

ANNUAL TECHNICAL REPORT

Ministry of National Defence and Border Security

2020-2021



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MINISTER'S MESSAGE

The pandemic in 2020-2021 was a difficult and challenging time for the Ministry of National Defence and Border Security, but we were able to remain resilient in the face of adversity. As COVID-19 threatened lives and livelihoods, the entire Defence Apparatus mobilized to safeguard our borders, citizens, and communities, and to keep our nation safe. Our success in 2020 and 2021 was due, in no small part, to this remarkable effort by all our Security Forces. Our strong performance in many areas during 2020 - 2021 was a result of our commitment to our mission, mandate and #planBelize. 2020 to 2021 was an extraordinary period for the Ministry, and one in which brought out the best in our personnel, as well as challenges in areas in which we must, and will, improve.



Hon Florencio Marin

The Ministry of National Defence and Border Security operational and administrative posture FTY 2020-2021 stems from the Ministry's policy based on two critical pillars:

- 1. Efficient and Timely Support for Humanitarian Aid and Disaster Response countrywide specifically in lowland/riverbank communities.*
- 2. Capacity building and revitalization of the Belize Defence Force (BDF) and the Belize Coast Guard (BCG).*

This initiative is a component of an overarching strategy of the Ministry to address welfare, accountability, and standards within the BDF and the BCG. The Ministry's considerations to support this initiative is captured in two acronyms: BCG and BDF.

- 1. B – Blue Budget: In the current financial climate it is imperative that fiscal austerity is exercised to ensure sustainment and long-term impacts.*
- C – Constructive Revitalization: Prudent Management of our resources and assets is a key consideration to build upon existing structures and enhance overall welfare.*

***G – Growth Initiatives:** The opportunity for growth and develop can be gained and garnered through stakeholder networking and partnership. Using other people’s money (OPM) is a creative way to resource much needed equipment and other items for the organization.*

2. ***B – Build Our Capacity:** investment in our greatest resource; our people, through academic enhancement and technical and tactical proficiency*

***D – Develop Robust Systems:** Robust systems are a key requirement to maintain your critical capabilities and operational posture.*

***F – Foresight and Forecast:** Continued assessment and evaluation of our strategies and plans must be conducted to counter the existing and fluid threats. Future considerations must be factored into our analysis as we develop Measures of Effectiveness (MOE) and Measures of Performance (MOP).*

Hon. Florencio Marin Jr.
Minister of National Defence and Border Security

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A combined two thousand soldiers from Belize Defence Force and five hundred sailors from the Belize Coast Guard face the challenges and embrace National Defence as their primary function to protect and safeguard all those living in Belize. Our national security forces are an instrument and expression of Belize's military power. The decisions made within the Security sector demand courage, bravery and strength of body, mind, and character to regularly address those actors who would challenge the security of our nation by land, sea, or air.

The three goals of the ministry are meant to give life to the Ministry's mission and vision and to mitigate challenges that arise in this process and are aligned with the Government of Belize's Medium-Term Plan, #PlanBelize. #PlanBelize has become the focal objective to see Belize strengthen its administrative weaknesses and chart a way forward in Good Governance, Transparency and Ethics.

Goal One is embedded in strategic objective 4: Citizens Security. The goal is to ***Maintain the Sovereignty and Territorial Integrity of Belize***. A crucial unbiased goal which focuses on the protection of all citizens.

Goal Two is derived from strategic objectives # 4: Citizen Security and Strategic Objective # 1: Poverty Reduction and Social Protection Inclusion and is to ***Reduce Local and Transnational Crime*** which negatively impacts the livelihood and tranquility of a country.

Goal Three is significant to #PlanBelize; it is derived from Strategic Objective # 1: Citizen Security, Strategic Objective # 2: Economic Transformation Growth and Strategic Objective # 5: Protection of the Environment and it is to ***Provide The Necessary Environment For A Prosperous And Stable Belize*** and is crucial to enhancing the overall quality of life as our national defence structures provide for the protection of these assets from harm or damage.

MISSION STATEMENT AND PRIORITIES OF THE MINISTRY

Vision Statement

Poise a robust and equipped Defence Forces of Belize to respond to all threats, thus making valuable contribution to national and regional security.

Mission Statement

To provide effective support to the Defence Forces of Belize, 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,

To promote defence diplomacy.

INTRODUCTION

The Ministry of National Defence and Border Security is responsible for the provision of effective support to the Defence Forces of Belize, to enhance their ability to defend our sovereignty, territorial integrity and to uphold the Constitution of Belize. In recent times of pandemic and natural disasters, we have supported the Belize Defence Force (BDF) the Belize Coast Guard (BCG), the Office of the Chief of Defence Staff and the Joint Intelligence Operations Centre (JIOC). We have launched several capacity building initiatives which are critical to address vulnerabilities that exists within the Defence Forces. Welfare, Morale, and Gender Issues have also been identified as components that require legal and policy revisions.

The Ministry remains committed to preserving our country's Sovereignty, Security and Stability in line with the National Security and Defence Strategy of Belize. Sacrifices that our soldiers and sailors make are a key reason for the peace and stability of our nation. Belize is a better and safer country because of the dedication of the women and men of the Security Forces to duty and service.

WOMEN, PEACE, AND SECURITY

The Ministry of National Defence and Border Security and the Ministry of Home Affairs and New Growth Industries, with the support of UNICEF, launched the Security Forces first Joint Sexual Violence Prevention and Response (JSVPR) Program in February 2022. The program brings together Belize's Security Forces including the Belize Defence Force, the Belize Police Department, and the Belize Coast Guard to reduce the incidence of sexual assault and sexual violence within Belize's Security sector and to provide effective response services should an incident occur.

The JSVPR Programme grows out of two key initiatives. The first being the National Security and Defence Strategy of Belize which produced Belize's first ever Women, Peace, and Security (WPS) Agenda for the Security Forces in late 2020. The WPS vision is "to empower women as equal partners in the development of a prosperous and stable Belize, especially in achieving our national security goals". The second initiative is the Spotlight Initiative of the United Nations and the European Union which aims to eliminate all forms of violence against women and girls. Spotlight focuses on strengthening policies and legislation to increase the protection of women and girls globally.

The intersection of these two initiatives created the JSVPR which sets out concrete strategies and interventions to create and maintain a safe and respectful environment for all members of the security forces. This is how we begin to build a culture of respect, camaraderie, and accountability. It is the aim of the Ministries that through increased awareness of sexual violence among those who serve, coupled with robust policies and preventative interventions, that the Joint Sexual Violence and Prevention and Response Programme can positively impact the morale and wellbeing of those who ensure the security of this nation.

BELIZE DEFENCE FORCE



The Belize Defence Force has consistently been relied upon for the execution of tasks beyond its core mandates and has generally performed above the required standards even in time of severe unavailability of resources. After years of operating in a constraint environment because of limited resources, the BDF needed to adjust as it focuses on its human resources and their ability to fulfil the organizational mandates to the country.

