	3 weeks	1
▪ Orthopedic Technician Training Programme	12 months	2
▪ Dentex Assistance Program	36 months, begun in 2022	2
▪ Dental Surgeon	None in 2024	0
▪ Advanced Command and Staff Course	None in 2024	0
▪ Basic Polygraph Course	None in 2024	0

<b>International Training 2024-2025</b>	<b>Length of Course</b>	<b>Number trained</b>
▪ Special Operations Senior Leadership Programme	2 months	2
▪ Intelligence Analysis Course	None in 2024	
▪ Military Law Development Course	None in 2024	0
▪ Commando Qualification Course	None in 2024	0
▪ Advance Spanish Course	None in 2024	0
▪ Strategic Leadership Programme	None in 2024	0
▪ Range Safety Officer Course	None in 2024	0
▪ Central America Human Rights Course	None in 2024	0
▪ Pilot Fixed Wing Multi-engine serial 2401	21 months	1
▪ Counter Terrorism Tactical Response Course	1 month	4
▪ Laboratory Technician Course	14 months	1
▪ Civil-Military Relations in Armed Violence Reduction and Prevention	2 weeks	1
▪ Transnational Threat Network	2 weeks	1
▪ Exercise Planning Process	2 weeks	2
▪ Operation Underground Railroad	1 week	1
▪ PANAMAX	2 weeks	6
▪ Haiti Contingent	1 month	31
▪ Fuerzas Comando	2 weeks	8
▪ Aviation Training	1 week	2
▪ Cyber Defence	1 month	1
▪ Infantry Leadership Skills	4 months	1
▪ Advanced Fix Wing Maintenance Course	2 months	1
▪ Aircraft Maintenance Technician	3 months	2
▪ Operations Zeus	1 week	1
▪ Caribbean Human rights	None in 2024	0
▪ Avionics Instrument Technician	3 months	1
▪ Pilot Rotary Wing Course	21 months, begun in 2023	1

5.3 Multinational Support: In alignment with the United Nations Security Council Resolution 2699, the BDF deployed two officers to support the Multinational Task Force in Haiti. These officers played a critical role in strengthening international peacekeeping efforts. Additionally, the BDF trained and prepared a contingent for future deployment, ensuring continued support for the mission and reinforcing Belize's commitment to global peace and security.

5.4 Sarstoon FOB: The successful inauguration of the newly renovated Forward Operating Base (FOB) on the banks of the Sarstoon River was a significant achievement for the year. This milestone marked the resumption of 24-hour monitoring by BDF personnel in the strategically crucial and volatile area along the southern border between Belize and Guatemala. The upgraded facility now provides a safer, more resilient operational base, ensuring enhanced security and operational effectiveness for personnel in the region.

## **6. WELFARE, MORALE AND DISCIPLINE**

6.1 Welfare and Morale: Through a continued focus on personnel development, operational readiness, infrastructure upgrades, and health initiatives, the BDF not only enhanced the skills and capabilities of its soldiers, but also ensured their well-being and morale remained high. These combined efforts contributed to the creation of a motivated, well-equipped, and resilient force, ready to meet the challenges of the future. To maintain operational readiness, the BDF made several strategic upgrades across various units, including enhancements to key equipment. Additionally, initiatives were introduced to promote the physical, mental, and emotional health of BDF personnel, fostering a sense of pride and unity within the Force. Below are some of the key initiatives undertaken in 2024 to support these objectives.

1. Infrastructure Purchases for Improvements –
  - Materials were purchased for the renovation of critical operational posts, including Crique Sarco, Santa Rosa, and Tree Tops OPs, ensuring that these strategic locations remain functional and conducive to operational activities.
  - Additionally, minor renovations were carried out at the training company lines in Price Barracks to improve the living conditions for our soldiers.
  - Renovations were also made at the Family Quarters at Price Barracks to improve accommodation for personnel and their families.

2. Fuel and Equipment Repairs –
  - Repairs were carried out on the fuel pumps at Price Barracks, Ladyville, ensuring that essential fuel supply systems remained operational, as well as the transportation assets of the Force across battalions.
3. Signals and Communication Enhancements –
  - Signals technicians regularly maintained and repaired critical communications infrastructure, including base stations, amplifiers, power supplies, and antennas. Key locations such as the JIOC, Price Barracks, and repeater sites at San Jose Hawaii and Baldy Beacon benefited from the installation and upkeep of essential radio infrastructure.
  - Additionally, the acquisition and distribution of key communication equipment included 12 solar panels, 86 Harris batteries (distributed across various camps), 24 gel batteries, and 14 Ule and Samsung phones, along with Tigo SIM cards and credits.
  - Satellite phones were also purchased and deployed to enhance communications in remote areas.
4. Transition to New Engines –
  - A major achievement for the BDF was the transition from Suzuki engines to the acquisition of 6 brand new 200 HP Yamaha engines, enhancing the mobility and operational capacity of the special boat unit.
5. Annual BDF Day and Sports Day –
  - These events served as vital platforms for fostering camaraderie, building esprit de corps, and celebrating the achievements of our personnel.
6. Wonder Woman Competition –
  - The BDF delivered an outstanding performance, securing 1st and 2nd place in the annual Wonder Woman Competition, organized by the Coast Guard for Security Forces in celebration of Women’s Month.

7. Kitchen and Barrack Rooms –
  - Recognizing the importance of proper housing and nutrition for the well-being of our soldiers, significant improvements were made to the barracks and kitchen facilities. Additionally, major kitchen appliances were purchased for Camp Belizario.
  
8. Community Outreach –
  - As part of our commitment to community development, the BDF engaged in various community outreach projects throughout the year. These included hands-on community service, mentoring local youth, and empowering future leaders through career talks and lectures.
  - In partnership with the LANG Band, we organized a series of events during the September celebrations, reinforcing the bond between the military and the civilian populace.
  
9. Wellness –
  - The Force introduced a variety of wellness initiatives aimed at maintaining physical fitness and mental well-being. These included departmental runs, team-building exercises, and wellness workshops focusing on stress management, mental health awareness, and physical health.
  
10. Highlighting Achievements –
  - The BDF prioritized recognizing the achievements of its personnel both locally and internationally throughout 2024. Regular promotional ceremonies and recognition events celebrated the hard work, dedication, and accomplishments of our officers and soldiers.
  - Internationally, personnel who represented the Force on overseas courses were publicly acknowledged, inspiring others to excel. Notable milestones in 2024 included the first female pilot completing pilot training in Jamaica, a dental surgeon finishing studies in Guyana, and a BDF female officer becoming the first ever Central American military officer of any gender to graduate from the School of Advanced Military Studies at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas.

11. Attaché to Mexico –

- In 2024, the BDF opened and filled an attaché billet in Mexico, strengthening bilateral defence relations and enhancing cooperation. This move facilitates better information exchange, joint training, and a stronger partnership in addressing regional security challenges.

6.2 Discipline. A total of 61 cases were processed by CBDF during this reporting period. They are as follows:

<b>Charge</b>	<b>Total Charged</b>
Negligently performing a duty	8
Neglect to the prejudice of good order and military discipline	4
Leaving his place of duty when on guard duty	5
Conduct to the prejudice of good conduct and military discipline	4
Absent without leave	6
Disobeying standing orders	9
Using threatening, abusive, insulting or provocative words likely to cause disturbance	2
Engaging in conduct unbecoming of an officer to the prejudice of good order and military discipline	10
Disobeying a lawful command	6
Drunkenness	1
Leaving duty	6

## 7. RECOMMENDATIONS

While the BDF has continuously shown resourcefulness in managing its operations, it is crucial to acknowledge that achieving sustained operational excellence requires adequate and timely access to financial resources. The support of the Ministry, particularly in the areas of budgeting and the prompt release of funds, will be pivotal in ensuring that the Force remains prepared for emerging challenges.

Given the growing operational and infrastructure needs, it is recommended that the MNDBS prioritize the BDF's budget requests and ensure timely fund release. Delays have hindered the BDF's ability to fully execute critical operations, conduct training, and maintain infrastructure. A more proactive approach will enhance operational readiness and morale.

## **8. CONCLUSION**

The BDF's achievements in 2024 highlight its steadfast commitment to national security, personnel welfare, and operational readiness. As the Force continues to evolve, however, adequate financial support and timely resource allocation are crucial to sustaining its effectiveness. Addressing these financial challenges, through more timely budgeting and fund releases, will enable the BDF to confidently tackle future national defence challenges. While the BDF has demonstrated remarkable commitment and effectiveness in fulfilling its mandates, ongoing financial constraints and resource limitations remain, impacting its ability to fully execute planned operations and infrastructure improvements.

# **BELIZE COAST GUARD ANNUAL REPORT**



## 1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Belize Coast Guard, under the purview of MNDBS, plays a pivotal role in safeguarding Belize maritime spaces from various threats, ensuring maritime safety, security, and protection. With a robust mandate and allocated budget, the Coast Guard executes its missions efficiently and effectively to uphold national interests and regional security. In the fiscal year 2023/24, the Belize Coast Guard witnessed a notable 9.65% budget increase, amounting to approximately \$13.8 million (see *Annex B* for detailed budget comparison), compared to the previous fiscal year, reflecting the government's commitment to maritime governance and security. This significant budget increase has enabled the Coast Guard to enhance its operational capabilities and address pressing challenges within its operational landscape.

The BCG made significant strides in personnel administration and welfare, focusing on salary adjustments, promotions, and training opportunities to improve morale and productivity. Through "People's Operation," 308 salaries were adjusted, ensuring financial accuracy for personnel. Additionally, two promotion boards led to 102 promotions across various ranks. Training opportunities expanded, with members pursuing higher education at the University of Belize and ITVET. International training partnerships also provided 87 personnel with specialized courses, while officers continued their professional development at institutions in Taiwan, Mexico, and Guyana. Welfare initiatives emphasized work-life balance, community engagement, and physical fitness.

Despite a 0.591% budget decrease, BCG strategically managed its financial resources to sustain operational effectiveness. The reduction impacted key areas such as patrol fuel allocation, maintenance costs, and uniform procurement, yet patrol operations increased by 6% due to efficient planning. Maintenance efforts focused on fleet readiness, with successful vessel servicing and vehicle repairs, while donations, such as nine new outboard engines, alleviated some financial strain. However, delays in food and uniform procurement posed challenges to operational readiness and morale. Infrastructure improvements, including the inauguration of Sector Big Creek and upgrades to forward operating bases, demonstrated BCG's resilience in maintaining service quality amid financial constraints.

