



Human Rights Council
Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review
Forty-fifth session
22 January–2 February 2024**Belize****Compilation of information prepared by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights****I. Background**

1. The present report was prepared pursuant to Human Rights Council resolutions 5/1 and 16/21, taking into consideration the outcome of the previous review.¹ It is a compilation of information contained in relevant United Nations documents, presented in a summarized manner owing to word-limit constraints.

II. Scope of international obligations and cooperation with human rights mechanisms

2. The United Nations country team stated that, while Belize had ratified the nine core human rights treaties and had, in 2023, submitted its overdue report on its implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, it had yet to submit several other overdue reports, including on its implementation of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families, the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) was providing technical support and training on reporting to the treaty bodies.²

3. In 2018, the Human Rights Committee recommended that Belize consider acceding to the Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, aiming at the abolition of the death penalty. It also recommended that Belize consider withdrawing its reservations to articles 12 (2) and 14 (3) (d) and (6) of the Covenant.³

4. The United Nations country team reported that, in 2023, Belize had ratified the Regional Agreement on Access to Information, Public Participation and Justice in Environmental Matters in Latin America and the Caribbean (Escazú Agreement).⁴

5. The United Nations country team noted that, since the visit in 2013 of the Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons, especially women and children, Belize had not invited any special procedure mandate holders to conduct country visits.⁵



6. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) recommended that Belize regularly submit comprehensive national reports for the periodic consultations on UNESCO education-related standard-setting instruments, notably on the Convention against Discrimination in Education.⁶

7. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) had worked with Belize, through its Regional Office for Central America and the Dominican Republic, on integrating human rights into the training of law enforcement officers, applying a human rights-based approach to programming, supporting stakeholders on the ratification of international human rights instruments and reporting to treaty bodies, among other issues.⁷

III. National human rights framework

1. Constitutional and legislative framework

8. The Human Rights Committee was concerned that, pursuant to section 3 of the Constitution, fundamental rights and freedoms might be subject to limitations on grounds of public interest and that the test applied by the Supreme Court of Belize to balance all fundamental rights against the public interest raised issues of compatibility with the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. It recommended that Belize review its constitutional law to ensure that rights protected by the Covenant were not restricted any further than allowed under the Covenant.⁸

9. The United Nations country team noted that, in 2022, the Governor General of Belize had assented to the Peoples Constitution Act 2022 to establish a People's Constitution Commission to draft and guide the process of promulgating a new Constitution or amendments to the existing one.⁹

2. Institutional infrastructure and policy measures

10. While noting the existence of governmental bodies mandated with human rights protection, the Human Rights Committee reiterated its concerns that Belize had not yet established a national human rights institution in line with the principles relating to the status of national institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights (the Paris Principles).¹⁰

11. The United Nations country team reported that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Foreign Trade and Immigration had coordinated a participatory process involving representatives of the State and of civil society in defining a model for a national human rights institution for Belize. The chosen model was in compliance with the Paris Principles. Nevertheless, Cabinet approval, budget allocation and an implementation plan for its establishment remained pending.¹¹

12. The Human Rights Committee welcomed the increase in the budgetary allocation for the Office of the Ombudsman of Belize, but remained concerned that the Office still lacked sufficient human and financial resources to carry out its mandate.¹²

13. The United Nations country team stated that Belize should accelerate the establishment of a national mechanism for reporting and follow-up or a closely aligned national reporting structure that could make progress on timely reporting to the treaty bodies.¹³

IV. Promotion and protection of human rights

A. Implementation of international human rights obligations, taking into account applicable international humanitarian law

1. Equality and non-discrimination

14. The United Nations country team noted that, in 2020, an Equal Opportunities Bill had been presented to the parliament, which had recommended conducting further public

consultation before the bill could be considered for passage into law. Action had yet to be taken on conducting the consultations.¹⁴ The Human Rights Committee recommended that Belize adopt comprehensive legislation against discrimination that included a definition of discrimination, both direct and indirect, including in the private sphere, and contained a non-exhaustive list of grounds of discrimination, including language, religious belief, sexual orientation and gender identity. It also recommended that Belize provide access to effective remedies for all victims of discrimination.¹⁵

2. Right to life, liberty and security of person, and freedom from torture

15. While noting that Belize had observed a de facto moratorium since 1985, the Human Rights Committee expressed its concern that the death penalty remained on the books. It recommended that Belize establish an official moratorium on the death penalty with a view to abolishing it and consider appropriate awareness-raising measures to mobilize public opinion in support of abolition of the death penalty.¹⁶