Consequently, the BDF devised its five strategic objectives. These are:

1. *Manning - The Regular Force growth must be projected to facilitate the smooth execution and manning of all operational requirements mandated by the ultimate priority which is “Defence of Belize”.*
2. *Organization – Ensuring the projected strength has sufficient combat power to operate in all environments across the country which is capable to neutralize threats across all domains including cyber operations.*
3. *Equipping – The BDF’s procurement system must be modernized for the optimum use of limited budget to ensure purchasing and delivery of proper weapon systems, transport, and other essential hardware are available for the Force’s use.*
4. *Train – The training and development must increase its intensity and diversity to encompass joint forces deployments and simulations across the entire organization’s configuration to improve reaction and proactiveness within an evolving contemporary environment.*

5. *Lead – The BDF must develop and retain intelligent, innovative, and principled leaders who are adept in operating in complex environments from tactical to strategic through talent management of officers and non-commissioned officers.*

Of equal importance, the administrative and welfare support systems are paramount for an effective and functional military organization such as the BDF. In early 2021, the Honorable Florencio Marin and his staff conducted a countrywide inspection at all military installations to identify priority areas to improve the lives and comfort for all service personnel within the BDF. This resulted in the identification of infrastructural improvement as being paramount.

1. *Throughout May 2021, Honorable Florencio Marin and his staff conducted an inspection, specifically, of the infrastructure at the different military installations to see what needed to be done for the officers and the soldiers of the Belize Defence Force to be better off. Key areas were identified at each location.*
2. *During the inspection, the Officers Mess Bathroom at Price Barracks, Ladyville was identified as being a priority for immediate reconstruction. This bathroom had been standing for over three decades without any major repairs done to it. There were many major issues that the officers were having that prevented them from using this bathroom and were becoming a health issue, as well as a hazard to its users. Immediately after the inspections construction of the bathroom commenced. The building was stripped to the bare bones and was reconstructed by putting new windows, doors, electrical, piping, hot and cold water. On 3rd November 2021, the Minister and the Minister of State of National Defence and Border Security officially handed over the bathroom. The refurbishment of the bathroom will give the officers a space for them to conduct personal administration without being concerned with water pressure issues, broken toilets, water leakages, and electrical hazards.*
3. *Another of the projects that the MND&BS is undertaking, is the reconstruction of the Kitchen at Camp Belizario. This project commenced in November 2021 and works are still ongoing, but this kitchen was in a dilapidated state that the order for works to commence came at the right time.*

This kitchen will provide a space where the chefs of the resident battalion can prepare healthy meals that the troops require for them to carry on with the job. The building will be refitted with the electrical and everything that a modern state-of-the-art kitchen requires, like industrial stoves and freezers. This will enhance the culinary specialist's ability to better prepare the meals for the Battalion.

Lessons Learned

- 1. The main lesson that was learned was that when the infrastructure is neglected, the elements will take its toll, therefore it is important to conduct preventative maintenance on all the buildings, including all assets. This will prevent a greater expense in the longer run.*
- 2. Our Medical System, which would include our policies and infrastructure showed major issues during the COVID Pandemic. These issues had to do with the lack of quarantine facilities for the rank and file of the BDF, clear COVID protocols, and action plan at the onset of the Pandemic. As the Pandemic raged on, some of these issues were rectified.*

Challenges

There were many challenges that were faced during the reporting period. The major one was financial. COVID brought with it, loss of life and at the same time financial constraints for the Force. The ability to purchase goods like food, vehicle parts, stationeries, and other important items to make the running of the Force smoother, was lacking.

The lack of appropriate medical care for the rank and file of the Force is a major issue. Getting an appointment to see a specialist within the country is difficult and getting to see a specialist from outside the country is even more difficult. Compounded to this, is the limited pharmaceuticals and medication for the troops who need it.

The lack of Troop-Carrying Vehicles (TCV) and other small administration vehicles is a major issue. Due to the financial constraints, the TCVs and other small vehicles were breaking down and there was no money to pay for parts and repairs. Vehicles were being grounded because they didn't have tires or other necessary items. The lack of kit and equipment has prevented the Force from operating at a higher level when on operations.

Future Priorities and Plans

There are major plans, to include the purchase of two new engines for the Defender Aircraft valued at US\$203,000, keeping in mind that the Defender is presently grounded and is awaiting the purchase of its engines.

The purchase of new engines for the Piper Aircraft will be required within twelve months. This will have a cost of approximately, US\$203,000.

Major refurbishment of the critical infrastructure of BDF includes accommodations, offices, and medical facilities. This will commence shortly thanks to the funds coming from the Central American Bank for Economic integration (CABEI).

The purchasing of weapons and ammunition is a priority for the Force. Soldiers are presently sharing weapons and live and blank rounds are in short supply. At the opening of the new fiscal year, the intent is there to purchase weapons.

Major Activities

1. Central America Security Conference (CENTSEC) was held on 31 January- 2 February 2022 at Biltmore in Belize City. This meeting had members from the Region and had the SOUTCOM Commander, General Laura Richardson. The theme for the meeting was Collaborative Responses to Regional Security and Humanitarian Assistance.

2. Change of Command for the BDF took place on 21 January 2022 at Price Barracks Ladyville. Command was changed from Brigadier General Steven Ortega to Brigadier General Azariel Loria.
3. Senior Officers Conference was held at Dream Valley Resort from the 25 to 26 November 2021. During this conference, key issues were discussed, and it charted the way forward.
4. The Short Commission Course was held on 16 August- 20 September 21 at Price Barracks Ladyville by the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst. This is the first of its kind, which consisted of 25 cadets of the different security organizations. It included members of the Belize Defence Force, the Belize Police Department, and the Belize Coast Guard.
5. Central American Integration System (SICA) meeting was held on 26 February - 4 March 2022.
6. Special Operations Task Force (SOTF) Minor Tactics Training was held on the 21 February - 4 March 2022 in partnership with the Canadians. This training consisted of 25 personnel of the SOTF unit, 16 Police Officers, and 03 Coast Guard. This training consisted of Small Unit Tactics (SUT), marksmanship, medical training, and communications.
7. Joint Combined Arms Training (JCET) is from 22 February - 18 March 2022. This training is being facilitated by the Canadians and consists of 28 BDF personnel.

Training

Due to the COVID Pandemic, training was temporarily halted, and not until the later part of 2021 that training commenced. During that time, promotional courses, developmental courses, and short commissioning course were held. All the necessary precautions were taken to avoid super spreaders.

Minister Tour of Refurbished Bathroom at the Officers Mess



Minister Marin and Minister Mira receive tour from General Ortega of Refurbished Facilities



Minister Marin and General Ortega Touring Refurbished Bathroom at the Officers Mess



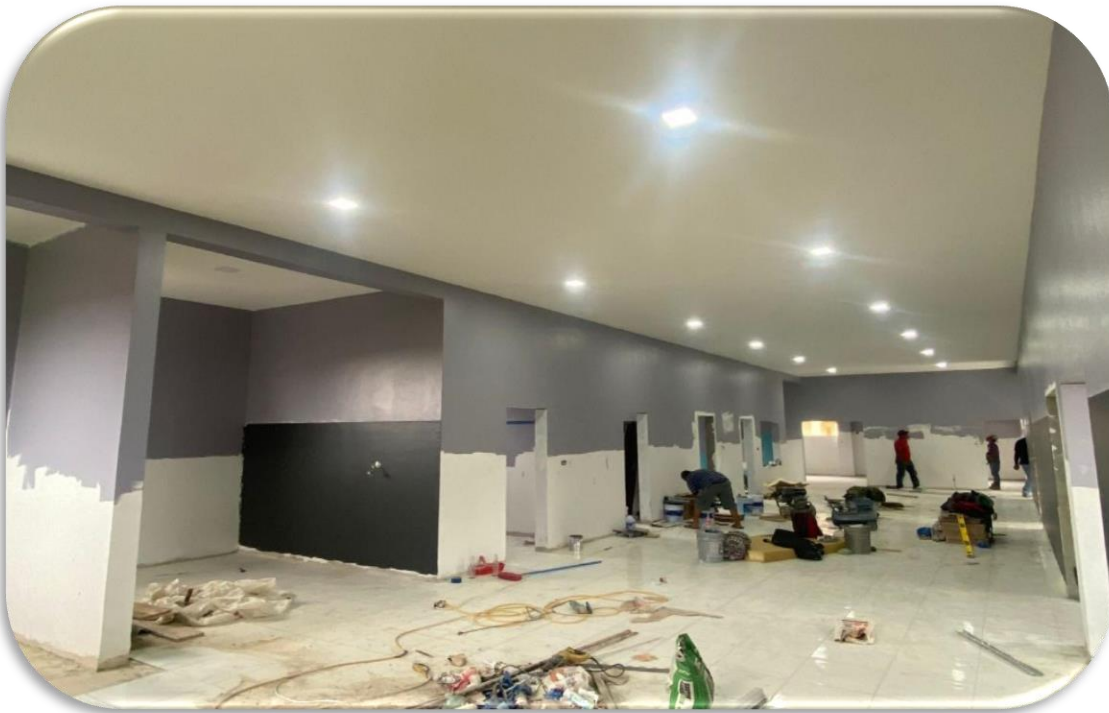
Ongoing Refurbishment of the Kitchen at Camp Belizario



Roof Replacement and Exterior Renovation of the Kitchen at Camp Belizario



Interior Renovation of the Kitchen at Camp Belizario



Short Commission Course-Royal Military Academy Sandhurst Cadets from BCG, BDF and BPD



Royal Military Academy of Sandhurst Instructors



Top Cadet Receives Sandhurst Sword from the Governor General



Belize's First Ever Short Commission Course with the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst



Change of Command Parade



Madame Chief Justice presiding at General Loria's Oath of Office



The Governor General confers the Change of Command Sword to General Loria



Belize Hosts the Central America Security Conference (CCENTSEC) 2022



Senior Delegates from Belize and the USA at CENTSEC



Minister Mira exchanges gifts with Admiral Richardson Commander US Southern Command



BELIZE COAST GUARD



Humanitarian Aid and Disaster Response (HADR)

The Belize Coast Guard is responsible for blue water Search and Rescue for Belize. In times of natural disasters such as flooding, we support the Belize Defence Force and NEMO by providing assets and personnel to conduct rescue and recovery operations in our inland waterways or affected communities.

Over the past year the BCG has conducted HADR operations to affected communities in the Cayo District and the Belize River Valley. The Coast Guard provided valuable support to NEMO in the communities that were significantly affected by the flood.



Working in conjunction with the bus operators, the BCG team in Crooked Tree transported residents on a schedule to and from two terminal points from which residents were able to go to work and conduct their daily business outside the community



BCG medics provided basic health care for residents in the community of Crooked Tree i.e. blood pressure checks, glucose checks, weight measurement. The scope of this mission covered the villages of Lemonal, Rancho Dolores, Maypen, Flowers Bank, Isabella Bank, Grace Bank, Burrell Boom and Crooked Tree.



Coast Guard SAR teams assisted affected communities of Santa Familia and Bullet Tree in the Cayo District. The Coast Guard outreach expanded into the villages of San Jose and Succotz.

BCG was able to distribute one hundred (100) customized face masks and fifty (50) croc footwear to residents of Crooked Tree Village.

The Belize Coast Guard evacuated 33 families, distributed 500 gallons of water and 460 pantry bags.

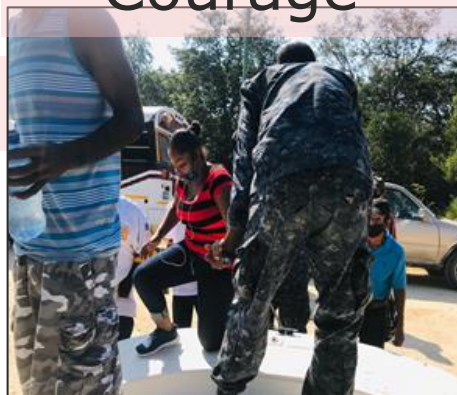
Search and Rescue

Due to the State of emergency and subsequent curfews, the Coast Guard observed a reduction in vessel movements which reduced our number of SAR cases. The Coast Guard has recorded sixty-four (64) Search and Rescue cases for the reporting period.



Courage

Safety



Security

Support To Joint Intelligence Operations Center

AIR TRAFFIC OF INTEREST: The Coast Guard supports the JIOC through its forward deployed forces augmented with the special operations group. This coordination is facilitated through the Coast Guard Operation Center. For this reporting period the Coast Guard Operation Center received the forty-five ATOIs declaration from JIOC. The Coast Guard responded to the respective areas of interest with the intent to detect and interdict. The Coast Guard remains a committed partner and force multiplier to the JIOC.



Capacity Building and Gender Issues

Capacity building initiatives are critical to address vulnerabilities that exist within the organization. Gender issues have been identified as a component that requires legal review and revision of our policy documents.

- *The Belize Coast Guard is conducting a review of its Regulations to ensure gender neutral language is embedded within the content of the document.*
- *The Belize Coast Guard has identified the requirement for a Public Relations Officer (PRO). The Commandant has selected Lieutenant Jasmine Bellini as the PRO for the organization.*
- *The Belize Coast Guard Sexual Harassment and Rape Policy will be adopted from the Belize Defence Force and inserted into our policy document.*
- *MNDBS Legal Advisor Ms. Leonia Duncan is providing legal guidance to this process.*

Revitalization of the Belize Coast Guard

Efforts to revitalize the Belize Coast Guard essentially focus on welfare with an end state of increasing morale.

- **Insurance:** *The Belize Coast Guard continues its discussion with RFG Insurance Company to implement a health insurance plan for sailors in the organization. This initiative is in partnership with the BDF. A total of 50 sailors are required for the scheme to be activated.*
- **Salary Adjustments:** *A salary adjustment review was conducted to identify sailors that require adjustment to their salaries and be placed on the correct and appropriate pay scale. This was completed and forwarded to the Ministry for review.*
- **Rapid Test:** *Rapid Testing is now being administered to sailors and results are forthcoming within a reasonable time. As discussed, mobile testing units will enhance this process to accommodate personnel who resides in the districts.*
- **Accounts Section:** *An office space has been identified and is now occupied by the first-class clerk and the administrative assistant. This space will be expanded to facilitate a Finance Officer and an additional clerk.*
- **Registering Installations:** *All land documents requiring registration will be given to the Legal Advisor to be processed at the Lands Department into the care of MNDBS.*
- **Medical Scholarships:** *The BCG will partner with the BDF in identifying candidates who are eligible for medical scholarships in Mexico. Currently, the BCG has one cadet in the nursing program.*

- ***Counter Narcotics Strategy:*** *The BCG has a Response Plan for illegal air tracks that are declared by the JIOC. This has been forwarded to the Office of the CDS to ensure it is aligned with the newly developed Counter Narcotics Strategy.*
- ***Naval Defence Plan:*** *BCG Naval Defence Plan is at the Office of the CDS. This plan is a component of the National Defence Plan.*
- ***Land Acquisition:*** *A land acquisition scheme was implemented in the BCG. Sailors who have enrolled into this scheme are on a payment plan. This project is located through the Boom/Hattievile Road.*

Establishment of an Accounts Section

The Coast Guard over the past 15 years has grown in size, strength, capacity, functions, duties and responsibilities. The support systems that are now required to meet our daily mandate and enhance our efficiency and effectiveness are critical considerations as we move forward. As the workforce has seen an increase from 50 to over 500 personnel, the welfare component is a critical element for the maintenance of morale and wellbeing of our sailors and operational posture.

The acquisition of a Finance Officer and accounts staff has addressed the issue of internal control deficiencies and enhances the logistics and accounting systems of the organization. This properly designed and functioning internal control system has eliminated the delay of acquiring items that are low cost which can be quickly processed through our Accounts Section. This new system has significantly decreased the time required for a purchase order as opposed to the previous system which required that all requisitions be forwarded to Ministry in Belmopan for approval.

Salaries, promotions, and increments are a critical component in our welfare system. The daily maintenance of our vehicle and vessel fleet was also cumbersome with the previous system and quite often delayed movement which is critical and crucial in fulfilling our mandate and obligations. Our ability to efficiently process documentation for salary adjustments due to incremental date change or promotion will be greatly enhanced with the establishment of an Accounts Section whose primary focus is Coast Guard affairs.

The Belize Coast Guard has ensured that the internal control system of our Accounts Section consists of formal policies and procedure that are aligned with the Ministry of National Defence and Border Security Finance policies.

The Accounts Section is the backbone of the Belize Coast Guard administrative system with the responsibility of managing the link of the accounting system with other functional areas of the organization. With a proper understanding of internal controls, the Finance Officer has designed an internal control system that promotes a positive business environment that can most effectively serve our vendors.

Key Concepts and Summary

- The establishment of the Accounts Section has implemented a system of internal control that combines policies with procedures to protect the integrity of Coast Guard finances and ensure efficiency of operations.
- This new system prevents losses and helps management maintain an effective means of performance.
- Administrative collaboration – This initiative is in direct partnership with the Ministry's Finance Officer. The Belize Coast Guard will maintain a direct line of effort with Ministry for accountability and transparency.
- Capacity Building – With the continuous growth of the Coast Guard, the establishment of an Accounts Section is a component of the Coast Guard strategic development plan that will facilitate its expansion and growth capacity.
- Deliberate Planning – budgetary cuts has compelled us to become better stewards and managers of our resources. The establishment of an Accounts Section now provide an opportunity to step back and be able to review, revise and revisit our existing internal procurement system with the intent to improve and make it more robust. This will allow us to be adequately prepared to confront new challenges that are inevitable.

In an era of financial challenges that require fiscal prudence and astute measures, the Belize Coast Guard continue to seek ways to improve efficiency that will be cost effective and build capacity in the long term. This initiative to establish an Accounts Section have accomplished all the above-mentioned concerns, with an understanding that the desired end state is a long-term plan for the Coast Guard to enhance and maintain a state of effectiveness and efficiency.

First Female Aide-De-Camp for Belize's Governor General



For the first time in Belize, a woman was selected to serve as Aide-de camp to the Governor General. Ensign Melissa Jones was hand-picked by the newly installed Governor General, Her Excellency Froyla Tzalam, to become the new Aide-de-camp (ADC) in Belize. The selection was made following interviews with various female officers of the Belize Defence Force and the Belize Coast Guard. This new appointment makes Jones the first female ADC and Coast Guard officer to be assigned to serve the Governor General of Belize. This is a proud moment for the Belize Coast Guard, and we congratulate Ensign Melissa Jones on her success and her new appointment.

Maritime Border Command: Major Operations

1. OPERATION CARIBE SPIKE

Operation CARIBE SPIKE was conducted in August 2021 and was the first Joint Operation between the Belize Coast Guard, Anti-Narcotics Unit and the United States Navy facilitated through JIATF South. This operational design and construct were to provide Belize with a Multi Mission Support platform acting as a force multiplier to conduct aerial surveillance and target acquisition in support of the BCG areas of interest beyond its territorial seas and limits of its Exclusive Economic Zone. The desired end state was to extend the Coast Guard operational reach, patrol known drug routes, test the Aero net system, gather intelligence and to build partner nation relationship.

2. OPERATION BLUE STEEL

The Toledo District experienced an increase of Covid cases and as a result, the Government decided to implement a lockdown in the villages of Midway, Conejo and Barranco. The Minister of National Defence and Border Security directed the Coast Guard to initiate a maritime border security cordon around Barranco to ensure compliance with this directive. The adverse effects of the virus spreading can result in a substantial loss of human life and public trust in security forces to maintain cross border transmission and local containment and control. Citizen security and economic stability are of utmost priority and the Minister of National Defence and Border Security issued a directive for Coast Guard to play an active role in the fight against this pandemic. This initiative is aimed to implement measures to mitigate the spread and maintain public confidence in the security mechanism, the end state being, CITIZEN SECURITY. The operational framework was designed to restrict movement and maneuver, control mobility corridors and provide local sea superiority.

Barranco Security Cordon



OPERATION BLUE STEEL.

Intent: I intend to SECURE the MMC by using a combination of assets to compliment the ground forces.

SoM: This will be achieved by using the BCG Barranco unit to establish a security cordon in Barranco augmented by the small boat teams conducting roving patrols in the Sarstoon and PHMR area

ME: Boat team operating in the Barranco

ES: Maintain control of maritime mobility corridors in and out of Barranco and the adjacent areas of operation.

3. OPERATION BLUE LIGHTNING

The Belize Coast Guard (BCG) coordinated response to counter the threat of a cross border transmission of the corona virus through the Corozal Bay corridor from Mexico. The response was carried out according to the Commandant Directives and in accordance with established Standard Operating Procedures. The cross-border transmission of the corona virus from neighboring Mexico to communities along the Belize northern border is of significant concern for the Ministry of National Defence and Border Security. The risk to the public from the increase spread of the virus in Chetumal can have significant impact for the country of Belize. This disease which causes severe illness, including illness resulting in death is concerning, especially since it has also shown sustained person-to-person spread in neighboring Guatemala and Mexico. As community spread is detected in more and more countries, the Coast Guard implemented measures to mitigate, with the intent to stop and deter any movement from Mexico into Belize or vice versa.

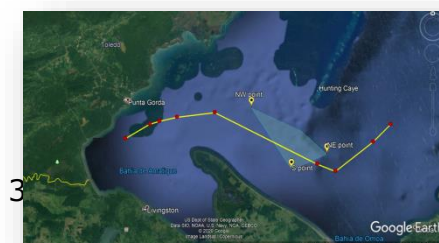
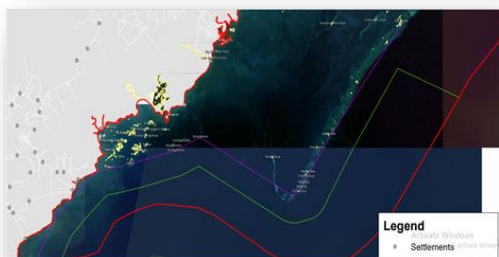


b. CORONA REEF

Corona Reef is about 4.5 miles south of Hunting Caye. It covers an area of about 90 square km. The northern portion that lays within Belize's jurisdictional waters is about 4 miles long. The remaining 5 miles falls within Guatemalan waters. This creates a complex conundrum whereby half of the reef system is located within Belize Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) and the other half straddles Guatemalan waters. Described as some of the healthiest reef in the Caribbean, this eco system directly impacts Belize's fishing industry and has vast potential for the tourism industry. For Guatemala a small portion of Corona Reef system is within Punta Manabique Reserve; however, most of the ecosystem is adjacent to the limits of Reserve. The nearest Guatemalan Navy facility is in Puerto Barrios about 40 miles away. The Belize Coast Guard maintains a weekly patrol to this site to maintain law enforcement deterrence for illegal fishers and to ensure environmental protection for the pristine reef system.

Amended Maritime Boundary

Corona Reef Boundary



International Support: Partner Nations



The Government of the UK through BATSUB has supported the covid efforts to the BCG by providing logistical support in the form of field rations. Our deployed units were able to utilize these items in areas where we were logistically challenged. Commanding Officer of BATSUB Simon Nichols pledged additional support in the form of troop-carrying vehicles and barracks accommodation if the need or requirement arises.

The United States Embassy donated \$400,000 worth of maritime and tactical equipment to the Belize Coast Guard. The donation included six outboard engines, navigational equipment, maintenance tools, and fifteen sets of night vision goggles.





The Government of Taiwan provided the Belize Coast Guard with a vacancy for an officer cadet to attend the Naval Academy. In February 2020, Officer Cadet Jason Soriano was the recipient of a scholarship to attend the Naval Academy in Zuoying District, Kaohsiung Taiwan.

Royal Military Academy Sandhurst Commissioning Course – Belize



A total of 24 officer cadets took part in the training: fourteen from the Belize Defence Force, eight from the Belize Coast Guard and two from the Belize Police Department. The officer cadets were prepared extensively for over a year to be able to keep up with the tempo of the commissioning course. Their training included multiple courses focused on a wide array of critical skills such as command, leadership, military tactics, and personnel management. The cadets' final five-week training culminated with the Short Commissioning Course. As they have reached a significant milestone in their chosen career, they will each receive their first commissioned rank within their respective organization.

Promotional Courses

Coast Guard conducted its annual promotional courses FTY 2021. These courses are designed to assess and test the aptitude of potential non-commissioned officers and commissioned officers who have met the requirements and are eligible for promotion to the higher rank. The following courses were conducted.

These promotional courses are a component of the Coast Guard development strategy and institutional building mechanism to ensure growth and sustainment through professional military education.

The table below depicts the courses conducted and members who are eligible for promotion.

Special Forces Selection



			
LIEUTENANT (4)	PETTY OFFICER CLASS ONE (10)	PETTY OFFICER CLASS TWO (15)	PETTY OFFICER CLASS THREE (24)

Two members of the Belize Coast Guard were successful in completing the rigorous Special Forces selection and course hosted by SOTF of the BDF. These two new operations are now posted to the Coast Guard special operations group.



Coastal Piracy

Coastal Piracy is a term adapted by the BCG to categorized armed robberies, assault, and murders within territorial waters. Intelligence has allowed BCG to appreciate the center of gravity for Coastal Piracy. Coastal Piracy often occurs when the following key components are present: Traditional Sailboat fishermen, Camp Fishermen (lobster trap harvesters) and a rich and diverse environment.

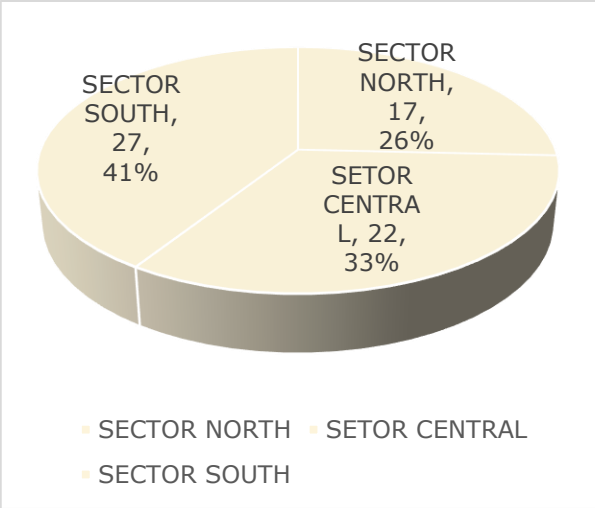
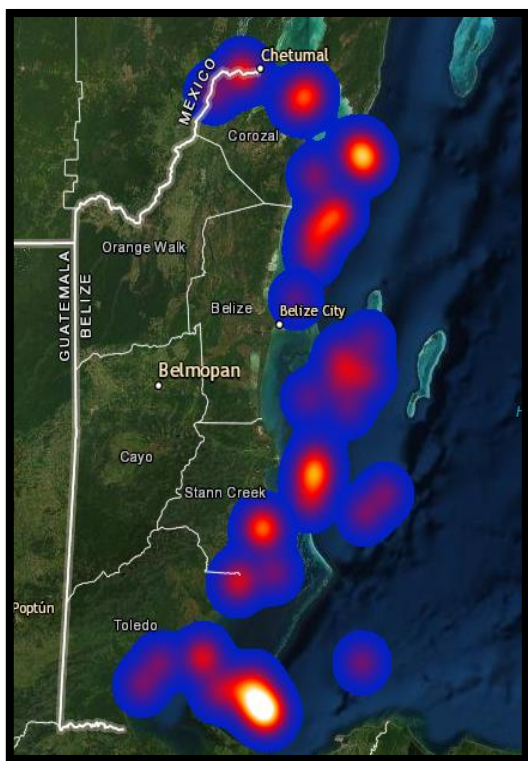
The southern sector of Belize saw an increase in criminal activities over the reporting period. The Coast Guard along with local law enforcement and international partners were able to aggressively counter these activities and dismantle two organized criminal networks that had established a strong presence in this sector and were collaborating with the criminal element in Honduras. The efforts of the Coast Guard, Fisheries and the GI3 unit of the police apprehended and arrested key leaders of this network.

The coastal pirates had an organized network and worked between Belize and neighboring Honduras where stolen engines and products can be sold in exchange for guns and drugs.



Operational Overview

A total of 66 incidents were recorded for routine operations across sectors for the year 2021. Sector south recorded the highest number of incidents with a total of 27 incidents, Sector Central with 22 incidents and Sector North with 17 incidents. In Sector South the most active area was the Corona Reef recording illegal incursions, gillnet recoveries, fisheries, and port violations. Sector Central saw a significant increase in piracy activity that sparked numerous high tempo operations to protect fishermen in the area. Sector north saw an increase in gang related and piracy activity.

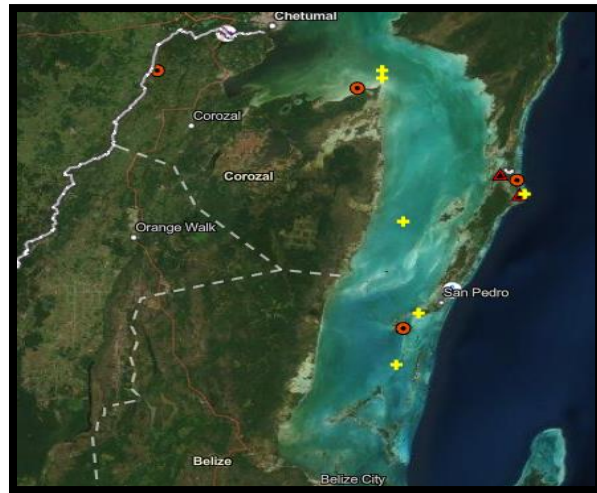
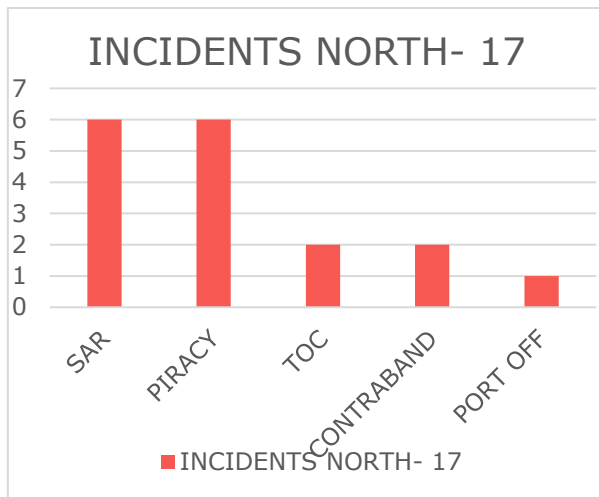