Training remained a cornerstone of operational excellence, with notable achievements including the inaugural Chief Petty Officer Course, promotional leadership programs, and specialized training in search and rescue, maritime readiness, and medical response. International cooperation strengthened training efforts, with participation in multinational exercises like Agile Bear '24, Tradewinds '24, and PANAMAX 2024. Despite infrastructure and funding limitations, BCG leveraged partnerships to enhance training

initiatives, ensuring personnel remained prepared for evolving maritime security challenges. Future training plans include expanding community-based maritime training, emphasizing the need for sustained investment in capacity-building programs.

Collaboration with regional and international partners played a crucial role in strengthening maritime security. The BCG's partnerships with SEMAR, the U.S. Security Cooperation Office, and JIATF-S facilitated intelligence sharing, joint operations, and technical support, enhancing law enforcement efforts. Through joint patrols and operations, the BCG disrupted illicit activities, improved surveillance capabilities, and bolstered maritime security. Locally, cooperation with governmental and non-governmental organizations improved enforcement efforts, particularly in fisheries protection and environmental monitoring. Technological advancements, such as drone surveillance and tracking systems, further improved operational efficiency. These combined efforts reinforced the BCG's commitment to safeguarding Belize's maritime domain and maintaining regional security.

## **2. MISSION STATEMENT AND PRIORITIES OF THE DEPARTMENT**

**2.1 Strategic Vision:** To create an apex institution, highly professionally motivated trained and resource capable of enforcing maritime laws and projecting sea power to the limits of our sea spaces and supporting maritime operations locally and regionally.

**2.2 Strategic Mission** To protect Belize's maritime spaces from threats both foreign and domestic, by providing maritime safety, security and protection of our people, industries and natural resources through military, law enforcement and humanitarian operations.

**2.3 Core Missions** Maritime safety, maritime security, marine resource protection, territorial integrity and sovereignty, naval defence of the State

## **3. MAIN ACHIEVEMENTS**

**3.1 Personnel Administration and Welfare:** The proper administration and welfare of the members of the BCG are directly proportional to their level of productivity and dedication to duty. Focusing on adjusting salaries, increments and allowances has been the main effort since the last quarter of 2024. The operation named "People's Operation" placed emphasis on these strategic issues of staff welfare.

Unfortunately, as simple as this operation may sound, the task requires attention to detail and experienced clerks that can conduct salary adjustments. The combined effort of BCG clerks and civilian staff has enabled a total of 308 salaries to be adjusted from January to December 2024. Continued and tangible results in this operation are seen in the eagerness for sailors to conduct their duties without the added financial stress incorrect salaries has caused. In addition, the BCG held two promotion boards in FY24/25 which yielded a total of 102 promotions throughout the ranks of Seaman to Petty Officer Class One. A standout statistic was that of the increasing number of resignations as compared to FY23/24 - ten (10) enlisted members resigned in FY24/25. This is a possible indication of a retention issue. There were six recommended dismissals and one actual dismissal.

Opportunities for training and education play a vital role in sailor morale. The ongoing partnerships in education through the University of Belize and ITVET have proven to be popular amongst members as each year vacancies are filled. Two BCG members are finishing bachelor's degrees at the University of Belize, and at ITVET one sailor is enrolled in auto electrical maintenance and the other in cooking. In developing the Legal Office, two enlisted members are enrolled on scholarships in a bachelor's degree in criminal justice. Both locally and internationally, 87 BCG members were given an opportunity to train. Development of officers is ongoing as four cadets are enrolled at the Taiwan Naval Academy, one at the Mexican Naval Academy and one at the Standards Officer Course in Guyana.

Fostering healthy work-life balances and community outreach remains an important aspect of welfare. Throughout 2024, the sailors were involved in activities such as the 8th Annual Wonder Woman Challenge, La Ruta Maya River Challenge, the 1st Annual BCG Family Day, Spartan Triathlon, Lion-man Triathlon, along with many marathons, and cycling races. Together with the BCG Family's Association, the Swim Pro program was held for young children and teenagers in Belize City and Belmopan. This program was successful in both teaching lifesaving skills but also the interaction of the wider Coast Guard family base and community.

**3.2 Budget and Procurement:** The FY 24/25 the Belize Coast Guard budget saw a decrease of 0.591% from the previous budget. This decrease accounted for \$81,569 in significant cost centers to include Operating Costs, Training and Contracts & Consultancies. The decrease although less than 1% still had an impact in the areas of patrolling and the maintenance of vessels and vehicles. Personnel Emoluments account for 75% of the entire budget. The other major expenditures come from the purchase of fuel under Operating

Costs, maintenance of vessels and boats under Maintenance Costs and food tendering under Contracts & Consultancies (refer to *Annex B* for full budget breakdown).

The overall decrease showed both positive and negative impacts on operational efficiency and readiness. It is important to note that only 4,000 gals were purchased every month as compared to 5,000 gals in FY 23/24. This is detrimental to the overall operational design. To maintain law enforcement and defence posture, we must constantly patrol. At the Senior Officer Conference May 2024, the impacted line items were discussed, and commanders were urged to forward plan and ensure operational effectiveness is not affected. Adaptability paired with operational planning showed an increase of 6% of Belize Coast Guard patrols from FY 23/24 despite cuts in monthly fuel. It does limit operational reach and does not leave room for error.

A constant reduction in maintenance cost allocation has indicated a burden to the upkeep of both vessel and vehicle fleets. In FY 24/25, 75% of the maintenance budget was dedicated to both vessel and vehicle maintenance. The Engineering department successfully conducted 100-hour and 300-hour servicing on multiple vessels, restored CG27 and made operational, and refitted 4 other vessels. The donation of nine engines reduced the maintenance burden as new engines require less upkeep. The Motor Transport Unit was able to successfully overhaul a F450 truck and assign a vehicle and trailer for Sector South's mobility.

A notable effect is the ongoing pressure for the purchase of uniforms and lack of contracts for food and sundries. The delay in food and sundries delivery affects operational readiness and hinders deployment efficiency. 120 uniforms were purchased last year, however, due to the elements sailors are exposed to operational uniforms face quick damage and deterioration. The demand is higher than the supply. This directly affects the overall morale and discipline as the Coast Guard is unable to uphold 100% uniformity amongst its personnel.

Budget cuts withstanding, the Belize Coast Guard was able to complete several infrastructural projects, particularly the inauguration of the Sector Big Creek. Throughout the Fleet, forward operating bases improved living conditions, rehabilitated docks and deployed strategies for erosion control.

Emerging challenges in procurement and finance have shaped the Coast Guard leadership to maintain resourceful and innovative in achieving the mission.

3.3 Training: This is a critical component of personnel readiness and professional development within BCG. In 2024, BCG successfully conducted various training programs locally and internationally, strengthening its operational capacity. A major milestone was the launch of the first-ever Chief Petty Officer Course, a five-week program designed to prepare PO1 personnel for leadership roles by providing expertise in quarter mastering, operations management, and advanced mentorship. Additional promotional courses for Petty Officer Class 1, Petty Officer Class Two, and Petty Officer Class Three, focused on leadership development, ensuring a steady progression of skilled personnel.

Specialized training initiatives enhanced BCG's maritime capabilities, including the Search and Rescue Seminar, which improved emergency response, and the Patrol Commanders Seminar, which prepared officers to lead patrol operations effectively. The Coxswain Course expanded its reach by including personnel from Belize Water Services and the Belize Port Authority, while the Maritime Readiness Seminar supported 16 members from our partner the Turneffe Atoll Sustainability Association. The Women's Seaweed Association also benefited from its first Level One Captain Course, leading to apprenticeship master licenses, further demonstrating BCG's commitment to expanding maritime safety and professional development opportunities. The Medic Unit was able to extend their expertise and train 19 members of CITO in CPR.

The BCG engaged in multinational exercises such as Agile Bear '24, which strengthened disaster response with U.S. forces, and Tradewinds '24, enhancing regional security cooperation. The Joint Combined Exercise Training (JCET) focused on elite training in small unit tactics and amphibious warfare, while PANAMAX 2024 reinforced maritime security and anti-piracy operations. Despite challenges like budget constraints, limited infrastructure, and instructor shortages, the BCG remained committed to improving training through increased funding, facility upgrades, and strengthened partnerships. Future plans include offering captain training for coastal communities through BELTRAIDE and WCS, highlighting the need for sustained investment in training resources and collaboration.

3.4 Collaboration and Partnerships: Unity has proven to strengthen the way the BCG carries out its mission. Regional stability determines the success of our collaborative efforts as partners. The BCG has a well-established network that enables intelligence sharing, training and exercise, and interoperability. Each partnership is unique. The BCG-SEMAR partnership has shown much success. The Belize–Mexico Border Commanders meeting was hosted by the Belize Coast Guard in November at the Biltmore Plaza Hotel. The 17th and 18th meetings in June and November focused on

strategic discussions and operational planning to address border security challenges, particularly narco-trafficking. Other key topics included intelligence sharing, training, and search and rescue operations. Agreements made in 2024 have contributed to the Belize Coast Guard's operational success. Through those agreements, collaboration was made to visit different installations within the Mexican Navy to enhance capabilities within the BCG mainly in UAV, health, K-9, and climate resilience. The monthly Operation Northern Seal remains an effective collaboration. A joint search and rescue tabletop exercise was conducted that yielded to six (06) SAR exercises and one joint operation. This is a testament to the commitment of both services to partnership and excellence.

The United States Security Cooperation Office (SCO) has aided in overseas training where over 50 Coast Guard members received technical capacity building in varying specialties. The SCO supported the Drone Squadron in crucial training to develop their technicians. Incorporating technology into operations effectively is paramount to BCG's future operational success. The donation of 9 outboard engines from USSOUTHCOM supported the Coast Guard's critical capability of its Boston Whaler Fleet in conducting maritime intercept operations and deterring drug trafficking from Belize's jurisdictional waters. A collaboration that is thriving is the posting of the Foreign Liaison Officer (FLO) at the Joint Interagency Task Force South (JIATF-S). Through the FLO's information sharing and actionable intelligence, 14 surface events and 3 air events were reported. The BCG was able to action all 14 surface events and position assets strategically. JIATF-S was able to assist in searches twice through MPA and C130 search. JIATF-S also provided air support for Operation Barracuda which took place from 14-24 September and included regional partners from Mexico, Honduras and Guatemala. Although there were no tangible results, the strategic positioning of the BCG assets was able to disrupt illicit cargoes

The British Army Training Support Unit in Belize (BATSUB) has remained a stalwart partner in all aspects of training and capacity building, providing logistical and technical support, and support during Wonder Woman Challenge. They remain eager and committed to maintaining a strong relationship.