16. The same Committee, while taking note of the efforts of Belize to prosecute cases of murder and attempted murder, remained concerned at the increase in homicide rates and the low number of prosecutions of such offences. It recommended that Belize strengthen its efforts to protect the right to life of its citizens, inter alia, by: reinforcing the financial and human resources of its police and judicial departments; implementing the amendments to the Jury Act and the Evidence Act; and conducting prompt, effective and thorough investigations to convict all those responsible for murder or attempted murder.¹⁷

17. The same Committee recommended that Belize: ensure that the regulations on the use of force were fully in line with international standards; ensure that cases of alleged brutality or excessive use of force by law enforcement personnel were automatically and promptly investigated and victims provided with effective remedies; and step up its efforts to make the Independent Complaints Commission fully operational and ensure the independence, impartiality and sufficient funding of the Professional Standards Branch.¹⁸ The United Nations country team reported that, since 2021, the Belize Police Department had been conducting law enforcement training aligned with a human rights-based approach to policing.¹⁹

18. In 2018, the Subcommittee on Prevention of Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment expressed concern that there appeared to be no clear justification for detention in numerous instances and that, when an offence was committed, it appeared to be a common practice to detain and question those in the proximity of the offence.²⁰ The Human Rights Committee remained concerned about allegations of arbitrary arrest and detention beyond 48 hours without charge and use of detention as a means of intimidation.²¹

19. The same Committee remained concerned that acts of torture remained undefined in the Criminal Code under the title “criminal harm to the person”. It recommended that Belize bring the definition of the crime of torture fully into line with international standards and strengthen its efforts to prevent torture and ill-treatment and to ensure that all such cases were promptly, thoroughly and independently investigated, that perpetrators were brought to justice and that victims received full reparation and rehabilitation services.²²

20. The Subcommittee on Prevention of Torture noted that the cells used for police detention throughout the country were often in poor condition and that food and water were not always provided by the authorities.²³

21. The Human Rights Committee expressed concern at credible reports of: poor prison conditions at Belize Central Prison, including overcrowding, malnutrition, inadequate access to water, poor sanitation and lack of medical care; inter-prisoner violence; and the use of isolation for up to 28 days in small punishment rooms lacking light and ventilation to discipline prisoners. While noting Supreme Court justices visited prisons each year, the Committee remained concerned at the reported lack of availability of visiting justices in charge of receiving, investigating and reporting prisoners’ complaints. It recommended that Belize take all necessary measures to improve the living conditions and treatment of prisoners, and investigate violations of inmates’ rights, bring perpetrators to justice, and provide effective remedies and full reparation to victims.²⁴

22. The Subcommittee on Prevention of Torture recommended that legislation, regulations and practice concerning the imposition of restrictions or disciplinary sanctions be revised to ensure that they did not result in inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment. It also recommended that the Administrative Segregation Section at Belize Central Prison be closed immediately and that the Multi-Max Section be refurbished and run as regular accommodation rather than a punishment unit.²⁵

23. The Subcommittee noted that the Wagner's facility for boys was run on a culture of fear. It recommended that Belize take urgent steps to prohibit the use of solitary confinement within that facility, prohibit all forms of collective and coercive punishment for disciplinary purposes and ensure that any form of punishment was proportionate and strictly limited in time.²⁶

24. The Subcommittee also recommended that Belize designate a functionally independent and sufficiently resourced national preventive mechanism as a matter of priority, with a mandate and powers that accorded with the provisions of the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment and that followed the Subcommittee's guidelines on national preventive mechanisms.²⁷

25. The Subcommittee further recommended that persons who could not be held criminally responsible owing to mental health problems be referred to appropriate mental health facilities rather than detained in prison.²⁸

3. Administration of justice, including impunity, and the rule of law

26. The Human Rights Committee reiterated its concerns about the lack of adequate resources devoted to the judiciary and inordinate delays in the delivery of justice, particularly for those accused of murder. It also regretted that national legislation restricted free legal assistance to capital cases and did not provide systematic legal representation to accused persons. It recommended that Belize allocate supplementary budgetary resources for the administration of justice to the greatest extent possible and guarantee, to the extent possible, the right to have legal assistance assigned to accused persons whenever the interests of justice so required.²⁹

27. The Subcommittee on Prevention of Torture noted that more than a third of inmates at Belize Central Prison were awaiting trial, that many of them had been waiting for lengthy periods and that there was a significant backlog of cases waiting to be heard. It recommended that pretrial detention be used as a means of last resort and that time limits for pretrial detention be strictly enforced.³⁰ The Human Rights Committee recommended that Belize take measures to address the situation of persons who had been in pretrial detention for many years and review its legislation to ensure that time spent in pretrial detention was taken into account when calculating the sentence.³¹

28. The same Committee was concerned that children between the ages of 12 and 14 could be held criminally liable when they had been found to have the appropriate maturity to understand the nature and consequences of their criminal conduct. It recommended that Belize raise the minimum age of criminal responsibility, in accordance with international standards.³²

29. The Subcommittee on Prevention of Torture was very concerned that, unlike adults, cases of juveniles held in pretrial custody were, in practice, not subject to periodic review by the judiciary. It recommended that juveniles be held in pretrial detention only as a measure of last resort and that the need to hold a juvenile on remand be subject to regular review and judicial oversight.³³

30. The Subcommittee noted that a juvenile justice system had not yet been fully established and no specialized juvenile courts existed. It recommended that a specialized juvenile justice system be put in place and that children only ever be detained as a measure of last resort and for the shortest possible period of time.³⁴ The United Nations country team noted that Belize had undertaken to amend key legislation (the Criminal Code, the Families and Children's Act and the Protection of Children and Vulnerable Witnesses Act) to address the need for standard operating procedures for the interaction between officers of the

judiciary, children and other stakeholders. Six child-friendly spaces had been established in police stations to promote safe interviewing and support for children in contact with the law.³⁵

4. Fundamental freedoms and the right to participate in public and political life

31. UNESCO stated that the Libel and Defamation Act had been repealed on 8 August 2022 and replaced with the Defamation Act 2022, which imposed civil penalties in the form of payment of damages and legal costs.³⁶

32. UNESCO also stated that, as at 20 April 2023, it had recorded no killings of journalists in Belize since 2006, when systematic monitoring had begun.³⁷

5. Prohibition of all forms of slavery, including trafficking in persons

33. The Human Rights Committee welcomed the establishment in 2018 of the Trafficking in Persons Unit within the Belize Police Department. It reiterated its concerns about the prevalence of trafficking, notably of women and children for the purposes of economic and sexual exploitation. It was particularly concerned at credible allegations of tolerance for and complicity of officials in human trafficking-related offences and impunity for such acts. It recommended that Belize: strictly implement its domestic legal framework in relation to trafficking in persons; allocate sufficient financial, human and technical resources to the Trafficking in Persons Unit; ensure that suspected cases of trafficking in persons were investigated and perpetrators brought to justice; and strengthen its efforts to identify victims and provide them with full reparation, appropriate protection and assistance, including by establishing safe houses and shelters.³⁸

34. The United Nations country team noted that the first convictions under the Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children (Prohibition) Act and the Trafficking in Persons (Prohibition) Act had been secured in 2021 and that Belize was implementing public education and awareness-raising campaigns to reach vulnerable groups. Nevertheless, the conviction level for those offences remained low and there was a need for ongoing capacity-building of State agencies for policy implementation and legislation enforcement. A review of both those Acts was under way to assess and address the gaps in the legislative framework that left migrants vulnerable to human trafficking.³⁹

6. Right to work and to just and favourable conditions of work

35. In 2021, the Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations of the International Labour Organization (ILO) requested the Government to continue promoting social dialogue in order to bring section 27 (2) of the Trade Unions and Employers' Organizations (Registration, Recognition and Status) Act, which provided that a trade union could be certified as the bargaining agent if it was supported by at least 51 per cent of employees, into conformity with the Right to Organise and Collective Bargaining Convention, 1949 (No. 98).⁴⁰

36. In 2022, the ILO Committee of Experts welcomed the information provided regarding the conduct of labour inspections to address anti-union discrimination in the banana plantation sector and in export processing zones. Nevertheless, it requested the Government to take all the necessary measures to ensure that Belizean workers were fully informed of their rights with respect to anti-union discrimination.⁴¹

37. The Human Rights Committee expressed concern about the female unemployment rates, which appeared to be triple those of men, and about the persistent wage gap between men and women.⁴² In 2021, the ILO Committee of Experts asked Belize to revise the Equal Pay Act of 2003 and the Labour Act of 2011 with a view to giving full legislative expression to the principle of equal remuneration for men and women for work of equal value. It also requested that Belize take the necessary steps to build the capacity of labour inspectors to identify discrimination and inequalities relating to pay for men and women workers.⁴³

38. The United Nations country team noted that persons with disabilities in Belize were still underrepresented in the workplace.⁴⁴

39. In 2021, the ILO Committee of Experts reiterated that the Summary Jurisdiction (Offences) Ordinance provided that a person who, being able wholly or in part to maintain

him or herself, wilfully refused or neglected to do so, was guilty of a petty offence and was liable to imprisonment. It once again requested Belize to take the necessary measures to repeal section 4 (1) (xxix) of that Ordinance.⁴⁵

7. Right to an adequate standard of living

40. In 2021, the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) noted that Belize faced the challenge of high levels of vulnerability and poverty and that poverty in rural areas was twice the level of that in urban areas. It indicated that, while some noticeable progress had been made on the country’s sustainable development agenda, particularly on Sustainable Development Goals 2–7 and 14, which it was on track to meet, the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic had hobbled the achievement of other Goals, including Goal 1 (on poverty), Goal 3 (on health) and Goal 4 (on education). The achievement of those Goals had not been sufficiently mainstreamed into the national budget structure or costed at the national or subnational levels, although it was referenced in the national development plan.⁴⁶

41. The United Nations country team recommended that Belize review the social protection system to ensure the establishment of a social protection floor that could prevent, reduce and eliminate economic and social vulnerabilities of poverty and deprivation, especially among children and those left furthest behind.⁴⁷

8. Right to health

42. The United Nations country team stated that the universal health essential service coverage index for Belize had been increasing and in 2019, had been estimated at 67 per cent. Nevertheless, children’s health remained a concern, as at least 8 per cent of under-5-year-olds were overweight and 15 per cent were stunted. It recommended that Belize address the immediate, underlying and enabling determinants of malnutrition and increase investment in immunization and primary health care to achieve universal health coverage among children.⁴⁸

43. The United Nations country team noted that Belize had expanded access to health services for all, including Indigenous Peoples, refugees, migrants, people living with HIV/AIDS and other marginalized populations. More health centres had been established in hard-to-reach areas that served Maya Indigenous communities, and maternal and child health services were provided at no cost.⁴⁹

44. The United Nations country team noted that Belize had endorsed the Sexual and Reproductive Health Policy in 2022. It recommended that Belize consider accelerating access to comprehensive adolescent and youth-friendly health services that covered sexual and reproductive health, non-communicable diseases and risk factors such as mental health, gender-based violence and child marriage and unions.⁵⁰

45. The Human Rights Committee was concerned that section 112 of the Criminal Code criminalized voluntary termination of pregnancy except when two medical practitioners certified that the continuance of the pregnancy would involve risk to the life of, or injury to, the physical or mental health of the pregnant woman or when there were risks that the child would be born with “abnormalities”. It recommended that Belize: review its legislation to ensure safe, legal and effective access to abortion where the life and health of the pregnant woman or girl was at risk and where carrying a pregnancy to term would cause the pregnant woman or girl substantial pain or suffering, most notably where the pregnancy was the result of rape or incest or was not viable; remove barriers that denied effective access by women and girls to safe and legal abortion; and ensure that women and girls who had abortions, as well as the physicians assisting them, were not subjected to criminal sanctions.⁵¹

9. Right to education

46. UNESCO stated that the Constitution of Belize, as amended in 2021, protected the right of the individual to basic education only, not to education in general. It recommended that Belize enshrine in the legal framework a comprehensive right to education for all.⁵²

47. The United Nations country team noted that Belize did not legally guarantee 12 years of free primary and secondary education, as it should under the Education 2030 Framework for Action. It recommended that, with the adoption of the Belize Education Sector Strategy

2021–2025, Belize institute measures to provide free access to education from preschool to junior college.⁵³

48. The United Nations country team noted that Belize had begun the implementation of the Education Sector Plan, 2021–2025, which aimed to reduce gender inequalities in education by 2025. In 2022, Belize had reformed the primary school curriculum, and the new national curriculum promoted competency-based education for the acquisition of skills that would increase young people's employability when they left school.⁵⁴

49. UNICEF noted that significant gains had been made in teacher training and that 86 per cent of primary school teachers were adequately trained. However, only 11 per cent of teachers at the early childhood level were trained, and the lack of training was even more prevalent in rural areas, which had a larger population of Indigenous children.⁵⁵

50. The United Nations country team noted that the COVID-19 pandemic had affected school-age children in Belize, who had lost over 5,000 hours of face-to-face learning time. Innovative approaches needed to be integrated in all schools in order to reverse the effects of the pandemic on learning.⁵⁶

51. UNESCO recommended that Belize continue strengthening inclusion in, and access to, education, especially for students with disabilities and girls and women.⁵⁷

10. Development and the environment

52. In 2021, UNICEF noted that Belize was extremely vulnerable to climate change and climate-related hazards, which presented an ongoing and future risk that threatened most sectors of the economy. The risk posed a direct threat to the coastal population centres home over 50 per cent of the country's population.⁵⁸

B. Rights of specific persons or groups

1. Women

53. The Human Rights Committee, while noting the draft amendments to the Representation of the People Act that would provide for a quota system to increase the representation of women in the National Assembly, remained concerned about the continued underrepresentation of women in public and political life, particularly in decision-making positions. It recommended that Belize strengthen its efforts to achieve the equal representation of women in political and public life, including through the introduction of temporary special measures such as quotas.⁵⁹

54. The same Committee, while welcoming the efforts of Belize to address gender-based violence, remained concerned at reports of the persistence of the phenomenon, including domestic violence, rape and increasing cases of femicide. It recommended that Belize continue and fortify its efforts to prevent and combat acts of violence against women, including by strengthening the institutions responsible for applying the existing legislative framework. To that end, it should: effectively investigate all cases of violence against women and girls and bring the perpetrators to justice; strengthen measures to encourage and facilitate victims' access to justice and means of protection; continue to improve its research and data-collection methods and systems; expedite the implementation of the National Gender-based Violence Plan of Action, 2017–2020; and ensure the accessibility of the necessary number of shelters, with adequate and sufficient resources to provide effective assistance to victims.⁶⁰

55. The United Nations country team noted that the Government was reviewing the Domestic Violence Act to improve its legal and policy coverage of vulnerable populations. It recommended that Belize step up efforts to revise the legislation on mandatory reporting of incidents of gender-based violence.⁶¹

2. Children

56. The United Nations country team noted that, in 2020, the Government had finalized an action plan to modernize the birth registration system. In partnership with United Nations agencies, it had promoted mobile registration campaigns reaching children born in

Indigenous, asylum-seeking, refugee and migrant communities.⁶² The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) recommended that Belize issue birth certificates to all children on its territory, with special regard to the obstacles faced by children born in Belize to foreign parents seeking international protection and the Indigenous population.⁶³

57. The Human Rights Committee reiterated its regret that corporal punishment was still lawful in the home, in alternative and day-care settings and in juvenile penal institutions. It recommended that Belize take all necessary measures to put an end to corporal punishment in all settings and that it undertake awareness-raising campaigns about the harmful effects of corporal punishment.⁶⁴

58. UNICEF noted that the prevalence of child marriage and early union practices was a major concern, with 1 in 5 girls (20.8 per cent) and 1 in 10 boys (10.7 per cent) aged 15 to 19 years married or in a union.⁶⁵ The United Nations country team reported that, in 2020, the Government had launched its Road Map to End Child Marriage and Early Unions in Belize.⁶⁶

59. The United Nations country team noted that, in 2023, Belize had joined the Regional Initiative: Latin America and the Caribbean Free of Child Labour.⁶⁷

3. Older persons

60. The United Nations country team noted that the ageing population in Belize was growing and that, while comprehensive health services for older persons, including medications for chronic non-communicable diseases, were provided for in specialized geriatric clinics, demand for services outstripped supply.⁶⁸

4. Persons with disabilities

61. The United Nations country team noted that the Ministry of Human Development, Families and Indigenous Affairs was drafting the Belize Disabilities Bill, which would, *inter alia*, establish the commission for persons with disabilities. It recommended that Belize take policy measures to strengthen the inclusion of persons with disabilities and their access education, health services, work and protection during humanitarian or security conditions.⁶⁹

5. Indigenous Peoples

62. The Human Rights Committee was concerned that, in spite of the consent order issued by the Caribbean Court of Justice on 22 April 2015, the recognition of customary land tenure of Maya Indigenous Peoples remained an unresolved dispute. It recommended that Belize comply with the consent order of the Caribbean Court of Justice and recognize and protect customary land tenure of Maya Indigenous Peoples and guarantee, in law and in practice, genuine good faith consultations with Maya Indigenous Peoples occupying customary lands prior to concluding concession agreements with a view to obtaining their free, prior and informed consent.⁷⁰

6. Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex persons

63. The Human Rights Committee welcomed the Supreme Court's 2016 decision in which it recognized the unconstitutionality and discriminatory character of section 53 of the Criminal Code with regard to its criminalization of same-sex sexual conduct between consenting adults. The Committee remained concerned, however, at credible allegations that lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex individuals were stigmatized and were subject to *de facto* discrimination based on their sexual orientation and/or gender identity. The Committee recommended that Belize: repeal section 53 of the Criminal Code; explicitly reject any form of social stigmatization, discrimination and violence against persons based on their sexual orientation or gender identity; facilitate access to justice by victims of harassment, violence and police abuse; ensure the investigation, prosecution and punishment of any act of violence motivated by the victim's sexual orientation or gender identity and ensure the systematic collection of data about such acts.⁷¹

7. Migrants, refugees and asylum-seekers

64. The Human Rights Committee was concerned about section 5 (1) of the Immigration Act (2000), which prohibited entry into the country to certain categories of foreigners based on their health status, disability, sexual orientation or other status, including persons with a physical or psychosocial disability, persons identified by immigration authorities as “homosexuals” and prostitutes.⁷²

65. The same Committee was concerned at the criminalization of immigrants in an irregular situation under the Immigration Act and at reports of indefinite detention of immigrants in an irregular situation, including the detention of unaccompanied minors and convicted persons in shared cells and poor conditions.⁷³ The Subcommittee on Prevention of Torture expressed similar concerns. It recommended that irregular entry by asylum-seekers and migrants not be treated as a criminal act and that detention be exceptional, strictly limited in time and take place in appropriate facilities. It also recommended that the detention of undocumented migrant children cease immediately, that they not be separated from their families unless it was in the best interests of the child and that their needs be properly provided for in a non-custodial environment.⁷⁴

66. The Human Rights Committee was concerned about the very limited number of persons granted refugee status since 2015 and the situation of the significant number of persons who had been recommended for recognition as refugees by the Refugee Eligibility Committee since 2015 and were still awaiting the final approval of the Minister of State for Immigration in 2018.⁷⁵

67. The United Nations country team noted that, in 2022, the Government had implemented an amnesty programme for asylum-seekers and migrants. An estimated 12,765 persons had applied.⁷⁶ UNHCR noted that the first stage of the process, involving receipt of documentation and determination of eligibility, had concluded in March 2023; those determined to be eligible were currently at the interview stage. No date had been set for the conclusion of the process.⁷⁷

68. UNHCR noted that the Government was working to review and propose amendments to the Refugees Act to ensure that national refugee law complied with international standards and to strengthen the refugee status determination process. It recommended that the proposed amendments be approved and incorporated into law.⁷⁸

69. The United Nations country team and UNHCR noted that, even though the legislation of Belize provided for access to the territory and an asylum process for asylum-seekers, in some cases, immigration officers had carried out a *de facto* determination process without having the mandate or competence to do so.⁷⁹ UNHCR recommended that immigration officers at the border and police officers be trained on how to refer cases of persons in need of international protection to the Refugees Department, and that internal protocols be established for referral of those cases.⁸⁰

8. Stateless persons

70. UNHCR noted that, while Belize was a party to the Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons and the Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness, it had not yet enacted legislation establishing a statelessness determination procedure. UNHCR recommended that Belize enact legislation to domesticate the statelessness conventions into Belizean law and provide protection to persons identified as stateless.⁸¹

Notes

¹ [A/HRC/40/14](#), [A/HRC/40/14/Add.1](#) and [A/HRC/40/2](#).

² United Nations country team submission for the universal periodic review of Belize, para. 11. See also [CAT/OP/BLZ/ROSP/1](#), para. 16.

³ [CCPR/C/BLZ/CO/1/Add.1](#), paras. 7, 8 and 23.

⁴ United Nations country team submission, para. 10.

⁵ *Ibid.*, para. 12.

⁶ UNESCO submission for the universal periodic review of Belize, para. 16 (v).

