



PR#077-26

## PRESS RELEASE

### **GOB Introduces Domestic Violence (Prohibition) Bill in the National Assembly**

*Belmopan, March 23, 2026.*

The Government of Belize today introduced the Domestic Violence (Prohibition) Bill, 2026, in the National Assembly. The proposed legislation represents an important step toward strengthening protections for victims of domestic violence and modernizing Belize's national response.

The Bill seeks to address gaps identified in the current Domestic Violence Act and expand protections for individuals experiencing abuse. It broadens the definition of relationships covered under the law to include dating, visiting, former, and non-cohabiting relationships, ensuring that more victims can access legal protection.

The proposed legislation also expands the types of abuse recognized in law, including psychological, emotional, economic, and technology-facilitated abuse. These provisions reflect the evolving nature of domestic violence and support earlier intervention.

In addition, the Bill strengthens access to protection orders through improved procedures, including expedited hearings and more flexible application processes. It also establishes clearer responsibilities for law enforcement, enhances accountability, and introduces stronger penalties for repeated breaches.

The legislation further promotes a more coordinated response by strengthening collaboration among agencies and improving referral pathways for counselling, legal, and social support services. These measures are intended to improve victim safety and access to support.

Hon. Thea Garcia-Ramires, Minister of Human Development, Family Support and Gender Affairs, noted that the introduction of the Bill during Women's Month reflects the Government's continued commitment to advancing protections for women and families.

The introduction of the Domestic Violence (Prohibition) Bill forms part of the Government's broader efforts during Women's Month to promote gender equality, prevent violence, and strengthen support systems for women, children, and families across Belize.

**Ends**