Locally the collaborative effort with governmental and non-governmental agencies has seen much tangible results in FY24/25. This spans from operations, to training, to policy and strategy. The combined efforts have resulted in increased and more efficient patrolling with NGO's like TASA and TIDE. The introduction of the long-range cameras at Hunting Caye Forward Operating Base enabled our operational reach to expand while managing resources. Joint patrols and arrests throughout all sectors increased last year which validates the importance of local partnership.

Through the ongoing partnership with the Blue Bonds Initiative, senior officers from the Coast Guard were part of the planning committee for the Fisheries Enforcement Workshop that incorporated law enforcement, fishermen, and civil society in a 2-day workshop to capture achievements, challenges, lessons learned and best practices. This workshop was to help shape the Fisheries Enforcement Strategy.

Effective collaboration is the backbone of military success. Through teamwork, discipline, and shared commitment, we strengthen our mission readiness and accomplish objectives with precision. By trusting one another and working as a unified force, we enhance operational effectiveness and uphold the highest standards of service.

**3.5 Operations:** The Belize Coast Guard showcased resilience, adaptability, and unwavering dedication to protecting Belize's maritime interests, solidifying its position as a premier maritime security force in the region. BCG operations covered in FY24/25 included maritime law enforcement operations, search and rescue, drugs and weapon seizure, medical evacuation and humanitarian assistance and disaster relief. The BCG conducted a total of 850 patrols, 1,395 joint patrols, and 1386 boardings throughout our maritime spaces. These patrols resulted in fines of over \$55,175 in Fisheries violations, \$7,000 in Port violations. Going into FY 25/26, there are 7 fisheries violations and 10 port violations cases pending. The most common maritime incident remains transnational organized crime. This is followed by Port violations, Fisheries violations, threats to territorial integrity and sovereignty, and lastly contraband. There were no coastal piracy incidents recorded this year (see *Annex A* for Operational Statistics).

The Belize Coast Guard successfully executed 49 search and rescues saving 132 lives. Five (05) recovery operations and five (05) Medical Evacuations were conducted highlighting our commitment to maritime safety and emergency response. Members of the BCG Fleet were heavily engaged in HADR after the effects of Hurricane Sara in Western Belize and the Belize River Valley. This operation supported by the NEMO and the Belize Red Cross, lasted for over a month and the BCG assisted in transporting 150 villagers daily from Crooked Tree Village and Rancho Dolores.

In keeping up with technological advancement, the BCG Operation Center made improvements to enhance its response and analytical capabilities. In addition to increasing the personnel assigned as operation specialists, the OPSCEN is equipped with Communication Service Integrated Inc, CSII, ArcGIS, and Tracking Solution tracking. This new tracking system enables the OPSCEN to efficiently monitor BCG vessels, enhancing situational awareness and streamlining decision-making in any scenario. The acquisition of two Perimeter 8 drones in the year 2024 is massive improvement in operational effectiveness.

They provide arial surveillance, data collection, search and rescue, environmental monitoring, disaster response, and maritime security operations. The combination of the above-mentioned systems has significantly increased the operational awareness, asset security, and combat effectiveness of BCG operations.

The BCG Fleet is separated into three sectors to collectively executed a wide range of critical missions aimed at safeguarding Belize's maritime domain, ensuring the security of its waters, and supporting broader national security initiatives.

Sector North had a total of 14 maritime incidents recorded for 2024. Sector North's common offences are port violations, fisheries violations, and contraband smuggling. Sector North took the lead in conducting extensive patrols, with particular emphasis on high-priority areas such as San Pedro and Bacalar Chico. Despite facing operational challenges in more remote and less accessible areas like Sarteneja—primarily due to the absence of dedicated vessel—the sector's personnel remained vigilant in executing their missions. Sector North's patrols, which involved both independent and joint operations, were instrumental in maintaining maritime law enforcement and countering illegal activities. Notably in September 2024, the Bacalar Chico patrol encountered three parcels of suspected cannabis, a black AR-15 semi-automatic rifle with an empty magazine, a rusted AK-47 semi-automatic rifle with an empty magazine, and twenty rounds of 7.62mm ammunition near west of Deer Caye. Sector North conducted 438 vessel patrols, 199 joint patrols, responded to 36 ATOI, 341 boardings, five search and rescue operations and two humanitarian assistance and disaster relief operations.

Sector Central had a total of 15 reported maritime incidents for 2024. Sector Central's common offences include fisheries violations, port violations, and environmental infractions. The most significant event for Sector Central is that no cases of coastal piracy occurred in line with robberies or physical aggression. Reports were made of verbal threats and intimidation from camp fishers onto sailboat fishers. At the beginning of 2025, the areas around the northern tip of Turneffe Atoll and Tobacco Caye Range are still being monitored closely. Sector Central conducted 305 patrols, 579 joint patrols, 559 boardings, and 6 SAR. Sector Central was highly active in conservation efforts in enforcing illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing in the areas of Turneffe Atoll and Lighthouse Reef Atoll. These efforts resulted in the seizure of over five hundred undersized lobster and 1,115 undersized conchs. The sector strategically refined its operational approach throughout 2024 by prioritizing the economy of force principles. This approach ensured that resources, both human and material, were deployed efficiently to maximize the

sector's impact. It also conducted Company level training programs such as Tactical Operational Emergency Training (TOETs), Crew Member Qualification, Basic First Aid, and Basic Communications Training. These initiatives were designed to enhance the preparedness and resilience of personnel, enabling them to perform under the demanding conditions of the maritime environment. The sector also emphasized collaborative partnerships, with successful joint operations and increased coordination with neighbouring nations and agencies.

Sector South had a total of 23 reported maritime incidents for 2024. Sector South continued to dominate maritime law enforcement, maintaining an effective deterrent against illegal activities while simultaneously adapting to the evolving landscape of maritime threats and criminal tactics within its operational area. The integration of emerging technologies, such as drone surveillance, was recommended to enhance reconnaissance and optimize patrol effectiveness. This strategic recommendation aims to further refine the sector's ability to allocate resources and focus patrol efforts in high-priority zones, improving overall enforcement efficiency.

Sector South geographically has the most area to cover compared to the other sectors and shares a collaborative working relationship with many non-governmental agencies to help conduct its mission. It also monitors foreign vessel activity Hunting Caye Forward Operating Base and conducted 142 foreign vessel boardings. The most common maritime incidents are response to ATOI/VOI, fisheries violations and threats to territorial integrity and sovereignty.

Unlike other years in the last quarter of 2024, Belizean southern maritime spaces had four threats to sovereignty with naval incursions from the Guatemala Navy. Sector South increased patrolling to deter and escort all incursions from Belizean territorial waters. 21 Corona Reef and 4 Dotted Line patrols were executed. In addition to maintaining presence along our maritime borders, the collection of illegal gillnets is common in the area surrounding Corona Reef. 18 gillnets were retrieved amounting to 8,859ft. 3,937ft of long line was also found and removed. It is prudent to make the comparison to FY23/24 where 10 more long range patrols were conducted. This can be attested to a reduction in fuel allocation during FY 24/25. Sector South conducted 107 patrols, 617 joint patrols, 142 foreign vessel boardings, 3 SAR, and 2 hurricane warning patrols.

## 4. LESSONS LEARNT

- 4.1 Improving and adapting more effective administrative systems: The current administrative system for payments of allowances and increments is ineffective in its design. The current civilian staff is underutilized and lack the authorization to process financial adjustments necessary to address the current salary issues found in the People's Operation. An improved system will allow for quicker processing and uplift sailor morale.
- 4.2 Improving operational readiness and flexibility: Maritime operations are often unpredictable, requiring adaptability and resilience. Recent experiences emphasize the need for a proactive maintenance schedule, efficient logistics support, and rapid response strategies. Strengthening contingency planning and enhancing fleet adaptability, including equipping vessels with necessary resources such as radio communication, navigational aids, and spotlights, will improve mission success.
- 4.3 Fostering a Culture of Continuous Improvement: Learning from past experiences is key to organizational growth. Conducting routine performance assessments, after-action reviews, and integrating best practices into operational procedures will help refine strategies and improve overall efficiency. Encouraging innovation and feedback from personnel will also contribute to long-term success.
- 4.4 Strengthening Asset Management and Sustainability: Effective resource management is critical for operational longevity. Ensuring that vessels, equipment, and technology are well-maintained and upgraded as needed will maximize fleet capabilities. Implementing sustainable practices, such as fuel efficiency measures and environmental conservation efforts, will also support long-term operational sustainability.
- 4.5 Addressing Gaps in Patrol Coverage and Surveillance: The operational success of the Southern Command has highlighted significant concerns regarding Belize's territorial waters, particularly in the Corona/Dotted Line area, where illegal fishing, drug trafficking, and contraband remain prevalent. Regular patrols by the Guatemalan Armed Forces (GAF) within Belize's waters further emphasize the need for increased surveillance. Collaborating with NGOs has proven beneficial for daily patrols, particularly in managing fuel limitations. However, certain areas remain unpatrolled, requiring

additional vessels and fuel. Utilizing camera access for monitoring and targeted deployments can help address these gaps effectively.

4.6 Effective resource management and budgeting: Effective resource management and budgeting are essential for maintaining operational readiness and enhancing capabilities. Securing adequate funding for equipment, training, and infrastructure is critical to sustaining Coast Guard operations, particularly in the face of potential budget cuts or stagnant funding. Strategic financial planning ensures mission success by optimizing resources and prioritizing essential needs

## **5. FUTURE PRIORITIES AND PLANS**

5.1 Recruitment of 50 enlisted personnel: BCG's Horizon 2030 Strategy has made provisions for the recruitment of enlisted members. BCG is expanding, and recruitment is essential to meet the increasing operational demand. This is to occur within the second quarter of the new financial year.

5.2 Establishment of K-9 Unit: the Belize Coast Guard's 2030 Beyond the Horizon Strategy outlines the establishment of the Second Fleet. The development of the K-9 Unit is an essential part of the Second Fleet. A maritime K-9 Unit will play a vital role in maritime operation success in detecting narcotics, explosives and other threats. This training will come as part of the Belize-Mexico partnership with SEMAR.

5.3 Building of the Maritime Training Center: through the partnership with the Blue Bonds & Finance Permanence Unit, a maritime training center is to be built to streamline all maritime law enforcement training.

5.4 Expansion of Headquarters for essential office space: The current infrastructure at BCG Headquarters currently has insufficient office space. The roof has been identified as adequate space to construct a third floor to include and house the Operations Center, Marine Science Technician Unit, Drone Squadron, and a conference room.