1. SECTOR NORTH

Of the 17 incidents recorded in Sector North, Search and Rescue (SAR) had the highest number of incidents, mostly in the Ambergris Caye area. Ambergris Caye is the largest island populated in Belize, which may be a contributing

factor for the highest SAR cases in our sea spaces.

The permanent establishment of Coast Guard Bacalar Chico Patrol base has resulted with the gang and criminal groups moving south beyond Bacalar Chico limit of exploitation. During FTY 2021, most incidents were recorded in the Norte Bar area closer to the hotel zones in San Pedro Town.



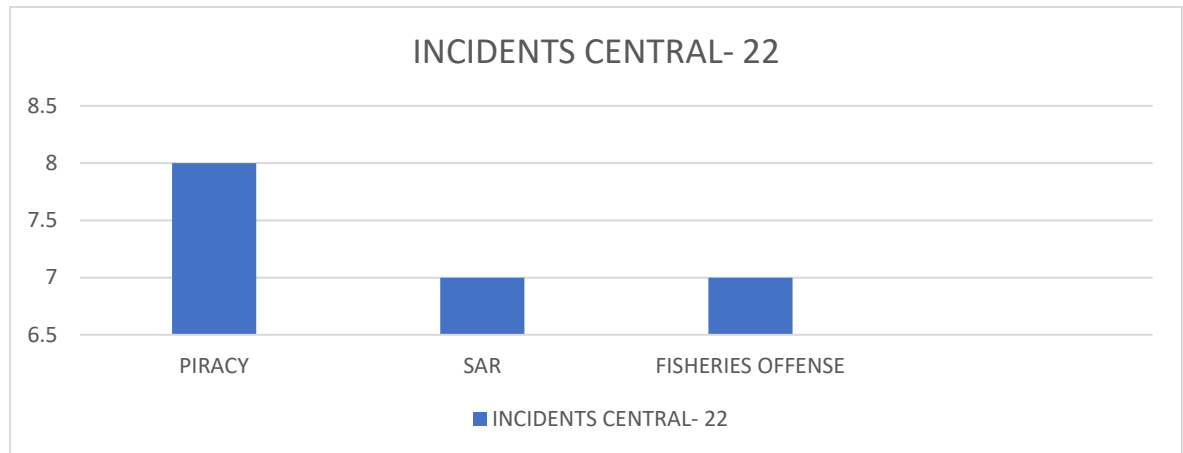
2. *SECTOR CENTRAL*

Sector Central have recorded a total of 22 incidents with the most common being Coastal Piracy. During the period of January to March 2021 a spike in piracy activity was recorded in the Sector Central.

These activities were carried out by two notorious criminal gangs of Dangriga Town, Stann Creek District, known as The Riverside Bloods (RSB) and The Salty Dog Crips (SLC). The criminal groups were known to conduct illegal harvesting of lobster and conch in close seasons, and illegal harvesting of manatee meat in the Mullins River area, beach, and reef.

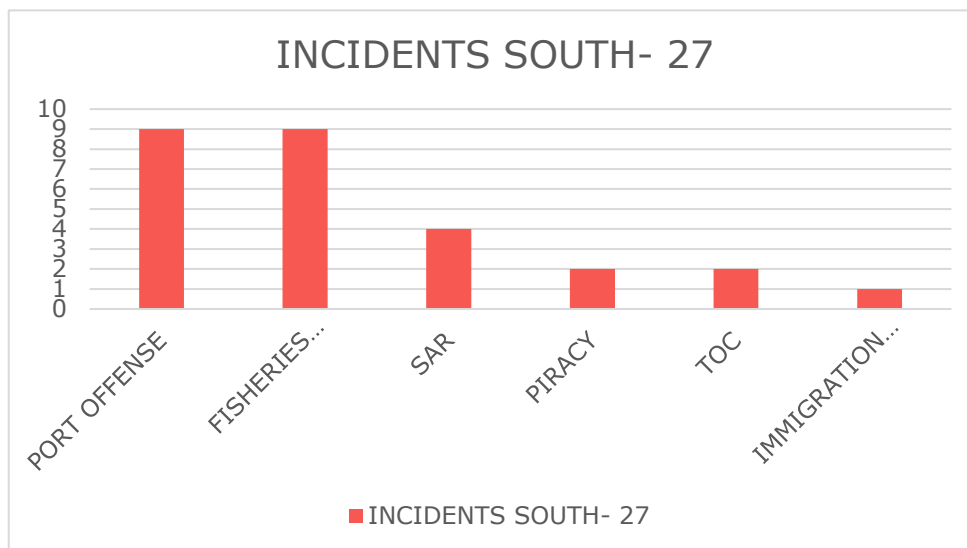
As a result, two major intelligence-driven operations were conducted to reduce the piracy activity and dismantle these criminal groups.

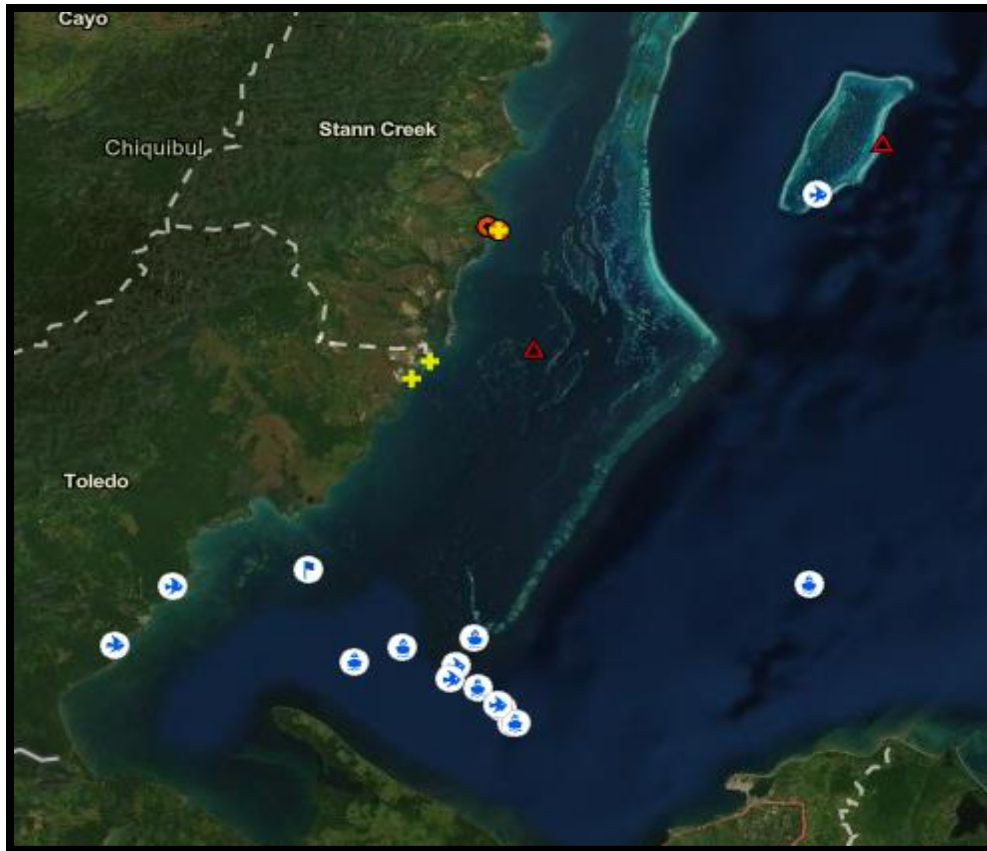
Upon completion of both operations, six illegal camps were destroyed, and the Riverside Blood gang headquarters was discovered and dismantled in Hopkins Village. This action destabilized groups significantly.



3. *SECTOR SOUTH*

Sector South recorded a total of 27 incidents with the most common being Port Offense. Analysis revealed the high illegal incursion of Guatemalan and Honduran fishing vessels entering Belizean territory and illegally harvesting marine products with gillnets and without a valid Belizean Fisherfolk license. This is significant contributing factor for the recorded number of incidents in Sector South.





a. Corona Reef and Gillnet Activity

FTY 2021 the Belize Coast Guard patrol recovered a total of seventeen (17) illegal gillnets. Fourteen (14) gillnets were recovered in the Corona Reef area, while another three (3) were recovered from the rivers of the Rio Grande and Moho River.

The Corona Reef remains an area of interest for the Belize Coast Guard as we continue to execute our mandate of preserving and protecting our marine resources from foreign incursion in Belize's Maritime domain. For FTY 2021 a total number of twelve incidents were recorded; five incidents were recorded as Fisheries Violation which included the use of illegal gillnet and seven other incidents where vessels were detained without proper documentation, illegal entry, and no valid Fisherfolk License. It was noted that more than 90 percent of the violation was committed by Guatemalan nationals; the other ten percent were carried out by Honduran nationals. A total number of fourteen gillnets were confiscated and labelled as found property.

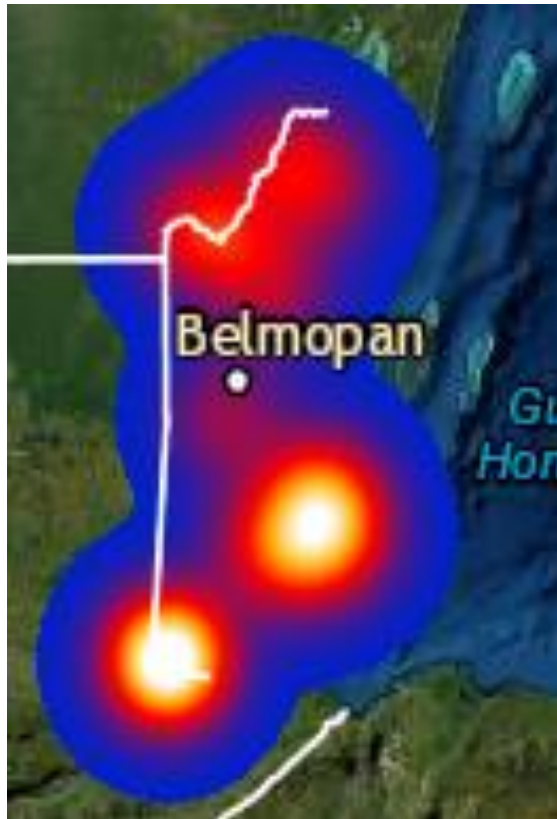


In the figure above the yellow marker depicts the boundary of the Corona Reef. The red markers represent the gillnet incidents and the blue and white represents the vessel incursions.

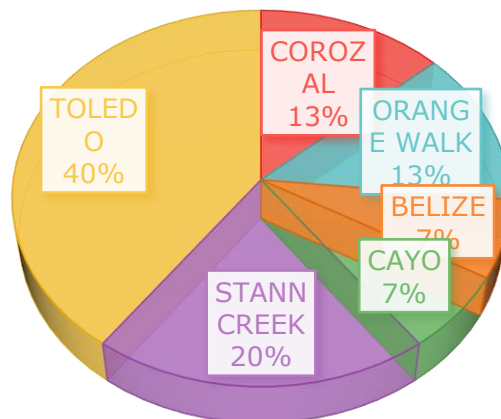
4. ATOI LANDINGS IN BELIZE 2021

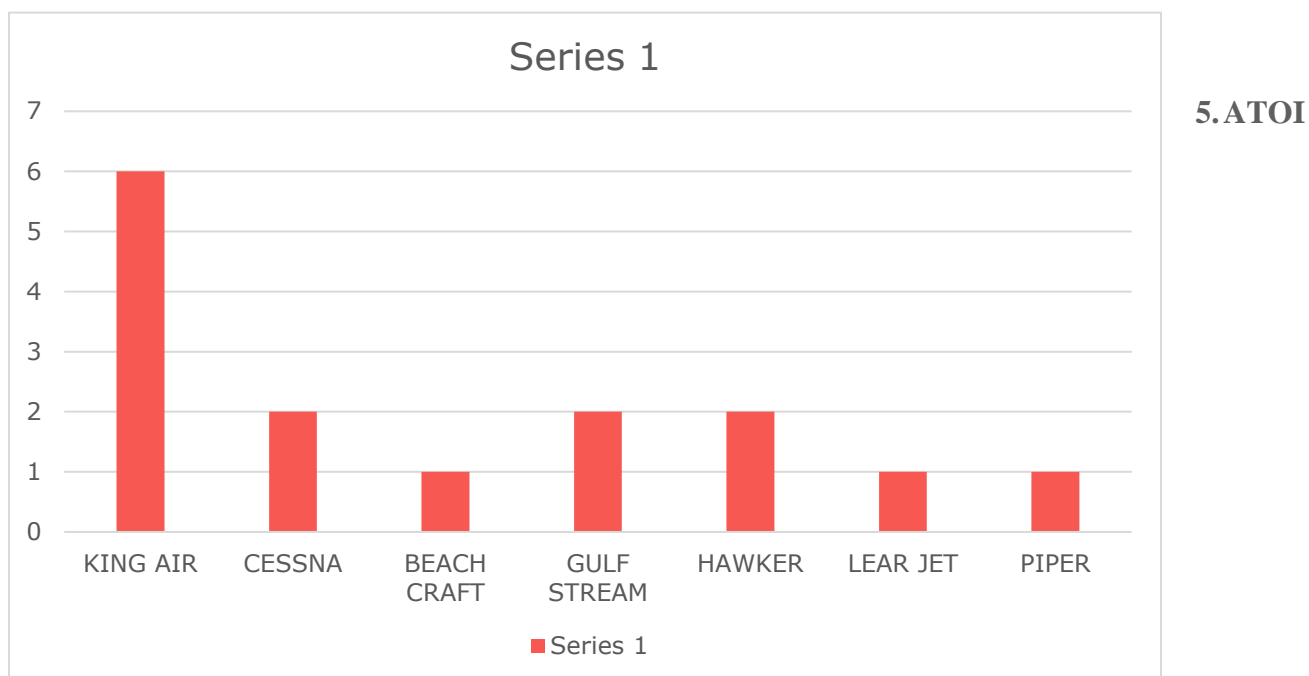
There has been a total of 15 recorded ATOI landings within Belize FTY 2021, of which the majority occurred in the southern part of the country. There have been six (6) landings in the Toledo District, three (3) in the Stann Creek District and one (1) in the Cayo District. The remainder being one (1) in Belize District, two (2) in Orange Walk District, and two (2) in Corozal District.

It was noted that the aircraft mostly used for 2021 in Belize was the King Air Beach Craft. Six of the fifteen landings were King Air Beach Crafts. Other aircraft type that landed were the Lear Jet, Hawker Jet, and Cessna Centurion. It has been identified that most aircrafts land in the northern part of the country or in the remote areas of the Toledo district. The following graph shows the different types and number of aircraft that landed FTY 2021 in Belize.



ATOI LANDINGS





LANDING NEAR COASTAL AREAS

A total of six (6) aircrafts landed close to the coast and information received states that the illicit cargo was taken by sea; 1 went to Mexico and the other 5 to Guatemala.

LOCATION	DATE	DISTANCE TO SEA	REMARKS
Little Belize Camp 33	October 7 2021	20 Km to Shipstern Lagoon	A burnt van was found on logwood road close to the Shipstern Lagoon. One white cargo truck was seen exiting little Belize junction, 45 minutes after the ATOI landed. This truck was escorted by a white Wingle QRT police mobile and a Heno Truck from Blue Creek station OW District. On board were approximately 6 individuals with tactical gear.

KANANTIK AIRSTRIP	November 25 2021	10 Km to sea access. Approximately 7 minutes to reach the seashore.	Cargo was exited through the sea and headed to Guatemala. Wilmer Limas and his son are suspected in moving the cargo. Wilmer Limas son sustained a gunshot wound and his father was taken by armed men. The son stated they were fishing. This incident happened where the cargo exited into the sea. A large blue vessel suspected used by the Sinaloa Cartel to move cargo through Belizean waters was identified to be used during this landing. This information provided a vital intelligence to support the relationships of Go fast and ATOIs
Riversdale off road close to the Lagoon	March 6 2021	Approximately 250 meters to the lagoon and access to the sea.	Cargo exited the lagoon above Riversdale into the sea and headed to the direction of Guatemala.
Monkey River	June 6 2021	Approximately 60 meters to the lagoon and into the sea.	Cargo exited the lagoon and was taken to the direction of Guatemala.
Placencia off coast	May 22 2021	Approximately 7 Km east of Bugles Caye into the sea the Lear Jet crash landed	Cargo was found by fishermen in the area.
Sarstoon Airstrip	September 3 2021	Approximately 400meters into the Sarstoon River.	Guatemalan Armed Forces seize cargo of the ATOI.

OFFICE OF THE CHIEF OF DEFENCE STAFF

2020 -2021		
Serial	Item	Description
01	National Defence Plan <i>a. Ground Defence Plan</i> <i>b. Naval Defence Plan</i>	The National Defence Plan (NDP) provides a framework for the defence of Belize. It describes the requirement for diplomatic, informational, military, and economic campaign during conflict and synchronizes unity of effort for preserving the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Belize.
02	ICJ Implications	Belize and Guatemala agreed to submit to the ICJ Guatemala's territorial and insular claim of Belize. The ICJ's ruling can have implications on Belize's territorial integrity and sovereignty. Hence, a study was conducted to see the possible courses of actions that can be taken to be better prepared as a country.
03	Counter Narcotics Denial Strategy	Counter Narcotics Denial Strategy was developed to address the problem of drug trafficking specifically as it relates to Drug Trafficking Organizations (DTO)/ Cartels having access to illegal landing strips, maritime corridors, and avenues of approach in Belize.
04	Multi-National Security Conference	The Multinational Security Conference is to share Belize's vision, work, and requirements with regards to military assistance with our allies and partners. It emphasizes security cooperation and military capacity building for the Belize Defence Force, the Belize Coast Guard and the Joint

		Intelligence Operations Centre all within the Ministry of National Security (Defence).
05	Threat Classification	The External Military Threat Assessment section of the National Intelligence Committee Report is used to rate/rank the military threat that Belize faces from Guatemala. Traditionally, the threat has been rated as Low to indicate the threat is almost nonexistent. The Ministry of National Defence and Border Security has advised that a change in the threat level has become necessary due to varying factors in the Guatemalan Military.
06	National Defence Intelligence Agency	The Ministry of National Defence and Border Security recognizes the need for an autonomous National Intelligence Agency to provide accurate and timely intelligence to meet the needs of the forces (BDF & BCG), to develop a clear picture of the operational environment in all domains including land, air, and sea. Hence, it proposed the creation of a National Defence Intelligence Agency that will fulfil the gaps in the intelligence community.

2022 and Beyond		
01	National Security and Defence Strategy (NSDS)	The NSDS is grand strategy and policy that provides strategic guidance for the MNDBS and other agencies and departments that provides for the security and defence of Belize. It is the overarching umbrella strategy that supersedes all other strategies and plans for the national security of Belize.
02	Review of National Defence Plan	The review of the national defence plan is a periodic exercise that requires the approval of the National Security Council to shape and realign defence and security strategies based on the threat and economic environment
03	Review of Security Forces' salaries and other benefits	To bring both military services on par with salaries and other benefits, a review of the salary scales, pension regulations and other benefits is being done. This will improve morale and welfare for service members of the BDF and BCG.
04	Tradewinds 2022	Tradewinds is a Caribbean security-focused, multi-dimensional exercise conducted in the ground, air, sea, and cyber domains. U.S. forces will join participating nations to conduct joint, combined, and interagency training focused on increasing regional cooperation in complex multinational security operations. Belize will co-host Tradewinds with Mexico.

CONCLUSION

The Ministry of National Defence and Border Security remains committed to preserving our country's freedom and territorial integrity. We further reiterate our commitment to the women and men of our Security Forces.

We have assisted and supported disaster relief during the pandemic, deterred and reduced drug trafficking, and improved collaboration and cooperation with partner nations and allies in the region.

Vital work has begun on improving the infrastructure to support our Security Forces and we continued to enhance the capacity of the security sector so that our sailors and soldiers can make significant contributions to our operational readiness.

We are committed to improving the security workplace environment to ensure that it supports the welfare and morale of our sailors and soldiers.

We congratulate our Security Forces individually and collectively on their contribution to this period's success. The Minister, the Minister of State and the Chief Executive Officer express gratitude to our Security Forces and our civilian staff for the work they do in making the Defence apparatus efficient and effective.

Ends.

ABBREVIATIONS

ADC	Aide-de-Camp
AIR	Apparent Intake Rate
ATOI	Air Traffic of Interest
BCG	Belize Coast Guard
BDF	Belize Defence Force
CABEI	Central American Bank for Economic integration
FTY	Financial Year
HADR	Humanitarian Aid and Disaster Response
ICJ	International Court of Justice
JCET	Joint Combined Arms Training
JIOC	Joint Intelligence and Operations Center
JSVPR	Joint Sexual Violence Prevention and Response
NEMO	National Emergency Management Organization
NSDS	National Security and Defence Strategy
OW	Orange Walk
PRO	Public Relations Officer
SAR	Search and Rescue
SOTF	Special Operations Task Force
SUT	Small Unit Tactics
TCV	Troop-Carrying Vehicle