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PR#102-26

PRESS RELEASE

Belize Hosts Hurricane Hunters in the Caribbean Hurricane Awareness Tour 2026

Belmopan, April 16, 2026.

Belize welcomed the United States Air Force 53rd Weather Reconnaissance Squadron, widely known as the “Hurricane Hunters,” as part of their annual Caribbean Hurricane Awareness Tour, a key regional initiative aimed at strengthening public understanding and preparedness ahead of the Atlantic Hurricane Season.

The visit, coordinated by the National Meteorological Service of Belize within the Ministry of the Public Service and Disaster Risk Management, with support from the Department of Civil Aviation, offers a unique educational opportunity for invited participants, including students and key stakeholders, to gain firsthand insight into the advanced technology and complex data collection methods used to monitor and forecast tropical cyclones. The Hurricane Hunters are internationally recognized for their daring missions, flying directly into storms to collect critical atmospheric data that cannot be obtained by satellite alone.

Several schools were also given the opportunity to tour the aircraft, providing students with valuable exposure to meteorology and disaster preparedness and inspiring the next generation to better understand the science behind hurricane tracking and forecasting.

The tour also highlights the strong and ongoing collaboration between the National Meteorological Service of Belize and its regional and international partners, including the National Hurricane Center (NHC) in Miami. Belize contributes critical meteorological data to regional forecasting efforts through its Doppler weather radar, surface observation network, and upper-atmosphere measurements obtained via weather balloon launches. This data-sharing partnership enhances forecast accuracy and supports timely decision-making across the region.

Among those in attendance were Hon. Henry Charles Usher, Minister of the Public Service and Disaster Risk Management, Katharine Beamer, Chargé d’Affaires of the United States Embassy in Belize, as well as Bernard Wagner, Mayor of the Belize City Council, whose presence underscored the importance of international cooperation and local leadership in advancing disaster preparedness initiatives.

While the tour is not open to the general public, selected groups were afforded the opportunity to participate through a pre-registration process, ensuring a structured and impactful experience for all involved.

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