5.5 Acquisition of Coastal Patrol boats: The acquisition of the coastal patrol boats remains a priority. The maritime activities of this past year continue to indicate that to become a major player in the region in narcotics interdiction, maritime governance, and expanding operational reach to the Exclusive Economic Zone these vessels are vital. The incursions in the south demonstrated that, albeit for reasons of a naval defence posture, these patrol boats are still a high priority for the naval defence of the state.

## 6. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### 6.1 Recommendations:

- **Communications improvement**: The continued investment in communication systems for all BCG vessels to be equipped with NET capability is paramount to operational security and safety.
- **Prioritize Vessel/Vehicle Replacement and Fleet Modernization**: Allocate funding and resources for the phased replacement of aging vessels and trucks to maintain operational effectiveness. Investing in modern, durable, and fuel-efficient boats will enhance mission readiness, improve safety, and reduce maintenance costs.
- **Streamline Logistics and Procurement Processes**: Expedite the acquisition of essential supplies, including rations, fuel, and maintenance equipment, to prevent delays in operations. Establishing more efficient procurement channels and pre-approved supplier agreements will ensure timely delivery and mission continuity.
- **Develop a Long-Term Fleet and Vehicle Maintenance and Sustainability Plan**: Establish a structured maintenance program to extend the lifespan of vessels, vehicles and equipment. Implementing preventative maintenance schedules and securing funding for spare parts and repairs will ensure the fleet remains operationally effective and mission ready.

6.2 Conclusion: BCG made notable strides in personnel administration, welfare, and training, which directly contributed to its overall operational effectiveness. The focus on salary adjustments through the "People's Operation" ensured financial stability for personnel, positively impacting morale and dedication. Additionally, the BCG promoted 102 members and saw a higher number of resignations, possibly indicating retention challenges. Despite this, the BCG maintained a strong commitment to education and professional development, with several personnel enrolled in degree programs and

specialized training. The active engagement in physical and community outreach programs further enhanced sailor morale and unity within the Coast Guard community.

The budgetary constraints faced by the BCG necessitated efficient resource management, particularly in operating costs, maintenance, and procurement. While a slight reduction in the budget had a minimal impact on overall operations, it led to a decrease in patrol reach due to fuel limitations. However, the BCG adapted to these challenges by increasing patrols and utilizing its resources effectively. Maintenance of vessels and vehicles became a focus, with the Engineering Department successfully maintaining critical assets, and new engines provided a significant boost. Despite financial constraints, infrastructure improvements, including the inauguration of the Sector Big Creek, demonstrated BCG's resilience and commitment to maintaining operational readiness.

BCG's collaborative efforts with both regional and international partners proved invaluable throughout the year. The Coast Guard strengthened its ties with agencies such as the Mexican Navy, U.S. forces, and various local NGOs, enhancing its operational capabilities through joint exercises, intelligence sharing, and resource donations. These partnerships played a critical role in maintaining maritime security, particularly in counter-narcotics and search-and-rescue operations. Technological advancements, including the introduction of drones, improved BCG's ability to conduct surveillance and respond to maritime threats. With its ongoing commitment to collaboration, personnel development, and operational excellence, the Belize Coast Guard remains a crucial component of Belize's national security strategy.

