



BELIZE NEEDS ASSESSMENT ON MIGRATION GOVERNANCE

The opinions expressed in the report are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the International Organization for Migration (IOM). The designations employed and the presentation of material throughout the report do not imply expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of IOM concerning the legal status of any country, territory, city or area, or of its authorities, or concerning its frontiers or boundaries.

IOM is committed to the principle that humane and orderly migration benefits migrants and society. As an intergovernmental organization, IOM acts with its partners in the international community to: assist in meeting the operational challenges of migration; advance understanding of migration issues; encourage social and economic development through migration; and uphold the human dignity and well-being of migrants.

This publication was made possible through support provided by the U.S. Department of State Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration (PRM), under the IOM Western Hemisphere Program and the generous contributions of government officials in a range of ministries and departments of the Government of Belize. IOM extends sincere thanks to all those who shared their knowledge and experience through in-person and remote interviews and to those who generously gave their time to support the review and validation of this report.

We also thank the IOM staff, representatives of other UN agencies and international organizations, members of civil society and representatives of the private sector who were part of this process. Collaborating with many different actors in the development of this report was key in guaranteeing that the findings are relevant, accurate and trustworthy.

The opinions expressed herein are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Government of the United States of America.

Publisher: International Organization for Migration
Regional Office for Central America, North America and the Caribbean
Sabana Business Centre, Boulevard Ernesto Rohrmoser
San José
Costa Rica
Tel.: +(506) 2212-5300
Email: rosanjose@iom.int
Website: www.rosanjose.iom.int

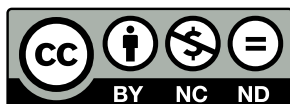
This publication was issued without formal editing by IOM.

Program Coordinator: Alexandra Bonnie
Research Coordinator: Estela Aragón
Authors: Tiarra Simon and Briana Mawby

Required citation: International Organization for Migration (IOM), 2021. *Belize Needs Assessment on Migration Governance*. IOM. San José, Costa Rica.

ISBN 978-92-9068-982-9 (Print)
ISBN 978-92-9068-981-2 (PDF)

© IOM 2021



Some rights reserved. This work is made available under the [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivs 3.0 IGO License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/3.0/igo/legalcode) CC BY-NC-ND 3.0 IGO).*

For further specifications please see the [Copyright and Terms of Use](#).

This publication should not be used, published or redistributed for purposes primarily intended for or directed towards commercial advantage or monetary compensation, with the exception of educational purposes e.g. to be included in textbooks.

Permissions: Requests for commercial use or further rights and licensing should be submitted to publications@iom.int.

* <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/3.0/igo/legalcode>

PUB2021/043/R

BELIZE

NEEDS ASSESSMENT ON MIGRATION GOVERNANCE



FOREWORD

Migration trends and flows in the Central America and Caribbean regions have shifted significantly in the last decade, evidencing the need to create migration governance systems that can adapt and respond effectively for the management of these evolving flows.

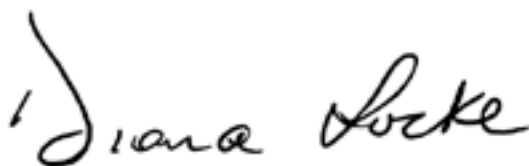
As the leading organization addressing migration around the world, and recognizing the impact of migration on development, IOM works with governments and partners in the international community to tackle old and new challenges posed by migration management; promote understanding about the nature of migration flows; encourage social and economic development through the benefits of migration; and ensure respect for the human dignity and well-being of migrants.

This report addresses the challenges and opportunities that exist in Belize for guaranteeing that migration to, from and within the country occurs through well-managed migration policies and mechanisms. This report provides key information to support the Government on current migration governance systems and highlights specific needs to inform

decision-makers to strengthen migration governance that will benefit States, communities and migrants. It will bring attention to the emerging activities that the Government of Belize is undertaking to address its migration management issues. It also highlights areas, such as data collection and analysis, among others, for which it needs support to further these activities, as well as undertake new ones to meet its internal and international obligations.

The Migration Governance Needs Assessment in Belize will add to a series of Needs Assessments conducted by IOM across Central America, North America and the Caribbean, seeking to expand the understanding of the institutions and policies regulating migration in the region in order to support intraregional sharing of good practices and the identification of efficient solutions to challenges in migration governance.

We believe that producing accurate and reliable information and analysis is a crucial step towards supporting governments and identifying ways in which IOM and other international partners can assist in strengthening effective migration management.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Diana Locke". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Diana" and last name "Locke" clearly distinguishable.

Diana Locke
Head of Office, IOM Belize

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS	IV
INTRODUCTION	01
METHODOLOGY	02
COUNTRY OVERVIEW: BELIZE	03
MIGRATION POLICIES AND ADHERENCE TO INTERNATIONAL STANDARDS	06
MIGRATION AND BORDER MANAGEMENT	10
MIGRATION MANAGEMENT IN SITUATIONS OF EMERGENCIES AND DISASTERS	14
MIGRANT PROTECTION AND ASSISTANCE	18
MIGRATION AND HEALTH	22
LABOUR MIGRATION AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT	26
LABOUR MIGRATION	26
HUMAN DEVELOPMENT	30
REFERENCES	34

ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ATIP Council	Anti-Trafficking in Persons Council
BZD	Belizean Dollar
CARICOM	Caribbean Community
CCJ	Caribbean Court of Justice
CORETT	Regional Coalition against Human Trafficking and Migrant Smuggling
CSME	CARICOM Single Market and Economy
DBMIS	Department of Border Management and Immigration Services
DRIP	Diaspora Returnee Incentive Program
MFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
MHDSTPA	Ministry of Human Development, Social Transformation and Poverty Alleviation
MIDAS	Migration Information Data Analysis System
NDC	Nationally Determined Contribution
NEMO	National Emergency Management Organization
NHI	National Health Insurance
SIB	Statistical Institute of Belize
SICA	Central American Integration System
TEP	Temporary Employment Permit

INTRODUCTION

Migration trends in the Caribbean and Mesoamerica have changed along with regional and global dynamics. In recent decades, the regions have seen important transformations in the factors that push people to migrate, in the profiles of migrants and in the risks to which migrants are exposed.

In this context, promoting organized, safe and regular migration is key. With the support of the international community, governments in the region have recognized the need to develop migration governance institutions that allow them to respond to emerging challenges and to maximize the opportunities presented by migration.

The International Organization for Migration (IOM) has developed different guidelines and tools to support governments in this process and to facilitate aligning domestic policy with international standards for the protection of migrants, including the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and specifically goal 10.7 to “facilitate orderly, safe, and responsible migration and mobility of people, including through implementation of planned and well-managed migration policies.”¹

As part of these efforts, IOM has created the Migration Governance Framework (MiGOF), which defines the principles and objectives of effective migration governance. Additionally, IOM has developed the Migration Governance Indicators (MGI) as an instrument that,

without addressing implementation, assesses the institutional, legal and public policy framework on migration in the countries that request it. In 2013, IOM conducted a *Diagnostic on Belizean Migration Trends and Migration Management Regulation*, which presented a rapid assessment of needs, capacities of the Government to administrate migration flows, and an overview of the existing legal framework.² Currently, Belize has not implemented a Migration Profile. The data collection process for the development of a Migration Governance Profile using the MGI methodology was completed, and preliminary findings were presented in an interministerial consultation in 2019. This Migration Governance Needs Assessment will build upon these analyses.

This report is part of a study that seeks to complement the MiGOF and MGI, offering a panoramic view of migration governance in Belize, including information about the successes and challenges in the implementation of migration policy and incorporating the perspective of the private sector and civil society.

The Migration Governance Needs Assessment in Belize was developed in an accessible format that provides data on the structures and policies regulating migration governance and identifies priorities for strengthening government capacity to manage migration effectively.

1. United Nations, 2015.
2. IOM, 2013.
3. IOM, 2019d.

METHODOLOGY

In 2018, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) carried out a comprehensive assessment of migration governance needs in ten Caribbean countries. In 2019, the study was replicated in Haiti, and in 2020 the methodology was expanded to Belize, Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala, Guyana, Honduras, Mexico, Panama and Suriname.

The methodology involved:

- A review of secondary sources of information, including national legislation, regulations and protocols, government reports and studies conducted by IOM, other United Nations agencies and international organizations.
- A baseline questionnaire made up of a set of 35 indicators and 89 sub-indicators, based on the principles and objectives of the IOM Migration Governance Framework (MiGOF). The questionnaire made it possible to identify the specific information gaps and inform the development of protocols for conducting semi-structured interviews.
- A series of in-person and remote semi-structured interviews conducted with government officials, members of civil society and representatives of United Nations agencies.
- Triangulation of primary data, compared with information provided by different sources, in order to guarantee the reliability of the results.