- ⁷ OHCHR, *United Nations Human Rights Report 2022*, pp. 149, 234 and 238–240; *United Nations Human Rights Report 2021*, pp. 270 and 273; *United Nations Human Rights Report 2020*, pp. 304, 322 and 323; *United Nations Human Rights Report 2019*, p. 269; and *United Nations Human Rights Report 2018*, p. 230.
- ⁸ [CCPR/C/BLZ/CO/1/Add.1](#), paras. 5 and 6.
- ⁹ United Nations country team submission, para. 3.
- ¹⁰ [CCPR/C/BLZ/CO/1/Add.1](#), paras. 9 and 10. See also [CMW/C/BLZ/QPR/1-3](#), para. 5.
- ¹¹ United Nations country team submission, para. 16.
- ¹² [CCPR/C/BLZ/CO/1/Add.1](#), paras. 9 and 10.
- ¹³ United Nations country team submission, para. 11.
- ¹⁴ *Ibid.*, para. 35.
- ¹⁵ [CCPR/C/BLZ/CO/1/Add.1](#), paras. 11 and 13.
- ¹⁶ *Ibid.*, paras. 22 and 23.
- ¹⁷ *Ibid.*, paras. 24 and 25. See also [E/ICEF/2022/P/L.6](#), para. 5; and https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/TreatyBodyExternal/DownloadDraft.aspx?key=ohr7fN74RP9hzRnDJqhUdKcKE72pLjsWRWrXn50gPcHERNZZN+hJ4FMHAV6rZzZclkyxu8ItosIIIRiG7ifVOaQ==.
- ¹⁸ [CCPR/C/BLZ/CO/1/Add.1](#), paras. 26 and 27. See also [CAT/OP/BLZ/ROSP/1](#), paras. 58 and 59.
- ¹⁹ United Nations country team submission, para. 40.
- ²⁰ [CAT/OP/BLZ/ROSP/1](#), paras. 27 and 28.
- ²¹ [CCPR/C/BLZ/CO/1/Add.1](#), paras. 32 and 33. See also [CAT/OP/BLZ/ROSP/1](#), paras. 60 and 61.
- ²² *Ibid.*, paras. 28 and 29. See also [CAT/OP/BLZ/ROSP/1](#), paras. 13 and 14.
- ²³ [CAT/OP/BLZ/ROSP/1](#), paras. 62 and 64.
- ²⁴ [CCPR/C/BLZ/CO/1/Add.1](#), paras. 30 and 31. See also [CAT/OP/BLZ/ROSP/1](#), paras. 72–77, 89 and 101–106.
- ²⁵ [CAT/OP/BLZ/ROSP/1](#), paras. 102, 105 and 106.
- ²⁶ *Ibid.*, paras. 97 and 98.
- ²⁷ *Ibid.*, para. 55.
- ²⁸ *Ibid.*, para. 32.
- ²⁹ [CCPR/C/BLZ/CO/1/Add.1](#), paras. 34 and 35. See also [CAT/OP/BLZ/ROSP/1](#), paras. 23 and 24.
- ³⁰ [CAT/OP/BLZ/ROSP/1](#), paras. 43 and 44.
- ³¹ [CCPR/C/BLZ/CO/1/Add.1](#), paras. 32 and 33.
- ³² *Ibid.*, paras. 36 and 37.
- ³³ [CAT/OP/BLZ/ROSP/1](#), paras. 46 and 47.
- ³⁴ *Ibid.*, paras. 33 and 34.
- ³⁵ United Nations country team submission, para. 41. See also [E/ICEF/2022/P/L.6](#), para. 8.
- ³⁶ UNESCO submission, para. 11.
- ³⁷ *Ibid.*, para. 15.
- ³⁸ [CCPR/C/BLZ/CO/1/Add.1](#), paras. 3 (a), 38 and 39. See also [CMW/C/BLZ/QPR/1-3](#), para. 32; www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=NORMLEXPUB:13100:0::NO::P13100_COMMENT_ID,P13100_COUNTRY_ID:4116519,103222; and www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=1000:13100:0::NO:13100:P13100_COMMENT_ID,P13100_COUNTRY_ID:4117287,103222:NO.
- ³⁹ United Nations country team submission, paras. 17 and 18.
- ⁴⁰ See www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=1000:13100:0::NO:13100:P13100_COMMENT_ID,P13100_COUNTRY_ID:4123303,103222.
- ⁴¹ See www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=1000:13100:0::NO:13100:P13100_COMMENT_ID,P13100_COUNTRY_ID:4302591,103222.
- ⁴² [CCPR/C/BLZ/CO/1/Add.1](#), para. 16. See also www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=1000:13100:0::NO:13100:P13100_COMMENT_ID,P13100_COUNTRY_ID:4116389,103222:NO.
- ⁴³ See www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=NORMLEXPUB:13100:0::NO::P13100_COMMENT_ID,P13100_COUNTRY_ID:4116391,103222.
- ⁴⁴ United Nations country team submission, para. 29.
- ⁴⁵ See www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=NORMLEXPUB:13100:0::NO::P13100_COMMENT_ID,P13100_COUNTRY_ID:4116519,103222.
- ⁴⁶ [E/ICEF/2022/P/L.6](#), paras. 2 and 21.
- ⁴⁷ United Nations country team submission, para. 31. See also [E/ICEF/2022/P/L.6](#), para. 18.
- ⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, paras. 24 and 25. See also [E/ICEF/2022/P/L.6](#), para. 11.
- ⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, para. 26.
- ⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, para. 28.
- ⁵¹ [CCPR/C/BLZ/CO/1/Add.1](#), paras. 20 and 21.
- ⁵² UNESCO submission, paras. 2 and 16 (i).

- ⁵³ United Nations country team submission, para. 19. See also UNESCO submission, paras. 3 and 16 (ii).
- ⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, paras. 20 and 22.
- ⁵⁵ [E/ICEF/2022/P/L.6](#), para. 16.
- ⁵⁶ United Nations country team submission, para. 21.
- ⁵⁷ UNESCO submission, para. 16 (iv).
- ⁵⁸ [E/ICEF/2022/P/L.6](#), para. 4. See also United Nations country team submission, para. 8.
- ⁵⁹ [CCPR/C/BLZ/CO/1/Add.1](#), paras. 16 and 17.
- ⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, paras. 18 and 19.
- ⁶¹ United Nations country team submission, para. 37.
- ⁶² *Ibid.*, para. 38. See also [CCPR/C/BLZ/CO/1/Add.1](#), paras. 43 and 44, and UNHCR submission for the universal periodic review of Belize, pp. 6 and 7.
- ⁶³ UNHCR submission, p. 7.
- ⁶⁴ [CCPR/C/BLZ/CO/1/Add.1](#), paras. 43 and 44.
- ⁶⁵ [E/ICEF/2022/P/L.6](#), para. 9.
- ⁶⁶ United Nations country team submission, para. 42.
- ⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, para. 9.
- ⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, para. 27.
- ⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, paras. 29 and 43.
- ⁷⁰ [CCPR/C/BLZ/CO/1/Add.1](#), paras. 45 and 46.
- ⁷¹ *Ibid.*, paras. 14 and 15. See also https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/TreatyBodyExternal/DownloadDraft.aspx?key=ohr7fN74RP9hzRnDJqhUdKcKE72pLjsWRWrXn50gPcHERNZZN+hJ4FMHAV6rZzZclkyxu8ItosIIRiG7ifVOaQ==.
- ⁷² [CCPR/C/BLZ/CO/1/Add.1](#), paras. 12 and 13.
- ⁷³ *Ibid.*, para. 41. See also United Nations country team submission, paras. 44–48, and [CMW/C/BLZ/QPR/1-3](#), paras. 15–18.
- ⁷⁴ [CAT/OP/BLZ/ROSP/1](#), paras. 35–38.
- ⁷⁵ [CCPR/C/BLZ/CO/1/Add.1](#), paras. 40 and 42. See also [CAT/OP/BLZ/ROSP/1](#), paras. 39 and 40; UNHCR submission, p. 4; and https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/TreatyBodyExternal/DownloadDraft.aspx?key=ohr7fN74RP9hzRnDJqhUdKcKE72pLjsWRWrXn50gPcHERNZZN+hJ4FMHAV6rZzZclkyxu8ItosIIRiG7ifVOaQ==.
- ⁷⁶ United Nations country team submission, para. 44.
- ⁷⁷ UNHCR submission, p. 2.
- ⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 2 and 3.
- ⁷⁹ United Nations country team submission, para. 48, and UNHCR submission, p. 5.
- ⁸⁰ UNHCR submission, p. 6.
- ⁸¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 2, 6 and 7.