ANNEX A: OPERATIONAL STATISTICS TO  
 BELIZE COAST GUARD ANNUAL REPORT

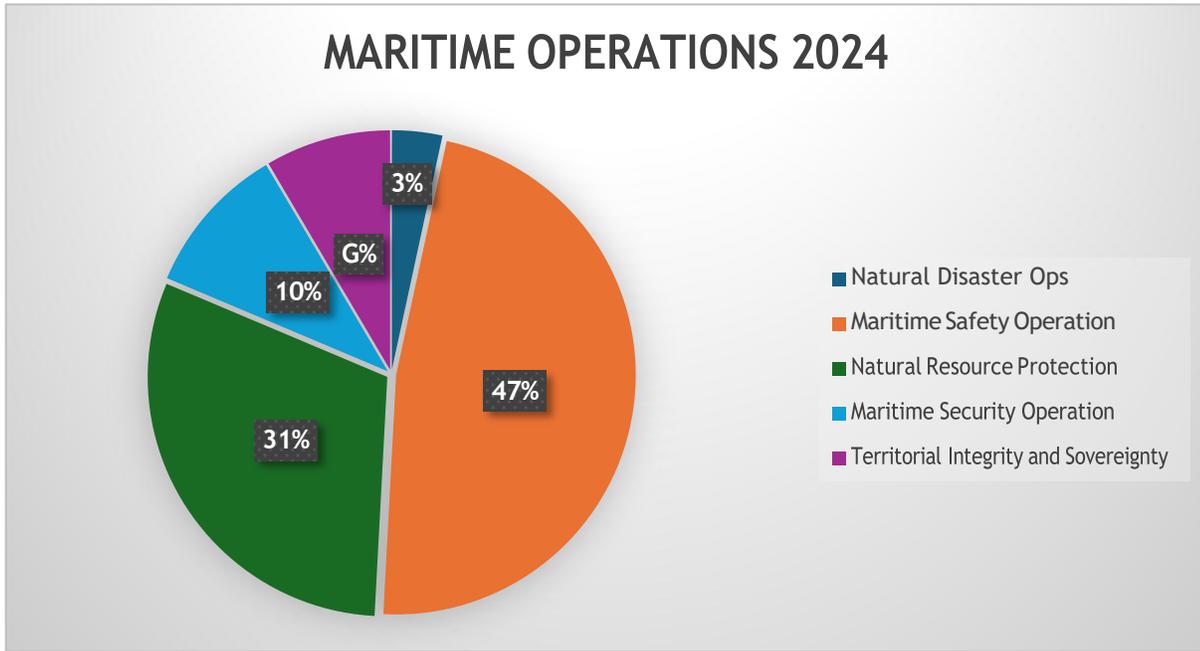


FIG 1. OPERATIONAL STATISTICS BY COAST GUARD MISSION FOR 2024

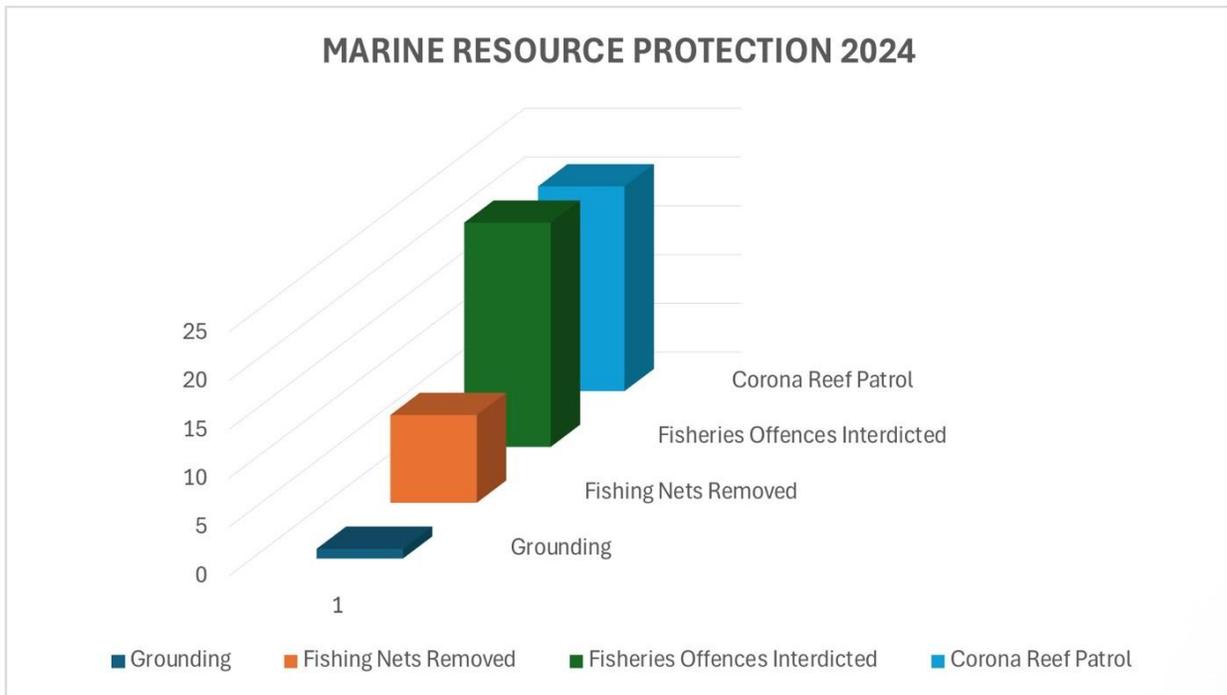


FIG 2. MARINE RESOURCE PROTECTION OPERATIONS IN 2024

ANNEX A: OPERATIONAL STATISTICS TO  
BELIZE COAST GUARD ANNUAL REPORT

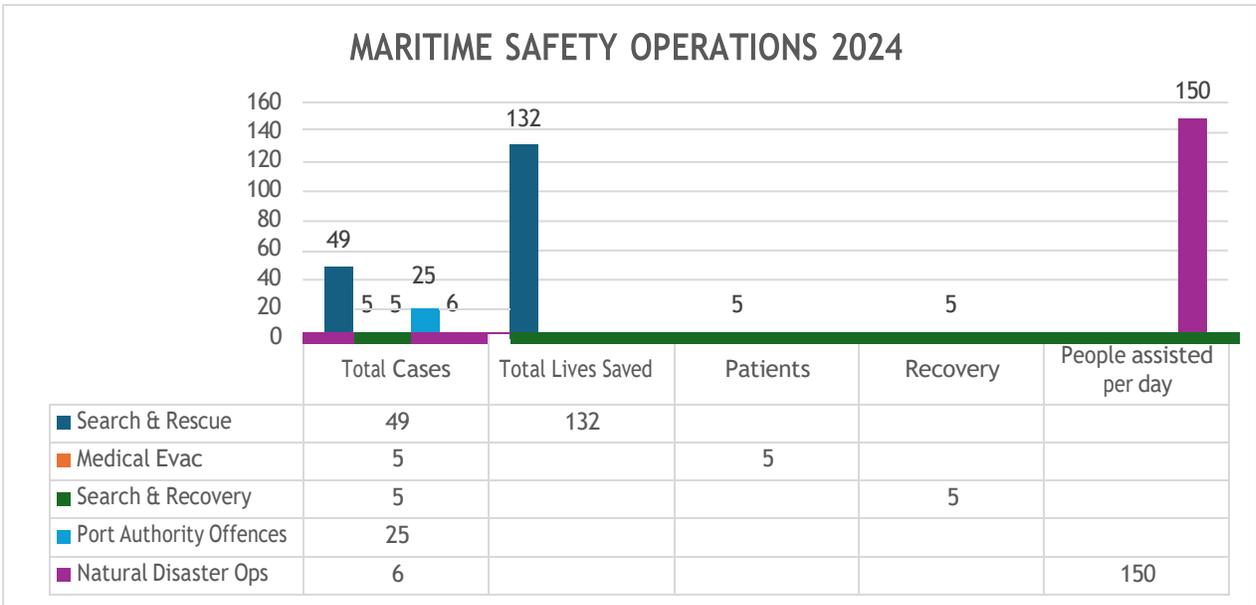


FIG 3. MARITIME SAFETY OPERATIONS IN 2024

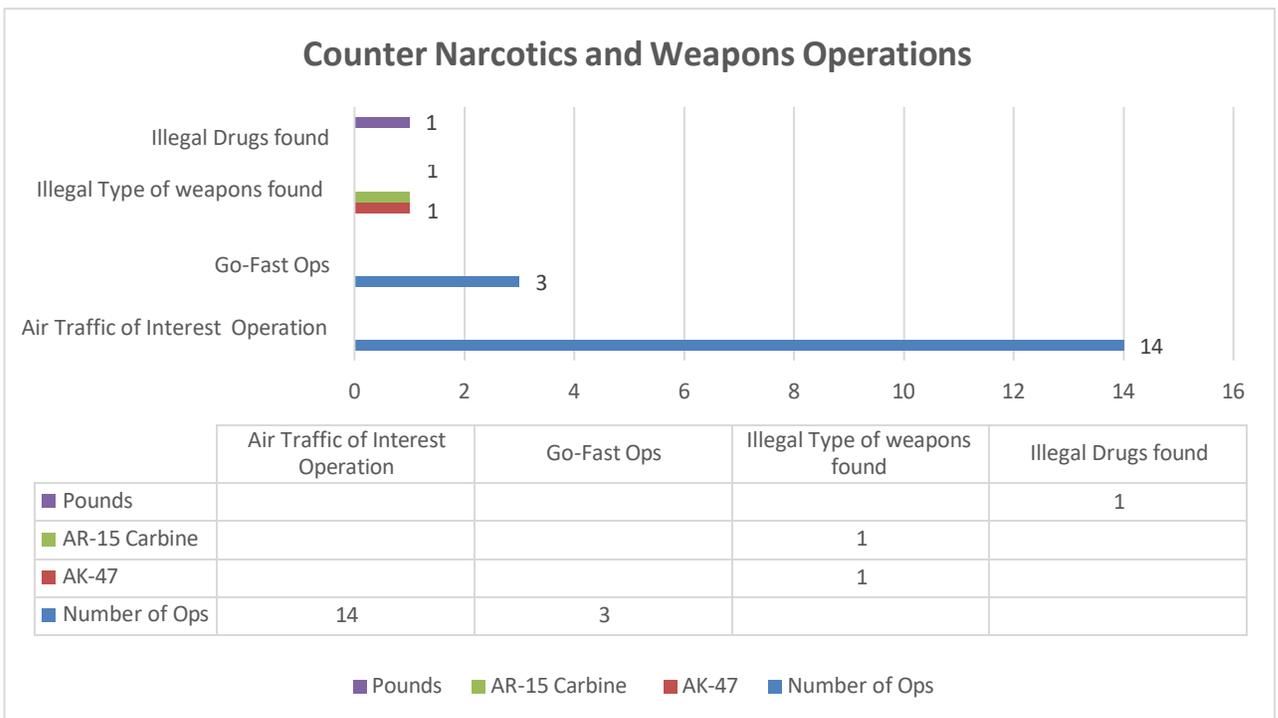


FIG 4. TRANSNATIONAL ORGANIZED CRIME OPERATIONS IN 2024

## COMMON INFRACTIONS/ ACTIVITIES 2024

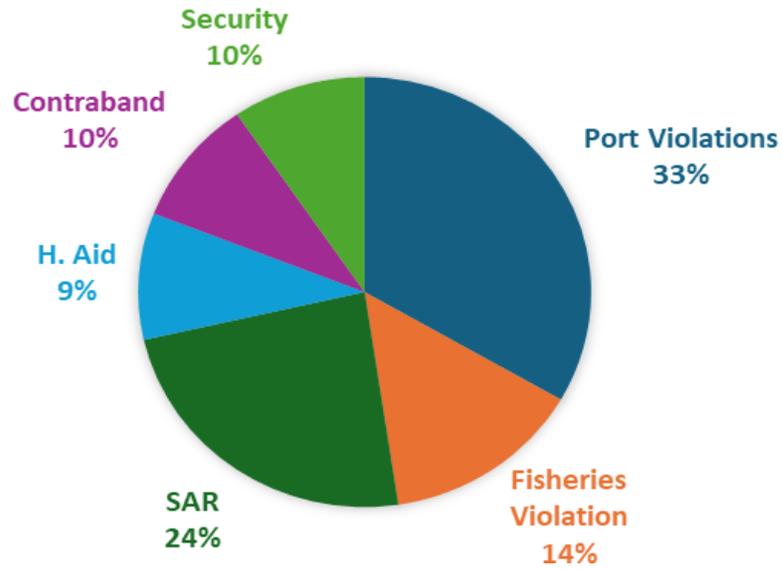


FIG 5. SECTOR NORTH MOST COMMON INFRACTIONS/ACTIVITIES 2024

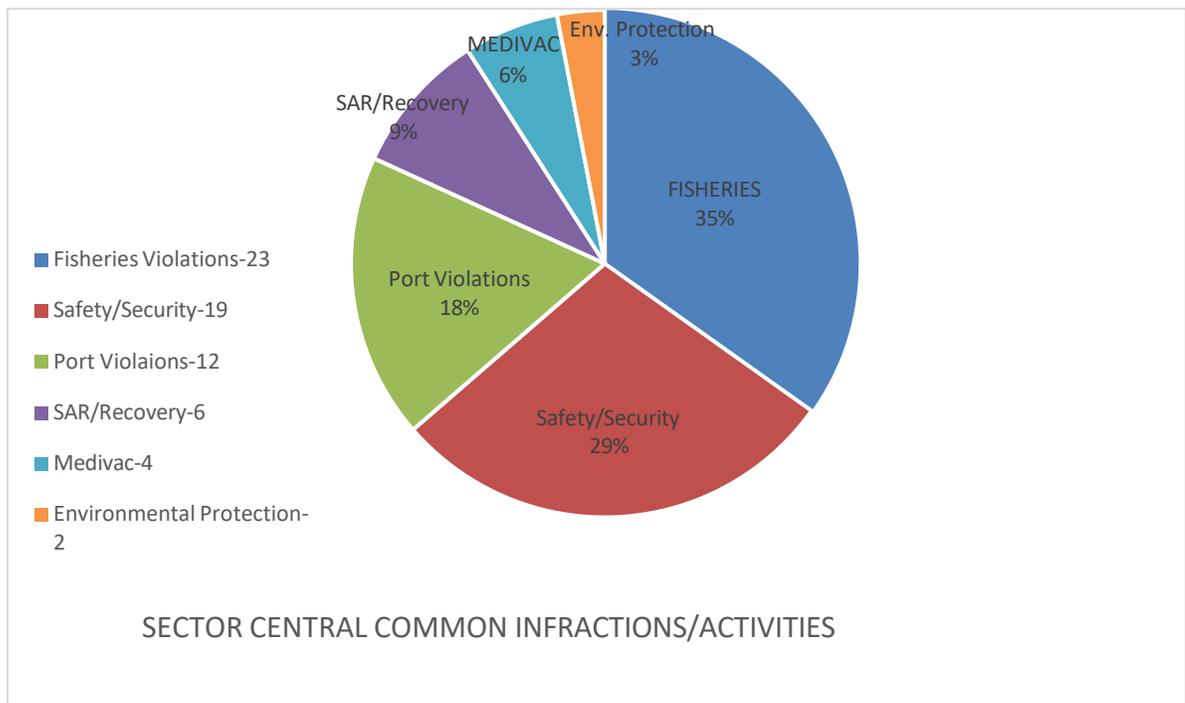


FIG 6. SECTOR CENTRAL MOST COMMON INFRACTIONS/ACTIVITIES 2024

## Infractions

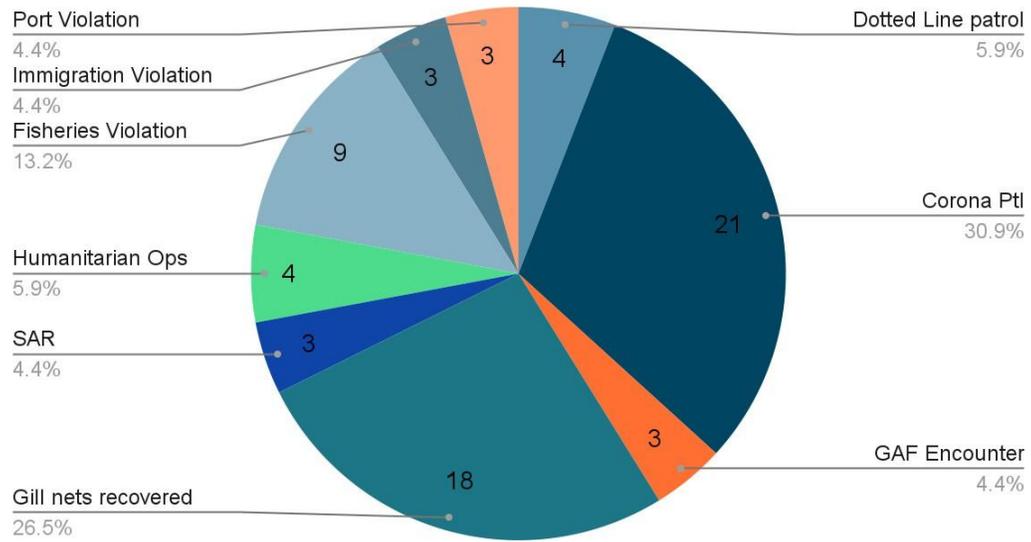


FIG 7. SECTOR SOUTH MOST COMMON INFRACTIONS/ACTIVITIES 2024

ANNEX B: BUDGET COMPARISON TO BELIZE COAST GUARD ANNUAL REPORT

Sheet #	Item	FY 2023/24	FY 2024/25	Difference (+/-)	Percentage
230	Personal Emoluments	\$9,856,140	\$9,856,152	\$12	0.0001
231	Travel and Subsistence	\$41,040	\$41,042	\$2	0.005
340	Material and Supplies	\$394,092	\$394,110	\$18	0.005
341	Operating Cost	\$900,672	\$891,698	(\$8,974)	-1.00
342	Maintenance Cost	\$584,520	\$584,512	(\$8)	-0.001
342	Training	\$65,268	\$43,858	(\$21,410)	-32.80
346	Public Utilities	\$69,528	\$69,527	(\$1)	-0.001
348	Contracts & Consultancies	\$1,860,840	\$1,809,634	(\$51,206)	-2.75
349	Rent & Leases	\$20,220	\$20,219	(\$1)	(\$0)
350	Grants	\$9,900	\$9,900	\$0	0
TOTAL		\$13,802,220	\$13,720,651	(\$81,569)	-0.6

# JOINT INTELLIGENCE OPERATIONS CENTER ANNUAL REPORT



## **1 INTRODUCTION**

In December 2013, the establishment of the Joint Intelligence Operations Center (JIOC) marked a significant milestone in Belize's commitment to combatting transnational criminal activities. Tasked as the National Interagency Coordinating Center for the security forces and law enforcement departments, the JIOC has emerged as a pivotal institution where resources and expertise are consolidated to address the complex challenges posed by transnational criminal elements affecting Belize. Throughout the year, the unwavering support of the country's security forces and law enforcement departments, coupled with the dedication, competence, and character of the JIOC's staff, has propelled the center to notable success, notwithstanding the encountered challenges.

The JIOC's operational posture in the past year has been shaped by the directive of the MNDBS to mitigate the threat of illegal landings of aircraft within Belize. Regionally, the JIOC actively engages in collaborative efforts with Latin American and Caribbean countries, fostering a united front to deter, detect, and intercept transnational criminal activities, ranging from drug trafficking and weapons smuggling to human smuggling and contraband.

Comprising members from the Belize Defence Force, Belize Coast Guard, and Belize Police Department, the JIOC operates 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, with a current staff of twenty-four. The center serves as the control hub for Joint Enforcement Team operations, facilitates communication among these teams and partner nations, supports intelligence and reconnaissance operations, and enables real-time decision-making in joint operations. As we delve into the accomplishments, challenges, and future of the JIOC, it is evident that this institution plays a pivotal role in safeguarding Belize's security and integrity within the wider context of regional collaboration.

## 2 STATISTICS FOR 2024

2.1 Air Tracks of Interest for 2024: Throughout 2024, the JIOC monitored declared tracks by the CSII system, with three hundred and twelve (312) tracks declared for the year (Figure 1). Three hundred and nine (309) were reported as faded, and no more information was obtained, while three (03) tracks were confirmed landings in Belizean territory.

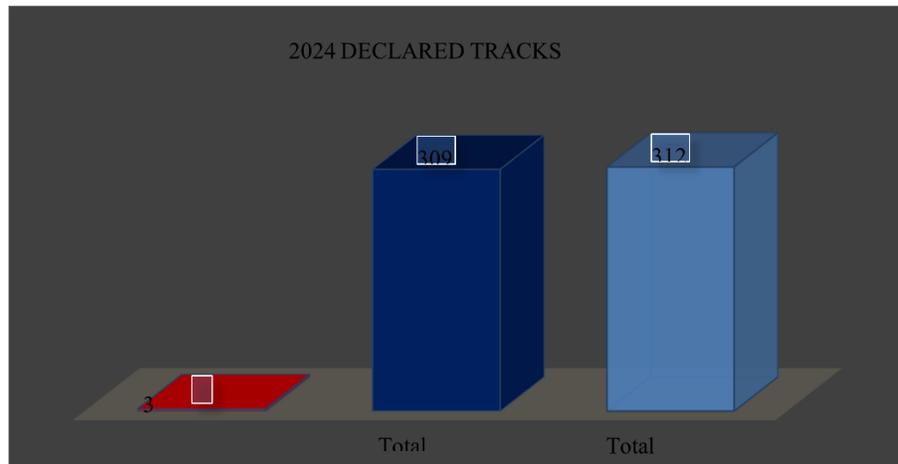


Figure 1: Tracks declared for 2024

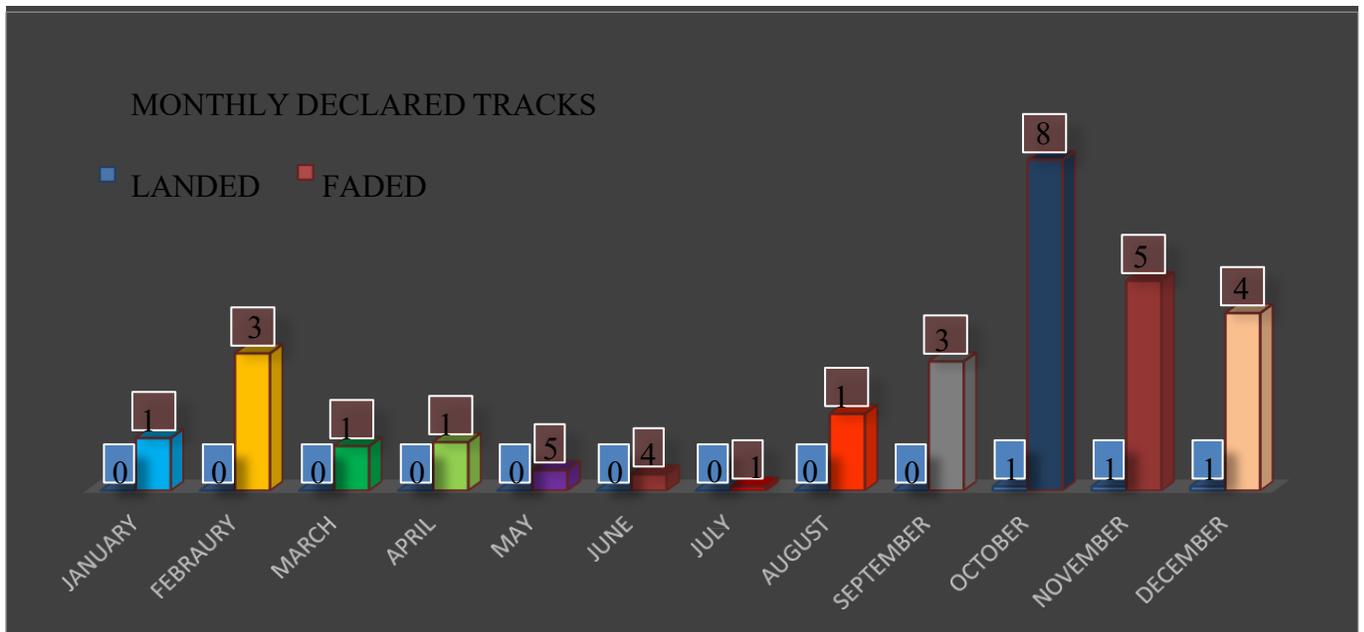


Figure 2: Monthly breakdown of 2024 declared tracks

The graph above (Figure 2) depicts the breakdown of tracks declared by month for 2024. The data indicates that October had the most declared tracks, with eighty-two (82) tracks declared, with their concentration mainly in South America between Venezuela, Guayana, Surinam, and Brazil. Similarly, the months of November (52 tracks declared), December (44 tracks declared), and February (34 tracks declared) had high tracks declared with similar patterns. Minor flight patterns detected were illegal tracks heading to Haiti, the Dominican Republic, and the Lesser Antilles.

### Landings

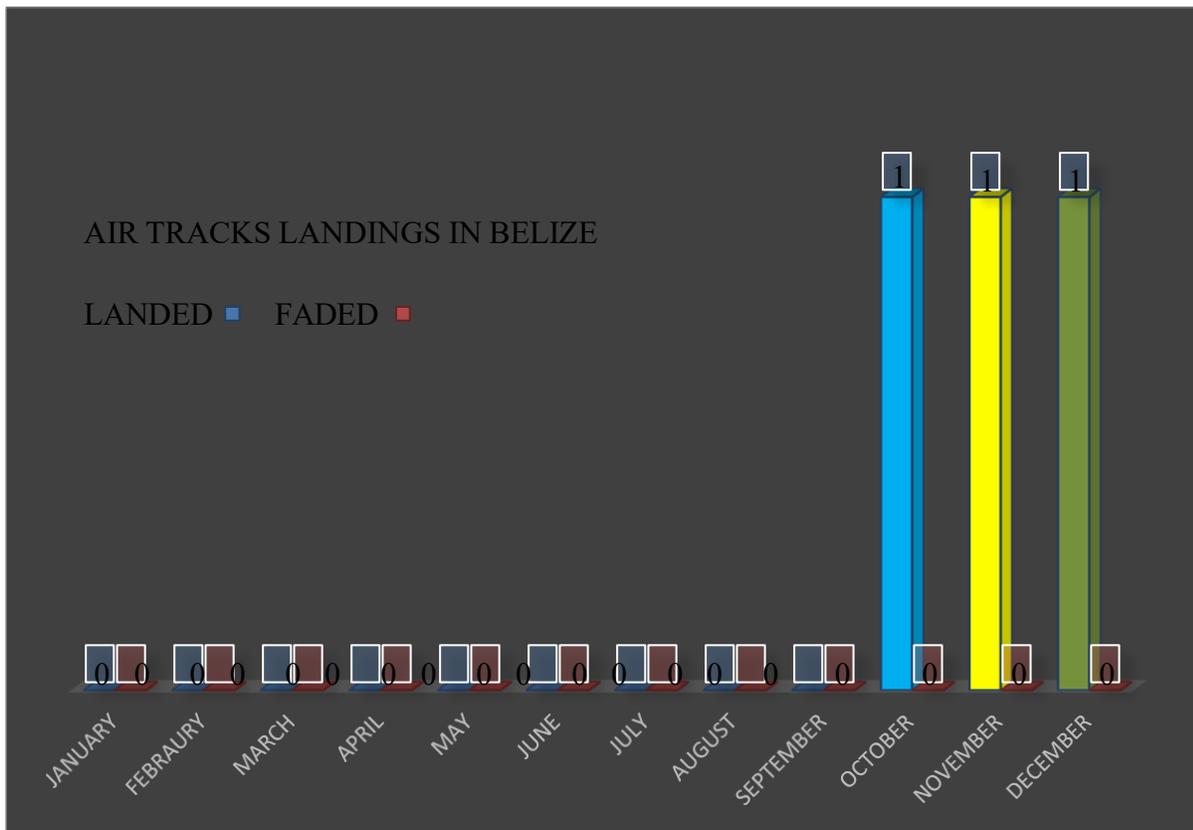


Figure 4: Plane landings in Belize

The year 2024 had three confirmed landings in Belize (Figure 4), with the first landing being the discovery of a Cessna 210 Centurion in the Graham Creek area on 23 October 2024. On 15 November 2024, the police received reports of an abandoned Cessna 210 plane around Franks Eddy, Cayo. Lastly, in December 2024, a Gulfstream III Jet landed on a clandestine airstrip southeast of Dolores Village, Toledo.

## Analysis of ATOIs Data (2020-2024)

The number of ATOIs has shown significant fluctuations over the years (Figure 6), with a notable surge in 2024. In 2020, there were two hundred and one (201) declared ATOIs, which declined steadily in subsequent years, dropping to one hundred and fifty-two (152) in 2021 and further to ninety (90) in 2022. A slight increase occurred in 2023, rising to ninety-seven (97). However, 2024 witnessed a dramatic increase, with three hundred and twelve (312) declared ATOIs, representing a staggering 221% rise compared to the previous year. This sharp escalation in 2024 could suggest heightened operational activity, improved detection and reporting capabilities, or emerging trends in transnational criminal operations.

Departing ATOIs, representing flights moving from North America to South America, have experienced a steep and consistent decline over the years. In 2020, there were one hundred and six (106) departing ATOIs, which decreased to sixty-one (61) in 2021 and dropped to thirty-five (35) in 2022. The trend continued in 2023, with only fifteen (15) departing ATOIs recorded, and by 2024, this number had dwindled to just one (1). This steady reduction in departing flights could signify enhanced enforcement measures, making these routes less viable for criminal activity or a change in trafficking strategy.

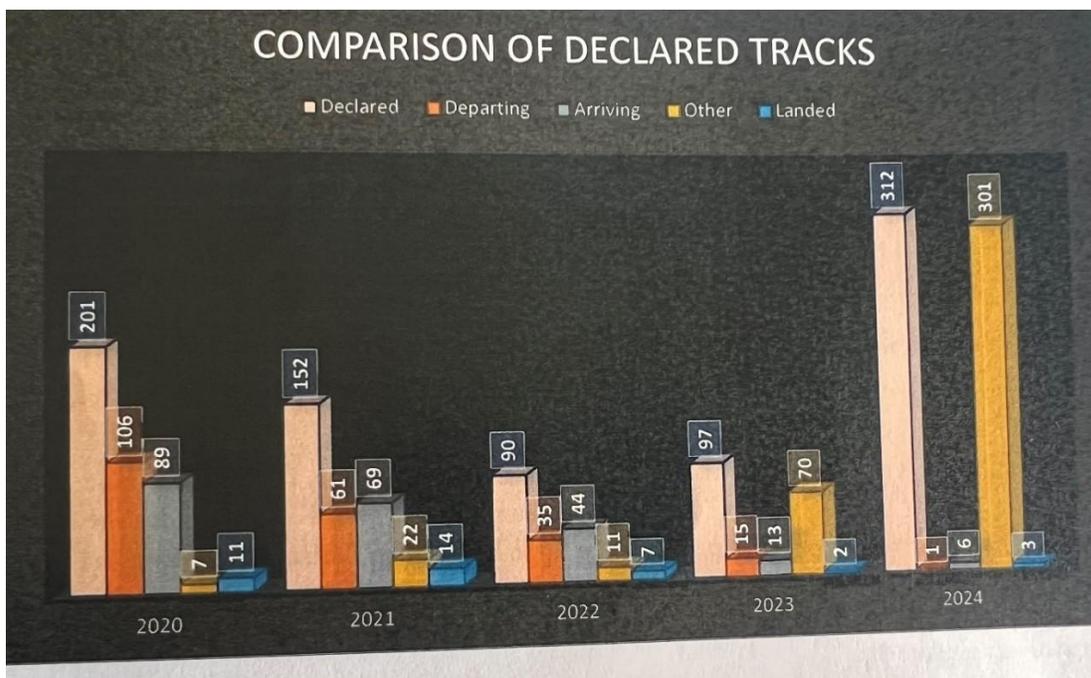


Figure 6: Comparison of ATOIs Data (2020 - 2024)

Arriving ATOIs representing flights moving from South America to North America, have shown a declining trend over the years, although less drastic than departing ATOIs. In 2020, there were eighty-nine (89) arriving ATOIs, which decreased to sixty-nine (69) in 2021 and forty-four (44) in 2022. By 2023, there was a significant reduction to just thirteen (13) arriving ATOIs, followed by a slight decrease to six (6) in 2024. This decline could indicate a disruption in trafficking networks, a shift of route to Europe through the Lesser Antilles, or a shift from air transportation to maritime Go-fast vessels.

Other ATOIs, declared in South America but do not affect Belizean airspace, have shown significant growth, particularly in 2024. In 2020, only seven (7) such ATOIs were recorded, increasing to twenty-two (22) in 2021. After a slight drop to eleven (11) in 2022, the numbers surged to seventy (70) in 2023, followed by an enormous jump to three hundred and one (301) in 2024. This substantial rise suggests a significant expansion of criminal activities in South America, potentially involving diversifying routes or methods to avoid detection.

In contrast, landed ATOIs in Belize have consistently remained low. In 2020, eleven (11) ATOIs landed and slightly increased to fourteen (14) in 2021 before dropping to seven (7) in 2022. By 2023, landed ATOIs had reduced to just two (2), with a marginal increase to three (3) in 2024. These consistently low numbers likely reflect effective interdiction measures or a strategic preference by traffickers to avoid Belizean airspace, opting for alternate routes instead.

The overall rise in declared ATOIs in 2024 indicates increased activity or improved regional reporting capabilities. While departing and arriving ATOIs have significantly declined over the years, this trend suggests disruptions in traditional trafficking routes or the success of enhanced law enforcement measures. However, the sharp surge in other ATOIs points to growing activity in South America that, although not directly impacting Belizean airspace, could pose future risks if these operations expand. Meanwhile, the consistently low numbers of landed ATOIs in Belize reflect effective deterrence measures but highlight the need for continued vigilance to maintain this success.

### **3 LESSONS LEARNT**

In 2024, the Joint Intelligence Operations Center (JIOC) demonstrated the critical value of interagency collaboration, continuous operations, and regional partnerships in countering transnational criminal threats. Enhanced surveillance capabilities led to a sharp rise in declared Air Tracks of Interest (ATOIs), though the high number of faded tracks revealed gaps in tracking continuity. The surge in South American ATOIs signals emerging risks that warrant proactive regional intelligence sharing. Overall, data-driven decision-making, staff competence, and adaptive strategies remain essential to sustaining and improving Belize's national security posture.

### **4 RECOMMENDATIONS**

To address the transnational threats highlighted in the 2024 JIOC Intelligence Report, Belize must adopt a comprehensive and coordinated approach that combines advanced monitoring technologies, interagency cooperation, proactive intelligence gathering, and regional partnerships. Prioritizing enhancing surveillance capabilities and strengthening collaboration with neighboring countries is essential to counter the evolving tactics of criminal networks. Simultaneously, robust border management, improved air and maritime traffic screening measures, and proactive policy adjustments will ensure effective deterrence and mitigation of potential threats.

The declared Air Tracks of Interest surge highlights a dynamic threat landscape that requires adaptive and forward-looking strategies. Addressing contraband transportation via local airlines, curbing undocumented migration, and tackling smuggling through shipping companies are critical areas that demand immediate action. Additionally, leveraging local and regional intelligence-sharing initiatives and operational synergies will improve Belize's ability to intercept and disrupt illicit activities at their source.

## **5 CONCLUSION**

The findings of the 2024 JIOC Intelligence Report underscore the growing complexity and interconnected nature of transnational criminal operations in the region. While Belize has successfully maintained low numbers of landed ATOIs, the dramatic rise in declared tracks signals a need for heightened vigilance and readiness. The nation's proactive response through enhanced monitoring, regional cooperation, and strategic policy adjustments will be vital to sustaining its deterrence measures while addressing emerging threats. By implementing the outlined recommendations and continuously adapting to the evolving threat landscape, Belize can strengthen its position as a resilient and proactive partner in combating transnational organized crime.

# CDS REPORT



## **1. OFFICE OF THE CHIEF OF DEFENCE STAFF**

1.1 The functions of the CDS encompass various strategic responsibilities aimed at ensuring the effective direction and preparedness of the armed forces. These include providing strategic direction, developing joint employment doctrine, and facilitating the preparation and review of defence plans. The CDS is tasked with assessing the capabilities of the armed forces compared to potential adversaries, preparing contingency plans for government and key personnel protection, and advising on strengths, deficiencies, and their impact on national security objectives and policy conformity. Moreover, the CDS advises budget priorities, military procurement plans, joint training policies, and peacekeeping operations. Throughout these duties, consultation with the Commander of the Belize Defence Force and the Commandant of the Belize Coast Guard, as well as consideration of their military advice and opinions, are essential. Additionally, the CDS is required to undertake any other necessary actions for the effective implementation of these functions. The CDS not only fulfils the outlined functions but also serves as a key advisor to the Minister of Defence, providing insights and recommendations on military matters. Additionally, the CDS plays a pivotal role in developing policies aimed at enhancing the efficiency and effectiveness of the armed forces, which are formulated through consultation with the senior leadership of the Ministry of Defence to ensure alignment with broader strategic objectives and priorities. Notable achievements for the end of this fiscal year include:

## **2. ACCOMPLISHMENTS**

2.1 Signing of MOU between Minister of MNDBS and Secretary of Mexican Navy: MNDBS and the Secretary of the Mexican Navy have formalized their commitment to exchanging experiences and providing training for Belize's armed forces by signing a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). This agreement represents a collaborative effort to enhance the professional development and personal growth of military personnel through specialized training. The Office of the CDS played a key role in facilitating this partnership by conducting a comprehensive assessment to identify the educational needs of the armed forces. This evaluation provided valuable insights into the existing

training programs and logistical support, highlighting areas that require additional resources to meet the evolving demands of the defence sector.

The purpose of this MOU is to establish a framework for cooperation, through which both parties will make concerted efforts to exchange experiences and provide training in naval education, as well as offer support during natural disasters. The agreement also covers areas such as technological development, logistics, intelligence, and risk management, in line with their respective competencies. It is based on the principles of equality, reciprocity, and mutual interest, and will be implemented in full compliance with the national laws of each Party and the international treaties binding on both States.

Through this MOU, both countries have committed to utilizing their resources and expertise to design and implement naval education and training programs that will benefit the members of their armed forces.

2.2 BCG to adopt BDF Pension Regulations: To ensure equity in salaries and benefits across both military services, a comprehensive review of salary scales, pension regulations, and other benefits is currently underway. This initiative aims to enhance morale and welfare for members of both the BDF and the BCG. Notably, in January 2023, the Coast Guard Board approved the review of BCG pension benefits with the goal of aligning them with those of the BDF. Subsequently, on January 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2024, Cabinet approved the adoption of BDF pension regulations by the BCG. On December 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2024, a submission was made to the Security Service Commission for the endorsement of the proposed amendments and draft Pensions and Other Grants regulations.

2.3 Role in Assisting the NSD with the National Security Strategy: The involvement of the Office of the CDS in supporting the National Security Directorate (NSD) has been critical to the successful development of the National Security Strategy (NSS). Through close collaboration and ongoing engagement, the CDS has offered invaluable technical expertise, strategic insights, and operational guidance. This partnership has been instrumental in ensuring that the NSS is comprehensive, forward-thinking, and aligned with the country's defence priorities.

The CDS has contributed significantly by analyzing evolving threats, identifying strategic defence objectives, and providing the NSD with a robust framework for addressing national security challenges. Furthermore, the CDS's support has facilitated the integration of military perspectives into the broader security strategy, ensuring that the nation's defence capabilities are fully aligned with the overall security and stability objectives.

As part of our contributions, the armed forces have also produced a comprehensive paper that outlines the disciplinary challenges faced by the armed forces, alongside the complexities introduced by the Security Service Commission (SSC). The difficulties encountered by the security forces in managing discipline and administrative matters have been an ongoing concern for over a decade. However, through extensive study, thorough legal opinions, and strategic collaboration with the National Security Council, we have made significant progress toward formulating a viable solution. The proposed reforms, which include the establishment of a Defence Board or Defence Council and necessary legal amendments, are poised to substantially improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the armed forces' administrative functions. These changes will ensure a more equitable and responsive disciplinary system, better serving the interests of national security.

**2.4 Review of National Defence Plan:** The review of the national defence plan has officially commenced under the direction of the Commander and Commandant of the Armed Forces. This periodic and vital process, which requires the approval of the National Security Council, is designed to refine and realign defence and security strategies in response to evolving threats and shifting economic conditions. This ongoing assessment is essential to maintaining Belize's sovereignty and ensuring the safety of its citizens. It's important to emphasize that the review is not a one-time event but a continuous process that considers the dynamic nature of security challenges. By regularly updating the national defence plan, Belize demonstrates its commitment to agility and preparedness, ensuring it can effectively address emerging threats while safeguarding the nation.

The Office of the CDS has completed the draft of the National Defence Strategy. This strategy will serve as a comprehensive framework outlining the country's approach to national security and military defence. It includes an assessment of both current and potential threats, defines strategic defence objectives, and details the means and methods for achieving these objectives. The Defence

Strategy has several key aims: ensuring the protection of the nation's sovereignty, safeguarding its territorial integrity, and promoting overall stability. Additionally, it seeks to enhance the military's readiness and capabilities to address evolving security challenges while fostering collaboration and interoperability with allied nations and partner organizations. Ultimately, the National Defence Strategy aims to provide a coherent and adaptable framework to secure the nation's interests and contribute to peace and security in an increasingly complex global environment.

2.5 Review of the Office of the CDS and the CDS Act: The review of the Office of the CDS and the CDS Act has been completed, providing a thorough assessment of both the organizational structure and operational effectiveness of the office, as well as a comprehensive evaluation of the legislative framework governing its activities. This review identified key strengths and weaknesses within the CDS, highlighting areas for potential improvement. It also involved a detailed analysis of past performance, benchmarking the office's operations against best practices, and considering evolving strategic priorities and emerging security challenges. The objective of this review was to ensure that the Office of the CDS remains aligned with national defence goals while enhancing its efficiency, responsiveness, and accountability. Additionally, the process aimed to refine the legal framework that supports the CDS's mandate, ultimately strengthening the nation's defence capabilities and resilience in the face of an ever-changing security landscape.

## **MINISTRY OVERALL LESSONS LEARNT**

### **1. Strengthened Interagency Collaboration Enhances Operational Success**

Close coordination between the Belize Defence Force, the Belize Coast Guard, and the Office of the CDS significantly improved operational readiness and effectiveness. Joint operations, intelligence sharing, and synchronized responses to national security threats enhanced deterrence and strengthened border security.

### **2. Investment in Infrastructure and Modernization Improves Readiness**

Strategic investments in infrastructure upgrades, improved operational bases, and the acquisition of modern equipment resulted in increased operational capacity across all formations. The development of new observation posts, perimeter fencing, and modernization of fleet capabilities reinforced the Ministry's commitment to maintaining operational efficiency.

### **3. Continued Emphasis on Training and Capacity Building is Essential**

Expanding professional military education, introducing new training programs, and collaborating with international partners boosted the competency and preparedness of personnel. Training initiatives such as the Chief Petty Officer Course, leadership programs, and specialized technical courses empowered personnel to adapt to evolving security challenges.

### **4. Logistical Challenges Affect Operational Continuity**

Delays in procurement, funding constraints, and limited access to essential supplies presented challenges to maintaining consistent operational readiness. Addressing these logistical gaps through improved planning, procurement systems, and contingency measures will enhance the Ministry's ability to sustain operations in dynamic environments.

### **5. Public Engagement and Youth Outreach Strengthens Community Ties**

The Belize Coast Guard's commitment to community engagement through youth development programs such as the Sea Cadet Corps demonstrated the importance of fostering trust and cooperation between security forces and local communities. Enhanced community involvement contributed to improved maritime security and public confidence.

## 6. Adopting Technology Improves Surveillance and Operational Effectiveness

Incorporating tracking solutions, drone surveillance, and advanced monitoring systems improved operational oversight and surveillance capabilities. Investing in modern technology will remain critical for enhancing situational awareness and securing Belize's land and maritime borders.

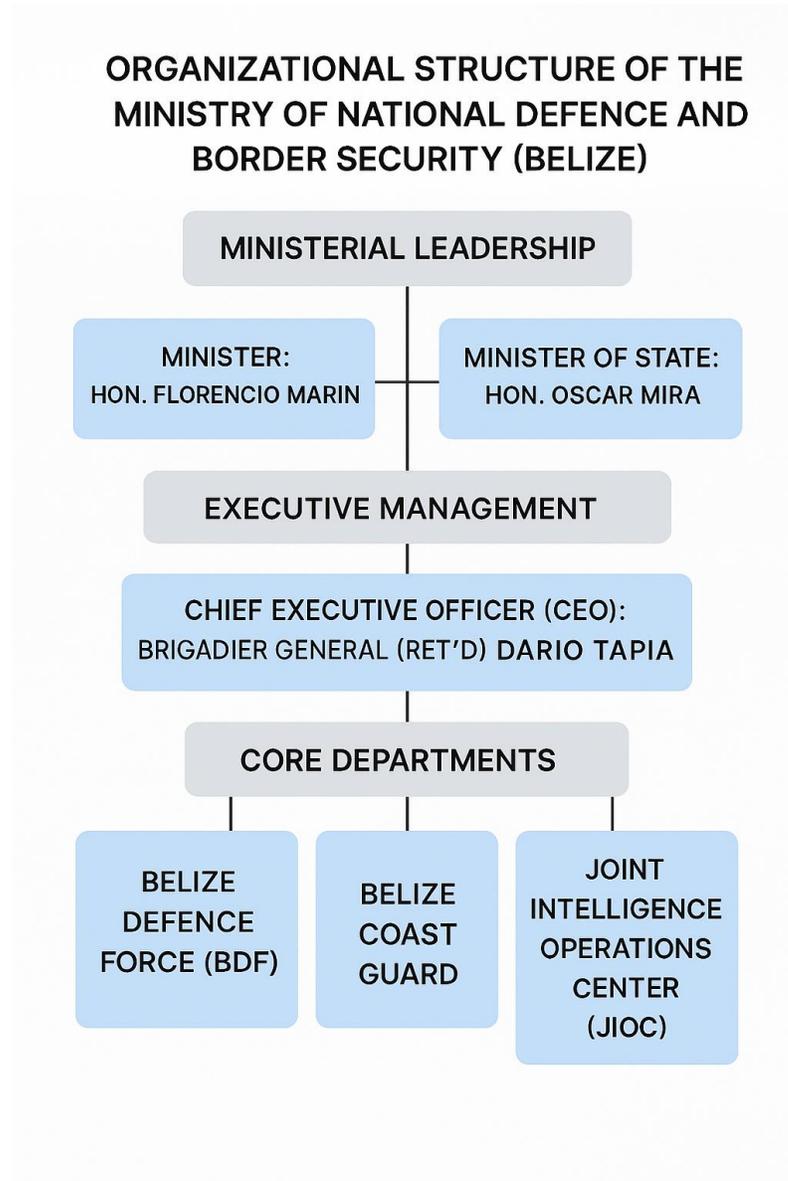
## **CONCLUSION**

The Ministry of National Defence and Border Security concludes 2024 with a renewed commitment to safeguarding Belize's sovereignty and ensuring the safety of its citizens. This year's achievements reflect the dedication, resilience, and professionalism of the Belize Defence Force, the Belize Coast Guard, and the Office of the Chief of Defence Staff. Despite challenges in procurement, infrastructure, and personnel resourcing, the Ministry demonstrated remarkable adaptability and operational readiness.

As Belize looks ahead to 2025, the Ministry is focused on advancing strategic objectives, including modernization, enhanced training programs, improved regional cooperation, and increased investment in defence capabilities. Strengthening interagency partnerships and expanding technological capabilities will be central to achieving long-term security goals.

The Ministry expresses its profound gratitude to all personnel who serve with honour and dedication, as well as to our regional and international partners who continue to support Belize's security efforts. Together, we remain committed to maintaining a secure and prosperous nation, prepared to meet the challenges of the future with unwavering determination and resolve.

ANNEX 1: ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE OF THE MINISTRY  
OF NATIONAL DEFENCE AND BORDER SECURITY



ANNEX 2: LIST OF PUBLICATIONS PRODUCED BY THE MINISTRY DURING 2024

No.	Title	Volume / Issue	Type	Date
1	The Belizean Soldier	Volume 4	Journal of the Belize Defence Force	2024
2	The Watchstander	Volume 6, Issue 1	Newsletter of the Belize Coast Guard	March 2024
3	The Watchstander	Volume 6, Issue 2	Newsletter of the Belize Coast Guard	June 2024
4	The Watchstander	Volume 6, Issue 3	Newsletter of the Belize Coast Guard	September 2024
5	The Watchstander	Volume 6, Issue 4	Newsletter of the Belize Coast Guard	December 2024