In February and March 2020, 13 interviews were conducted with 23 representatives of government ministries, civil society and the private sector. Interviews with government officials included representatives of the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries, Forestry, the Environment and Sustainable Development, and Immigration Services and Refugees, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Human Development, Social Transformation and Poverty Alleviation, the Ministry of Finance, Labour, Local Government, Rural Development, Energy, Public Utilities, Public Service and Elections and Boundaries, and the Ministry of National Security.

The final result is a document that offers an updated panoramic view of migration governance in Belize, structured in six thematic chapters:

1. Migration Policies and Adherence to International Standards
2. Migration and Border Management
3. Migration Management in Situations of Emergencies and Disasters
4. Migrant Protection and Assistance
5. Migration and Health
6. Labour Migration and Human Development

Each chapter is divided into three subsections that include:

- a) a factual description of government management of migration;
- b) a section of bullet points that highlight the most important aspects discussed in the description; and
- c) a table that details the principal needs related to migration governance, organized by sector.

The identified needs included in each chapter were prepared based on the information provided by government representatives, IOM specialists and representatives of civil society. These offer recommendations and opportunities for improvement, but they are not exhaustive and do not represent the official position of the Government of Belize or the organizations consulted.

COUNTRY OVERVIEW: BELIZE

Belize is located on the northeast coast of Central America and is bordered by Mexico to the north, by Guatemala to the south-west, and by the Caribbean Sea to the east. Belize encompasses a 22,966 km² territory⁴ and approximately 408,500 inhabitants, of which approximately 24,300 reside in the capital, Belmopan, and 64,300 in the former capital, Belize City.⁵ The country's population density is among the lowest in the world.

Belize was the site of many Maya city states prior to European settlement. The country was colonized by the United Kingdom in the 17th century and remained under British rule until Belize declared its independence on 21 September 1981.⁶ Maintaining its historical link with the United Kingdom through membership in the Independent Mainland Nations of the Commonwealth Caribbean, Belize remains the only English-speaking country in Central America.

By virtue of its geographical location, historical background and political associations, Belize is a Member State of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), the Organization of American States (OAS), the Association of Caribbean States (ACS), the Central American Integration System (SICA), the Global Forum on Migration Development (GFMD), and the Global Compact on Migration. Belize is also a Member State of the Regional Conference on Migration (RCM), which is a regional consultative process on migration in Central and North America. In addition, Belize regularly participates in the Caribbean Migration Consultations (CMC), a regional consultative process under

development in the Caribbean, and in the Regional Coalition against Human Trafficking and Migrant Smuggling (CORETT). As a Member State of CARICOM since 1974, Belize has signed onto the CARICOM Single Market and Economy (CSME), the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency (CDEMA), the Caribbean Public Health Agency (CARPHA), the Implementing Agency for Crime and Security (IMPACS) and the Caribbean Court of Justice (CCJ).

Belize is considered an upper-middle income country, with a Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of USD 1.88 billion and a GDP per capita of USD 4,884.70 in 2018.⁷ The main sources of income and employment are the agriculture and tourism sectors.⁸ The latter sector has played a significant role in the national economy in the last decade, as the total income from tourism increased from USD 278 million in 2008 to USD 487 million in 2018.⁹ The agricultural sector requires seasonal and migrant workers, who come primarily from border communities.¹⁰ In 2018, Belize sent USD 42,979,101 in remittances;¹¹ in the same year, Belize received USD 92,512,739 in remittances,¹² representing almost five per cent of the country's GDP.¹³ In absolute numbers, Belize receives the smallest amount in remittances in the Central American region.¹⁴

In 2018, Belize scored 0.720 in the Human Development Index (HDI), which placed the country in the high human development category, ranking 103 out of 189 countries. The average life expectancy of Belizeans is 74.5 years.¹⁵ The Gender Inequality Index

4. Government of the United States of America, 2020b.

5. Government of Belize, 2019a.

6. Government of the United States of America, 2020b.

7. World Bank 2020a; World Bank, 2020b.

8. Government of the United States of America, 2020b.

9. World Bank, 2019c.

10. IOM, 2013.

11. World Bank, 2018a.

12. World Bank, 2019d.

13. World Bank, 2018b.

14. OAS, 2015.

15. UNDP, 2019.

(GII), which calculates the loss to achievements in reproductive health, empowerment and labour market participation due to inequality between men and women, ranked Belize 103 out of 162 countries.¹⁶

Since 1983, Belize has received a large foreign population in relation to its total population.¹⁷ At present, there are about 60,000 foreign nationals in the country, of which 49.7 per cent are female migrants.¹⁸ This phenomenon is mainly due to Belize's relatively

strong economy, higher living standards, job availability¹⁹ and stable political context,²⁰ in comparison to other countries in the region. Notwithstanding, Belize also experiences a high emigration rate, totalling 68,100 emigrants in mid-2019.²¹ Immigrants, primarily from Guatemala (approximately 26,000), El Salvador (approximately 9,900), Honduras (approximately 9,500), United States of America (approximately 5,500) and Mexico (approximately 4,000),²² currently constitute 15 per cent of the Belizean population.²³

16. UNDP, 2018.

17. IOM, 2016.

18. Migration Data Portal, 2020.

19. IOM, 2013.

20. Palacio, 1993.

21. Migration Data Portal, 2020.

22. UN DESA, 2019.

23. Government of the United States of America, 2020b.

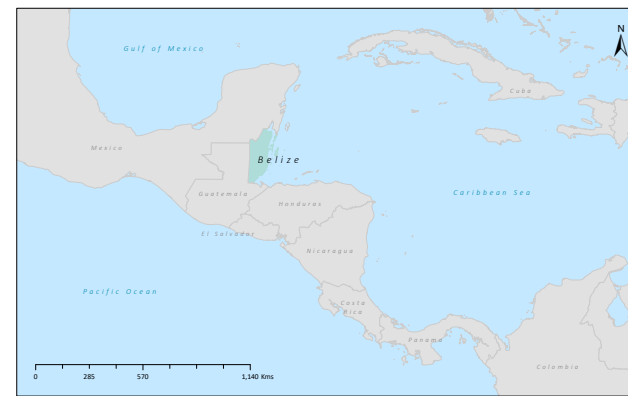
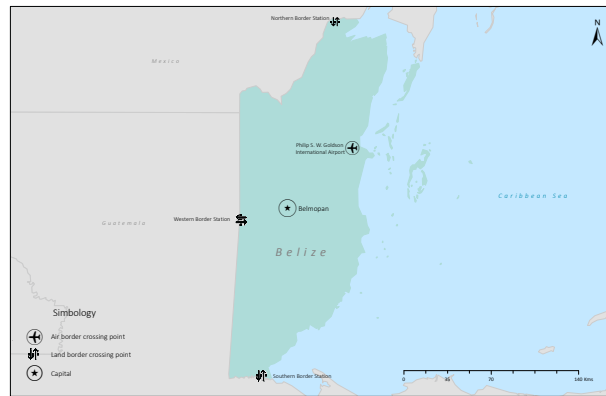
GENERAL INFORMATION

CAPITAL	CURRENCY	POPULATION ²⁴	AREA (km ²) ²⁵	GDP PER CAPITA (USD) ²⁶	MAIN ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES ²⁷
Belmopan	Belize Dollar (BZD)	408,487	22,065	4,884.70	Tourism and agriculture

MIGRATION DATA

IMMIGRANT POPULATION ²⁸	IMMIGRANT POPULATION (% of total population) ²⁹	WOMEN (% of immigrant population) ³⁰	EMIGRANT POPULATION ³¹	INTERNALLY DISPLACED POPULATION ³²	REMITTANCES RECEIVED (USD) ³³	REMITTANCES RECEIVED (% of GDP) ³⁴	NET MIGRATION RATE ³⁵
60,000	15.4	49.7	68,100	3,500 in 2016	99,465,758	4.9	3.2

MAP OF BELIZE



Note: These maps are for illustration purposes only. The boundaries and names shown, and the designations used on these maps do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the International Organization for Migration.

24. Government of Belize, 2019a.
25. Government of the United States of America, 2020b.
26. World Bank, 2019b.
27. Government of the United States of America, 2020b.
28. Migration Data Portal, 2020.
29. Ibid.
30. Ibid.
31. Ibid.
32. IDMC, 2016.
33. World Bank, 2019d.
34. World Bank, 2018b.
35. Migration Data Portal, 2020.

MIGRATION POLICIES AND ADHERENCE TO INTERNATIONAL STANDARDS

This section describes the different national policies that have been developed in Belize for the management of migration. It also includes information about the status of ratification of international treaties that support the respect for the rights of migrants.

Belize has ratified all the main international instruments in the field of human rights. The country has no overarching policy or strategy related to migration that adheres to international standards; however, it is in the process of developing a national migration policy.

The body of law relating to migration in Belize includes the following documents: the *Constitution of Belize, 1981* (with amendments through 2011), the *Immigration Act* (Chapter 156, revised in 2000), the *Nationality Act* (Chapter 161, revised in 2011) and the *Aliens Act* (Chapter 159, revised in 2011). Other laws directly related to migration include the *Trafficking in Persons (Prohibition) Act, 2013* (Chapter 108:01), the *Refugees Act*, (Chapter 165, revised in 2000), the *Passport Act* (Chapter 164, revised in 2000), and the *Caribbean Single Market and Economy Free Movement of Skilled Persons Act* (Chapter 1702, revised in 2011).

The Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries, Forestry, the Environment and Sustainable Development and Immigration Services and Refugees (hereafter called the Ministry of Immigration) includes the key departments that manage migration processes in Belize. The Department of Border Management and Immigration Services (DBMIS) is mandated to facilitate the travel of Belizean nationals and foreign nationals and to combat irregular migration. The Department of Nationality and Passports manages the residency and citizenship processes. The Refugees Department is responsible for the case management of asylum seekers and persons in need of protection. These Departments are comprised of units acting under specific legislative mandates within national laws: a) Immigration Service Unit, acting under the *Immigration Act*, the *Aliens Act*, the *Trafficking in Persons (Prohibition) Act*, and the *Caribbean Single Market and Economy Free Movement of Skilled Persons Act*; b) Nationality Services Unit, acting under the *Nationality Act*; c) Passport Services Unit, acting under the *Passport Act*; d) Permanent Resident Unit, acting under the *Immigration Act* (section 10); and e) Refugees Department, acting under the *Refugee Act*.³⁶

The Government of Belize, with support from IOM, is currently working on developing a national migration and development policy to improve migration governance, addressing current migration-related challenges and leveraging opportunities that will potentially allow

migrants to contribute to national development.³⁷ The National Inter-Ministerial Steering Committee is the coordination mechanism pertaining to migration matters. The Chief Executive Officer of the Ministry of Immigration leads the Committee to oversee the development of the migration policy, which began in 2017, and monitor implementation once the policy is adopted. Other interministerial coordination mechanisms pertaining to migration include: the Nationality Scrutinising Committee, the Visa Vetting Committee, the CARICOM Single Market and Economy Committee and the Temporary Employment Committee.

The *Constitution of Belize* (Chapter 4, Part 3), guarantees all persons, without distinction of place of origin, political opinions, colour, creed or sex, the rights of: “(a) life, liberty, security of the person, and the protection of the law; (b) freedom of conscience, of expression and of assembly and association; (c) protection for his family life, his personal privacy, the privacy of his home and other property and recognition of his human dignity; and (d) protection from arbitrary deprivation of property.”³⁸ The Constitution does not explicitly mention migration status; however, it does apply regardless of place of origin, and thus provides some protection to migrants.

According to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Belize has established bilateral extradition agreements with Mexico, Guatemala and the United States of America to ensure expedited procedures for the safe arrival of forced returnees.³⁹ However, as stated in a 2013 IOM report, there were no standard operating procedures dedicated to forced returnees, which often resulted in lack of coordination concerning referrals to the court system, detention, prosecution and repatriation.⁴⁰ The need to establish specific procedures for forced returnees remains prevalent.

The Statistical Institute of Belize (SIB) collects data through the national census, which provides existing migration data and information on immigrants living in the country. The most recent census was conducted in 2010, and another is in progress at the time of this report in 2020. These data provide an approximation of the regularized immigrant population, though migrants with irregular status are not counted officially.⁴¹ The SIB also publishes migration-related data as part of its collection of tourist information via the Visitor Expenditure and Motivation Survey.⁴² The SIB collects data via the Labour Force Survey and Household Budget Survey, but the data are disaggregated only by sex and district, and

36. Tanika, please change to: Government of Belize, 2000a; Government of Belize, n.d.g.

37. IOM, 2019d.

38. Government of Belize, 2011a.

39. The compulsory return of an individual to the country of origin, transit or third country, on the basis of an administrative or judicial act.

40. IOM, 2013.

41. Government of Belize, 2013a.

42. Government of Belize, 2019c.

these surveys do not provide much insight into the migrant population or migration trends. According to the MFA, no data are systematically collected on nationals living abroad.

Foreigners who are at least 18 years old can obtain permanent residency when they: a) have legally resided in Belize for a continuous minimum period of one year preceding the application, including by means of a temporary employment permit (TEP), and have not been outside of Belize for more than 14 days during that time; b) intend to stay in Belize; c) can prove that they have been, and are, able to financially sustain themselves and any dependents through employment in Belize; and d) have not been sentenced in any country to imprisonment of twelve months or more without a free pardon with respect to the criminal offence. Permanent residency can also be obtained once a person has held a legal status for a period of one year through a student or dependent permit and can demonstrate the financial means to sustain themselves, among other requirements.⁴³ Moreover, according to the *Immigration Act*, minors who entered Belize regularly or irregularly and have continuously resided in the country for at least ten years shall be eligible to apply for permanent residency.⁴⁴

The *Constitution of Belize* and the *Nationality Act* outline the existing avenues to acquire citizenship by right of descent and by virtue of registration. Citizenship by descent is granted to: a) persons born in the country on or after Independence Day (1981), except when neither parent is a citizen of Belize and at least one parent “possesses such immunity from suit and legal process as is accorded to the envoy of a foreign sovereign power accredited to Belize” or “his father or mother is a citizen of a country with which Belize is at war and the birth occurs in a place then under occupation by that country”; and to b) persons born outside the territory if at least one parent is a citizen. Citizenship by registration may be obtained after residing for a minimum period of five years as a permanent resident, with a continuation of one year preceding the date of the application. In their application, foreigners can appeal to grant their minor children citizenship by descent.⁴⁵

The *Constitution of Belize* also stipulates that the right to vote is extended to every: a) Belizean citizen; or b) citizen of any Commonwealth country who has ordinarily resided in Belize for at least 12 months prior to registering to vote or who is domiciled in Belize and ordinarily resident on the date of registration to vote. Both Belizean citizens and Commonwealth country citizens must have attained the age of 18 years and must be resident in Belize for a period of at least two months prior to registration to vote. Belizean citizens who reside abroad are not permitted to vote, with the exception of students studying abroad and

ORGANIZATIONAL AND LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK

Legislation governing migration	✓	<i>Immigration Act</i> (Chapter 156, revised in 2000)
National migration policy in a programmatic document	—	Migration policy is being drafted with support of IOM
Interministerial coordination mechanism	✓	National Inter-Ministerial Steering Committee
National laws dealing with extradition and agreements for extradition facilitation	✓	Mexico, Guatemala and the United States of America

RELEVANT INTERNATIONAL TREATIES

Convention or treaty		Year of ratification
<i>International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Their Families</i>	✗	2001
<i>International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and Its Two Protocols</i>	✓	1996, but two protocols not ratified
<i>International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights</i>	✓	2015
<i>International Convention on the Rights of the Child</i>	✓	1990
<i>Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women</i>	✓	1990
<i>Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities</i>	✓	2011
<i>Convention against Torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment</i>	✗	1986
<i>International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearances</i>	✗	2015
<i>International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination</i>	✓	2001

43. Government of Belize, n.d.f.

44. Government of Belize, 2000d.

45. Government of Belize, 2011a.

individuals who are on official government duty outside of Belize.⁴⁶ Migrants have access to legal recourse, can present cases in court regardless of their migration status and may secure legal representation, though representation is not provided by the Government. All persons charged with a criminal offence have the right to be informed about the nature of the offence charged in a language they understand and are permitted to have the assistance of an interpreter during the trial if they cannot understand the language used at the trial.⁴⁷

MIGRATION POLICIES AND ADHERENCE TO INTERNATIONAL STANDARDS



Migration strategy and regulatory framework

- The primary immigration legislation is the *Immigration Act* (Chapter 156, revised in 2000).
- There is no documented migration strategy.
- The National Inter-Ministerial Steering Committee is the formal interministerial coordination mechanism for migration.



Anti-discrimination

- The *Constitution of Belize* prohibits discrimination based on place of origin; however, it does not include migration status.



Records and data collection

- Existing migration data are collected through the national census. These data provide only an approximation of the immigrant population, as migrants with irregular status are not considered.⁴⁸

46. Government of Belize, 2000f.

47. Government of Belize, 2011a, Article 6.

48. Government of Belize, 2013a.



Residence and citizenship

- Permanent residency can be obtained by foreigners who are 18 years and older and have resided in Belize for one year immediately preceding the application.
- Citizenship can be obtained by descent and by virtue of registration.



Access to political rights

- Every Belizean citizen or a citizen of any Commonwealth country who fulfils certain residency requirements and who has attained the age of 18 years has the right to vote.
- Belizean citizens who reside abroad are not permitted to vote.
- Migrants have access to legal recourse, can present cases in court regardless of their migration status and may secure legal representation (not provided by the Government).

MAIN NEEDS IDENTIFIED BY THE GOVERNMENT

- Adopt and implement a comprehensive migration policy and strategy.
- Promote international engagement to exchange experiences and learn about migration issues and good practices in the region.

MAIN NEEDS IDENTIFIED BY IOM

- Create and adopt a comprehensive migration policy that includes private and public sectors, as well as civil society organizations.
- Develop standard operating procedures dedicated to forced returnees.
- Improve data collection, processing and analysis on migration to inform the migration policy development and implementation.
- Create a Statistical Unit within the Department of Border Management and Immigration Services to process administrative migration data, with support from the Statistical Institute of Belize, to support the migration policy.
- Consider the development of mechanisms to facilitate the participation of Belize citizens residing abroad in presidential elections.

MIGRATION AND BORDER MANAGEMENT

This chapter presents a brief description of the main structures and systems available in Belize to manage migration flows and exercise border control. Belize has one international airport, five official seaports, and three official border crossing points at the Belize Northern Border Station, the Belize Western Border Station and the Belize Southern Border Station. Unofficial border crossing points are detected across the extended borders with Guatemala and Mexico, which are generally isolated and unmonitored.

The *Immigration Act* (Chapter 156, Art. 24) stipulates that persons who enter Belize other than at an official border crossing point, disembark without the approval of an immigration officer or fail to present themselves to an immigration officer upon arrival may be charged with an offence. The Act provides several migration- and non-migration-related grounds for classifying individuals as “prohibited immigrants”, including: lacking financial means to support themselves; being “any idiot or person who is insane or mentally deficient or any person who is deaf and dumb or deaf and blind;” having a communicable disease; being a stowaway; being a sex worker or homosexual or “any person who may be living on or receiving the proceeds of prostitution or homosexual behaviour”; having a previous criminal conviction; non-compliance with the conditions of a permit; cancellation or expiry of a permit; or entering, leaving, or remaining in the country in violation of a stipulation of the Act. Some of these classifications, however, are not currently being put into practice. For example, IOM Belize notes that immigration staff are instructed via a policy declaration not to seek information about sexual orientation in interviews or to use this as a factor to determine admittance into the country. IOM Belize highlights the need to revise the *Immigration Act* to bring it in line with all international conventions standards and to consolidate the *Nationality Act* and *Permanent Residence Act* into a single law. Any person who commits an offence against any of the provisions of the *Immigration Act* will be liable for a maximum fine of BZD 1,000/USD 500, and repeat offenders are liable to a fine of up to BZD 5,000/USD 2,500.⁴⁹ Upon completion of sentence or payment of the fine, the immigration officer makes the necessary arrangements for the forced return of the person. According to interviews with immigration officials, there are administrative challenges for deporting foreign nationals, including securing the required travel documents, transit visas and return travel tickets.

The immigration law of Belize, which is criminal, governs immigration offences. As stated by IOM Belize, between 2016 and 2018, there were 1,449 migrants with irregular status

prosecuted and convicted in Belize. Any migrant to be detained is held at the Belize central prison as a person awaiting trial, or at any place appointed by the Minister of State for Immigration. Migrant detainees are held in a separate section of the central prison; women and men are held separately. The age of criminal responsibility is 12 according to Belizean law, though this may be extended to 14 in some cases.⁵⁰ Migrant children whose parents are in irregular status are placed in dedicated shelters managed by the Ministry of Human Development, Social Transformation and Poverty Alleviation (MHDSTPA). Nonetheless, according to the *Belize Immigration Detention Profile*, in 2014, the UN Committee on Migrant Workers expressed concerns on the detention of migrant workers along with convicted criminals and indicated that children under the age of 18, including unaccompanied minors, have been placed in pre-deportation detention.⁵¹ The *Detention Profile* states that many migrants are reportedly held in administrative detention of three to six months if they are not able to pay the fine. According to IOM Belize, the period of detention is set by the magistrate at the time the matter is brought to court. The central prison maintains records of all migrants and liaises with the DBMIS on a weekly basis for the deportation of migrants.

In order to support the Government of Belize in securing its borders, the United States of America Department of State Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs (INL) supported the newly established Border Interdiction Team Enforcement (BITE), comprised of the Immigration Department, customs and police, with the acquisition of headquarters and three forward operating bases in Belize to focus on border patrol and migrant smuggling, among other responsibilities. In addition, officers have received trainings on detection of fraudulent documents and interview techniques from INL.⁵²

In 2013, the DBMIS implemented IOM’s Migration Information Data Analysis System (MIDAS) and placed it in all established border crossing points and immigration offices to enable improved border control and migration management.⁵³ The system collects biometric data and monitors the entries, (over)stays and exits of all migrants through the use of machine-readers that capture Machine-Readable Zone (MRZ) codes, webcams and fingerprint readers.⁵⁴ MIDAS is not yet connected to the Belize Immigration Passport System. However, it is connected to the INTERPOL database to help immigration officers to identify persons of interest or people included on international watch lists. MIDAS is managed by a central server at the headquarters of the DBMIS in Belmopan and utilizes

49. Government of Belize, 2000d.

50. Government of Belize, 2000b.

51. Global Detention Project, 2016.

52. United States of America Department of State, n.d.

53. IOM, 2013.

54. IOM, n.d.b.

mobile units at locations where a formal office does not exist. Information is shared with other departments upon request through the established channels.

The implementation of MIDAS has improved the migration management of the country significantly, with 22,351,753 immigration records registered since 2013. However, the additional checks that MIDAS conducts require internet connectivity, and when connectivity is limited the entry and exit processes tend to slow down; there are also limitations in terms of the equipment and infrastructure available at official points of entry that hamper the full implementation of MIDAS. Authorities have been coordinating with the IOM MIDAS Team and are working to solve these issues; in the meantime, immigration officers have become selective in capturing some biometric features. For example, when there are connection problems with the camera, facial images are not collected, and when the system slows down, facial features are only collected for persons of interest in order to avoid waiting time for travellers. Public opinion against the collection of biometric data for privacy reasons has also played a role in the change in capturing biometric data. Immigration officers are seeking to upgrade the MIDAS servers at all official points of entry in order to improve the entry and exit processing time.

Non-nationals from 105 countries are not required to hold a visa prior to entering Belize. Visitors from 90 countries are required to have a pre-entry visa,⁵⁵ at a cost ranging from BZD 200/USD 100 to BZD 3,000/USD 1,500.⁵⁶ The period of stay granted to persons who meet the requirements to enter Belize is 30 days and can be extended up to 180 days.⁵⁷ The DBMIS is responsible for issuing these visas through the interministerial Visa Vetting Committee, which gathers weekly to discuss visa applications, with the requirement to respond to applicants within seven days. In response to the COVID-19 pandemic at the beginning of March 2020, and as part of the mobility restrictions implemented during the crisis, the DBMIS temporarily suspended several immigration services, including: applications for a Belize passport (except in case of emergency travel); applications for nationality; applications for permanent residence; and applications for visas (except when the visa is required to allow the applicants to obtain extensions in order to maintain their legal status in Belize).⁵⁸

According to the Global Passport Power Rank, which measures the mobility opportunities of a country's citizens, Belize ranks 45th out of 189 countries, with a mobility score of 96. The passport index shows that Belize nationals can travel to 61 countries visa free, to 35 countries with a visa on arrival and to 102 countries with a required visa.⁵⁹ Under the CARICOM Single Market Economy (CSME), Belizeans, who are CARICOM nationals, are allowed a six-month stay in other participating CSME Member States.

INFRASTRUCTURE AND EQUIPMENT

Border management system	✓	IOM's Migration Information Data Analysis System (MIDAS)
Records of entries and exists	✓	Collected through MIDAS
Electronic/biometric passports	✗	CARICOM, including fingerprint and photograph, but excluding chip
Machine-readers or scanners	✓	Machine readers the capture Machine-Readable Zone codes
Identification of fraudulent documents	✓	Through training and the border management system

RELEVANT INTERNATIONAL TREATIES

Convention or treaty		Year of ratification
<i>Convention on the Status of Stateless Persons</i>	✓	2006
<i>Convention against Torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment</i>	✓	1986
<i>United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and its protocols</i>	✓	2007
<i>Protocol against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Air and Sea</i>	✓	2007
<i>International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearances</i>	✓	2015

55. Government of Belize, n.d.d.

56. Government of Belize, n.d.k.

57. Government of Belize, n.d.c.

58. Government of Belize, 2020.

59. Passport Index, 2020.

The Passport Services Unit, located in the DBMIS, is responsible for issuing machine-readable CARICOM passports. The passports' biometric features include a photograph and fingerprint; immigration authorities are considering implementing e-passports in the near future. According to the *Passport Regulations Act* (Chapter 164), applicants who are residents of Belize can submit their applications to seven passport offices throughout Belize.⁶⁰ Every application must be supported by a Belizean-born recommender over 18 years old who holds a valid passport and has known the applicant for one year or more. Anyone who supports a fraudulent application is, according to the Act, liable to be taken to court and charged a fine of BZD 50,000/USD 25,000 or spend five to 15 years in jail.⁶¹ Passports are issued within three weeks or 15 working days and cost between BZD 50/USD25 and BZD 85/USD 42.5 for individuals who are 16 years and older and BZD 30/USD 15 and BZD 55/USD 27.5 for persons under 16 years. For Belize nationals residing outside of the country, applications may be submitted to the nearest Belizean consulate.⁶² According to IOM Belize, the administrative process takes between four and six weeks, as applications are sent from the Belize Embassy to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) and thereafter to the Passport Office of Belmopan for revision and issuance.

Belize currently has no laws criminalizing the smuggling of migrants. The only legislation that can be interpreted as applicable to smuggling is found in the *Trafficking in Persons (Prohibition) Act, 2013* which states that a person "that engages in the transportation for commercial gain shall ensure that every person travelling on board of his conveyance is in possession of a lawful travel document for entry."⁶³

MIGRATION AND BORDER MANAGEMENT



Border management

- Belize has one international airport, five official seaports, and three official border crossing points.
- Machine readers are available at all official border crossing points.
- Passports are checked against watch lists.



Smuggling of migrants

- There is no law to combat the smuggling of migrants; the only legislation that can be interpreted as applicable to smuggling is found in the *Trafficking in Persons (Prohibition) Act, 2013*.
- The Border Interdiction Team Enforcement group is a formal taskforce that focuses on migrant smuggling, among other issues.



Migrant detention

- There is no dedicated detention centre for individuals suspected of immigration offences; migrant detainees are held in a separate section of the central prison, and women and men are held separately.
- The age of criminal responsibility is 12 years old, and minors under the age of 18 can be detained.

60. Government of Belize, 2013d.

61. Ibid.

62. For more information see www.belize.com/downloads/belize-passport_regulations-2013.pdf.

63. Government of Belize, 2013e.



Border management system

- The Migration Information Data Analysis System (MIDAS) monitors the entries, stays and exits of migrants at all official border crossing points.
- MIDAS mobile units are available for use at some land and seaport locations where a formal office does not exist.
- MIDAS enhances connection to INTERPOL screening systems to identify persons of interest under various categories.
- Belize keeps records of forced return, but they are not disaggregated by sex or age.



Visas

- Foreign citizens from 105 countries are not required to apply for a visa prior to entry.
- Single entry visa costs for 90 countries range from BZD 200/USD 10 to BZD 3,000/USD 1,500; multiple visa costs are higher.



Travel documents

- Belize ranked 45th according to the Global Passport Rank 2019.
- To obtain a passport, foreign nationals must be formally recommended by a Belizean citizen who was born in Belize or obtained citizenship by descent.
- Belize issues machine-readable passports.
- Individuals can access passport application forms online and these can be collected at select embassies and consulates abroad to be processed in-country.

MAIN NEEDS IDENTIFIED BY THE GOVERNMENT

- Create an intergovernmental migration database, allowing the Immigration Department and Refugee Department to share information electronically.
- Strengthen data collection and response related to migrant missing persons.
- Ensure internet connectivity and improve the available equipment and infrastructure required to fully implement MIDAS at all official border crossing points.
- Implement regular training for government entities related to border management and security and management of changing migration trends and develop training for immigration officers to learn Spanish in order to assist Spanish-speaking migrants.

MAIN NEEDS IDENTIFIED BY IOM

- Revise the *Immigration Act* to bring it in line with all conventions and consolidate the *Nationality Act* and *Permanent Residence Act* into a single law.
- Create alternatives to the detention of migrants in police stations or jails and impose immigration fines.
- Improve data collection efforts on the characteristics and needs of the migrant population with irregular status.
- Create and adopt legislation on migrant smuggling to enact the *Protocol against Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea and Air*.

MIGRATION MANAGEMENT IN SITUATIONS OF EMERGENCIES AND DISASTERS

This section offers an overview of the different institutions, laws, regulations and national plans that exist in Belize for the management of emergencies and disasters, emphasizing to what extent the migration issues are incorporated.

The *Disaster Preparedness and Response Act* (Chapter 145, revised in 2003) established the National Emergency Management Organization (NEMO).⁶⁴ This centralized government agency is directed by a National Emergency Coordinator who has broad responsibilities for “coordinating the general policy of the Government of Belize related to mitigation of, preparedness for, response to, and recovery from emergencies and disasters in Belize” and for preparing and reviewing disaster risk assessment maps of the country, among other responsibilities. The Act includes provisions for the welfare and safety of individuals in cases of disasters as well as NEMO’s activities supported through the intersectoral coordination of the National Disaster and Preparedness and Response Advisory Committee.⁶⁵ Overarchingly, the Government of Belize purposely does not differentiate between treatment of nationals and non-nationals in its emergency and disaster management policies.

Present guidelines related to disaster risk management in Belize are included in the *National Hazard Mitigation Policy* (2004) and the *National Hazard Mitigation Plan* (2006), which were drafted with support from the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency (CDEMA) and the Caribbean Development Bank (CDB). The *National Hazard Mitigation Policy* provides an integrated approach to sustainable development at national, sectoral and community levels, whereas the *National Hazard Mitigation Plan* defines administrative guidelines and provides a hazard mapping and vulnerability assessment of the country.⁶⁶ The Plan attempts to strengthen the legislative framework for disaster risk reduction and supports other policies critical to disaster risk management such as land-use, human settlement planning and transportation policies.⁶⁷ Although it does not explicitly include migrants, it identifies the need for a comprehensive land-use policy to guide sectoral policy formulation and implementation regarding the use of land for protected areas, industry, agriculture or human settlement as well as the identification of human resource needs. The

Ministry of National Security is responsible for addressing mass movements of persons across borders and, although there is no formal contingency plan to manage large scale population movements in times of crisis, the ministry is currently formulating a *2020–2025 Border Strategy*.

NEMO advocates participation in national development planning initiatives to influence and shape sectoral policy and the re-evaluation of existing policies to streamline disaster risk reduction measures into them.⁶⁸ In 2011, within the regional Central American Integration System (SICA) forum, the Coordination Centre for the Prevention of Natural Disasters in Central America adopted the *Regional Manual on Procedures for Foreign Ministries in Cases of Disasters*⁶⁹ for the States of Central America, including Belize, and the Dominican Republic.⁷⁰ IOM seeks to support States in responding to migrants’ needs before, during and after crises. The *IOM Migration Crisis Operational Framework* (MCOF), adopted in 2012, is an operational and institution-wide tool to improve and systematize the way in which IOM supports its Member States to better prepare for and respond to migration crises.⁷¹ The IOM Migrants in Countries in Crisis (MICIC) initiative, launched in 2014, provides guidelines and support for ensuring that migrants are included in crisis preparedness, emergency response and post-crisis action.⁷² Both of these frameworks are voluntary for States, and they are intended to complement national policy regarding emergency management. Belize has not explicitly integrated these frameworks into national policies and strategies.

In response to the crises derived from the COVID-19 pandemic, IOM supported migrants, who were stranded outside of their country of residence, through a round-trip humanitarian flight that carried 32 nationals from Belize to El Salvador and brought 13 Belizeans back to Belize.⁷³ Moreover, specific hurricane shelter procedures were issued by NEMO in order to evacuate people, including migrants, who tested positive for the virus and to provide them with shelter during the hurricane season of 2020.⁷⁴ Other efforts conducted by NEMO include the distribution of COVID-19 preparedness signs throughout Belize’s largest island, Ambergris Caye.⁷⁵

64. Government of Belize, 2003b.

65. Ibid.

66. GFDRR, 2010.

67. Bello et al., 2017.

68. Government of Belize, 2006.

69. SICA, CSM, and CCPDNAC, 2011.

70. Cantor, 2018.





71. IOM, 2012.

72. MICIC Initiative, 2016.





In 2010, NEMO established an early warning system for tsunami threats.⁷⁶ NEMO is tasked with establishing procedures to inform communities during and after a disaster and to collaborate with organizations for the exchange of information and the harmonization of procedures.⁷⁷ It disseminates information via social media in both English and Spanish, which allows for communication with migrants from Spanish-speaking countries – the largest migrant population in Belize.⁷⁸ However, several issues have been identified with the dissemination of information concerning disaster treats. According to a study by the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), there are also no clear guidelines on the role of NEMO in assisting other government entities with the access and dissemination of information.⁷⁹ The Belize Red Cross identified the need to improve the early warning system to communicate emergency issues to migrants, and specifically to vulnerable migrant groups such as LGBTIQ+ people, women, children, individuals with irregular status and those living in rural areas of the country. Therefore, at the beginning of 2020, the Red Cross, with support from the Government, conducted a needs assessment on early warning systems with communities to identify what their needs are for disaster-related emergencies and help guide the adaptation of early warning systems to meet the communities' needs. *Horizon 2010–2030*, the national development strategy, cites the need for the development and implementation of a gender-focused *National Disaster Management Strategy* “based on family protection, cohesiveness and restoration before, during and after a disaster.” However, *Horizon 2030* does not address migration issues except to mention that some Belizeans wish to migrate outside of Belize.⁸⁰

The Belize Red Cross conducts field assessments following a disaster and it established Community Disaster Response Teams (CDRTs) to assist NEMO while they provide immediate relief to affected people and communities through Vulnerability and Capacity Assessments.⁸¹ The CDRTs develop training modules for communities in Belize related to gender, psychosocial support, conflict management and family emergency planning, among other topics, so that community members can be better prepared in case of an emergency. These trainings are open to all community members, regardless of migration status. The Belize Red Cross also provides trainings to NEMO when the Red Cross implements new methodologies and programmes related to vulnerable groups and disaster risk management. As the CDRTs are on the ground with communities immediately during and after disaster

INCLUSION OF MIGRATION PERSPECTIVE IN PLANS AND PROTOCOLS

Mechanism to include the migration perspective		
National risk and disaster management		
Early warning system		Information is disseminated in English and Spanish
Environmental policies and strategies		

RELEVANT INTERNATIONAL TREATIES

Convention or treaty		Year of ratification
<i>United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change</i>		1994
<i>Paris Agreement on Climate Change</i>		2016
<i>Tampere Convention on the Provision of Telecommunication Resources for Disaster Mitigation and Disaster Relief Operations</i>		
<i>Kyoto Protocol to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change</i>		2003

73. IOM, 2020.

74. Breaking News Belize, 2020.

75. San Pedro Sun, 2020.

76. Amandala, 2010.

77. Bello et al., 2017.

78. UN DESA, 2019.

79. Bello et al., 2017.

80. Government of Belize, 2011c.

related emergencies, a need has been identified to establish a protocol to provide assistance to all migrants, including those with irregular status. In 2013, with support from the Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery (GFDRR), Belize adopted the first comprehensive national strategy, the *National Climate Resilient Investment Plan*, to address the impacts of environmental change on social and economic development.⁸² In 2015, the Government established the National Climate Change Office to develop policy and provide support to partners throughout Belize; key officials from the Office identified the need for a vulnerability assessment on different regions, districts and border communities in order to identify how environmental change impacts affect communities and how this would affect internal and cross-border migration flows. IOM is currently assisting the National Climate Change Office to mainstream human mobility more thoroughly in climate-related policies. In line with this identified need, the Office would benefit from an increased collaboration with NEMO regarding disaster risk reduction and disaster preparedness, as collaboration currently takes place only in times of emergencies.

The 2016 Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) that Belize submitted to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) does not mention migrants or migrants' issues.⁸³ The *National Climate Change Policy, Strategy and Action Plan* addresses key priorities in alignment with the NDC and the Third National Communication (2016), which identifies the key natural hazards that affect the country and planned activities to "evaluate the feasibility of relocating vulnerable communities."⁸⁴ The Second National Communication (2011) already noted in this regard that there has been "some voluntary migration inland away from Belize City."⁸⁵ Nevertheless, while the displacement of communities appears as an outcome of environmental change in the coastal and marine sector, further efforts are underway for deeper mainstreaming of human mobility in the document. Planned relocations are receiving increasing attention given the exposure of some communities to natural hazards, and the Government of Belize and IOM are working to assess the need for planned relocation and develop guidelines in this regard.

MIGRATION MANAGEMENT IN SITUATIONS OF EMERGENCIES AND DISASTERS



Emergency and risk management

- The *Disaster Preparedness and Response Act of 2000* governs disaster risk management in Belize.
- The *National Hazard Mitigation Policy* and the *National Hazard Mitigation Plan* provide an overview of the current efforts in disaster risk reduction and define major challenges and priorities.
- The National Emergency Management Organization (NEMO) is the head agency coordinating disaster management efforts and oversees an intersectoral coordination mechanism.
- The specific needs of migrant populations are not taken into account in any official document.



COVID-19 emergency response

- IOM supported migrants during the COVID-19 pandemic through a round-trip humanitarian flight between Belize and El Salvador.
- NEMO established specific hurricane shelter procedures to evacuate individuals, including migrants, who tested positive for the virus.
- NEMO distributed COVID-19 preparedness signs throughout Belize's largest island, Ambergris Caye.

81. IFRC, 2016.

82. Government of Belize, 2013c.

83. Government of Belize, 2016a.

84. Government of Belize, 2016b.

85. Government of Belize, 2011b.



Early warning systems

- NEMO established an early warning system for tsunamis.
- Information is disseminated to the public through social media in English and Spanish, which allows communication with migrant populations from both English- and Spanish-speaking countries.



Strategies for mitigation and adaptation related to environmental change

- The *National Climate Resilient Investment Plan* addresses natural hazards, mitigation and adaptation measures.
- Climate- and environment-related guiding documents have thus far included a limited integration of human mobility.

MAIN NEEDS IDENTIFIED BY THE GOVERNMENT

- Create a mechanism to facilitate collaboration between government agencies, civil society organizations and international organizations that address disaster and human mobility issues.
- Collect information on how environmental change and natural hazards affect Belize and its neighbouring countries as a cross-border issue.
- Conduct vulnerability mapping on district-specific environmental issues.

MAIN NEEDS IDENTIFIED BY IOM

- Ratify the *Tampere Convention on the Provision of Telecommunication Resources for Disaster Mitigation and Disaster Relief Operations*.
- Develop system to collect data on displaced persons, disaggregated to include migration status.
- Collect data on the movement of persons and the impact over migrant populations, before, during and after crises.
- Revise existing disaster risk reduction policies to explicitly include migrants.
- Establish clear guidelines on the role of NEMO in assisting other government entities with the access and dissemination of information concerning natural hazards and crises.
- Improve the early warning system to communicate emergency issues to migrants, and specifically to vulnerable migrant groups such as LGBTIQ+ people, women, children, individuals with irregular status and those living in rural areas of the country.
- Advance and mainstream human mobility in strategic documents related to environmental change.

MIGRANT PROTECTION AND ASSISTANCE

The following section will discuss the main government institutions, legislation and initiatives that exist in Belize to provide protection and assistance to the migrant population, particularly to vulnerable groups, refugees and asylum seekers, victims of trafficking and returnees.

Protection and assistance for various vulnerable groups in Belize falls under the mandate of several institutions, primarily the Ministry of Human Development, Social Transformation and Poverty Alleviation (MHDSTPA) and the Ministry of Immigration. The Anti-Trafficking in Persons (ATIP) Council and the Department of Human Services, located within the Ministry of Human Development, provide support to victims of trafficking and unaccompanied minors. The Ministry of Immigration, and specifically the Refugees Department, provides support for refugees and asylum seekers.

There is no law that prohibits discrimination or harassment on grounds of migration status. However, the *Constitution of Belize* (Chapter 4, Part 3), guarantees all persons, without distinction of place of origin, political opinions, colour, creed or sex, the rights of: “(a) life, liberty, security of the person, and the protection of the law; (b) freedom of conscience, of expression and of assembly and association; (c) protection for his family life, his personal privacy, the privacy of his home and other property and recognition of his human dignity; and (d) protection from arbitrary deprivation of property.”⁸⁶ The MHDSTPA drafted an Equal Opportunities bill that is currently under evaluation by the Government.

The Department of Human Services of the MHDSTPA provides protective care to migrant children under 18 years old, who are referred as a result of child abuse, including sexual abuse and exploitation. Case management services for unaccompanied minors and children who are separated from family members because the adult family members are in the custody of the Department of Border Management and Immigration Services (DBMIS) is also provided. The Department of Human Services works along with the relevant embassy and the Immigration Department to reunite children with their families where possible and to repatriate unaccompanied minors to their country of origin when it is deemed in their best interest. In June 2016, the Caribbean Court of Justice (CCJ) found in *Maurice Tomlinson v the State of Belize and the State of Trinidad and Tobago* that “homosexual CARICOM nationals have a right to

freedom of movement on the same terms as any other CARICOM national and both Belize and Trinidad and Tobago agree that this is so.”⁸⁷ Section five of the Belizean *Immigration Act* restricts the entry of individuals, including homosexual people, who seek financial gain by offering sexual services or by profiting from sexual services provided by others.⁸⁸ However, because Mr Tomlinson was unable to show that he was in danger of being prejudiced by the provisions, the CCJ dismissed his case. The Court found that the State practice of both Belize and Trinidad and Tobago was in keeping with this right to free movement; however, the Court emphasized that inconsistencies between administrative practices and apparent meanings of legislation should be addressed.⁸⁹ In August 2016, the Supreme Court of Belize found a law criminalizing same-sex intimacy unconstitutional.⁹⁰ According to IOM Belize, the *Immigration Act* remains unchanged, but the DBMIS directed staff not to ask about the sexual orientation of migrants or to use this information in determining admittance into Belize.

Belize has a rich history of ensuring refugee protection in response to increased levels of violence in neighbouring countries, particularly for significant refugee flows in 1980, 2010, and at the time of this report in 2020.⁹¹ According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), by the end of 2019 Belize registered 2,158 refugees and asylum seekers, along with 3,390 other persons with international protection needs. These individuals were primarily from El Salvador, Honduras, Guatemala and Nicaragua.⁹² The Refugees Department located in the Ministry of Immigration, is mandated by the *Refugee Act* (Chapter 165) to enforce the international *Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees* and ensure that all processes regarding asylum seekers and refugees are in line with international and national standards. The Department was established in 2016 in response to a new wave of mixed migration⁹³ movements to Belize. It liaises with several ministries, UN bodies and local NGOs on issues related to asylum seekers, displaced persons and refugees. All migrants who enter Belize irregularly are essentially considered “prohibited immigrants” as stipulated in the *Immigration Act*.⁹⁴ However, the Refugees Department is responsible for making referrals of persons who meet refugee eligibility requirements to the DBMIS, which may provide entry stamps to regularize the migration status of these individuals. Asylum claims must be lodged within 14 days of arrival in Belize, which has been highlighted as main

86. Government of Belize, 2011a.

87. CCJ, 2016b.

88. Government of Belize, 2000d.

89. CCJ, 2016a.

90. Sopelsa, 2016.

91. UNHCR, 2019a.

92. UNHCR, 2019b.

93. Refers to complex population movements of people using the same routes and modes of transportation to travel, but moving for different reasons. This may include migrants, some of whom may have specific needs, refugees, unaccompanied and separated children, or victims of trafficking.

94. Government of Belize, 2000d.

challenge by UNHCR.⁹⁵ Key officials noted the need to connect the Refugee Database and Registration System to MIDAS. Moreover, in order to effectively mainstream interministerial coordination between the various government entities that provide support for asylum seekers, refugees and displaced persons, standard operating procedures on the referral of vulnerable migrants are currently being developed for government stakeholders and non-governmental entities.

In regards to the protection of victims of trafficking, Belize's counter-trafficking legislation, the *Trafficking in Persons (Prohibition) Act, 2013* outlines the tenants of the 4Ps approach⁹⁶ as it establishes possible penalties for offense of trafficking in persons, assistance and protection of victims of trafficking, provisions for prevention, and inter-agency and multidisciplinary cooperation between governments and nongovernmental organizations. Additionally, the *Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children (Prohibition) Act* prohibits and punishes acts of commercial sexual exploitation of anyone younger than the age of 18. However, Part 2, Section 3 of the Act excepts sexual activity with children ages 16 and 17, where an individual gives or promises remuneration or other benefits.⁹⁷ This provision leaves these children vulnerable to the worst forms of child labour,⁹⁸ as well as sex trafficking.⁹⁹ The Anti-Trafficking in Persons (ATIP) Council, located within the MHDSTPA, is mandated by law to coordinate the implementation of the *Trafficking in Persons (Prohibition) Act*. The 2018–2020 *National Anti-Trafficking Action Plan* guides the work of the ATIP Council, which oversees three established committees: a) the Information, Education and Communication (IEC) Committee—mandated with prevention and awareness efforts to reduce vulnerability to, and demand for, human trafficking; b) the Operations Committee – responsible for the rescue and assistance of victims of trafficking as well as the investigation and prosecution of perpetrators, utilizing a victim-centred approach; and c) the Monitoring and Evaluation (ME) Committee – in charge of data collection on trafficking, the development of national reports and leading the implementation of policies and programmes.

In 2019, the Government of Belize investigated 10 new cases of trafficking in persons and achieved one conviction of a trafficker.¹⁰⁰ Between 2014 and 2019, the Government identified 87 potential victims of trafficking.¹⁰¹ Although the Government has made important progress towards implementing the counter-trafficking legislation according to international standards, resource challenges remain for increasing the number of investigations and for identifying potential victims of trafficking. Officials from the ATIP Council have recognized the need for interpreters in order to better assist victims of trafficking, especially from Asian and Middle Eastern countries.

MIGRANT PROTECTION AND ASSISTANCE INFRASTRUCTURE

Institutions for the protection and assistance of migrants	✓	Ministry of Human Development, Social Transformation and Poverty Alleviation and Ministry of Immigration
Anti-discrimination legislation that includes migrants	✗	
Formal provisions for protecting and assisting migrant women	✗	
Formal provisions for protecting and assisting unaccompanied children	✓	Ministry of Human Development, Social Transformation and Poverty Alleviation
Formal provisions for protecting and assisting refugees and asylum seekers	✓	Refugees Department
Specific legislation against trafficking in persons	✓	<i>Trafficking in Persons (Prohibition) Act</i> and <i>Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children (Prohibition) Act</i>
Formal provisions for protecting and assisting returnees	✗	

RELEVANT INTERNATIONAL TREATIES

Convention or treaty		Year of ratification
<i>International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families</i>	✓	2001
<i>Domestic Workers Convention (No. 189)</i>	✗	
<i>Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities</i>	✓	2011
<i>International Convention on the Rights of the Child</i>	✓	1990
<i>Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women</i>	✓	1990
<i>1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees</i>	✓	1990
<i>1967 Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees</i>	✓	1990
<i>1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness</i>	✓	2015
<i>Additional Protocol to the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children</i>	✓	2003

95. UNHCR, 2019a.

96. Makes reference to the comprehensive framework to combat human trafficking, the 4 Ps approach: Prevention, Protection, Prosecution and Partnership.

97. Government of Belize, 2013b.

98. Government of the United States of America, 2018.

99. Government of the United States of America, 2019a.

100. Government of the United States of America, 2020a.

101. See Trafficking in Persons Reports from the United States Department of States of 2014 until 2019 for more information.

The Government of Belize assists victims of trafficking to replace their lost identification documents or obtain Belizean identification documents, and if applicable, travel documents. It also secures the victim's family, protects and enforces the rights of a child victim, ensures safe return, and provides the option to apply for permanent residency or remain in the country during the proceedings against a person charged with the offence of trafficking in persons.¹⁰² According to IOM Belize, the Anti-Trafficking Police Unit and the Department of Border Management and Immigration Services (DBMIS) conduct joint operations and screen persons for elements of human trafficking. Potential victims of trafficking are referred to the Department of Human Services, which is responsible for victim care and assistance, and is on standby for possible victim protection when operations are carried out. The country currently offers a range of placement options for victims of trafficking that include safe houses, shelters for domestic violence, residential care, group homes and foster care. These services, including medical and psychological care, are provided to adult and child victims of trafficking through the respective units within the Department of Human Services of the MHDSTPA. NGOs related to domestic violence have been trained by government officials to provide shelter and services to adult female victims of trafficking. However, there are limited shelter opportunities and dedicated programmes for male victims, including migrants.¹⁰³ According to officials from the ATIP Council, Belize has built a successful relationship with foreign embassies and consulates through the Regional Coalition against Human Trafficking and Migrant Smuggling (CORETT by its Spanish acronym) to coordinate on victim care and voluntary return. As a result, it has safely repatriated 11 victims of trafficking, including eight Hondurans in cooperation with the Government of Honduras¹⁰⁴ and two victims of trafficking with return assistance from IOM, which supports the Government of Belize to ensure the safe return of victims and facilitate voluntary return and reintegration for victims of trafficking.

Bilateral agreements have been established with Mexico, Guatemala and the United States of America to ensure an expedited procedure for the safe arrival of forced returnees.¹⁰⁵ For the fiscal years of 2018 and 2019, a total of 181 Belizeans nationals were subject to forced return from the United States of America alone.¹⁰⁶ However, no formal programmes have been implemented to reintegrate these individuals and help them rebuild their lives in Belize. In terms of voluntary returns, according to IOM Belize, 50 people were repatriated in July 2020 through the IOM Assisted Voluntary Return programme.¹⁰⁷

MIGRANT PROTECTION AND ASSISTANCE



Provisions to protect all migrants

- There is no anti-discrimination legislation in place that covers migration status.
- The *Constitution of Belize* guarantees all persons, without distinction of place of origin, political opinions, colour, creed or sex, the rights of life, liberty, security, protection of the law, freedom of expression and protection for their family life, among others.



Vulnerable groups

- The Department of Human Services provides protective care to migrant children under 18 years old, who are referred as a result of child abuse including sexual abuse and exploitation.
- The Department provides case management for unaccompanied minors and children who are separated from family members while they are in the custody of the DBMIS.



Refugees and asylum seekers

- At the end of 2019, Belize registered 2,158 refugees and asylum seekers, along with 3,390 other persons with international protection needs.
- The Refugees Department is responsible for procedures for refugees and asylum seekers.
- Asylum claims must be submitted within 14 days of arriving in Belize.

102. Government of Belize, 2013e.

103. Government of the United States of America, 2019a.

104. Government of the United States of America, 2019b.

105. The compulsory return of an individual to the country of origin, transit or third country, on the basis of an administrative or judicial act.

106. United States Immigration and Custom Enforcement, 2019.

107. For more information on the Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration (AVRR) programme, see: www.iom.int/assisted-voluntary-return-and-reintegration.



Victims of trafficking in persons

- The main legislation on trafficking is the *Trafficking in Persons (Prohibition) Act 2013*, and the *2018–2020 National Anti-Trafficking Action Plan* guides counter-trafficking programmes.
- The interministerial and sectoral coordination body is the Anti-Trafficking in Persons (ATIP) Council.
- Between 2014 and 2019, the Government identified 87 potential victims of trafficking.



Returnees

- Bilateral agreements have been established with Mexico, Guatemala and the United States of America to ensure an expedited procedure for the safe arrival of forced returnees.
- In 2018 and 2019, a total of 181 Belizeans nationals were subject to forced return from the United States of America.
- There are no formal reception or reintegration programmes for forced returnees.

MAIN NEEDS IDENTIFIED BY THE GOVERNMENT

- Adopt the *Equal Opportunities* bill to prevent discrimination of all persons and specifically mention the status of migrants.
- Expand support services available for refugees, including shelters and training on migrant assistance to avoid re-traumatization.
- Connect the Refugee Database and Registration System to MIDAS.
- Hire appropriately vetted interpreters in key languages to support victims of trafficking.
- Create and implement training for labour officials to identify victims of trafficking in the labour force.
- Adopt a comprehensive Anti-Trafficking in Persons framework that delineates the relationships and responses of stakeholders involved.
- Finalize and implement protocols and agreements for the repatriation of victims of trafficking.

MAIN NEEDS IDENTIFIED BY IOM

- Ratify the *Domestic Workers Convention (No. 189)*.
- Update anti-discrimination legislation to include migration status.
- Revise the *Immigration Act* regarding the classification of “prohibited migrants” to eliminate discriminatory provisions.
- Extend the 14-day deadline for lodging asylum claims upon arrival.
- Create standard operating procedures for managing new migration flows and making referrals of migrants with specific needs (e.g. health, education, or social services).
- Revise the *Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children (Prohibition) Act* to prohibit child labour and sex trafficking of children between the ages of 16 and 17.
- Generate protocols to assist male victims of trafficking.
- Develop measures to provide reception and reintegration support to forced returnees.

MIGRATION AND HEALTH

The following section describes the health-care system in relation to the integration of the migrant population in Belize and analyses the level of inclusion of the migrant perspective in the different policies, guidelines, practices and programmes related to health.

The Ministry of Health is responsible for health-care governance, mandated through the *Public Health Act Chapter 40* (2000), and policy development of the health-care system of Belize. The country has a decentralized public health system divided into four regions (Northern, Central, Western and Southern), administered through Regional Health Managers of the Ministry of Health and designated to provide services across the country. Care at the primary and secondary level is available in all regions through a network of six urban-based regional and community hospitals, 35 health centres and 53 health posts serving the rural population.¹⁰⁸ Most centres offer outreach services through mobile clinics accounting for approximately 40 per cent of the centres' service delivery.¹⁰⁹ The country has one national referral hospital in the Central Health Region that provides tertiary care and one psychiatric hospital that provides mental health care; all regular migrants can access health care in these facilities. Private health-care services provide mainly primary care and some additional tertiary care through three private hospitals, divided into non-profit and for-profit facilities. Belize's primary framework for mental health care aims to provide accessible mental health services to urban and rural communities; help individuals and families during crisis; and identify and treat mental disorders at an early stage. Migrant populations can also access mental health care.¹¹⁰ Additionally, the Belize Red Cross provides psychosocial support to all individuals in the country in times of post disaster and offers training to migrant communities and schools on health and hygiene, water and sanitation and prevention of communicable diseases.

Belize's health system is largely dependent upon public financing. In 2017, the country had a total health expenditure of USD 280.5 per capita, representing 5.6 per cent of its GDP.¹¹¹ Free primary health care, considered essential health care at the community level, is provided for all persons in Belize, including migrant populations with access to a social security card. However, stakeholders note that migrants without a social security card will not be denied services. The National Health Insurance (NHI) scheme, established in 2003,

funds primary care in the South Side of Belize, the Southern Region and Corozal.¹¹² The NHI provides free primary health care and covers basic medical consultations, childbirth and deliveries, complete natal care, immunizations, family planning, HIV/AIDS treatment and cancer treatments, among others, at a reduced cost for citizens and residents.¹¹³ The NHI is intended to make universal health care available to the public without any financial barriers.¹¹⁴ However, due to the strain the COVID-19 pandemic has placed on the health-care system, the Government of Belize asked citizens and residents to pay a small fee for non-primary health services within the NHI.

In order to access the NHI, which covers primary health care, every applicant from a household must present a valid social security card, which is a means of identification in Belize, for which several documents are required. For foreign-born residents this includes a naturalization certificate and birth certificate. All other residents can contact the Social Security Branch Office for information and guidance.¹¹⁵ Migrants residing in Belize with a Temporary Employment Permit (TEP), which is exclusively linked to an employer, are provided a social security card for as long as their TEP is valid. Their spouse is also provided a card which allows them to access the health-care system. While migrants with irregular status do not have access to the social security card, key health stakeholders suggest that they may not be denied health care upon the discretion of service providers, and they are encouraged to get a card. Thus, in practice, migrants without a social security card still have access to primary care. Access to health care is provided without identification only in emergency cases, such as in the event of sexual abuse, suicide attempt or traffic accident. Vaccines are also provided to migrant groups regardless of status, and no fees are collected.

The *National HIV-TB Strategic Plan 2016–2020* responds to HIV/AIDS through a “human rights-based and child rights-based approach,”¹¹⁶ offering universal access to affordable health care and social security to persons infected with HIV/AIDS, regardless of migration status or other social categorizations. All migrants also have full access to post-exposure prophylaxis kits (PEP-kits). There is no formal mechanism to provide interpretation services for non-English speakers, and interpretation largely relies on the language capacity of the staff. The Ministry of Health utilizes the Belize Health Information System (BHIS), implemented at

108. IADB, 2014.

109. WHO, 2006.

110. Ibid.

111. World Bank, 2019a.

112. PAHO/WHO, 2017.

113. IADB, 2014.

114. Government of Belize, 2014.

115. Government of Belize, n.d.i.







116. Government of Belize, 2016c.

every public hospital, public clinic and several health centres across the country, to collect and analyse patient data and report health information. While the Ministry utilizes the BHIS, the NHI uses a different web-based information system known as RAWA.¹¹⁷

According to key health stakeholders, there are no permanent health officers placed at any port of entry. Government health response is dependent on the condition of the moment, such as the global emergency surrounding COVID-19. The emergency response framework of the Government follows PAHO/WHO guidance to address the needs of migrants and displaced persons. Nonetheless, assistance to these populations is hindered by the difficulty of accessing them, as displaced migrants tend to be concentrated in informal and hard-to-reach settlements. In response to the global COVID-19 emergency, the Ministry of Health and PAHO/WHO provided training in April 2020 to community volunteers with key information on prevention and control strategies, managing quarantine centres and the use of communication channels.¹¹⁸ The Ministry has identified the “need for improvement on country-level coordination of health training among the many stakeholders in the field of health.”¹¹⁹ There is no protocol in place to provide health screenings or referrals for forced returnees, victims of trafficking or asylum seekers. According to officials from the Refugees Department, asylum seekers and refugees have access to health services.

The *Health Sector Strategic Plan 2014–2024* (HSSP) is Belize’s comprehensive health governance framework, which aims to deliver health care following a “national vision of universal access to a health-care system based on equity, affordability, accessibility, quality, and sustainability.”¹²⁰ A steering committee made up of representatives from different units from the Ministry of Health and the PAHO/WHO country office was established to manage the development of the HSSP. Although the national health policy is part of a comprehensive approach to meeting the health needs of the population, it does not include any measures to address the specific needs of the migrant population, and it mentions immigrants exclusively in relation to the behavioural determinants of health and demographic profiles. Similarly, legislation related to health care, does not specify access to, or equity in, health-care delivery. