

CHIEF JUSTICE
ANNUAL REPORT
ON THE JUDICIARY
OF BELIZE
2009-2010

FOREWARD

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ADDRESS DELIVERED
AT THE FORMAL OPENING OF
THE
COURT COMMENCING THE 2010
LEGAL YEAR
OF THE SUPREME COURT

ON

MONDAY 18TH JANUARY, 2010

BY THE HON. CHIEF JUSTICE
ABDULAI CONTEH

INTRODUCTION

YOUR EXCELLENCY, THE GOVERNOR-GENERAL, SIR COLVILLE YOUNG, MY LORDS GONZALEZ J., AWICH J., LUCAS J., LORD J., LEGALL J., MESDAMES JUSTICES ARANA AND HAFIZ-BERTRAM, MR. ATTORNEY GENERAL, YOUR

EXCELLENCIES, MEMBERS OF THE DIPLOMATIC CORPS, MEMBERS OF THE CLERGY, THE OMBUDSMAN, PRESIDENT OF THE BAR ASSOCIATION OF BELIZE, YOUR WORSHIPS, LEARNED SENIOR COUNSEL AND ATTORNEYS, COMMISSIONERS OF THE SUPREME COURT, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN:

IN A REAL SENSE, TODAY WE STAND ON THE CUSP OF TIME. WE HAVE ALL WITNESSED, JUST A FEW WEEKS AGO, THE END OF THE FIRST DECADE OF THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY. A CENTURY THAT HOLDS SO MUCH PROMISE FOR HUMANKIND. WHAT IS HOWEVER UNMISTAKABLE, IS THAT THE FIRST DECADE OF THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY DID NOT END ON AN UNBOUNDED NOTE OF OPTIMISM. COUNTRIES ALL OVER THE WORLD, LARGE AND SMALL, DEVELOPED AND DEVELOPING, ARE IN THE THROES OF RECESSION; THOUGH IN SOME CASES, WITH A GLIMMER OF HOPE OF RECOVERY ON THE HORIZON. IT IS UNDENIABLE HOWEVER, THAT THE GLOBAL ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL DEVELOPMENTS OF THE LAST DECADE HAVE CAST A PALL OF GLOOM OVER MOST COUNTRIES, INCLUDING HERE IN BELIZE.

THE OPENING OF THE LEGAL YEAR OF THE SUPREME COURT IS NOW A FIXED ITEM IN THE JUDICIAL CALENDAR IN BELIZE. IT IS ALMOST INVARIABLY HELD ON THE THIRD MONDAY OF THE FIRST MONTH IN THE NEW YEAR. THE OCCASION ITSELF PRESENTS AN OPPORTUNITY FOR THE CHIEF JUSTICE TO INFORM THE NATION ABOUT THE HEALTH AND PROGRESS OF THE JUDICIARY OVER THE PAST YEAR. THE OCCASION HAS, OVER THE YEARS, COME TO ASSUME A FORMAL FORMAT. IT IS NOT AN OCCASION FOR HISTORICALS OR GRANDSTANDING. THEREFORE IN THE BEST TRADITION OF THE OCCASION, I DO NOT INTEND THIS OCCASION TO BE ANY DIFFERENT.

THE CONTINUING NEED FOR RESOURCES FOR THE JUDICIARY

THE ATTAINMENT OF NEARLY EVERYTHING IS NOW DEPENDENT ON THE AVAILABILITY OF THE NECESSARY FINANCIAL RESOURCES. THIS IS SO EVEN IN THE FACE OF ECONOMIES IN THE GRIP OF RECESSION.

IT IS AGAINST THIS BACKGROUND NOTWITHSTANDING THAT I CANNOT HELP BUT MENTION THE NEED FOR FINANCIAL RESOURCES AND OTHER SUPPORT FOR THE SYSTEM OF ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE. IT HAS ALWAYS BEEN A CONSTANT LAMENT OF MINE ON THIS OCCASION TO BEMOAN

THE ALLOCATION OF FINANCIAL RESOURCES TO THE JUDICIARY IN BELIZE. I HAVE ALWAYS DONE SO NOT WITH ANY MALICE, INGRATITUDE OR TO GIVE OFFENCE, BUT TO STATE AN EVIDENT FACT.

I THEREFORE SAY THAT NO OFFENCE IS INTENDED IF I STATE THAT LAST YEAR WAS NO EXCEPTION IN THE ALLOCATION OF RESOURCES TO THE JUDICIARY. THE TOTAL ALLOCATED TO THE JUDICIARY, INCLUSIVE OF SALARIES, WAGES AND OTHER COSTS, WAS \$7,092,483.00. THIS REPRESENTS 1.03% OF A TOTAL NATIONAL BUDGET OF \$689,760,217.00.

THE PROPER FUNDING OF THE JUDICIARY IS CLEARLY RECOGNIZED IN THE CONSTITUTION OF BELIZE WHERE IT IS PROVIDED THAT THE BUDGETS PRESENTED BY THE SUPREME COURT AND COURT OF APPEAL SHALL BE GIVEN FIRST PRIORITY CALL ON THE CONSOLIDATED REVENUE FUND.

THE DEVIL HERE, AS ALWAYS, HOWEVER, IS IN THE DETAILS. IN THE DETAILED MUNITIAE OF THE PREPARATION OF THE OVERALL NATIONAL BUDGET, IT IS PROBABLE THAT SOME CLEAR AND LEGITIMATE REQUIREMENTS OF THE JUDICIARY WERE OVERLOOKED.

I CAN ONLY CALL FOR MORE CARE AND ATTENTION TO THE FINANCIAL RESOURCES NEEDS OF THE JUDICIARY. A PROPERLY FUNDED AND FUNCTIONING JUDICIARY IS,

AFTER ALL, PART OF THE UNDERPINNING OF THE STABILITY AND INDEED PROSPERITY OF ANY SOCIETY.

IN FACT I AM ADVISED THAT FOR THE CURRENT YEAR THE JUDICIARY WAS PRESENTED WITH A FIGURE WHICH ITSELF IS A 10% REDUCTION ON LAST YEAR'S ALLOCATION AND TOLD TO FIT ITS BUDGETARY REQUIREMENTS INTO THAT FIGURE. THERE IS OF COURSE, THE ADMITTED ECONOMIC RECESSION AND THE CONSEQUENT NATIONAL FINANCIAL SHORTFALLS, WHICH NECESSITATES A BELT-TIGHTENING EXERCISE ACROSS THE BOARD. THIS IS UNDERSTANDABLE, BUT WE MUST CAUTION THE NEED FOR CARE SO THAT THE ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE IS NOT CRIPPLED.

GEORGE WASHINGTON, THE FIRST AMERICAN PRESIDENT, IS REPORTED TO HAVE SAID: *"THE TRUE ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE IS THE FIRMEST PILLAR OF GOOD GOVERNMENT."* THIS IS A TRUISM TO WHICH TIME AND HISTORY HAVE ATTESTED TO IN THE LIVES OF NATIONS THAT ARE CONSIDERED STABLE AND PROSPEROUS TODAY. THEREFORE MONEY SPENT ON THE ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE IS INVESTMENT IN BOTH THE STABILITY AND DEVELOPMENT OF BELIZE.

NEW JUDICIAL APPOINTMENTS

LAST YEAR SAW THE APPOINTMENT OF LEGALL J. AS

AN ADDITIONAL JUDGE OF THE SUPREME COURT. I TAKE THIS OPPORTUNITY, AGAIN, TO WELCOME LEGALL J. HE HAS BROUGHT MUCH NEEDED RELIEF TO A BELEAGUERED JUDICIARY IN TERMS OF LESSENING ITS CASELOAD. IN THE SHORT TIME HE HAS BEEN WITH US, HE HAS ATTENDED WITH DISPATCH TO HEARING AND DECIDING CASES.

THE APPOINTMENT OF LEGALL J. HAS BROUGHT THE COMPLEMENT OF THE JUDGES OF THE SUPREME COURT TO NINE, INCLUDING THE CHIEF JUSTICE. THIS HAS MARKEDLY IMPROVED, RELATIVELY SPEAKING, THE MAN-POWER SITUATION ON THE BENCH. AS A RESULT, THE ISSUE OF DELAYED JUDGMENTS WILL, IT IS HOPED, NOW BE RARE. THIS ISSUE WAS THE CAUSE OF SOME FRICTION BETWEEN THE BENCH AND SOME SECTIONS OF THE BAR. THIS RESULTED IN AN UNPRECEDENTED STATEMENT BEING ISSUED BY THE BENCH LAST SEPTEMBER AS THE ISSUE WAS SEEN AS AN ATTEMPT TO DESTABILIZE THE JUDICIARY. CONCERN WITH DELAY IN THE ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE, INCLUDING DELAY IN THE DELIVERY OF JUDGMENTS IS, WITHOUT DOUBT, A CAUSE FOR LEGITIMATE WORRY. BUT THE ANSWER DOES NOT LIE IN SOME ILL-ADVISED ATTEMPTS TO SUBVERT THE JUDICIARY BY OVERTLY TRYING TO UNDERMINE PUBLIC CONFIDENCE IN IT. RATHER, A MORE PRODUCTIVE AND

CONSTRUCTIVE APPROACH WOULD BE COLLECTIVELY TO SEARCH FOR AND FIND WAYS OF ADDRESSING THE PROBLEM.

I TRUST THAT THIS IS NOW ALL WATER UNDER THE BRIDGE.

I AM HEARTENED TO SAY THAT THE ISSUE OF DELAYED JUDGMENTS IS NOW ALMOST BEHIND US; ALL THE JUDGES ARE NOW CURRENT WITH JUDGMENTS IN CASES THEY HAVE HEARD IN THE PAST, EXCEPT FOR THREE JUDGMENTS FOR WHICH THE PARTICULAR JUDGES HAVE PROMISED TO DELIVER THEM WITHIN A MONTH FROM TODAY. THE ONLY JUDGMENTS WHICH ARE NOW DUE ARE FOR CASES WHICH WERE RECENTLY CONCLUDED IN 2009. I AM ADVISED THAT PENDING JUDGMENTS IN THESE WILL BE DELIVERED BEFORE THE END OF MARCH THIS YEAR.

I TAKE THIS OPPORTUNITY AS WELL FORMALLY TO WELCOME ON BEHALF OF MY COLLEAGUES IN THE SUPREME COURT AND ON MY OWN PERSONAL ACCOUNT, THE APPOINTMENT LAST YEAR, OF MR. DENYS BARROW AS A JUSTICE OF APPEAL OF THE COURT OF APPEAL.

MR. JUSTICE BARROW'S APPOINTMENT BRINGS THE COMPLEMENT OF JUDGES IN THE COURT OF APPEAL TO FIVE.

THE TOTAL COMPLEMENT OF JUDGES FOR THE SUPERIOR COURTS IN BELIZE, THAT IS, THE SUPREME COURT AND THE COURT OF APPEAL, PRESENTLY

THEREFORE STANDS AT FOURTEEN.

THIS, I MAKE NO APOLOGIES TO SAY, IS NOT A LARGE TASK-FORCE, CONSIDERING THE NUMBER AND COMPLEXITY OF CASES, BOTH THE SUPREME COURT AND THE COURT OF APPEAL, HAVE TO DEAL WITH.

SOME NUMBERS ON THE COURTS' WORKLOAD

THE NUMBERS TELL THE STORY: FOR 2009, A TOTAL OF 1,116 CASES WERE COMPLETED. THESE NUMBERS INCLUDE DIVORCE PETITIONS OF WHICH A TOTAL OF 255 WERE FILED IN 2009 AND 215 WERE DISPOSED OF IN THE COURSE OF THE SAME YEAR. THE YEAR HOWEVER, SAW A SURGE IN THE NUMBER OF CASES FILED IN THE SUPREME COURT. FOR THE FIRST TIME THE NUMBER EXCEEDED 1,000 CASES, REACHING A FINAL TALLY OF 1,054. THIS INCREASE NO DOUBT UNDERSCORES THE INCREASINGLY LITIGIOUS NATURE OF BELIZEAN SOCIETY IN AN ENVIRONMENT IN WHICH PEOPLE ARE BEING EVER-MORE CONSCIOUS OF THEIR RIGHTS AND READY TO USE THE COURT SYSTEM TO VINDICATE THEIR CLAIMS.

ON THE CRIMINAL SIDE, THE SUPREME COURT DISPOSED AS WELL, OF 191 CASES TRIED ON INDICTMENT FOR 2009. THE SPIRALLING CRIME RATE HAS RESULTED IN THE SUPREME COURT FOR THE FIRST TIME, SITTING IN ITS

CRIMINAL JURISDICTION ALMOST SIMULTANEOUSLY IN THE THREE DISTRICTS OF THE CENTRAL, SOUTHERN AND NORTHERN. THE AVAILABILITY OF JUDGES MADE THIS POSSIBLE; OTHERWISE CASES WOULD HAVE HAD TO BE TRAVERSED FROM ONE SESSION TO THE OTHER THEREBY FEEDING INTO A BURGEONING BACKLOG OF CASES.

FOR THE SAME PERIOD, THE COURT OF APPEAL HEARD AND DETERMINED A TOTAL OF 71 CASES, INCLUDING BOTH CRIMINAL AND CIVIL APPEALS.

IT CAN THEREFORE, BE SAID THAT THOUGH BELIZE, FROM THE EMPIRICAL EVIDENCE, HAS THE LEAST NUMBER OF JUDGES IN THE REGION IN BOTH THE COURT OF APPEAL AND THE SUPREME COURT, IT IS NOT MERCIFULLY, A JURISDICTION THAT SUFFERS FROM A BACKLOG OF CASES WAITING TO BE TRIED, BUT THE UNDENIABLE FACT IS THAT BELIZE DOES NOT, AT PRESENT, HAVE A SURFEIT OF JUDGES. THE SYSTEM OF ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE COULD STILL PROFIT FROM MORE JUDGES SO AS TO EXPEDITE NOT ONLY THE HEARING OF CASES BUT THE DELIVERY OF JUDGMENTS AS WELL.

IN THIS REGARD I MUST ACKNOWLEDGE WITH APPRECIATION THE CONTINUATION IN HARNESS OF TWO OF OUR JUDGES OF THE SUPREME COURT EVEN AFTER

THEY HAD ATTAINED THE PRESCRIBED AGE FOR RETIREMENT. THEIR DEMITTING OFFICE WITHOUT IMMEDIATE SUITABLE REPLACEMENTS WOULD HAVE HAMSTRUNG THE HEARING OF CASES, ESPECIALLY OF CRIMINAL CASES ON WHICH THESE TWO JUDGES ARE PRESENTLY DEPLOYED.

I TAKE THIS OPPORTUNITY AS WELL TO RECORD OUR GRATITUDE TO THE COMMONWEALTH SECRETARIAT IN LONDON IN AGREEING LAST YEAR TO EXTEND THE SERVICES OF SIR JOHN MURIA AS A JUSTICE OF THE SUPREME COURT FOR A FURTHER TERM. HIS CONTINUED SERVICE HAS PROVED A BOON TO THE ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE. HE IS CURRENTLY A PART OF THE COMPLEMENT OF JUDGES OF THE SUPREME COURT I SPOKE OF EARLIER. WE ARE THEREFORE GRATEFUL FOR THIS ASSISTANCE.

THE WORK OF THE MAGISTRATES COURTS

I WANT AT THIS JUNCTURE TO COMMEND AND SALUTE THE FINE MEN AND WOMEN WHO CONSTITUTE THE RANKS OF THE MAGISTRACY IN BELIZE, INCLUDING THOSE OF THE FAMILY COURT, IN THE WORK THEY CONTINUE TO PERFORM NEARLY EVERY DAY OF THE YEAR. THEY ARE, LIKE THE REST OF US, HUMAN AND THEREFORE NOT PERFECT OR INFALLIBLE. THEY SOMETIMES MAKE MISTAKES. BUT AGAINST

ALL THE ODDS THEY CONTINUE TO STRIVE TO DO JUSTICE. THEY DO NOT, AND I EMPHASIZE THIS, DELIVER INJUSTICE. OUR MAGISTRATES FORM THE VITAL COG IN THE WHEELS OF THE ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE. TRUTH BE TOLD, THE MAGISTRATES BEAR THE BRUNT OF THE SYSTEM. IN THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM, FOR EXAMPLE, THEY ARE IN THE TRENCHES IN THE FRONTLINE IN THE FIGHT AGAINST THE SCOURGE OF CRIME GRIPPING BELIZEAN SOCIETY. REGRETTABLY HOWEVER, THERE IS SOME PERVASIVE LACK OF UNDERSTANDING OR APPRECIATION OF THE VITAL ROLE OF THE MAGISTRATES IN THE SYSTEM OF THE ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE AS A WHOLE. AS EFFORTS ARE IN HAND TO ACHIEVE, ACROSS THE BOARD, AN ALL LEGALLY-QUALIFIED MAGISTRACY, IT IS HOPED THAT THIS JAUNDICED VIEW WILL CHANGE. I CAN SAY WITH CONFIDENCE HOWEVER, THAT OUR MAGISTRATES CONTINUE TO RENDER INVALUABLE YEOMAN SERVICE IN THE CAUSE OF JUSTICE.

HERE AGAIN, THE FIGURES SPEAK VOLUMES FOR THE IMPORTANT ROLE THE MAGISTRATES PERFORM IN THE JUSTICE SYSTEM. IN THE COURSE OF LAST YEAR, 15,590 CRIMINAL CASES WERE LODGED IN THE MAGISTRATES COURTS AND THEY WERE ABLE TO DISPOSE OF A TOTAL OF 12,072 CASES. ON THE CIVIL SIDE, 5,749 CASES WERE LODGED

AND THEY DISPOSED OF 4,420 CASES. THE FAMILY COURT OVER THE SAME PERIOD HANDLED 2,837 CASES. WE ALL KNOW HOW EMOTIONALLY-CHARGED SOME OF THESE CASES CAN BE.

AS CHIEF JUSTICE, I MAKE BOLD TO SAY THAT OUR MAGISTRATES COURTS CERTAINLY DO NOT DISPENSE INJUSTICE. ON THE CONTRARY, THEY EXERCISE EVERY DAY OF THE WORKING WEEK, INVALUABLE FUNCTIONS IN THE CAUSE OF THE ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE.

I SHALL THIS YEAR OMIT REFERENCE TO JUDICIAL STATISTICS DEPICTING THE WORK, BY NUMBER AND TYPE OF CASES, THE COURTS DEAL WITH ANNUALLY. THESE WILL BE FOUND IN THE ANNUAL REPORT ON THE JUDICIARY WHICH WILL BE PUBLISHED SHORTLY.

NEW SOLICITOR GENERAL

LAST YEAR ALSO SAW THE APPOINTMENT OF MR. OSCAR RAMJEET TO THE CRITICAL AND IMPORTANT OFFICE OF SOLICITOR GENERAL OF BELIZE. I TAKE THIS OPPORTUNITY, ON BEHALF OF THE JUDICIARY FORMALLY TO WELCOME HIM. I SAY CRITICAL AND IMPORTANT OFFICE BECAUSE THE SOLICITOR GENERAL IS TRADITIONALLY THE SECOND RANKING LAW OFFICER AFTER THE ATTORNEY GENERAL, OF THE LAW OFFICERS OF THE CROWN. THE ATTORNEY GENERAL'S OFFICE

IS PIVOTAL TO BOTH THE DRAFTING OF LEGISLATION AND REPRESENTING THE STATE IN CIVIL LITIGATION. THE EVIDENCE IS THAT THAT OFFICE IS INCREASINGLY BEING EMBROILED EITHER AS A CLAIMANT OR DEFENDANT IN CIVIL LITIGATION IN THE COURTS, ON BEHALF OF THE GOVERNMENT OF BELIZE. I AM CONFIDENT THAT MR. RAMJEET WILL BRING THE NECESSARY INSPIRATION AND LEADERSHIP TO THE OFFICE OF SOLICITOR GENERAL.

ACCESSION TO THE APPELLATE JURISDICTION OF THE CARIBBEAN COURT OF JUSTICE (CCJ)

IN JUNE 2009, THE PRIME MINISTER INTRODUCED IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, A PROPOSED CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT THAT WOULD ENABLE BELIZE TO REPATRIATE ITS FINAL COURT OF APPEAL FROM HER MAJESTY'S PRIVY COUNCIL IN LONDON, UNITED KINGDOM, TO THE REGION, IN PARTICULAR, TO THE CCJ IN PORT OF SPAIN.

THIS IS IN MANY WAYS A BOLD AND VISIONARY MOVE WHOSE TIME HAS, NO DOUBT, COME. WE IN THE JUDICIARY WELCOME THIS MOVE WHILE AT THE SAME TIME WE ACKNOWLEDGE WITH GRATITUDE THE EXCELLENT SERVICES PROVIDED BY THE BOARD OF THE PRIVY COUNCIL IN ACTING AS THE FINAL APPELLATE COURT FROM ITS CREATION IN 1833, FIRST FOR THE BRITISH EMPIRE, AND

LATER FOR INDEPENDENT COMMONWEALTH COUNTRIES LIKE BELIZE WHO CHOSE TO MAINTAIN THE LEGAL LINK.

FOR BELIZE, THE ASSOCIATION WITH THE PRIVY COUNCIL GOES WAY BACK TO THE 19TH CENTURY, EVEN WELL BEFORE THE ESTABLISHMENT OF OUR PRESENT COURT OF APPEAL. IN THE SEMINAL CASE OF ATTORNEY GENERAL FOR BRITISH HONDURAS v. BRISTOWE (1880) AC 143, THE PRIVY COUNCIL UPHELD THE LOCATION SYSTEM OF LAND ALLOCATION AND TENURE AS PART OF THE HISTORIC COMMON LAW OF THE BAYMEN IN THE BAY SETTLEMENT OF BRITISH HONDURAS. IMPORTANTLY, IN THE LIGHT OF THE CURRENT IRREDENTIST CLAIM BY OUR NEIGHBOUR TO THE WEST, THE PRIVY COUNCIL HELD IN THAT CASE THAT BRITISH TERRITORIAL SOVEREIGNTY HAD BEEN ACQUIRED IN THE THEN BAY SETTLEMENT IN OR BEFORE 1817 WHEN THE CROWN BEGAN SURVEYING AND GRANTING LAND IN THE AREA. INDEPENDENT AND SOVEREIGN BELIZE IS LEGALLY AND POLITICALLY THE SUCCESSOR TO HER BRITANNIC MAJESTY'S TERRITORIAL SOVEREIGNTY IN THE AREA.

THE PRIVY COUNCIL HAS, OVER THE YEARS, PROVIDED BY ALL ACCOUNTS, AN EXCELLENT FINAL APPELLATE COURT AT NO COSTS TO BELIZE, AND ITS DECISIONS, WITHOUT DOUBT,

CLARIFIED AND ENHANCED OUR JURISPRUDENCE IN IMPORTANT AREAS OF THE LAW.

THE REPATRIATION OF BELIZE'S FINAL COURT OF APPEAL TO THE REGION INTO THE APPELLATE STREAM OF THE CCJ'S JURISDICTION, WILL, I AM CONFIDENT, NOT RESULT IN ANY DIMINUTION IN THE QUALITY OF THE JUDGMENTS OF THAT COURT. I AM CONVINCED THAT THERE IS AMPLE LEGAL TALENT AND EXPERIENCE IN THE REGION FOR CARICOM MEMBER STATES TO CONSTITUTE COLLECTIVELY, NOT ONLY THEIR OWN FINAL APPELLATE COURT BUT A COURT FOR THE INTERPRETATION AND APPLICATION OF THE REGIONAL INTEGRATION TREATY OF CHAGURAMAS. THIS IS A CHALLENGE TO WHICH THE COUNTRIES IN THE REGION CAN AND MUST RISE UP TO.

WE IN BELIZE, ARE FORTUNATE THAT THE ISSUE HAS BEEN EMBRACED IN AN OBJECTIVE BI-PARTISAN MANNER SINCE THE CONCLUSION OF THE AGREEMENT ESTABLISHING THE CCJ IN ST. MICHAEL IN BARBADOS, ON 14TH FEBRUARY 2001. THIS AGREEMENT WAS SIGNED ON BEHALF OF BELIZE BY A FORMER PRIME MINISTER AND IN A SPIRIT OF MATURE AND RESPONSIBLE BI-PARTISANSHIP, IT IS NOW BEING BROUGHT TO FLOWER UNDER ANOTHER PRIME MINISTER. TO THE CREDIT OF ALL SIDES, CONSENSUS ON THIS ISSUE HAS

NOT TURNED INTO DISSENT FOR PARTISAN POLITICAL GAINS, UNLIKE THE CASE IN OTHER COUNTRIES ON THIS VITAL REGIONAL ISSUE.

CRIME AND THE ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE

THERE CAN BE NO DOUBT THAT FROM MEDIA REPORTS AND THE DAILY GRIND IN BOTH THE MAGISTRATES AND SUPREME COURT, THAT CRIMINALS ARE STILL ACTIVE AND IN BUSINESS. IT IS HOWEVER HEARTENING TO HEAR FROM THE COMMISSIONER OF POLICE HIMSELF, THAT 2009 SAW A REDUCTION, HOWEVER MODEST, OF OVERALL CRIMINAL ACTIVITY IN THE COUNTRY. THE COMMISSIONER OF POLICE AND HIS OFFICERS AND MEN AND WOMEN OF THE BELIZE POLICE DEPARTMENT SHOULD BE CONGRATULATED FOR THIS MODEST ACHIEVEMENT. ANYTHING THAT MAKES THE CRIMINAL LESS BUSY IS A CAUSE FOR CELEBRATION.

IT IS HOWEVER MANIFEST THAT THERE ARE CRIMINAL ELEMENTS ABROAD AND ABOUT WHO ARE DETERMINED TO HARASS AND DISTRESS AND IN SOME CASES, WANTONLY MURDER PEOPLE AND DELIBERATELY ROB, HARM AND RAPE THE UNSUSPECTING OR VULNERABLE. IT IS MOST UNACCEPTABLE AND INTOLERABLE THAT THERE ARE GRENADE THROWERS LURKING IN THEIR LAIRS WAITING TO PREY ON THE UNSUSPECTING

PUBLIC. CRIME IS IN AND OF ITSELF UGLY AND WHEN IT DESCENDS TO GRENADE-THROWING, IN PUBLIC PLACES, IT PUTS ON THE DECIDEDLY UGLY AND UNACCEPTABLE FACE OF DEPRAVITY AND SHOWS THE CRIMINAL COWARD AT HIS WORST.

IT IS THE SITUATION THAT THE CRIME SITUATION IS GRIM WHEN THIS IS COMPOUNDED WITH REPORTS OF POWERFUL FIELD GUNS MISSING FROM THE ARMORY OF THE BDF. IT MUST GIVE CAUSE TO WONDER AND WORRY FOR THESE WEAPONS COULD WELL BE IN THE HANDS OF CRIMINAL ELEMENTS.

HOWEVER, DESPITE THE SEEMING LULL IN SERIOUS CRIMINAL ACTIVITY IN 2009, THE COURTS WERE KEPT FULLY OCCUPIED BY CRIMINALS AND WOULD-BE CRIMINALS.

I HAD EARLIER MENTIONED THE FIGURE OF 15,590 AS THE NUMBER OF CRIMINAL CASES FILED IN THE MAGISTRATES COURTS AND THE FIGURE 12,072 AS THE NUMBER OF SUCH CASES THEY DISPOSED OF IN 2009.

IN THE SUPREME COURT, THE FIGURES BY CATEGORY OF CRIME ARE EQUALLY GRIM FOR 2009: A TOTAL OF 56 CASES FOR MURDER WERE TRIED IN THE SUPREME COURT, WITH A TOTAL OF 39 CASES FOR ATTEMPTED MURDER, AND A TOTAL OF 42 CASES FOR RAPE, CARNAL KNOWLEDGE AND UNLAWFUL CARNAL KNOWLEDGE WITH AN ADDITIONAL 34 OTHER CASES

FOR SERIOUS CRIMINAL OFFENCES. THIS TALLY OF SERIOUS CRIMINAL CASES ACTUALLY TRIED IN THE SUPREME COURT, IN THE COURSE OF ONE YEAR ALONE, WITHOUT DOUBT, DEPICTS A DIRE SITUATION WITH REGARDS TO CRIME IN BELIZE.

THERE IS EVIDENTLY NO MAGIC BULLET AS A SOLUTION TO CRIMINAL ACTIVITIES. BUT IT IS UNDOUBTED THAT A SUSTAINED CAMPAIGN AND COOPERATION BETWEEN, ON THE ONE HAND, THE COMMUNITY, THE POLICE AND THE COURTS WITH SUPPORT FROM THE GOVERNMENT, WILL PUSH BACK THE SERRIED RANKS OF CRIMINALS ON THE OTHER HAND, AND MAKE THE STREETS AND HOMES AND OUR PERSONS SAFE AGAIN.

THIS WAS THE WINNING FORMULA IN THE OLD DAYS, WHEN COMMUNITY POLICING WAS AT ITS BEST. IT CAN STILL BE MADE TO WORK. IT IS BELIEVED THAT THE CRIMINAL ELEMENTS IN SOCIETY ARE, BY AND LARGE, KNOWN. THEREFORE, SUSTAINED COOPERATION BETWEEN THE POLICE AND THE COMMUNITY AT EVERY LEVEL, IS A POWERFUL WEAPON IN THE FIGHT AGAINST CRIME.

THE CRIMES CONTROL COUNCIL, HAS SINCE ITS RECENT RELAUNCH UNDER MR. MICHAEL YOUNG SC, BEEN VIGOROUSLY SEARCHING FOR WAYS TO MEET THE MENACE OF

CRIME. I WAS INVITED IN THE COURSE OF LAST YEAR TO TESTIFY BEFORE THE COUNCIL AND MAKE A PRESENTATION TO IT. I WAS GRATEFUL FOR THE OPPORTUNITY AND CAME AWAY WITH THE CLEAR IMPRESSION THAT THE COUNCIL'S RECOMMENDATIONS WILL MAKE SOME DIFFERENCE IF IMPLEMENTED. WE EAGERLY AWAIT THE COUNCIL'S RECOMMENDATIONS.

THE FIGHT AGAINST CRIME AFFECTS EVERYONE: IT IS VITAL THAT THIS BATTLE BE WON.

THE NEED FOR CONTINUING JUDICIAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING

I HAVE HAD OPPORTUNITY IN THE PAST ON THIS OCCASION TO ISSUE A PLANTIVE CALL FOR MORE JUDICIAL EDUCATION IN BELIZE. THE NEED FOR THIS CANNOT BE OVERSTATED. THIS IS SO BECAUSE, LAW, BOTH AS A DISCIPLINE OF STUDY AND A PRACTICAL PROFESSION, IS AN EVER-EVOLVING FIELD. IT IS THEREFORE IMPERATIVE THAT BOTH PRACTITIONERS AND THE BENCH ARE UP TO DATE WITH DEVELOPMENTS IN THE MANIFOLD AREAS OF THE LAW.

THIS IS THE RATIONALE FOR CONTINUING LEGAL AND JUDICIAL EDUCATION. FOR JUDGES IN PARTICULAR, IT WOULD NOT ONLY HELP HONE THEIR SKILLS ANS IMPROVE THEIR KNOWLEDGE, IT WOULD ALSO EXPOSE THEM TO THE BEST PRACTICES THAT MUST BE OBSERVED ON THE BENCH.

HOWEVER, BECAUSE OF FINANCIAL AND OTHER CONSTRAINTS, BELIZE REMAINS SINGULAR IN THE REGION, IN NOT HAVING A FORMAL INSTITUTE OR ARRANGEMENT FOR JUDICIAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING. TO SAY THAT EVEN JUDGES NEED TRAINING IS NOW A UNIVERSALLY ACCEPTED TRUTH. WHAT TRAINING THERE IS FOR JUDGES AND MAGISTRATES IN BELIZE AT THE MOMENT IS AD HOC AND OFTEN IMPROVISED AND SPORADIC.

AGAIN, BECAUSE OF FINANCIAL CONSTRAINTS, BELIZE IS NOT EVEN ABLE TO TAKE UP OFFERS FOR JUDICIAL TRAINING PROVIDED BY THE COMMONWEALTH JUDICIAL EDUCATION INSTITUTE IN OTTAWA, CANADA.

THE CASE FOR A LOCAL INSTITUTE OF JUDICIAL EDUCATION AND TRIANING IS, IN MY ESTIMATION, COMPELLING: BOTH JUDGES AND MAGISTRATES, THE REGISTRY AND OTHER SUPPORT STAFF WILL UNDOUBTEDLY BENEFIT. THIS CAN ONLY REDOUND TO THE BENEFIT OF THE ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE IN THE ROUND. IT WILL HELP SENSITIZE JUDGES TO GENDER ISSUES AND ETHNIC DIVERSITY.

CONFERENCES AND VISITS

LAST YEAR, FROM 25TH TO 27TH JUNE I, TOGETHER WITH MURIA J. AND THE REGISTRAR, ATTENDED IN PORT OF SPAIN, TRINIDAD & TOBAGO, THE INAUGURAL MEETING OF THE CARIBBEAN ASSOCIATION OF JUDICIAL OFFICERS (CAJO).

THIS MARKED THE FORMAL LAUNCHING OF CAJO AS THE UMBRELLA ORGANIZATION FOR ALL JUDICIAL OFFICERS, INCLUDING JUDGES OF EVERY LEVEL, MAGISTRATES AND REGISTRARS AND COURT ADMINISTRATION. THE CONCEPT AND VISION OF CAJO ARE LAUDABLE AS IT WOULD PROVIDE A PLATFORM FOR THE EXCHANGE OF VIEWS, IDEAS AND NETWORKING BETWEEN THE RELEVANT JUDICIAL OFFICERS SO AS TO IMPROVE THE ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE IN THE CARIBBEAN REGION. CAJO UNDOUBTEDLY ADDS AN IMPETUS TO THE MOVE FOR MORE MEANINGFUL REGIONAL INTEGRATION.

IN JUNE 2009, THE SUPREME COURT LIBRARIAN, MRS. ERROLYN GRINAGE, ATTENDED THE 24TH ANNUAL CONFERENCE OF THE CARIBBEAN ASSOCIATION OF LAW LIBRARIANS (CARALL) IN BARBADOS. THIS ENABLED HER TO ESTABLISH NETWORK LINKS WITH HER COLLEAGUE LAW LIBRARIANS IN THE REGION AND TO ATTEND A SEMINAR WHICH INCLUDED A PRESENTATION ON LAW REPORTING.

IN THE COURSE OF 2009, THE SUPREME COURT LIBRARY WAS ALSO THE RECEIPT OF LAW BOOKS FROM VARIOUS DONORS TO WHOM I TAKE THE OPPORTUNITY TO EXPRESS GRATEFUL THANKS. THE FORTHCOMING ANNUAL REPORT WILL RECORD THESE GIFTS AND THE DONORS.

FROM THE 1ST TO 5TH SEPTEMBER, MAGISTRATE ALBERTA PEREZ OF THE FAMILY COURT, ATTENDED A CONFERENCE IN MANAGUA, NICARAGUA ENTITLED "RESTORATIVE JUSTICE."

ON 5TH SEPTEMBER 2009, HAFIZ-BERTRAM J. REPRESENTED ME AT THE 41ST MEETING OF THE COUNCIL OF LEGAL EDUCATION HELD IN GRENADA.

AND FROM THE 26TH SEPTEMBER TO 3RD OCTOBER, AWICH J. AND MAGISTRATE SHARON FRASER ATTENDED THE 15TH TRIENNIAL CONFERENCE OF THE COMMONWEALTH MAGISTRATES AND JUDGES ASSOCIATION (CMJA) HELD IN TURKS AND CAICOS ISLAND.

APPRECIATION AND CONCLUSION

LET ME CONCLUDE THIS ADDRESS BY EXPRESSING ON BEHALF OF THE JUDICIARY, SINCERE THANKS AND APPRECIATION TO ALL THOSE WHO IN SO MANY DIVERSE WAYS CONTRIBUTED TO THE FUNCTIONING OF THE COURTS AND THE ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE.

ON BEHALF OF MY COLLEAGUES AND ON MY OWN ACCOUNT, AS WELL AS THE STAFF OF THE REGISTRY, THE MAGISTRACY AND THE FAMILY COURT, SAY A SPECIAL "THANK YOU" TO ALL THE MEMBERS OF THE CLERGY WHO ORGANIZED AND FACILITATED THE

ECUMENICAL SERVICE OF WORSHIP THAT WAS CONDUCTED A SHORT WHILE AGO AT THE HOLY REDEEMER CATHEDRAL HERE IN BELIZE CITY. WE THANK YOU ALL THE MEMBERS OF THE CLERGY FOR THEIR PRAYERS AND INVOCATION OF GOD'S GRACE AND GUIDANCE AS WE START THE NEW LEGAL YEAR.

I THANK AS WELL ALL MY COLLEAGUES ON THE BENCH, THE JUSTICES OF THE COURT OF APPEAL AND THEIR LORDSHIPS IN THE PRIVY COUNCIL, FOR THEIR STEADFAST SERVICE IN THE CAUSE OF JUSTICE IN BELIZE.

MY GRATEFUL THANKS AND APPRECIATION GO AS WELL TO THE CHIEF MAGISTRATE AND ALL THE OTHER MAGISTRATES AND THEIR SUPPORTING STAFF, AS WELL AS TO THE DIRECTOR OF THE FAMILY COURT, THE MAGISTRATES OF THAT COURT AND THEIR SUPPORTING STAFF.

I SAY "THANK YOU" ALSO TO THE COMMISSIONERS OF THE SUPREME COURT AND JUSTICES OF THE PEACE WHO AS ALWAYS RENDER VALUABLE SERVICES TO THE ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE IN DIVERSE WAYS.

MR. COMMISSIONER OF POLICE TO YOU PERSONALLY AND YOUR OFFICERS, ESPECIALLY THOSE YOU DETAIL FOR SERVICE IN THE COURTS AND OF COURSE THOSE MEN

AND WOMEN WHO FORMED THE SPLENDID PARADE I HAD THE HONOUR TO INSPECT A SHORT WHILE AGO, I SAY A BIG "THANK YOU!"

I WOULD ALSO LIKE TO THANK THE STAFF OF THE REGISTRY AND THE SUPREME COURT LIBRARY WHO CONTINUE, AS ALWAYS, TO TOIL AND LABOUR IN THE VINEYARD OF JUSTICE.

MY GRATEFUL THANKS GO AS WELL TO MS. YVETTE DOBSON AND THE JANITORIAL STAFF WHO LABOUR TO KEEP THE COURTS AND OFFICES CLEAN. OUR THANKS AND APPRECIATION GO ALSO TO THE STAFF OF ANCHOR SECURITY COMPANY FOR KEEPING WATCH NIGHT AND DAY ON THE COURTS!

AGAIN, TO RUN THE RISK I ALWAYS DO AT THIS JUNCTURE EVERY YEAR, THAT IS, TO SOUND A TRIFLE SELF-SERVING, I VENTURE TO SAY A VERY BIG "THANK YOU" TO MS. JULIE STAINE, MY INDEFATIGABLE SECRETARY BEHIND WHOSE UNFLAPPABLE EXTERIOR LIES A DEEP WELL OF SUPPORT WHICH SUSTAINS MY DAILY WORK. SHE ALWAYS RISES TO THE OCCASION NO MATTER HOW DAUNTING! THANK YOU JULIE!

FINALLY MR. ATTORNEY, I WOULD LIKE TO TAKE THIS OPPORTUNITY TO THANK YOU PERSONALLY AND THROUGH YOU THE ADMINISTRATION FOR THE SUPPORT RENDERED TO

THE JUDICIARY OVER THE COURSE OF LAST YEAR.

A SWAN SONG?

ON A PERSONAL NOTE, PLEASE ALLOW ME BEFORE I FINALLY CONCLUDE TO OBSERVE THAT IN SOME QUARTERS THERE HAS BEEN SOME FEVERISH SPECULATION AS TO MY DEMITTING OFFICE AS CHIEF JUSTICE AND TALK OF EVEN A POSSIBLE SUCCESSOR!

LET ME SAY THIS: THE CONSTITUTION CONTAINS PROVISIONS ON THE TENURE OF JUDGES, INCLUDING THE CHIEF JUSTICE. I SHOULD THINK THAT DECORUM, PROTOCOL AND THE INTERESTS OF THE DUE AND PROPER ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE, CONSONANT WITH JUDICIAL INTEGRITY AND INDEPENDENCE AND RESPECT FOR JUDICIAL OFFICE, WOULD NOT REDUCE THE ISSUE OF THE CONTINUANCE IN OFFICE OF A JUDGE OR HIS RETIREMENT, TO A MATTER OF WHAT CAN ONLY BE DESCRIBED AS UNWHOLESOME SPECULATION.

FOR ME, AS CHIEF JUSTICE, IT HAS BEEN AN HONOUR AND PRIVILEGE TO SERVE THE PEOPLE OF BELIZE. WHEN THE TIME, AS CONSTITUTIONALLY PROVIDED FOR ME TO DEMIT OFFICE COMES, MAKE NO MISTAKE, I SHALL, BY GOD'S GRACE, DO SO, FORTIFIED IN THE KNOWLEDGE THAT I HAVE THROUGHOUT MY TENURE AS CHIEF JUSTICE, BEEN

UNFAILINGLY LOYAL TO THE JUDICIAL OATH: "TO UPHOLD THE CONSTITUTION AND THE LAW, AND CONSCIENTIOUSLY, IMPARTIALLY AND TO THE BEST OF MY ABILITY, DISCHARGE MY DUTIES AS CHIEF JUSTICE AND THAT I DID RIGHT TO ALL MANNER OF PEOPLE, WITHOUT FEAR OR FAVOUR, AFFECTION OR ILL-WILL."

I AM, OF COURSE, HUMAN AND NOT INFALLIBLE AND IT IS POSSIBLE THAT IN SOME INSTANCES, I MIGHT NOT HAVE QUITE MEASURED UP TO SOME EXPECTATIONS. BUT I CAN SAY WITHOUT EQUIVOCATION THAT IN EVERY INSTANCE I PERSONALLY TRIED AND CONSTANTLY EXHORTED MY COLLEAGUES AND THE MAGISTRATES AS WELL, TO JUDGE FAIRLY AND IMPARTIALLY WITHOUT FEAR OR FAVOUR, AFFECTION OR ILL-WILL IN KEEPING WITH JUDICIAL INDEPENDENCE AND INTEGRITY. THIS IS THE ABIDING AND UNALTERABLE DUTY THE JUDICIARY OWES TO THE PEOPLE OF BELIZE.

THIS POSITION IS REPRESENTED THROUGHOUT THE AGES BY A FIGURE REPRESENTING LADY JUSTICE BLINDFOLDED WITH A SWORD IN ONE HAND AND THE SCALES OF JUSTICE HELD EVENLY IN THE OTHER. AND THE ANCIENT DESCRIBED IT THUS: FIAT JUSTITIA, RUAT COELUM. (LET JUSTICE BE DONE, EVEN THOUGH THE HEAVENS FALL.)

**THIS IS WHAT THE
JUDICIARY TRIES TO DO IN
BELIZE.**

**I NOW DECLARE THE NEW
LEGAL YEAR OPEN.**

**MR. ATTORNEY, YOU MAY
NOW MOVE THE MOTION FOR
THE ADJOURNMENT.**

Privy Council

The Privy Council, which is the final court for Belize, sits in the United Kingdom. Appeals from the Court of Appeal lie to the Privy Council, sometimes as of right and sometimes with leave of the Court. The Privy Council is made up primarily of members of the United Kingdom's House of Lords. In recent years there have been appointments from the Commonwealth jurisdiction. The membership is predominantly male.

PRIVY COUNCIL APPEALS 2008 – 2009

NO. OF APPEALS LODGED IN 2008

Criminal Appeals	3 lodged
Criminal Appeals	1 disposed of
Civil Appeals	2 lodged
Civil Appeals	0 disposed of

OUTSTANDING CRIMINAL CASE

Criminal Appeal No: 7 of 2003 - Earlin White, Simeon Sampson, SC for Appellant

Criminal Appeal No: 17 of 2006 – Kirk Gordon, Simeon Sampson SC for Appellant

Criminal Appeal No. 3 of 2007 - Michael Faux, Kevin Arthurs, Esq for the Appellant.

Criminal Appeal No. 24 of 2007 - Elvis Myers, Hubert E. Lexington SC for the Appellant.

OUTSTANDING CIVIL CASES

Civil Appeal No. 11 of 2002 – Rhett Fuller v Attorney General. Eamon Courtenay SC for Appellant and Ms. Priscilla Banner for Respondent.

Civil Appeal No: 25 of 2007 - Kuo, Chun Hung v Attorney General. Wilfred P. Elrington, SC for Appellant and Ms. Priscilla Banner for Respondent.

Civil Appeal No: 28 of 2007 - George Betson v Rupert Martin Marin. Hubert E. Elrington, SC for the Appellant and Mrs. Magali Marin Young for the Respondent

Civil AppealNo. 17 of 2008 - Prime Minister and Minister of Finance v Albert Vellos, Dorla Dawson, Yasin Shoman and Darrel Carter. Ms. Lois Young Barrow SC for Appellants and Mrs. Lisa Shoman, Anthony Sylvestre Esq and Kevin Arthurs Esq for the Respondents.

Civil Appeal No. 18 of 2008 - Belize Bank Ltd v Attorney General, Minister of Finance, Hon. Mr. Justice Awich, Jaime Alpuche, Jeffrey Locke and the Central Bank of Belize. Andrew Marshalleck Esq for Appellant, Ms. Lois Young Barrow SC for First and Second Respondents and Michael Young SC for the Third, Fourth and Fifth Respondents.

Civil Appeal No. 29 of 2008 - RBTT Trust Ltd v Cedric Flowers. Hamel Smith QC and Philip Zuniga SC for Appellant and Eamon Courtenay SC and MS. Robertha Magnus-Usher for Respondent.

Civil Appeal No. 36 of 2008 - Murli Mahitani v Kevin Castillo. Hubert E. Elrington SC for Appellant and Derek Courtenay SC and Ms. Vanessa Retreage for Respondent.

Civil Appeal No: 8 of 2009 – Belize Electricity Limited v Public Utilities Commission – Michael Young SC for Appellant and Derek Courtenay SC for the Respondent

APPEALS LODGED IN 2009

Criminal Appeals	1 lodged
Criminal Appeals	1 disposed of
Civil Appeals	5 lodged
Civil Appeals	1 disposed of

Court of Appeal

Section 94 (Chapter 7) of the Constitution of Belize establishes Belize's Supreme Court of Judicature and Court of Appeal.

The Court of Appeal exercises an appellate jurisdiction over both the High Court and Magistracy and has jurisdiction and powers to hear and determine appeals in civil and criminal matters. While this Court is established with a President and four Justices of Appeal, a panel of three Justices sits at any one time. The present composition is made up of 2 resident Belizean and 3 visiting Justices of the Commonwealth Caribbean in addition to the President.

The Court of Appeal may sit in Belize 4 times for the year; however, in practice it usually sits 3 times. A lot depends on the number of cases on its calendar.

COURT OF APPEAL 2009

DATE OF SITTING	CRIMINAL APPEALS	CIVIL APPEALS	TOTAL
10 th March	6	15	21
1 st June	9	17	26
13th October	9	11	20
Single Judge	0	4	4
TOTAL	24	47	71

Chief Justice Annual Report on the Judiciary of Belize 2009

No. of appeals lodged in 2008 - Criminal Appeals11 lodged
Criminal Appeals14 disposed of

Civil Appeals36 lodged
Civil Appeals31 disposed of

No. of Appeals lodged in 2009 - Criminal Appeals27 lodged
Criminal Appeals14 disposed of

Civil Appeals30 lodged
Civil Appeals29 disposed of

Supreme Court

The Belize Supreme Court has been in existence since 1843 and was formally established by section 94(5) of the Belize Constitution on Independence, the 21st of September 1981.

The judiciary, which is one of the three separate arms of the State, is headed by the Chief Justice, who has overall responsibility for the administration of justice in Belize. There are nine Supreme Court Judges including the Chief Justice.

In the Civil Jurisdiction the judge sits alone and hears and determines matters. These proceedings are governed by Civil Procedure Rules.

The Supreme Court: has unlimited original jurisdiction to hear and determine any civil or criminal proceedings under any law. In its

criminal jurisdiction, a Judge sits with a jury made up of 12 members for capital offence cases and made up of 9 members for non-capital offence cases. The Court sits 4 times or holds four sessions in the calendar year in each of the 3 judicial districts. The country is divided into three districts for this purpose. These are the Northern, Southern, and Central districts. This affords participation of all citizens in exercising their civil duties as jurors. In this very way, accused persons can truly be tried by their peers, which is a fundamental principle in the jury trial system.

The Court also has an appellate jurisdiction in which it hears civil and criminal appeals from the Magistrates' Court. These appeals are heard by a judge who sits alone.

**1,116 CIVIL CASES WERE DETERMINED BY THE SUPREME COURT
FOR THE YEAR 2009**

CIVIL

NUMBER OF CIVIL CASES FILED DURING PERIOD 2008-2009

Number of Superior Actions/Claims filed in 2008.....	889
Number of Claims filed in 2009.....	1054
Number of Claims actually completed during 2008	742
Number of Claims actually completed during 2009	865
Number of Summary Actions completed during 2009.....	3
Applications for Case Management filed in 2009... ..	153
Case Management disposed of in 2009	115

DIVORCE

NUMBER OF DIVORCE PETITIONS FILED DURING THE PERIOD 2008-2009

Number of Divorce Petitions filed in 2008	248
Number of Divorce Petitions filed in 2009.....	255
Number of Divorce Petitions disposed of in 2008.....	217
Number of Divorce Petitions disposed of in 2009.....	215

ADOPTIONS

NUMBER OF ADOPTIONS FILED DURING THE PERIOD 2008 -2009

Number of Adoptions filed in 2008	34
Number of Adoptions filed in 2009	24
Number of Adoptions approved in 2008	47
Number of Adoptions approved in 2009	27

INFERIOR COURT OF APPEALS

Number of Inferior Court Appeals Notices lodged in 2008	71
Number of Inferior Court Appeals disposed of in 2008	2
Number of Inferior Court Appeals Notices lodged in 2009.....	80
Number of Inferior Court Appeals disposed of in 2009... ..	6

CORONERS INQUEST LODGED

Number of Coroners Inquests lodged in 2008.	1
Number of Coroners Inquest lodged in 2009	6

191 CRIMINAL CASES WERE DETERMINED BY THE SUPREME COURT FOR THE YEAR 2009

MURDER CASES

There were 56 Murder cases dealt with by the Court in 2009 as follows:

	FEMALE	MALE
29 arose in the Belize District)	1	38
) Central District		
10 arose in the Cayo District)	39	
6 arose in the Corozal District)		
) Northern District	1	9
4 arose in the Orange Walk District)	10	
5 arose in the Stann Creek District)		
) Southern District	0	7
2 arose in the Toledo District)	7	
TOTAL	56	

ATTEMPTED MURDER CASES

There were 39 Attempted Murder Cases dealt with in 2009

	FEMALE	MALE
22 arose in the Belize District)	3	24
) Central District		
5 arose in the Cayo District)	27	
5 arose in the Corozal District)	0	9
) Northern District		
4 arose on the Orange Walk District)	9	
2 arose in the Stann Creek District)	0	3
)		
1 arose in the Toledo District)	3	
TOTAL	39	

ROBBERY CASES

There were 5 Robbery cases dealt with by the Court in 2009 as follows:

	FEMALE	MALE
2 arose in the Belize District)	0	3
) Central District		
1 arose in the Cayo District)	3	
0 arose in the Corozal District)	0	2
) Northern District		
2 arose in the Orange Walk District)	5	
0 arose in the Stann Creek District)	0	0
) Southern District		
0 arose in the Toledo District)	0	
TOTAL	5	

**RAPE CASES(R), CARNAL KNOWLEDGE (CK),
UNLAWFUL CARNAL KNOWLEDGE (UCK)**

There were 10 Rape, 26 Carnal Knowledge and 6 Unlawful Carnal Knowledge cases dealt with by the Court in 2009 as follows:

	R	MALE CK	UCK
4 (R), 4 (CK), 0 (UCK) arose in the) Belize District)			
) Central District	4	8	1
0 (R), 4 (CK), 1 (UCK) arose in the) Cayo District)			
)		13	
1 (R), 6(CK), 4 (UCK) arose in the) Corozal District)	3	12	4
) Northern District			
2 (R), 6 (CK), 0 (UCK) arose in the) Orange Walk)			
)		19	
0 (R), 2 (CK), 1 (UCK) arose in the) Stann Creek District)			
) Southern District	3	6	1
3 (R), 4 (CK), 0 (UCK) arose in the) Toledo District)			
		10	
TOTAL	42	-----	

MANSLAUGHTER CASES

There were 5 Manslaughter cases dealt with by the Court in 2009 as follows:

		FEMALE	MALE
1 arose in the Belize District)		
	) Central District	1	3
3 arose in the Cayo District)		
	)		4
1 arose in the Corozal District)		
	) Northern District	0	1
0 arose in the Orange Walk District))		
	)		1
0 arose in the Stann Creek District))		
	) Southern District	0	0
0 arose in the Toledo District)		
	)		0

	TOTAL	5	

MANSLAUGHTER BY NEGLIGENCE CASES

There were 10 Manslaughter by Negligence cases dealt with in 2009 as follows:

		FEMALE	MALE
1 arose in the Belize District)		
	) Central District	0	3
2 arose in the Cayo District)		
	)		3
1 arose in the Corozal District)		
	) Northern District	0	4
3 arose in the Orange Walk District))		
	)		4
1 arose in the Stann Creek District))		
	) Southern District	1	2
2 arose in the Toledo District)		
	)		3
	TOTAL	10	

OTHER CASES

There were 34 other cases dealt with by the Court in 2009 as follows:

	FEMALE	MALE
18 arose in the Belize District)		
3 arose in the Cayo District)	2	19
7 arose in the Corozal District)		
4 arose in the Orange Walk District)		
2 arose in the Stann Creek District)		
0 arose in the Toledo District)		
	21	
		11
		11
	0	2
	2	
TOTAL		34

NUMBER OF CASE BROUGHT BEFORE THE SUPREME COURT DURING THE YEAR 2009

CENTRAL DISTRICT CRIMINAL CASES 2009

SESSIONS	MURDER	ATTEMPTED MURDER	MANSLAUGHTER	MAN SLAUGHTER BY NEGLIGENCE	ROBBERY	RAPE CARNAL KNOWLEDGE UNLAWFUL CARNAL KNOWLEDGE	OTHER CASES	TOTAL
January	6	7	0	0	1	R 1 CK 2 UCK 1	4	22
April	13	9	1	1	0	R 1 CK 3	6	34
June	9	9	1	0	1	R 2 CK 2 UCK 0	7	31
October	11	2	2	2	1	R 0 CK 2 UCK 0	4	24
TOTAL	39	27	4	3	3	R 4 CK 9 UCK 1	21	111

NUMBER OF CASES BROUGHT BEFORE THE SUPREME COURT DURING THE YEAR 2009

NORTHERN DISTRICT CRIMINAL CASES 2009

SESSIONS	MURDER	ATTEMPTED MURDER	MANSLAUGHTER	MANSLAUGHTER BY NEGLIGENCE	ROBBERY	RAPE CARNAL KNOWLEDGE UNLAWFUL CARNAL KNOWLEDGE	OTHER CASES	TOTAL
March	7	6	1	1	1	R 1 CK 2 UCK 4	7	30
May	2	0	0	1	1	R 0 CK 4 UCK 0	3	11
September	0	0	0	2	0	R 1 CK 2 UCK 0	1	6
November	1	3	0	0	0	R 1 UCK 0 CK 4	0	9
TOTAL	10	9	1	4	2	R 3 CK 12 UCK 4	11	56

NUMBER OF CASES BROUGHT BEFORE THE SUPREME COURT DURING THE YEAR 2009

SOUTHERN DISTRICT CRIMINAL CASES 2009

SESSIONS	MURDER	ATTEMPTED MURDER	MANSLAUGHTER	MANSLAUGHTER BY NEGLIGENCE	ROBBERY	RAPE CARNAL KNOWLSDGE UNLAWFUL CARNAL KNOWLEDGE	OTHER CASES	TOTAL
February	5	3	0	1	0	R 1 CK 2 UCK 1	1	14
May	1	0	0	1	0	R 1 CK 2	0	5
July	0	0	0	0	0	R 1 CK 1	0	2
November	1	0	0	1	0	CK 1	1	4
TOTAL	7	3	0	3	0	R 3 CK 6 UCK 1	2	25

CASES HEARD IN THE SUPREME COURT FOR THE YEAR 2008

RAPE				UNLAWFUL CARNAL KNOWLEDGE			
GUILTY	NOT GUILTY	NOLLI PROSEQUI	DISMISSED	GUILTY	NOT GUILTY	NOLLI PROSEQUI	DIMSISSED
0	3	9	0	0	0	7	0
ATTEMPTED RAPE				INCEST			
0	0	1	0	1	0	3	0
CARNAL KNOWLEDGE							
0	1	18	1				

General Registry

The Supreme Court General Registry is the court office for the Supreme Court and the Court of Appeal. Court documents are filed and processed in the Registry. It is headed by the Registrar who is an attorney-at-law and a judicial officer. She is assisted by 1 Deputy Registrar and 1 Assistant Registrar. They are assisted in their tasks by approximately 20 members of staff, which includes Marshalls and Deputy Marshalls of the Court. These members of staff are civil servants and are appointed, disciplined, and promoted by the Public Services Commission, which is appointed by the Governor General, acting in accordance with the advice of the Prime Minister given after consultation with the Leader of the Opposition.

Functions

In addition to the filing and processing of court documents, the Supreme Court Registry is also responsible for all matters relating to estates, companies, and trademarks. All land matters are

handled by the Land's Registry based in Belmopan while the Vital Statistics Unit in Belize City handles all matters regarding births, deaths, and marriages.

Vital Statistics Unit

Vital Statistics Unit was created in mid 1997 and is administered by the Registrar General. This Unit, which houses records as far back as 1885, is headed by Assistant Registrar, who is responsible for the day to day registration. The registration system is a passive one in that the office is dependent on the individual to come in with the information.

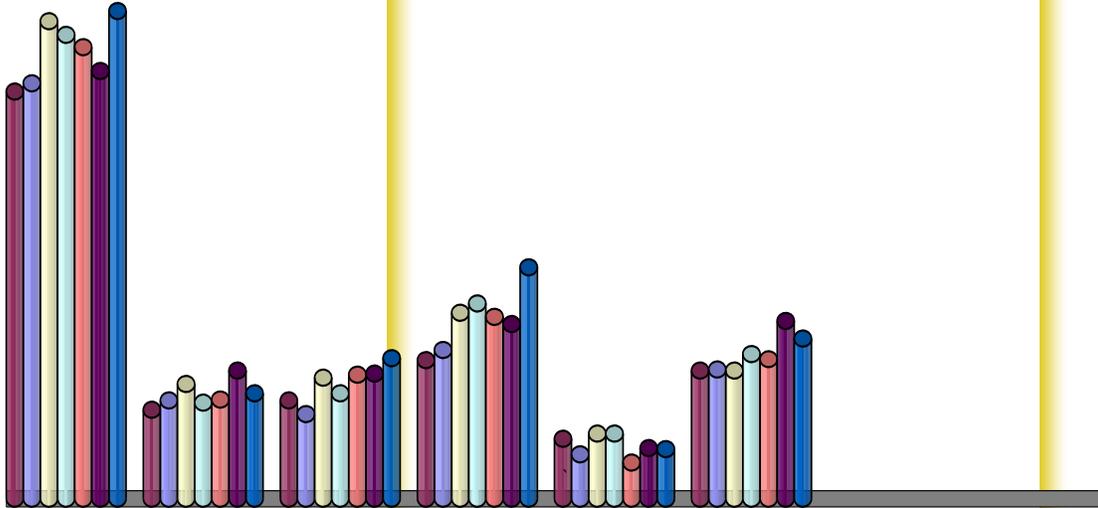
Vital Statistics Unit is responsible for the registration and recording of all Births, Deaths, and Marriages, Adoptions and Deed Polls and the issuing of Certificates pertaining to same. There is a total Staff of 13 in Belize City, where the main Office is located. Just one year ago, offices were opened in the District Towns, based on a Memorandum of Understanding with the Ministry of Health; these Offices are within the Hospitals. This move is expected to increase registration in a timelier manner. The Staff now totals 21.

These Vital Records are important for legal and administrative uses for both Government and the individual, for the purpose of obtaining Identification Cards or Passports; so the office presently caters mainly to the issuing of certificates.

A lot more can be done to transform the existing system into a more reliable and useful one and fortunately, many of the necessary changes are internal, within the control of the Registrar General, since the mechanism is already in place to accomplish.

The computerization of the records has speed up the search and production of certificates; but not to the fullest since it is only producing Births and Marriages. With the information computerized this offices has been able to facilitate both the Statistical Institute of Belize and the Social Security Board with vital information.

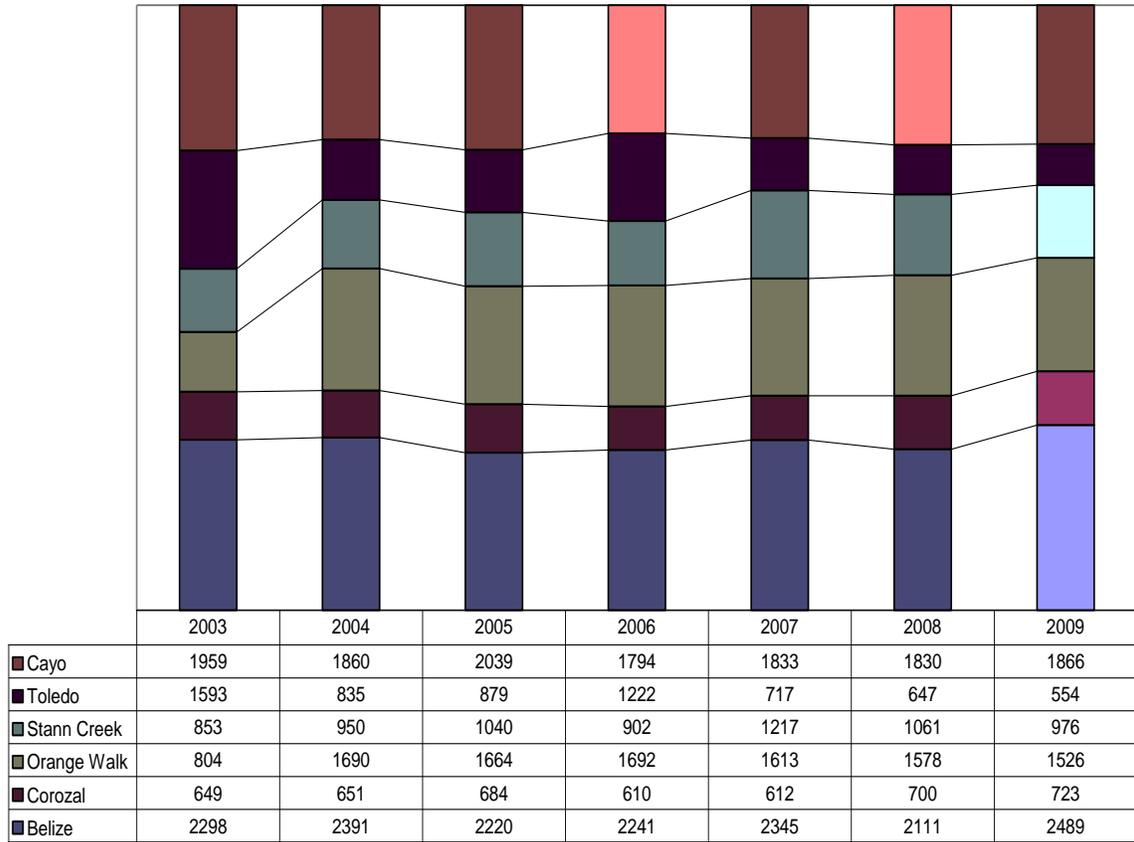
Deaths



	Belize	Corozal	Stann Creek	Cayo	Toledo	Orange Walk		
■ 2004	394	86	95	134	58	124		
■ 2003	402	95	82	144	43	125		
■ 2005	462	111	117	180	63	124		
■ 2006	449	93	102	189	63	140		
■ 2008	437	96	120	176	35	135		
■ 2007	414	124	121	169	49	172		
■ 2009	472	102	136	224	48	155		
■								

Births

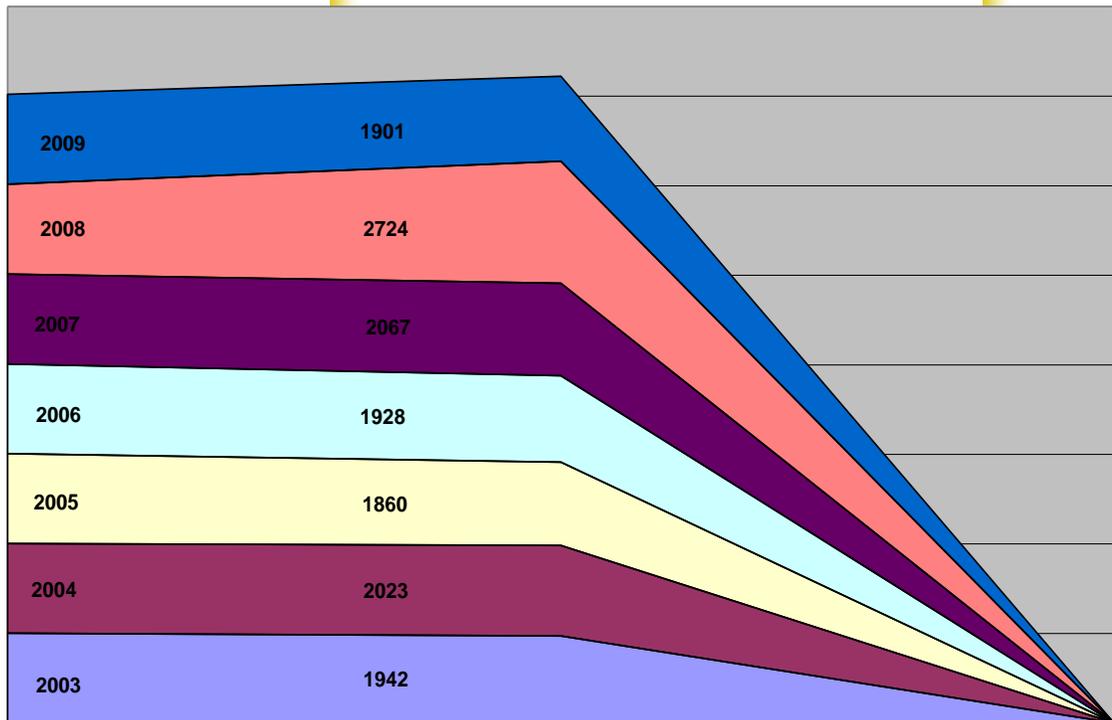
BIRTHS



Marriages

- Roman Catholic Churches have performed the most marriages with Holy Redeemer Cathedral being the No. 1 church used.
- Civil Ceremonies is the No. 2 way of getting married with the Registrar General's Office being the most used.
- Anglican Churches is No. 3 with St. John's Cathedral being the No. 1 Church.

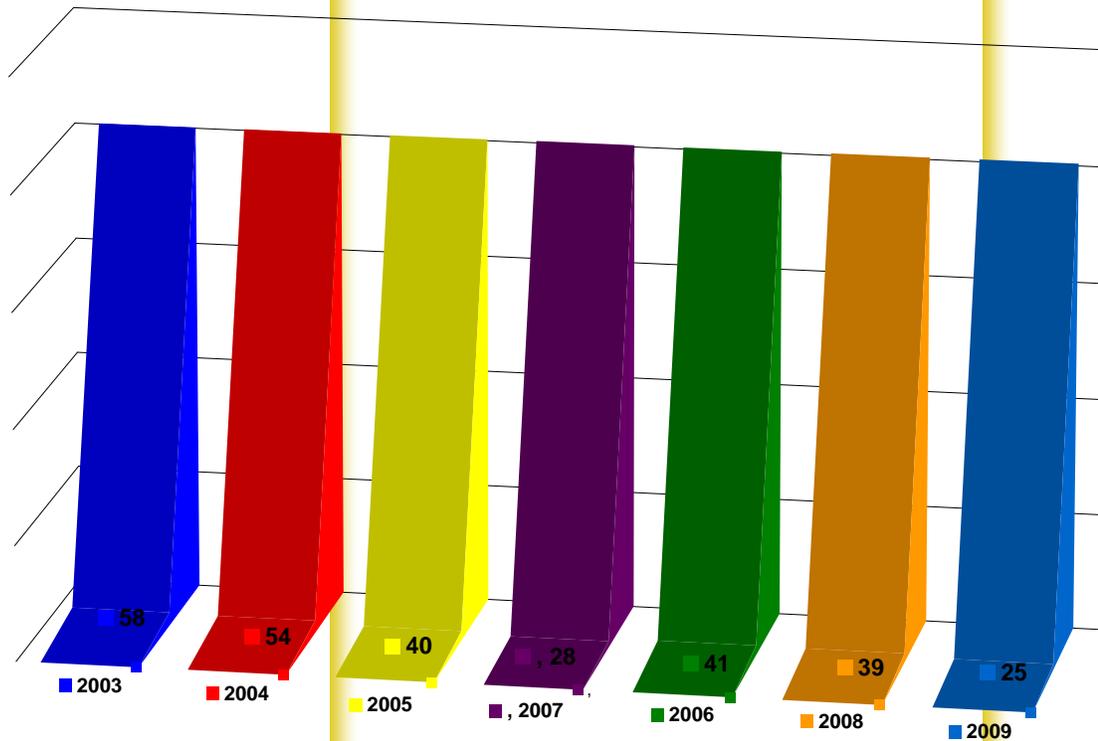
MARRIAGES



Adoptions

When a Child is adopted, the original Birth Entry is cancelled to protect the rights of the child and can only be re-opened on the Order of the Supreme Court. The Adoption Certificate therefore is equivalent to the Birth Certificate.

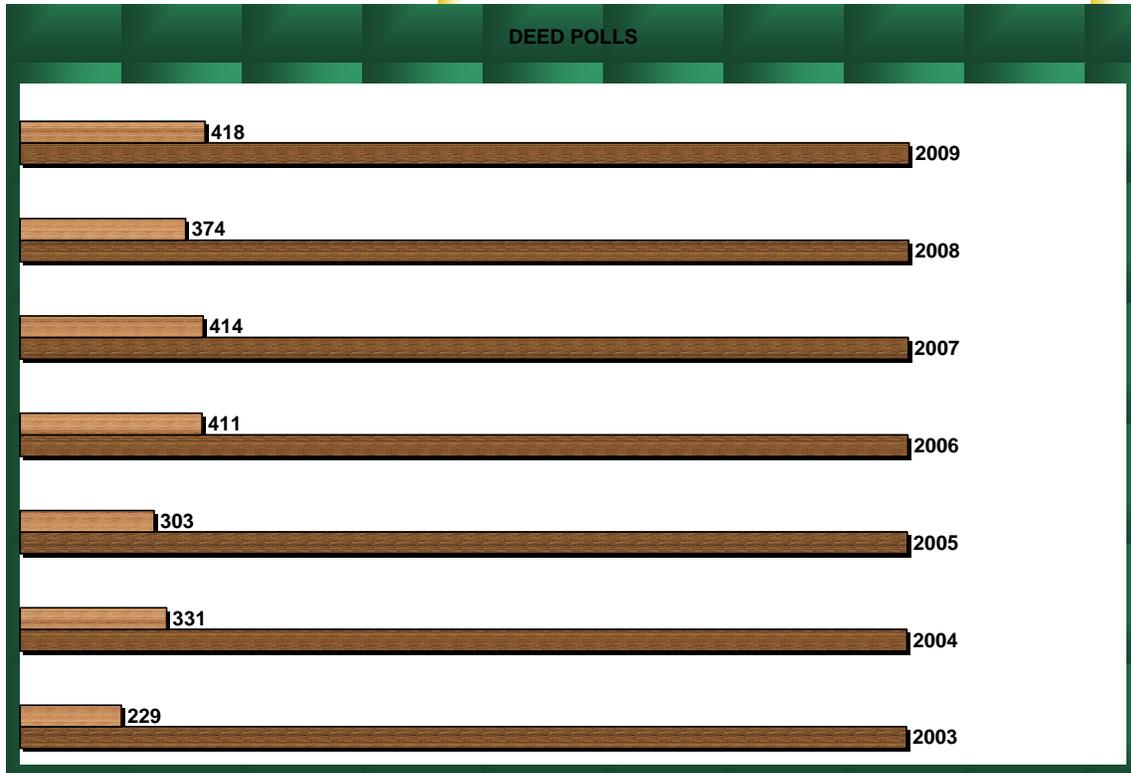
When a child is adopted, the Adopted parents also have the right to change the Child's name from that which was given in the original Birth Entry. Any correction or alteration of the Adoption record after the Court's approval must be made by a Court Order



Deed Polls

Deed Poll is the only accepted legal privilege in which one can change names completely.

This process does not change the information on the Birth Certificate. However, for the purpose of acquiring identification, the Deed Poll and the Birth Certificate must be used together, so that one can get the name so requested.



Magistrates' Court

Legal Authority

The Constitution of the Courts

Chapter 94 of the Laws of Belize, Part 2 Section 3(1) of the Inferior Courts Act sets out the constitution of the Magistrate Courts into the following Judicial District:

- (a) The Belize Judicial District
- (b) The Toledo Judicial District
- (c) The Stann Creek Judicial District
- (d) The Cayo Judicial District
- (e) The Orange Walk Judicial District
- (f) The Corozal Judicial District

The Belize Municipal Court is also under the authority of the Inferior Courts Act authorizing it to do or perform any act or function.

Mission Statement

The Mission of the Magistrates Court is to provide the community with equal and impartial access to judicial services by ensuring the

preservation of judicial independence; protection of individual rights and increases the public's trust and confidence by maintaining high ethical standards.

Functions

The Magistrates Court is a creature of statute and as such plays a very important role in society in the dispensation of justice. The Principles of Integrity, Independence, Impartially and upholding the rule of law are paramount for the court's existence. Its role is to be efficient in the in the delivery of justice to ensure the welfare and safety of citizens and to engender confidence in the whole system of justice. Despite the challenges the Magistrates Court faces it continues to meet the growing number of cases that have been lodged and it strives to dispose of these in a timely manner. As in most other jurisdictions, the Magistrates' Court is at the forefront of both criminal and civil cases.

Staffing

Mr. Hurl Hamilton joined the Magistracy Department as a Magistrate and has been posted to the Belmopan Magistrates Court. Mr. Hamilton holds the LLB Degree from the University of Guyana. We welcome him to the department and wish him every success in his new posting.

Transfer

Ms. Tracy Sosa Magistrate of Belize City was transferred to the Orange Walk Magistrates Court.

Ms. Hettiema Stuart was transferred from Orange Walk to the Belize City Municipal Court. Mrs. Kathleen Lewis was transferred from San Ignacio Magistrates Court to Belize City and Ms. Rachel Montejo took up posting in that Court.

Mrs. Lorelle Johnson Clerk of Court San Ignacio was transferred to the Belmopan Magistrates Court on September 16, 2009. She was replaced by Ms. Violeta Chan who took over the San Ignacio Court.

Changes in Staff

In the year in Review 2009, the Magistrates Court said goodbye to Mr. Earl Jones and Mr. Harrison Hulett who had been serving as Magistrates in the Belmopan Magistrates Court and the Municipal Court in Belize City.

We extend our gratitude to both of them for giving years of invaluable service.

Ms. Letrice Gabb Second Class Clerk was transferred to the Sales Tax Department on November 2, 2009. She was replaced by Ms. Maria Acosta on November 4, 2009. Mr. Dwayne Saldano took up the post of Office Assistant on June 25, 2009.

Training

Magistrates Sharon Fraser and Aretha Ford traveled to San Salvador on June 5 to June 12, 2009 to attend an Anti-Gangs Workshop. Magistrate Kathleen Lewis also traveled to San Salvador on October 16 to October 23, 2009 to attend an Anti-Gangs Workshop. This seven day workshop was sponsored and facilitated by the United States Government.

Challenges

The department continues to be faced with the problem of inadequate spacing in the Courts for Magistrates which are presently too small and cause inconvenience to both staff and public.

There is the need for Bailiffs in the districts since reliance is placed on police officers to service summonses. Again, this creates its own problem as the police readily do not attend to the needs of the District Courts. The Courts continue to operate on stretched resources but is still able to provide justice to members of the public.

Conclusion

It is hoped that the year ahead will be more productive and that Magistrates be given the opportunity to pursue judicial education as well as having increased access to books, periodicals and law reports.

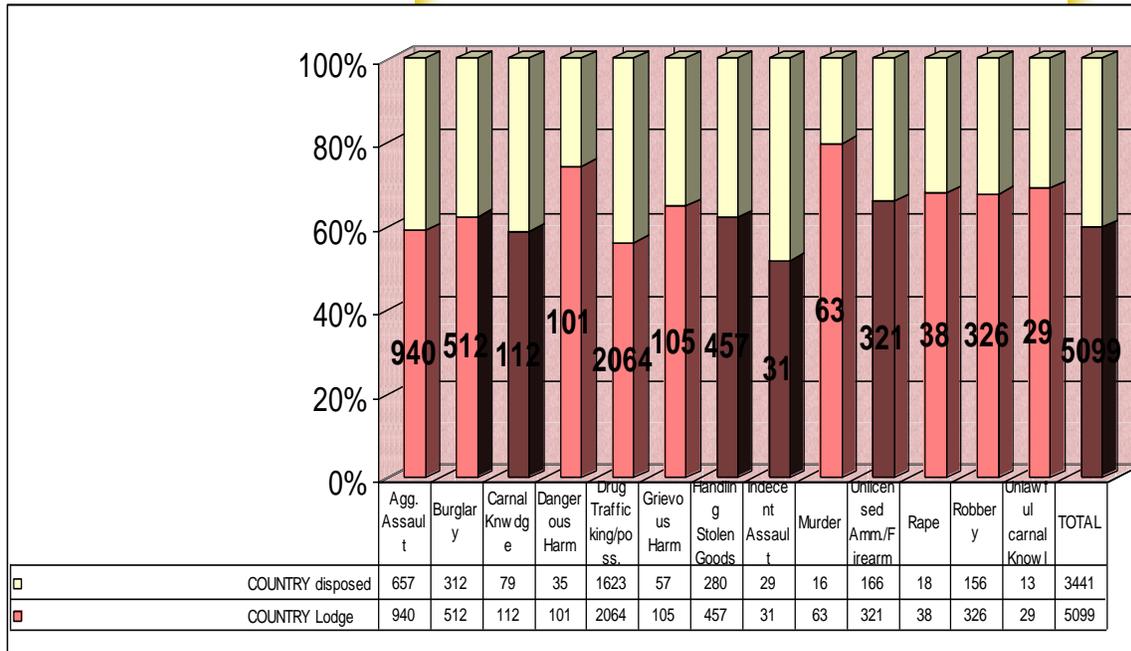
We live in a time of financial constraints and admittedly there are burdens on the National

Budget but the legitimate needs of the Administration of Justice are vital and necessary to perform its functions properly.

Chief Justice Annual Report on the Judiciary of Belize 2009
Magistrates' Court Criminal Statistics for 2009

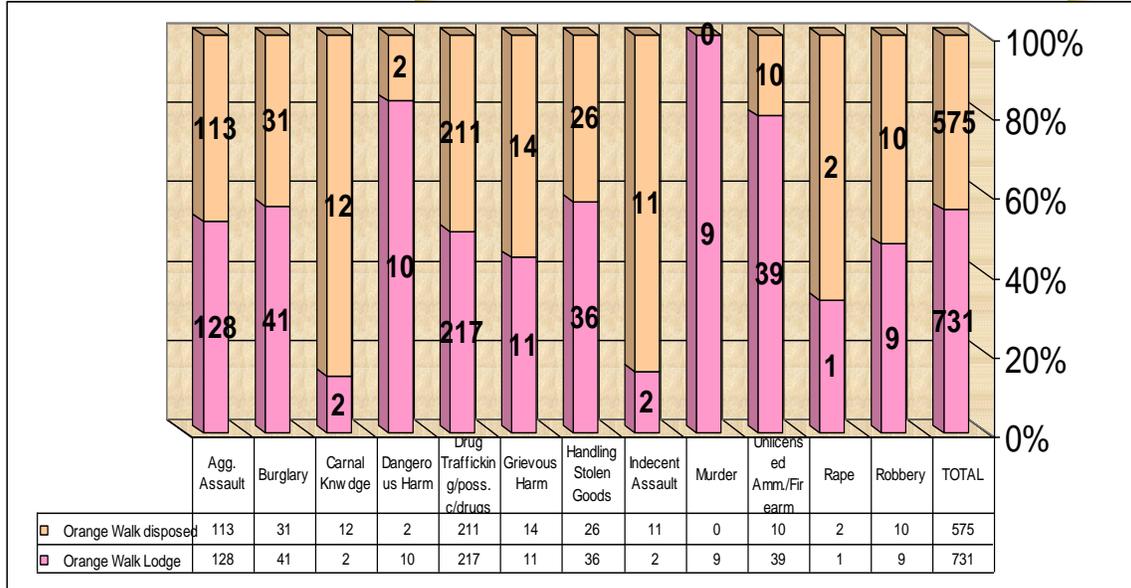
	Orange Walk		Corozal		Belize City		Belmopan		San Ignacio		Dangriga		Punta Gorda		San Pedro		COUNTRY	
	Lodge	disposed	Lodge	disposed	Lodge	disposed	Lodge	disposed	Lodge	disposed	Lodge	disposed	Lodge	disposed	Lodge	disposed	lodge	disposed
Aggravated Burglary	3	2	6	4	14	3	6	3	4	4	20	6	0	0	2	1	57	23
Aggravated Assault	128	113	88	71	223	104	97	77	99	77	112	119	40	50	40	46	940	657
Arson	0	0	1	0	2	0	3	1	3	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	10	3
Attempt Rape	1	0	0	0	2	1	1	1	2	1	1	4	0	0	0	2	7	9
Attempt Murder	13	3	14	10	63	10	22	9	9	4	7	34	2	5	4	2	137	77
Attempt Robbery	0	1	2	0	20	5	6	2	2	1	10	8	0	0	2	2	43	19
Burglary	41	31	58	42	105	43	43	16	46	33	108	59	29	28	51	60	512	312
Carnal Knowledge	2	12	6	6	6	0	7	3	3	2	19	16	54	38	3	2	112	79
Claiming Upon a Forged Doc.	0	0	2	1	4	0	2	0	19	0	9	10	0	0	8	3	44	14
Dangerous Harm	10	2	11	7	38	5	22	10	2	2	5	4	8	4	3	1	101	35
Drug Trafficking	34	33	20	16	138	61	16	10	26	21	7	37	17	25	24	19	315	222
Escape	9	6	12	10	24	14	2	2	8	8	18	15	7	4	7	10	93	69
Forgery	0	0	0	0	4	0	4	1	19	0	7	6	21	2	1	0	56	9
Grievous Harm	11	14	14	8	34	8	15	4	3	2	7	6	0	0	7	15	105	57
Handling Stolen Goods	36	26	46	33	121	48	45	26	23	11	93	79	29	27	38	30	457	280
Incest	2	0	2	1	3	0	1	0	0	0	1	10	0	0	0	0	9	11
Indecent Assault	2	11	12	8	1	1	0	0	0	0	5	9	0	0	0	0	31	29
Kidnapping	1	0	0	0	0	0	2	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	6	1
Maim	1	2	4	3	0	0	4	3	2	1	2	1	0	0	2	0	17	10
Manslaughter	2	2	0	0	1	0	9	4	4	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	19	7
Murder	9	0	5	3	22	1	12	5	8	2	2	4	1	1	4	0	63	16
Poss. Controlled Drugs	183	178	110	98	584	480	88	75	115	109	197	158	116	117	178	186	1749	1401
Poss. Unlicensed Ammunition	24	8	16	14	64	20	17	4	24	21	16	16	14	14	4	6	187	103
Poss. Unlicensed firearm	15	2	16	13	44	10	5	3	18	13	19	9	10	8	5	5	134	63
Rape	1	2	4	3	6	0	5	4	3	1	10	3	6	4	1	1	38	18
Robbery	9	10	27	23	146	43	30	11	25	21	54	26	13	10	12	12	326	156
Theft	133	90	84	72	193	122	86	50	59	58	121	112	36	28	107	68	909	600
Unlawful carnal Knowledge	0	0	8	6	7	0	2	2	6	3	3	2	0	0	3	0	29	13
Unnatural Crime	1	0	2	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	2	0	0	1	0	7	3
OTHER	916	791	767	931	2879	1745	455	327	792	779	1694	1214	948	911	1174	1078	9625	7776
TOTAL	1587	1339	1337	1384	4749	2724	1008	654	1326	1177	2549	1969	1351	1276	1683	1549	15590	12072
CIVIL SUITS	573	470	732	654	1924	1063	581	550	659	368	621	737	265	206	394	372	5749	4420
CORONERS INQUEST	3	0	36	14	2	1	0	0	6	3	0	0	0	0	1	0	48	18

Chief Justice Annual Report on the Judiciary of Belize 2009



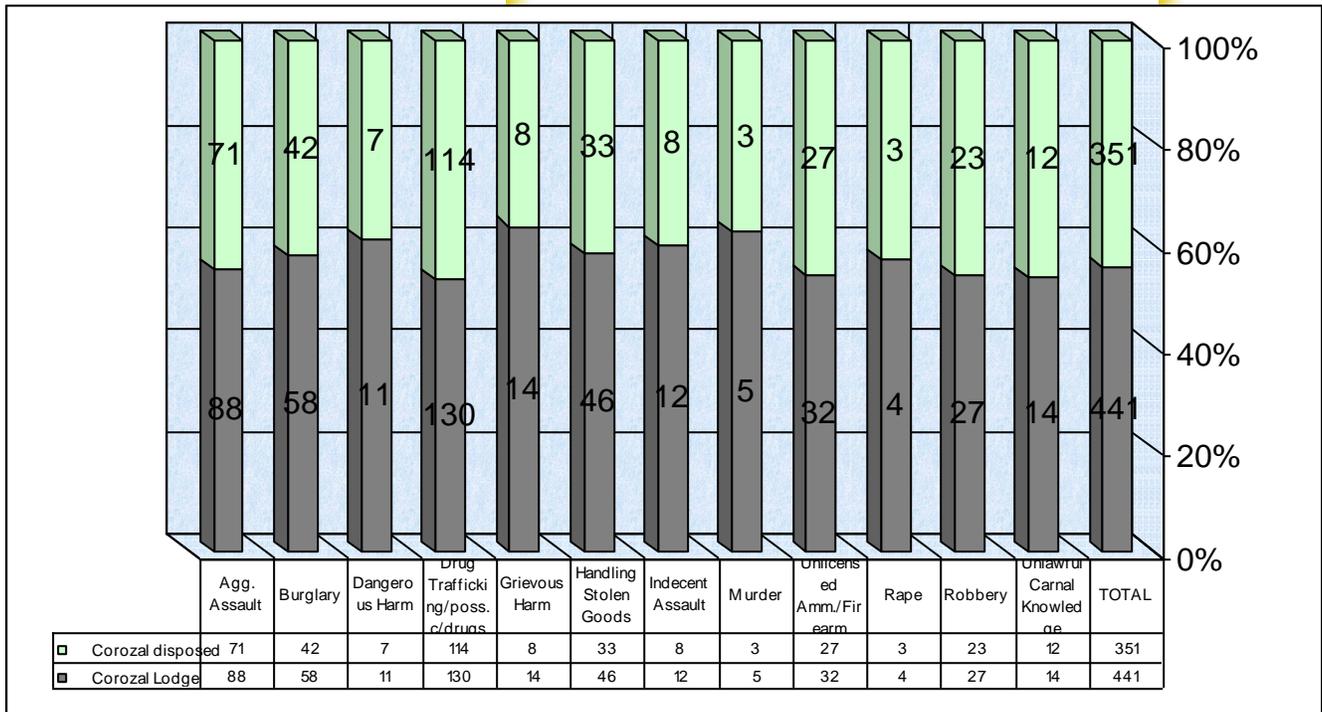
CRIME 2009	COUNTRY	
	Lodge	disposed
Agg. Assault	940	657
Burglary	512	312
Carnal Knowledge	112	79
Dangerous Harm	101	35
Drug Trafficking/poss. c/drugs	2064	1623
Grievous Harm	105	57
Handling Stolen Goods	457	280
Indecent Assault	31	29
Murder	63	16
Unlicensed Amm./Firearm	321	166
Rape	38	18
Robbery	326	156
Unlawful carnal Knowledge	29	13
TOTAL	5099	3441

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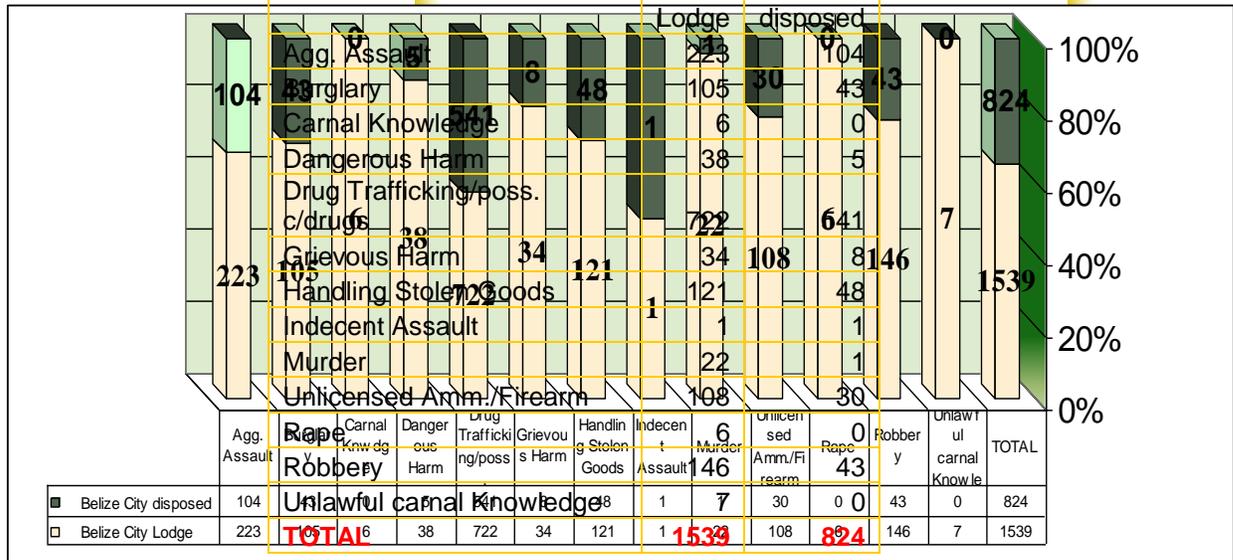
CRIME 2009	Orange Walk	
	Lodge	disposed
Agg. Assault	128	113
Burglary	41	31
Carnal Knowledge	2	12
Dangerous Harm	10	2
Drug Trafficking/poss. c/drugs	217	211
Grievous Harm	11	14
Handling Stolen Goods	36	26
Indecent Assault	2	11
Murder	9	0
Unlicensed Amm./Firearm	39	10
Rape	1	2
Robbery	9	10
TOTAL	731	575

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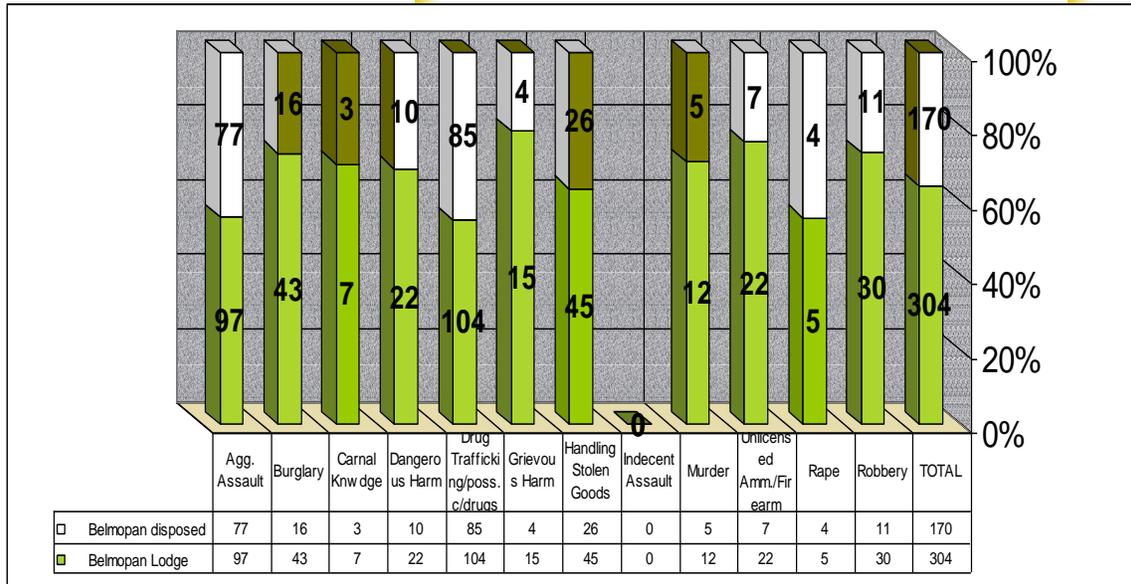


CRIME 2009	Corozal	
	Lodge	disposed
Agg. Assault	88	71
Burglary	58	42
Dangerous Harm	11	7
Drug Trafficking/poss. c/drugs	130	114
Grievous Harm	14	8
Handling Stolen Goods	46	33
Indecent Assault	12	8
Murder	5	3
Unlicensed Amm./Firearm	32	27
Rape	4	3
Robbery	27	23
Unlawful Carnal Knowledge	14	12
TOTAL	441	351

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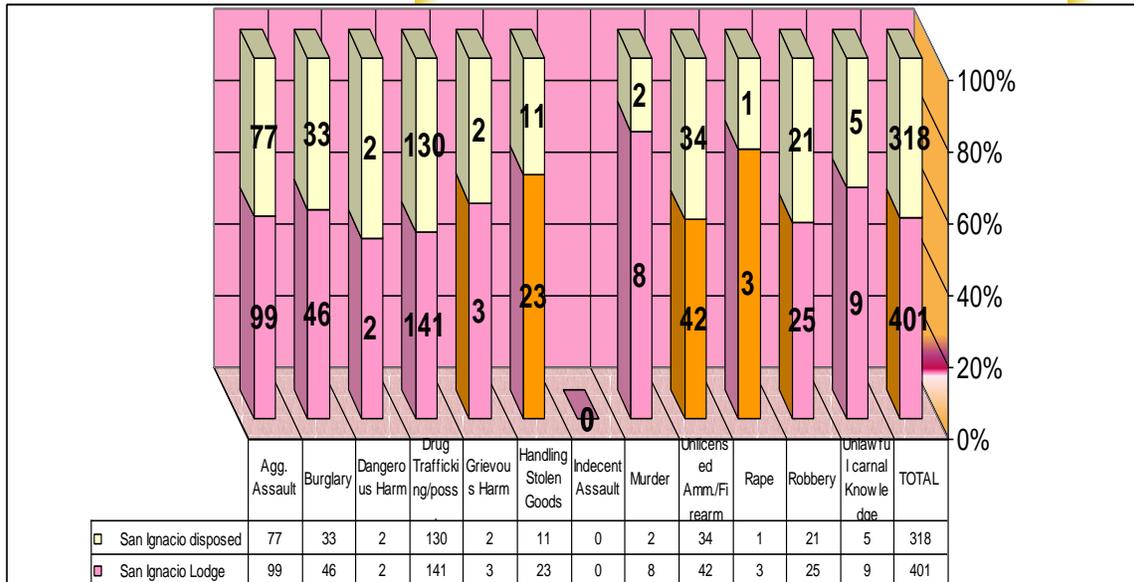


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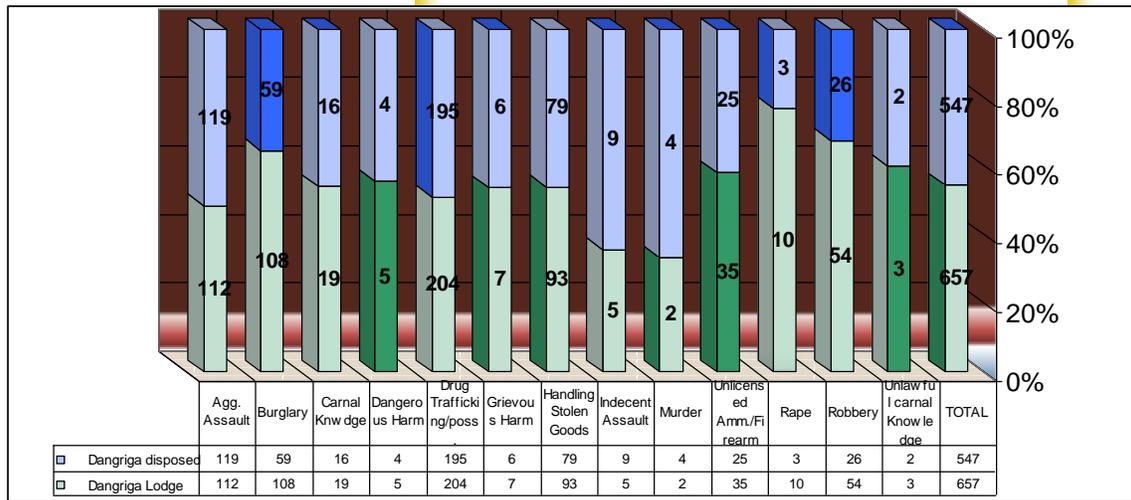
CRIME 2009	Belmopan	
	Lodge	disposed
Agg. Assault	97	77
Burglary	43	16
Carnal Knowledge	7	3
Dangerous Harm	22	10
Drug Trafficking/poss. c/drugs	104	85
Grievous Harm	15	4
Handling Stolen Goods	45	26
Indecent Assault	0	0
Murder	12	5
Unlicensed Amm./Firearm	22	7
Rape	5	4
Robbery	30	11
TOTAL	304	170

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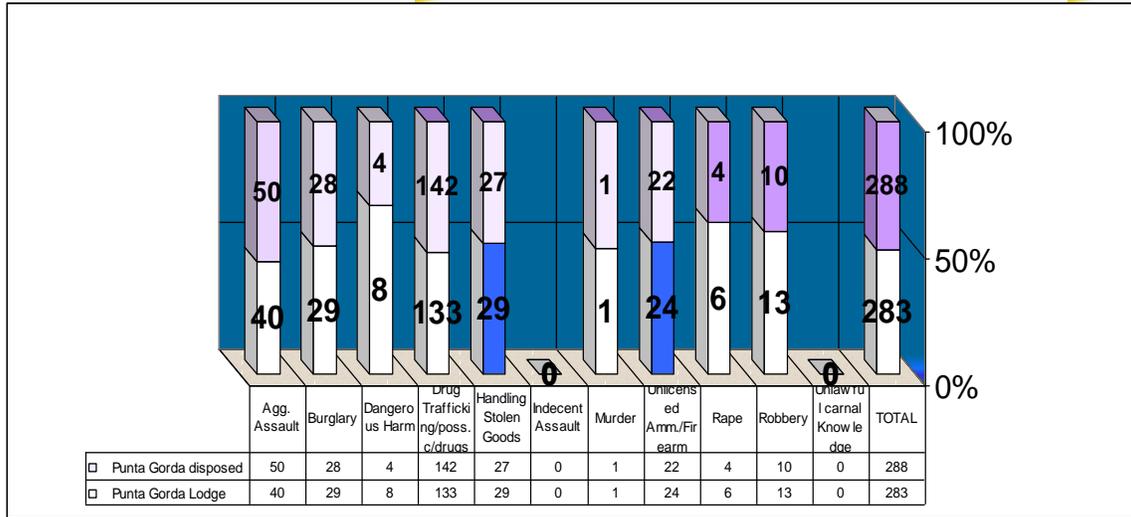
CRIME 2009	San Ignacio	
	Lodge	disposed
Agg. Assault	99	77
Burglary	46	33
Dangerous Harm	2	2
Drug Trafficking/poss. c/drugs	141	130
Grievous Harm	3	2
Handling Stolen Goods	23	11
Indecent Assault	0	0
Murder	8	2
Unlicensed Amm./Firearm	42	34
Rape	3	1
Robbery	25	21
Unlawful carnal Knowledge	9	5
TOTAL	401	318

Chief Justice Annual Report on the Judiciary of Belize 2009



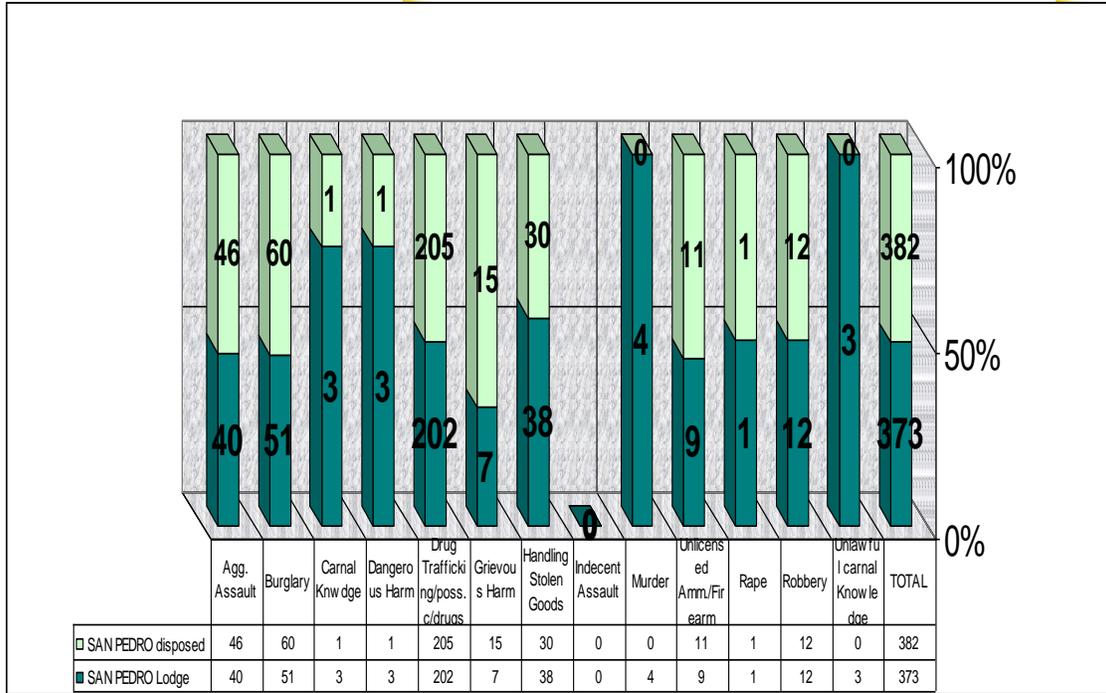
CRIME 2009	Dangriga	
	Lodge	disposed
Agg. Assault	112	119
Burglary	108	59
Carnal Knowledge	19	16
Dangerous Harm	5	4
Drug Trafficking/possession	204	195
Grievous Harm	7	6
Handling Stolen Goods	93	79
Indecent Assault	5	9
Murder	2	4
Unlicensed Amm./Firearm	35	25
Rape	10	3
Robbery	54	26
Unlawful carnal Knowledge	3	2
TOTAL	657	547

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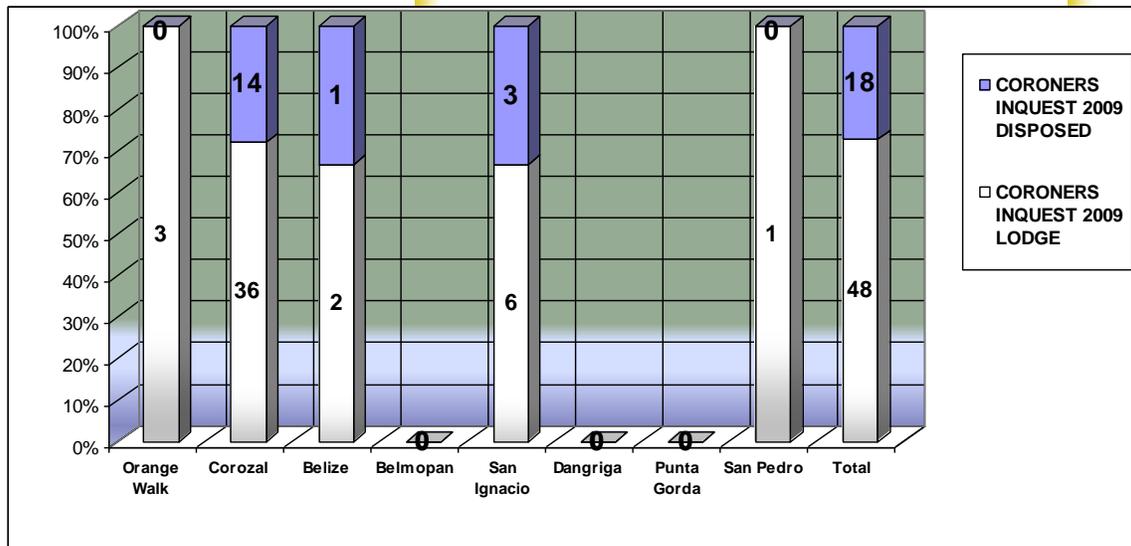
CRIME 2009	Punta Gorda	
	Lodge	disposed
Agg. Assault	40	50
Burglary	29	28
Dangerous Harm	8	4
Drug Trafficking/poss. c/drugs	133	142
Handling Stolen Goods	29	27
Indecent Assault	0	0
Murder	1	1
Unlicensed Amm./Firearm	24	22
Rape	6	4
Robbery	13	10
Unlawful carnal Knowledge	0	0
TOTAL	283	288

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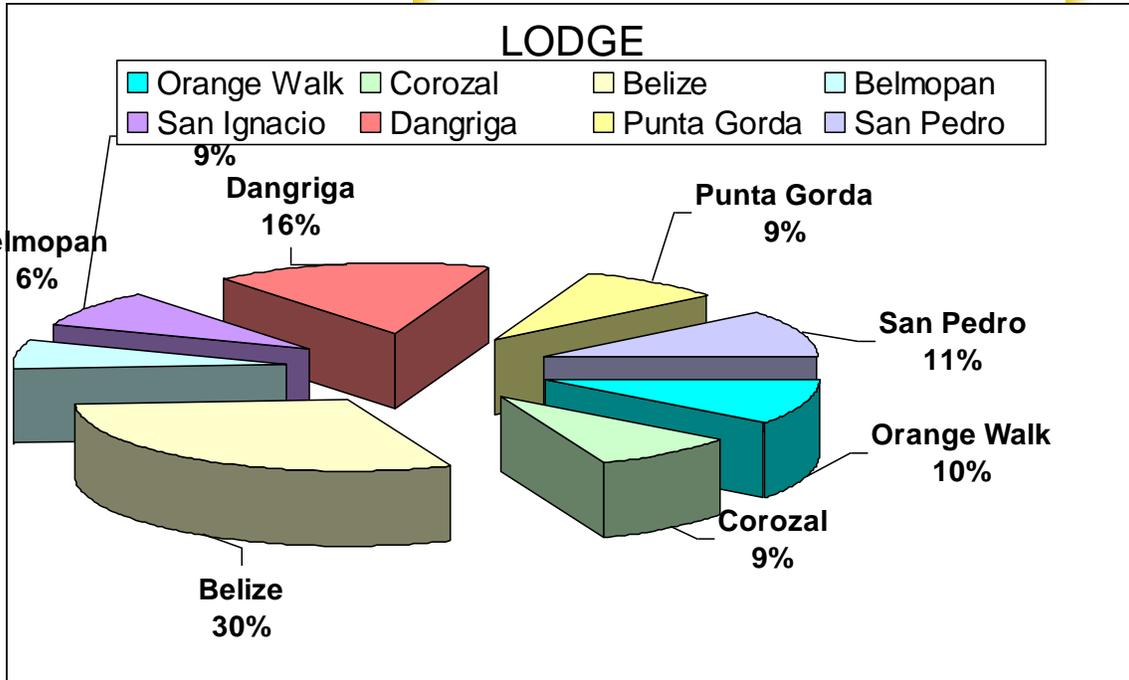


CRIME 2009	SAN PEDRO	
	Lodge	disposed
Agg. Assault	40	46
Burglary	51	60
Carnal Knowledge	3	1
Dangerous Harm	3	1
Drug Trafficking/poss. c/drugs	202	205
Grievous Harm	7	15
Handling Stolen Goods	38	30
Indecent Assault	0	0
Murder	4	0
Unlicensed Amm./Firearm	9	11
Rape	1	1
Robbery	12	12
Unlawful carnal Knowledge	3	0
TOTAL	373	382

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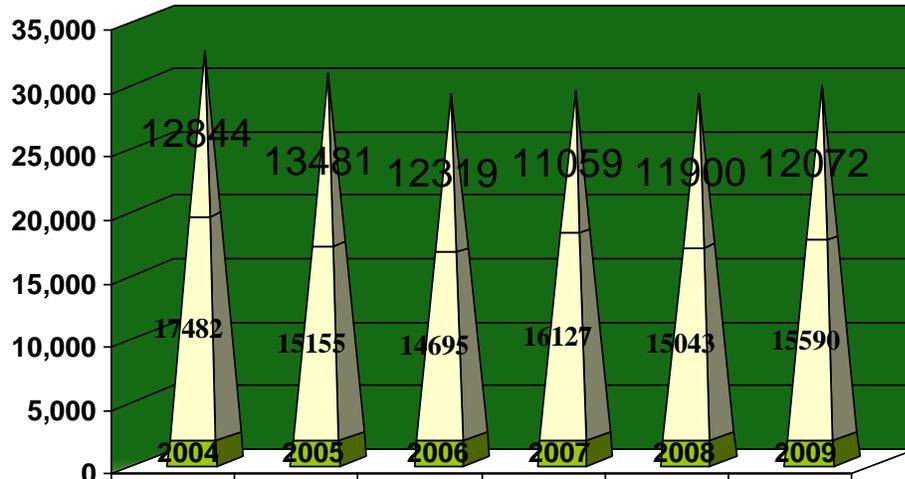
CORONERS INQUEST 2009		
DISTRICT	LODGE	DISPOSED
Orange Walk	3	0
Corozal	36	14
Belize	2	1
Belmopan	0	0
San Ignacio	6	3
Dangriga	0	0
Punta Gorda	0	0
San Pedro	1	0
Total	48	18



DISTRICTS	LODGE
Orange Walk	1587
Corozal	1337
Belize	4749
Belmopan	1008
San Ignacio	1326
Dangriga	2549
Punta Gorda	1351
San Pedro	1683
TOTAL	15590

**CRIMINAL STATISTIC REVIEW COUNTRY WIDE FROM
2004 - 2009**

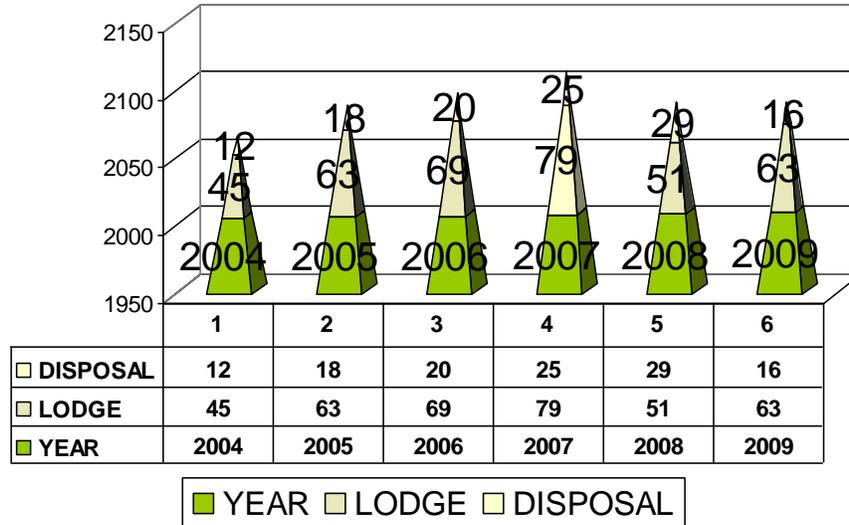
■ YEAR ■ LODGE ■ DISPOSAL



	1	2	3	4	5	6
■ DISPOSAL	12844	13481	12319	11059	11900	12072
■ LODGE	17482	15155	14695	16127	15043	15590
■ YEAR	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009

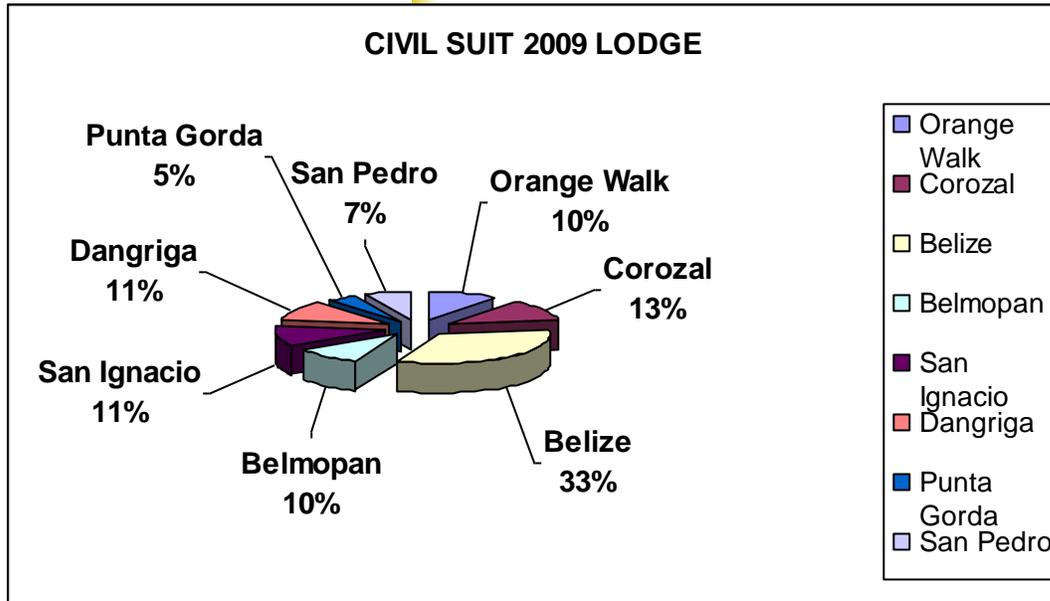
YEAR	LODGE	DISPOSAL
2004	17482	12844
2005	15155	13481
2006	14695	12319
2007	16127	11059
2008	15043	11900
2009	15590	12072

REVIEW OF MURDER CHARGES FOR THE COUNTRY OF BELIZE PERIOD 2004- 2009



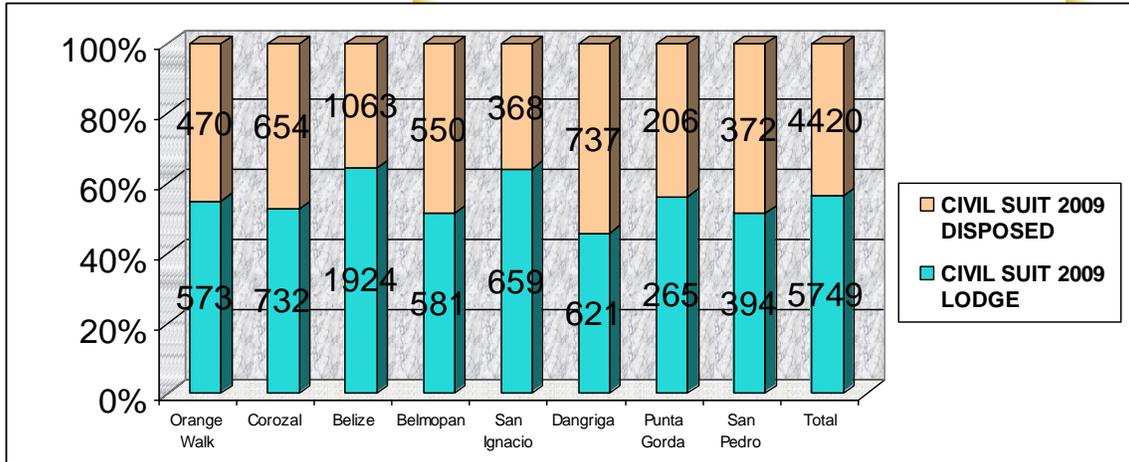
MURDER			
	YEAR	LODGE	DISPOSAL
	2004	45	12
	2005	63	18
	2006	69	20
	2007	79	25
	2008	51	29
	2009	63	16

Magistrates' Court Civil Statistics for 2009

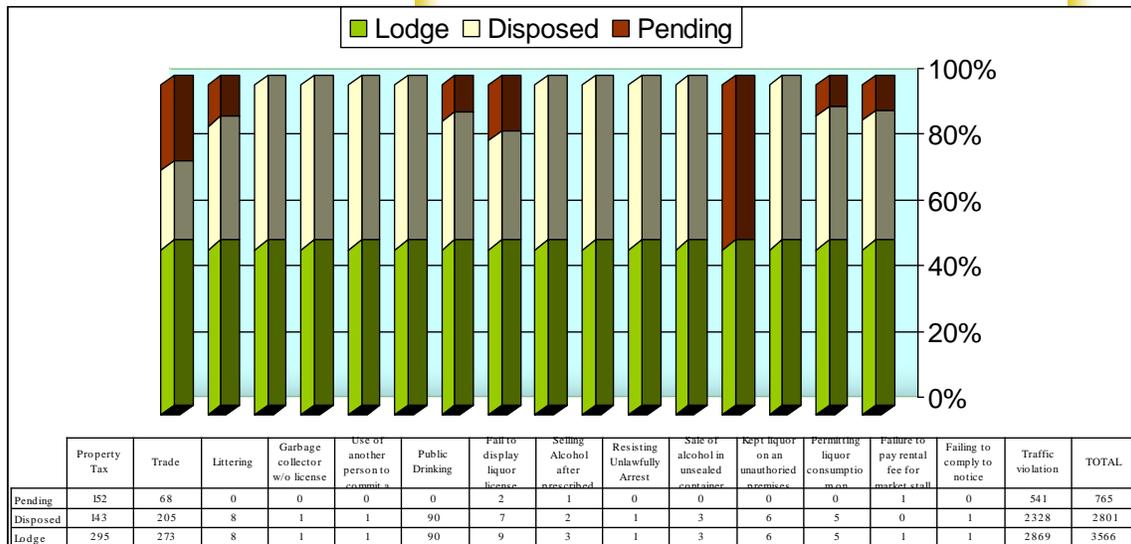


CIVIL SUIT 2009		
DISTRICTS	LODGE	DISPOSED
Orange Walk	573	470
Corozal	732	654
Belize	1924	1063
Belmopan	581	550
San Ignacio	659	368
Dangriga	621	737
Punta Gorda	265	206
San Pedro	394	372
Total	5749	4420

Chief Justice Annual Report on the Judiciary of Belize 2009



Municipal Court Statistic for 2009



	Lodge	Disposed	Pending
Property Tax	295	143	152
Trade	273	205	68
Littering	8	8	0
Garbage collector w/o license	1	1	0
Use of another person to commit a littering offence	1	1	0
Public Drinking	90	90	0
Fail to display liquor license certificate	9	7	2
Selling Alcohol after prescribed hour	3	2	1
Resisting Unlawfully Arrest	1	1	0
Sale of alcohol in unsealed container	3	3	0
Kept liquor on an unauthorised premises	6	6	0
Permitting liquor consumption on Premises	5	5	0
Failure to pay rental fee for market stall no.11	1	0	1
Failing to comply to notice	1	1	0
Traffic violation	2869	2328	541
TOTAL	3566	2801	765

Family Court

Legal Authority

The Belize Family Court has the authority to operate by virtue of the Family Court Act Chapter 93 of the Laws of Belize Revised Edition 2000. The Belize Family Court was established in April, 1989 and has been in operation for the past nineteen years.

Mission Statement

To serve the public by offering a complete, professional, family centered service in a caring, committed and confidential manner based upon the principles of dignity and respect for all.

Objective

The Belize Family Court provides an environment where family and juvenile matters are handled in a holistic manner in order to provide alternative methods for reconciliation, protection, rehabilitation, growth and development in conjunction with other relevant organizations

The Functions of the Family Court

- Hear legal matters as they pertain to abuse and neglect, maintenance, custody, juvenile and domestic violence
- Provide consultative services to counselors/social workers in the legal and social matters in Belize and in the Districts
- Undertake data collection, policy development and advocacy
- Assist parents in obtaining maintenance for children who are entitled to such.
- Enable parents to apply for access, visitation and custody
- Conduct home visits, prepare reports for custody, access and maintenance
- Offer public education awareness.

- Coordinate with the National Committee for Families and Children, other government agencies, non-governmental organizations and other related organizations for the improved services for families.

Jurisdiction

The Belize Family Court is a specialized Court and it determines family matters and juvenile criminal matters. The following legislation constitutes the remit of the court

- Families and Children Act Chapter 173 of the Laws of Belize
- Domestic Violence Act No.19 of 2007
- Married Person Protection A Chapter 175 of the Laws of Belize
- Juvenile Offenders Act Chapter 119 of the Laws of Belize
- Certified Children Reformation Act Chapter 121 of the Laws of Belize
- Probation of Offenders Act Chapter 120 of the Laws of Belize
- International Abduction Act Chapter 197 of the Laws of Belize
- Penal System Reform (Alternative Sentences Act) Act No. 41 of 2001

Development/ Training Staff Retreat

Staff development and training continues to be one of the main focuses of the Belize Family Court. On the 23rd and 24th November 2009 the Director and staff participated in a two days retreat held at the Corozal Bay Inn. Ms. Anita Zetina, Ag Representative for Unicef facilitated the retreat.

Mrs. Jacqueline Joseph from the Ministry of Public Service made presentations on “The Public Service and You” and “Values and Ethics of the Workplace”. The highlight of the retreat was the health session presented by Dr. Cynthia Terry and Dr. Lydia Batty from the Belize Family Life Association. At the end of the presentation staff members were afforded the opportunity to do Hypertension/Glucose testing and the calculation of Body Mass Index.

Seminar on Restorative Juvenile Justice

A seminar on Restorative Juvenile Justice was organized and held by the Central American Court of Justice in Nicaragua during the period of the 2nd to 5th September 2009. Its purpose was to find alternative ways and means of dealing with Juvenile Justice, particularly in the area of sentencing, the holistic plan being to develop a consensus on a Regional Plan in Juvenile Justice. Judges who are involved with Juvenile Justice from the Dominica Republic and Central American territories attended. Magistrate Alberta Perez of the Belize Family Court represented Belize.

Achievements

In June of 2009 Miss Lisa Griffith graduated from the University of Belize with a Bachelor Degree in Social Work, she was promoted to the post of Coordinator of the Family Court. Presently Magistrate Alberta Perez and Magistrate Natalia Carter are pursuing studies to obtain Masters Degree.

Changes in Staff

The court saw some changes in staff members over the past year. Miss Lisa Griffith was appointed Coordinator after the retirement of Mrs. Myrna Willoughby in January 2009. Mr. Raymond Belgrave Driver/Mechanic resigned his post in May 2009; Mr. Felix Vanegas replaced him in August. Miss Chaka Quilter Bailiff/Records Keeper also joined the staff in August of the same year.

Challenges

The court continues to function giving clients the best possible service despite of the many challenges. Some urgent needs of the court are:

- Relocating to a more spacious building
- More office space for the Intake/Welfare Officers
- Lack of children's corner
- Additional staff for Belize City and the districts

- Office equipment for the districts
- The passage of the Mediation Act

Plan of Action for 2010

- Training in identifying clients with mental disability
- Training in Sign Language for Intake/Welfare Officers
- Management/Supervisors training
- Specialized training in interviewing skills
- Working with families and children in collaboration with the Department of Human Services

Other

As part of its mandate, the Family Court continues to facilitate students who are on internship from Law School, the University of Belize who are pursuing their Associate and Bachelor Degree program as well as high school students on job training.

STATISTICAL REPORT FOR 2009

Juveniles Completed Cases for 2009

<i>Motor Vehicle & Bicycles (Charges)</i>	<i>Amount</i>
Drove an unregistered motor vehicle	1
Drove motor vehicle w/ a Belizean driving license	5
Drove unlicensed motor vehicle	1
Drove w/ a valid drivers license	1
Drove w/ due care & attention	1
Caused bicycle to proceed on a 1 way street	4
Rode bicycle w/ due care & attention	2
Used unlicensed motor vehicle	4
Vehicle not covered by third party insurance	7
TOTAL	26

<i>Assaults & Harm (Charge)</i>	<i>Amount</i>
Grievous Harm	3
Dangerous Harm	2
Use of deadly means of Harm	2
Aggravated Assault	25
Wounding	15
Assaulting a Police Officer	4
Harm	13
Common Assault	10
TOTAL	74

<i>Theft Related Offences (Charge)</i>	<i>Amount</i>
Burglary	17
Conspiracy to commit Burglary	2
Abetment of Robbery	2
Attempt Theft	1
Handling Stolen Goods	14
Theft	22
Damage to Property	7
Robbery	19

TOTAL	84
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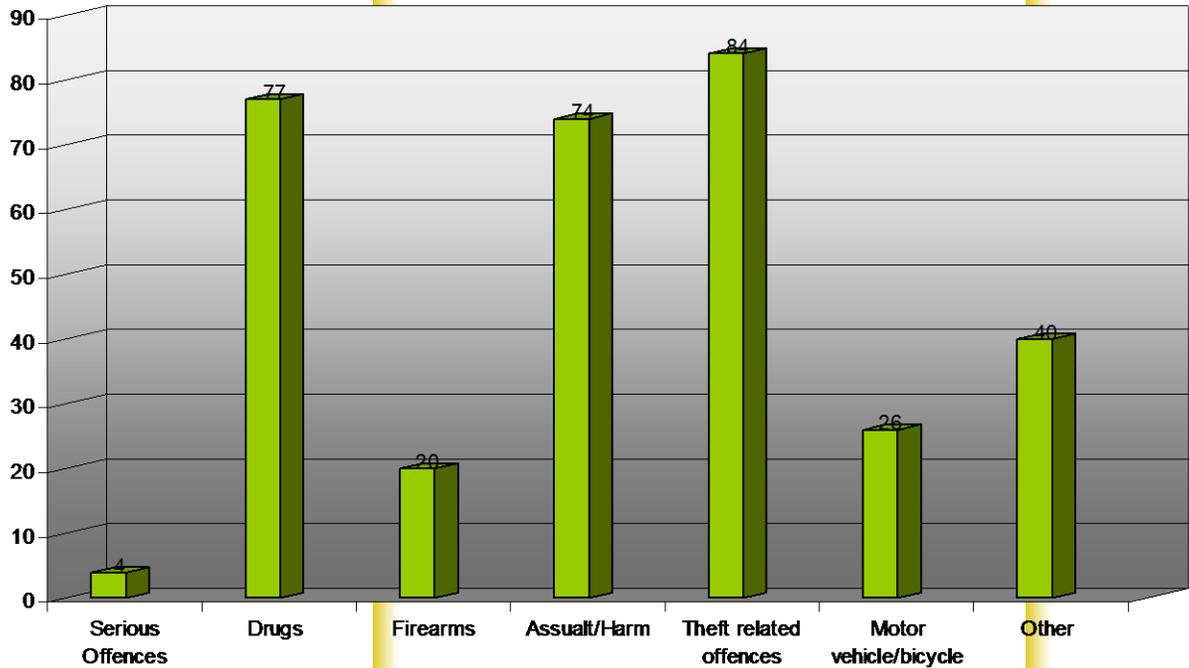
Firearm (Charge)	Amount
Kept ammunition w/ a gun license	10
Kept firearm w/ a gun license	8
Kept prohibited firearm	2
TOTAL	20

Drugs (Charge)	Amount
Drug Trafficking	13
Possession on Controlled Drug	62
Smoking cannabis	2
TOTAL	77

Other (Charge)	Amount
Mischiefous Act	7
Resisting lawful arrest	2
Attempt suppression of evidence	3
Threatening words	13
Used indecent words	1
Disorderly conduct	1
Displaying of gang insignia	1
Escape	3
Drinking alcohol in public place	2
Using obscene language	1
Insulting words	3
Disturbance of court	1
Obstructing a Police Officer	2
TOTAL	40

Serious Offences	Amount
Murder	1
Attempt Murder	3
TOTAL	4

Juvenile Completed Cases for 2009



CHARGES	AMOUNT
Serious Offences	4
Drugs	77
Firearms	20
Assaults & Harm	741
Theft related Offences	84
Motor vehicle & Bicycle	26
Other	40

STATISTICS ON FAMILY MATTERS

The year 2009 saw an increase of 210 more family matter cases in the Belize Family Court. This represents an increase of 7.4% from the previous year, which may not seem significant, but in a society already plagued with social ills, the increase speaks volume. The Intake/Welfare Section of the court facilitated a total of 2,837 new applications, of which 2,358 went before the court, while 117 were settled out of court, 362 are still pending. The statistics show one of two things, either more emphasis is needed in the

Cases	Pending	In Court	Out of Court	Total
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area of mediation or the severity in the nature of cases has increased.

Chief Justice Annual Report on the Judiciary of Belize 2009

Maintenance	57	539	62	658
Variation of Maintenance	12	140	0	152
Revocation of Maintenance	20	100	2	122
Attachment	11	59	0	70
Remittance of Arrears	6	28	0	34
Recovery of Arrears	91	257	3	351
Continuance of Payment	1	7	0	8
Revival of Maintenance	0	13	0	13
Legal Separation	16	100	9	125
Family Issue	36	0	26	62
Protection Order	43	539	2	584
Revocation of Protection	0	7	0	7
Variation of Protection	0	1	0	1
Occupation Order	1	101	0	102
Revocation of Occupation	0	2	0	2
Revocation of Legal Separation	0	1	0	1
Legal Custody	37	118	9	164
Variation of Custody	2	25	1	28
Access/Visitation	16	101	1	118
Variation of Access	2	36	0	38
Relinquishment	2	7	1	10
Contempt of Court	0	15	0	15
Supervisory Order	0	18	0	18
Exclusion Order	0	1	0	1
Care Order	0	82	0	82
Uncontrollable Behavior	4	41	1	46
Production of Child	1	2	0	3
Parental Responsibility	1	2	0	3
Declaration of Paternity	1	15	0	16
Guardianship	2	0	0	2
Revocation of Access	0	1	0	1
Grand Total	362	2358	117	2837

Cases	Male	Female	Total
Maintenance	67	591	658
Variation of Maintenance	85	67	152
Revocation of Maintenance	87	35	122
Attachment	2	68	70
Remittance of Arrears	18	16	34
Recovery of Arrears	3	348	351
Continuance of Payment	0	8	8
Revival of Maintenance	1	12	13
Legal Separation	32	93	125

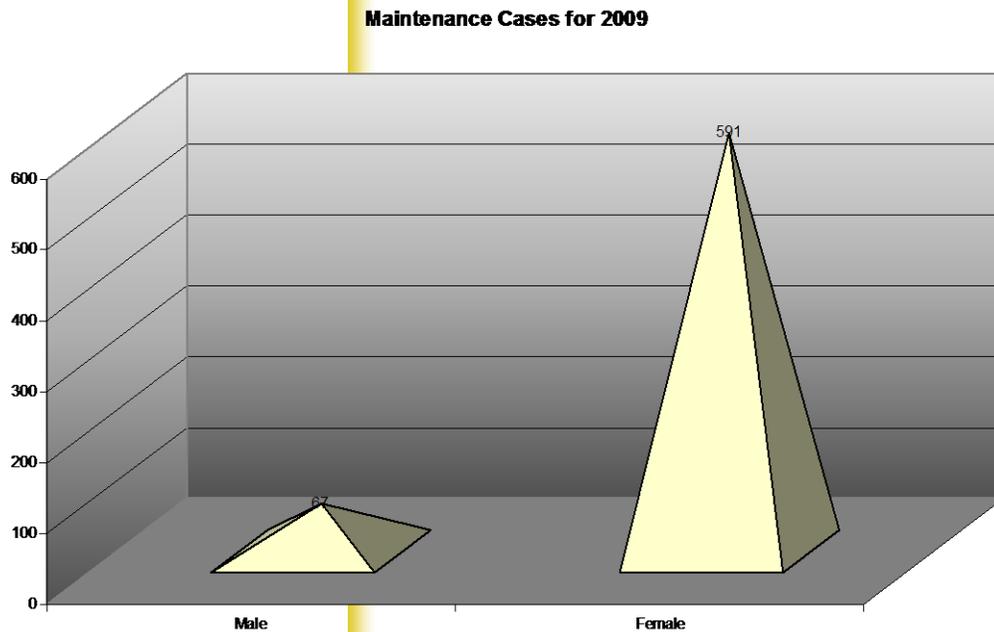
Chief Justice Annual Report on the Judiciary of Belize 2009

Family Issue	28	34	62	Applications by Gender
Protection Order	100	484	584	
Revocation of Protection	1	6	7	
Variation of Protection	0	1	1	
Occupation Order	11	91	102	
Revocation of Occupation	1	1	2	
Revocation of Legal Separation	1	0	1	
Legal Custody	107	57	164	
Variation of Custody	8	20	28	
Access/Visitation	104	14	118	
Variation of Access	17	21	38	
Relinquishment	1	9	10	
Contempt of Court	12	3	15	
Supervisory Order	0	18	18	
Exclusion Order	0	1	1	
Care Order	0	82	82	
Uncontrollable Behavior	7	39	46	
Production of Child	1	2	3	
Parental Responsibility	0	3	3	
Declaration of Paternity	13	3	16	
Guardianship	2	0	2	
Revocation of Access	1	0	1	
Grand Total	710	2127	2837	

MAINTENANCE CASES

The sum of \$ 21,135.00 was collected at the court for spousal and child maintenance in the year 2009. The figure continues to increase, as more orders are made daily. As impressive as the figures may seem, collecting spousal and child maintenance remains a challenge for the court.

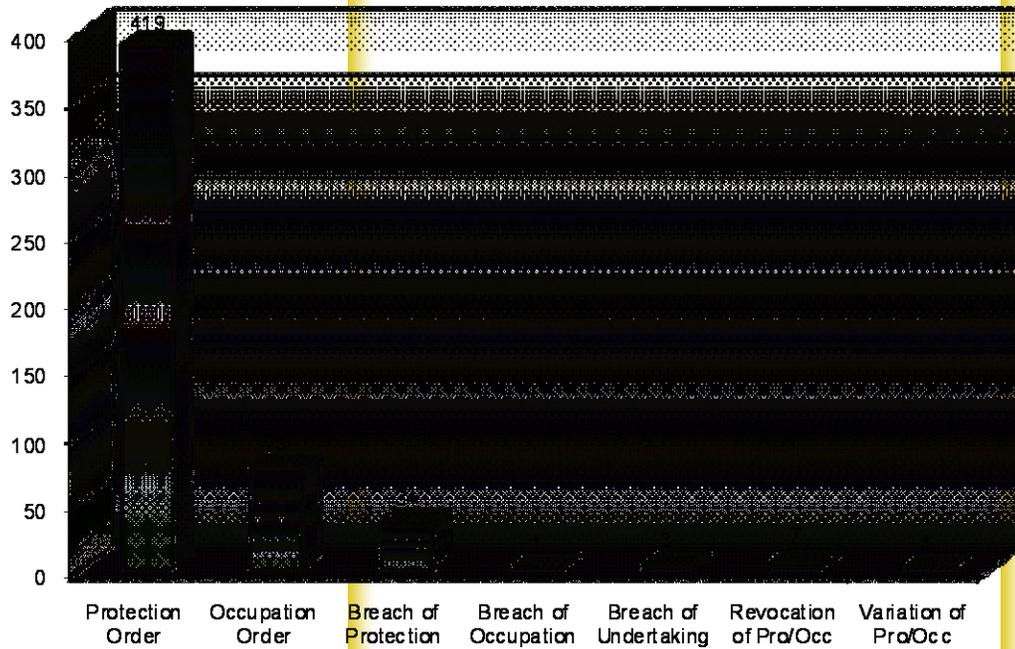
The year 2009 saw a 4.5% decrease in maintenance application as oppose to the previous year. A total of 658 applications were made of which 67 applicants were males while the remaining 591 were females.



DOMESTIC VIOLENCE CASES

In the year 2009 the Belize Family Court disposed of 536 Domestic Violence related cases, which is a 5.4% increase from the previous year.

Completed Domestic Violence Cases 2009



Law Library

The Law Library operates as the information resource focal point for the judiciary, housing materials that are used to support the delivering justice.

Vision

To become proactive in the development and provision of services and new technology in the legal field to all its users.

Mission

The library mission is to provide access and make its resources available and useful to the judiciary and legal community of Belize

Collection Development

A host of electronic databases are accessible in the library. In addition the law library subscribes to some legal reports. The law library has many early sets of reports and statutes from England.

Changing Information Needs

The cost of access to legal information continues to surpass our budget our library need to work with government and other social partners to save valuable time and keep up to date with cases relevant to practice area.

The Changing Service Needs

Today as our electronic resources flourish, many of our attorneys access these resources remotely from their offices and homes. Yet we firmly believe that there is still a significant need for library space devoted to quiet contemplation and study.

However there remains a great deal to do if the library is to retain its relevance to the judiciary in the future.

Depository

Legal researchers, scholars and students in the legal community are encourage to deposit a copy of

their Thesis, Dissertation and results of their research free of charge at the Law Library. These deposits will enable's our library to guard our cultural heritage by collecting and preserving important materials from the past for future generation.

Staff

The Library is staff by a Librarian Mrs. Errolyn Grinage. Assistant Librarian Ms. Angela Flowers.

Staff Development

The librarian attended the 24th Annual Conference of the Caribbean Association of Law Libraries (CARALL) in June 2009. This Annual meeting and seminar was held in Barbados. The CARALL Seminar allows networking across the region with members. The seminar included a presentation on techniques of law reporting.

Gifts to the Supreme Court Law Library

The US Ambassador to Belize donated some law text for the library.

The Mexican Embassy donated a few of their law text to the library Mrs. Yvonne Lawrence from the Attorney General Ministry in Jamaica donated some missing volumes of the West Indian Reports.

Books Donated To Supreme Court Law Library (2009)

Date Donated	Title of Book	Donated By
January 12 2009	Handbook of Federal Evidence, 5 th Ed. Vol. 4, 2005.	United States Ambassador Robert Dieter
January 12 2009	Handbook of Federal Evidence 5 th Ed. Vol. 2.	
January 12 2009	Handbook of Federal Evidence 5 th Ed. Vol. 1.	
January 12 2009	Handbook of Federal Evidence 5 th Ed. Vol. 3.	
January 12 2009	Dispute Resolve: Negotiation, Mediation and Other Process, 3 rd . Ed.	
January 12 2009	Jury: National College of the State Judiciary.	
January 12 2009	Criminal Procedure: Criminal Practice Series. Vol. 2 Section 3.1 -7.5, 1999.	
January 12 2009	Criminal Procedure: Criminal Practice Series, Vol. 3, Section 8.1-12.5, 1999.	
January 12 2009	Criminal Procedure: Criminal Practice Series, Vol. 4, Section 13.1-20.6, 1999.	
January 12 2009	Criminal Procedure: Criminal Practice Series, Vol. 5, Section 21.1-27.6, 1999.	
January 12 2009	Criminal Procedure: West's Criminal Practice Series, 2 nd Ed. Vol. 6, Section 28.1- end, 2004	
February 23 2009	A general guide to the Civil Proceedings Rules. Trinidad and Tobago. 1998.	
April 2 2009	Tribunal de Justica Brasilia Vol. 1 De Condado Portucalense a Domfoao Braganca 4 th Ed. Salvador 2009.	
	Tribunal de Justica Brasilia Vol. 2 3 rd Ed. Salvador. 2009.	
	Tribunal de Justica Brasilia Vol. 3 2 nd Ed. Salvador. 2009.	

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September 17 2009	What is the Federal Judiciary 1 st Ed. In English	Mexican Embassy Ambassador
	The Mexican Legal System 2 nd Ed. In English	Mexican Embassy Ambassador
	Political Constitution of the United Mexican States 2 nd Ed.	Mexican Embassy Ambassador
	Relevant Decisions of the Mexican Supreme Court 1917-2004	Mexican Embassy Ambassador
	A Penalty without Legitimacy: The Mandatory Death Penalty. Trinidad and Tobago	Chief Justice: Dr. A. Conteh
	A Penalty without Legitimacy: The Mandatory Death Penalty. Trinidad and Tobago	Chief Justice: Dr. A. Conteh
October 13 2009	The West Indian Reports Vol. 32, 33, 36, 45, 46, 48, 49	Mrs. Yvonne Lawrence (Attorney General Ministry, Jamaica)
October 13 2009	The New Guyana Bar Review Vol. 2 Issue 1. May 2008	Justice Legal



Purchased Books: 2009

ISBN	Name of Book	Author	Date
9780199232802	Environmental Law 2 nd Ed.	David Woolley	4 th March 2009
9780421905108	Kemp & Kemp: Personal Injury Law, Practice and Procedure. Thompson & Sweet & Maxwell	Andrew Ritchie	12 th March 2009
9781847030535	Macgillivray on Insurance Law 11Ed.	Nicholas Leigh-Jones; John Birds; David Owen	
9780199556618	Blackstone's Employment Law Practice 2009 4 th Ed.	John Bowers (Editor)	6 th April 2009
9781847032218	Judicial Remedies in Public Law	Lewis Clive	15 th April 2009
9780421948006	Snell's Equity 31 st Ed. with 4 th Supplement	John McGhee	
9780421948006	Snell's Equity 4 th Cumulative 31 st Ed.	John McGhee	
9781405728270	Butterworth's Company Law Handbook 22 nd Ed.	Keith Walmsley (Consultant Enterprise)	
9780421474703	Megarry & Wade: The Law of Real Property. 7 th Ed. Sweet and Maxwell. 2008.	Charles Harpum	
9781847662903	Commercial Enforcement 2 nd Ed.	Lafferty Andrew	
9781845922344	Abuse of Process in Criminal Proceedings 3 rd Ed.	David Corker	
	Chitty On Contracts 13 th Ed. Vol. 1. General Principles. Sweet and Maxwell. 2008.		
	Chitty On Contracts 13 th Ed. Vol. 2. General Principles. Sweet and Maxwell. 2008.		
9780754537076	Tolley's Employment Handbook 23 rd Ed.	Elizabeth A. Slade	August 26 th 2009
9781847661111	Executorship and Administration 7 th Ed.	John Thurston	September 1 st 2009
	Fisher and Lightwost's Law of		27 th August 2009

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	Mortgage 12 th Ed. 2009.		
	12 th Ed. Supplement		
9781847661418	Wilkinson's Road Traffic Offences 24 th Ed. Vol. 1.	Kevin McCormac (General Editor)	1 st October 2009
9781847661418	Wilkinson's Road Traffic Offences 24 th Ed. Vol. 2.	Kevin McCormac (General Editor)	
9780406178312	Duncan and Neill on Defamation 3 rd Ed.	Sir Brian Neill	2 nd October 2009
9781846610608	Gore-Brown Company Law Precedents	Andrew Thornton	
9780199256846	Money Laundering: Law and Practice	Jonathan Fisher	
9781853287787	Clinical Negligence: Law and Practice	Clive Thomas	
9781847036131	Commercial Injunctions 6 th Ed.	Steven Gee	
9781455726733	Spencer Bower, Turner and Handley on The Doctrine of Res Judicata 4 th Ed.	George Spencer Bower	
9780421787209	Employment Precedents and Company Policy Documents: Looseleaf	Alan J. Julyan, Simon Jeffreys, Jeremy McMullen	
9781847026063	Philpson on Evidence 17 th Ed.	Hodge M. Malek	
980199248247	The Law of Habeas Corpus 3 rd Ed.	Adam Zelilick	
9781405736879	Borrie and Lowe: Law of Contempt 4 th Ed.	Ian Cram	
9781847662903	Commercial Enforcement 2 nd Ed.	Lafferty Andrew	
	Principles of the Law of Libel and Slander 2 nd Ed.	W.A. Button	
	The Banned Books of England	Craig Alec.	
	The Law of Libel and Slander	O.S. Hickson	
	Fraser on Libel and Slander (Law and Practice) 7 th Ed.	Gerald Osborne	
9783598115028	Moys Classification and Thesaurus for Legal Material 4 th Ed.	Elizabeth M. Moys	

Judicial Officers

Court of Appeal Judges



**Mr Justice Elliot Mottley –
President of the Court of Appeal**



Mr Justice Boyd Carey



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Mr Justice Dennis Morrison

Mr Justice Denys Barrow

Mr Justice Manuel Sosa

Supreme Court Judges



Hon. Chief Justice Dr. Abdulai Conteh



Hon. Justice Samuel Awich



Hon. Justice Troadio Gonzales



Madam Justice Minnet Hafiz Bertram



Hon. Justice Herbert Lord



Hon. Justice Adolf Lucas Sr.

Hon. Justice Sir John Muria



Madam Justice Michelle Arana



Hon. Justice Oswald Legall

Magistrates



**Mrs Margaret Gabb McKenzie
Chief Magistrate**



Mrs Dorothy Flowers – Senior Magistrate



Ms Tracy Sosa



Ms Stephanie Gillett



Mr Roberto Ordenez



Mr Earl Jones



Mr Clive Lino



Mr Edd P Usher



Mr Emmerson Banner



Mr Albert Hoare



Ms Aretha Hyde



Mr Harrison Hewlett



Mrs Kathleen Lewis



Mr Leslie Hamilton



Ms Rachel Montejo



Mr Hurl Hamilton



Ms Sharon Fraser

Family Court Magistrates



Ms Margaret Nicholas – Director



Mrs Sandra Arnold



Ms Alberta Perez



Mrs Natalia Carter

Commissioners of the Supreme Court

Section 15 of the Supreme Court of Judicature Act, Chapter 91 of the Laws of Belize, Revised Ed. 2000, provides for the appointment of “fit and proper Persons” as Commissioners of the Supreme Court by instruments under seal of the Court. Commissioners are authorized to take affidavits and declarations or, by special order of the Court or a Judge, to take the examination of witnesses or receive production of documents.

Commissioners:

Name	Date of Appointment	Residence
BULLER, Kelsie Henry – J.P.	10.8.1964	Stann Creek
GEGG, Edgar Gilbert Napier -J.P.	2.4.1969	Belize
LIZAMA, J. Alfonso- J.P.	7.1.197	Corozal
RAMIREZ, Ramon Edmundo	7.1.1971	Corozal
ESPADAS, Adolfo	23.1.1971	Orange Walk
WRIGHT, Leopold Gregory	20.7.1971	Cayo
USHER, Victor Edward	6.3.1974	Belize
STANSMORE, Alfred L.	30.8.1974	Corozal
BRADDICK, Luis R.	6.1.1978	Punta Gorda

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AYUSO, Angel L.	16.1.1978	Corozal
ESPAT, Luis A.	18.5.1979	Belmopan
USHER, Gerald Charles	7.6.1979	Belmopan
AKE, Gabriel Modesto	21.12.1979	Belize
PRICE, Ester Maria	21.12.1979	Belize
MUSA, Edward Nabil	22.12.1979	Belize
BOWMAN, Alice (Mrs.)	28.12.1979.	Stann Creek
MENZIES, Karl Hugh Joseph	28.12.1979	Belize
PRINCE, Maria Callola Pinto	28.12.1979	Belize
QUAN, Norman	28.12.1979	Belize
MOODY, Hallett Jr.	21.1.1986	Belize
MEIGHAN, Dorine	21.1.1986	Belize
CHAVANNES, Charles Gustave	21.1.1986	Belize
RIVEROLL, Othon	21.1.1986	Corozal
BURGOS, Narciso	21.1.1986	Orange Walk
SMITH, Lloyd	21.1.1986	Orange Walk
ARAGON, Ella Wilcox (Mrs.)	21.1.1986	Cayo
JENKINS, Denzil	21.1.1986	Stann Creek
OGALDEZ, Alonzo Bernard	21.1.1986	Dangriga
MAHUNG, Paul	21.1.1986	Punta Gorda
ZUNIGA, Edmund	21.1.1986	Punta Gorda
NUNEZ, Wilfredo	21.1.1986	San Pedro
PACHECO, Herculano	2 1.1.1986	Benque Viejo
BOITON, George Paul	21.1.1986	Cayo
MUNNINGS, Kenneth	13.11.1989	Belize
CLARKE, Orton	13.11.1989	Belize
QUINTO, William	13.11.1989	Belize
EWING, Kenneth	13.11.1989	Belize
HERNANDEZ, Clinton	13.11.1989	Dangriga
SEGURA, Carolina	13.11.1989	Benque Viejo
LESLIE, Martha Marina	10.1.1991	San Pedro
GUERRERO, Abelardo E.	10.1.1991	San Pedro
ZABANEH, Mary Elizabeth	18.4.199 1	Independence
WADE, Aubrey A.	18.4.1991	Placencia
HOTCHANDANI, Bhogwan	25.11.1991	Belize
PITTS, Edward	25.11.1991	Belize
CAYETANO, Phyllis	25.11.1991	Dangriga
HARRISON, Alicia	25.11.1991	San Ignacio
CASTILLO, Justo	25.11.1991	Belmopan
GARBUTT, Raymond	25.11.1991	Roaring Creek
TORRES, Uvaldemir	25.11.1991	Orange Walk
AGUILAR, Wilfredo Sr.	25.11.1991	Corozal
GRANIEL, Baldemar	25.11.1991	San Pedro
BADILLO, Gerald Sr.	16.3.1994	Caye Caulker

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CAMPBELL, Sydney	16.3.1994	Hattieville
COLEMAN, Rita	16.3.1994	Hattieville
GREENWOOD, Thomas	16.3.1994	Belize
McKENZIE, Arthur	16.3.1994	Belize
MEYERS, Raymond Anthony	16.3.1994	Burrel Boom
SOSA, John	16.3.1994	Belize
SMITH, Beatrice Kingston	16.3.1994	Crooked Tree
THOMPSON, Hector Douglas	16.3.1994	Belize
VERNON, Telsford	16.3.1994	Burrel Boom
YOUNG, Shirley A.	16.3.1994	Caye Caulker
GARBUTT, Chorley Ann	28.11.1994	Belize
ADOLPHUS, Bernard Alexander	16.3.1995	Hattieville
YOUNG, Fred	16.3.1995	Hattieville
ANDERSON, Rudolph	6.2.1996	Belize
TILLET, William	6.2.1996	Belize
GALVEZ, Florence	6.2.1996	Punta Gorda
NUNEZ, John	6.2. 1996	Punta Gorda
CANSINO, Elia	6.2.1996	Orange Walk
ELLIS, Rudolph	6.2.1996	Orange Walk
AYUSO, Mateo	6.2.1996	Corozal
ZETINA, Jaime	6.2. 1996	San Ignacio
FLOWERS, Harold	6.2.1996	Belize
SHI, Wen-Chen (Rick Shi)	4.6. 1996	Belize
HOARE, Fulgencio Apolonio	3.1.1997	San Pedro
ALAMILLA, Wilfredo Luis Sr.	3.1.1997	San Pedro
COURTNAY, Delhart Luthrel Sr.	3.1.1997	Belize
CHRISTIE, Mark Anthony	3.1.1997	Belize
LENAREZ, Sonia Louise	3.1.1997	Belize
BERNARD, Patrick Alexander	17.9.1997	Belmopan
STAINÉ, Julie Therese	19.12.1997	Belize
GILL, Beatrice Clarabell	19.12.1997	Belize
GRINAGE, Audrey	19.12.1997	Belize
KNIGHT, Hector Benjamin	19. 12.1997	Belize
NUNEZ, Margaret Rose	19.12.1997	Belize
LASHLEY, Raymond Granville	22.12.1997	Belize
USHER, Minnie Seay	29.12.1997	Gales Point Manatee
GIRON, John	31.12. 1997	Maskall Village
BRICEÑO, Elijo Eloy "Joe"	23. 12.1999	Orange Walk
ERALES, Jose Eduardo - J.P. (S)	23.12.1999	Belize
SIKAFFY, Beulah Agnes (Mrs.)	23. 12.1999	Belize
XIAO, Yibin "Bennicio"	23.12.1999	Belize
KUAN, Shaoyun "Wendy" (Mrs.)	23.12.1999	Belize
CASTILLO, Kevin Andrew	23. 12.1999	Belize
DIAZ, Santos -O.B.E., J.P.	23.12.1999	Belize

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HAYLOCK, Kent Albert -M.B.E.	23.12.1999	Belize
JOSEPH, Fitzgerald Alexander	23. 12. 1999	Belize
ARNOLD, Janet Pitts (Mrs.)	23.12.1999	Belize
BHOJWANI, Vinod	23.12. 1999	Belize
BROWN, Walter Linford J.P.	23.12.1999	Belize
USHER, Francis Henry - J.P.	23.12.1999	Belize
HYDE, Charles Bartlett - C.B.E., J.P.	23.12.1999	Belize
GODFREY, Joy Vernon (Mrs.)	23. 12.1999	Belize
HOTCHANDANI, Arun Sunder - J.P.	23. 12.1999	Belize
ESCOBAR, Ramon Eustaquio	23.12.1999	Corozal
CHAVEZ, Rafael Primitivo - J.P.	23.12.1999	Corozal
MARIN. Olga Daisy (Mrs.) - J.P.	23.12.1999	Corozal
EK, Eugenio - J.P.	23.12.1999	Corozal
ALPUCHE. Israel Jacinto - J.P.	23.12.1999	Corozal
LOPEZ, Joseito - J.P.	23.12. 1999	Corozal
ZUNIGA, Sherman Eufrescio	23.12.1999	Belmopan
KEN, Jesus - J.P. (S)	23.12.1999	Belmopan
DEL VALLE. Frances Emolyn (Mrs.)	23.12.1999	Belmopan
PUNJABI, Jagdish kumar	23.12.1999	Corozal
SHARP. Leslie Woodman - J.P.	23.12.1999	Orange Walk
ESPEJO, Agripina Ann (Mrs.) -M.B.E., J.P.	23.12.1999	Orange Walk
PUNJABI, Vinod Kumar - J.P.	23.12.1999	Orange Walk
JOHNSON, John Arthur	23.12.1999	Punta Gorda
FLORES, Augustine - J.P.	23.12.1999	Dangriga
FRANCISCO, Fredrick	23.12.1999	Dangriga
RAMOS. Gadsby Sr.	15.2.2001	Belmopan
RAMCLAM, Howard - J.P.	15.2.2001	Belize
GRIFFITH, Anthony Albert	15.2.2001	Belize
SHOMAN, Yasin J. - J.P.	15.2.2001	Belize
GRIFFITH, Roy A.	15.2.2001	Corozal
HUMES, Elizabeth Dorothy (Ms.)	15.2.2001	Belize
PALACIO, Irene Agnes (Ms.)	15.2.2001	Belize
PANDY. Myrna Elizabeth (Ms.)	15.2.2001	Belize
SMILING, Winston A.K. - J.P.	15.2.2001	Belize
HULSE. Sylvia (Mrs.) - J.P.	15.2.2001	Belize
MAGANA, Othon - J.P. (S)	16.1.2003	Orange Walk
LENNAN. Attolene Crawford (Mrs.)	16.1.2003	Belize
LEE, Archie – J.P.) (S)	16.1.2003	Belize
JENKINS, David Anthony	16.1.2003	Belmopan
GILLETT, Gweneth (Mrs.)	16.1.2003	Belize
DIAZ, Ricardo	16.1.2003	Belize
CASTILLO, Ricardo - J.P.	16.1.2003	Corozal
CARDONA, Jose Amir	16.1.2003	Belmopan
BUXANI, Ramesh Dialdas	16.1.2003	Belize

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ACOSTA, Allan Anthony	16.1.2003	Belize
BUDHRANI, Tara Rewa	16.1.2003	Belize
VERDE, Jorge - J.P.	16.1.2003	Orange Walk
REYES, Ramon Sr.	16.1.2003	Caye Caulker
RATH, Therese (Mrs.)	16.1.20	Dangriga
QUIROS, Dorene (Mrs.)	16.1.2003	Belize
PEYREFITTE, Lisa (Ms.)	16.1.2003	Belize
PEÑA, Arnold Antonio	16.1.2003	Belize
MEENAVALLI, Manga Raju	16.1.2003	Cayo
MATHEWS, Baxter Fitzgerald	16.1 .2003	Belize
JOHNSON, Netty (Ms.)	16.1 .2003	Belize
VASQUEZ, Sandra (Mrs.)	16.1 .2003	Belize
NICHOLAS, Lawrence J.	2.5.2003	Belmopan
SKEEN, Marlon Andrew	12.1.2006	Belize City
MADRID, Adrian 'Danny'	12.1.2006	Belize City
ESPAT, Luke	12.1.2006	Belize City
IRELAND, Sandra Marie	12.1.2006	Belmopan
GABB, Antonio R	12.1.2006	Belize City
PAZ, Jose Alezemi Jr.	6.4.2006	San Pedro
GIBSON, Bruce Austin	6.4.2006	Belize City
SMITH, Fred C.	6.4.2006	Belize City
OBANDO, Natividad Jesús	6.4.2006	Stann Creek
PALACIO, Robert Llewellyn J.P. (S)	4.08.2006	Belize City
ZETINA, Jose Carmen J.P. (S)	4.08.2006	Belize City
USHER, Raymond Alexander	4.08.2006	Belize City
WILTSHIRE, Ann Priscilla (Mrs.) J.P.	4.08.2006	Belize City
HOTCHANDANI, Anil Sunder J.P.	8.09.2006	Belize City
HE, Jian Lin J.P.	2.01.2007	Belize City
VERDE, Mariana O (Ms)	19.1.2007	Belize City
SISODIA, Gulzar M. Rana	27.09.2007	Belize City
SWIFT, Robert Clifton	6.12.2007	Belize City
LOPEZ, Martha	24.01.2007	Orange Walk
CORNEJO, Bernadette M.B.E. JP	8.09.2008	Orange Walk

Administrative and Support Staff

Supreme Court Marshall



L-R Mr Lino Chan, Mr Fitzroy Alvarez, Mr Hershel Crawford, Mr George Lightfoot, Mrs Nadine Lewis, Mr Frank Mendez, Mr Charles Humes, Mr Glen Banner, Mr Ernest Ferguson

Supreme Court Stenographers



L-R Ms Pamela Joseph, Ms Elvia Cowo, Ms Melissa Rowley, Ms Pauline Wright, Ms Eloisa Bustillos, Ms Audrey Grinage, Ms Lavern Staine

General Registry Staff



Ms Velda Flowers – Registrar General



Mr Edmund Pennil – Deputy Registrar



Ms Elizabeth Humes – Assistant Registrar



Ms Marie Coye – Legal Assistant

General Registry Staff



**L-R Ms Esther Vaughan, Ms Yvette Dobson, Ms Natalie Pitterson, Ms Merlene Antonio,
Mr Moses Sulph, Ms Avril Bennett, Ms Candice Flowers, Ms Deborah Robateau,
Ms Shari Lopez**

Supreme Court Law Library Staff



L-R Ms Angela Flowers (Assistant Librarian), Mrs Errolyn Grinage (Librarian)

Vital Statistics Unit Staff



U-D: Ms Patricia Grant, Ms Lovina Daniels, Ms Leticia McLaren, Mr Ian Gaynair, Ms Bernadett Armstrong, Ms Claudia Castellanos, Mrs Rita Gabb, Ms Vanessa Morris, Mr Lesmore Barker, Ms Rushinee Foreman, Ms Brenda Gomez, Ms Lisa Mckoy , Ms Stephanie Neal, Ms Bridget Gladden,

Magistrate Court Staff



Front Row L-R: Diana Hendy, Erlinda Levia, Orleen Pitzold, Lovette Nunez, Adelaida Moya

Middle Row L-R: Brian Young, Cheryl Slusher, Miriam Gideon, Yvette Bradley, Merlene Andrews

Back Row L-R: Leslie Smith, Pearl Lizama, Elton Anderson, Dwayne Broaster

Family Court Staff



Front Row L-R: Everal Day, Kayla Tingling, Miguel Ico, Karen Moguel, Alfaro Bol

Middle Row L-R: Faye Usher, Tanya Craig, Jean Burgess

Back Row L-R: Carmontella Brown, Geraldine Garbutt, Lisa Griffith, Sharon Bayliss

The Editorial Committee

Chief Justice Annual Report on the Judiciary of Belize 2009

Hon. Chief Justice Dr. Abdulai Conteh

Ms Velda Flowers

Ms Sharon Fraser

Ms Margaret Nicholas

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Mrs Errolyn Grinage

Ms Lovina Daniels

Ms Avril Bennett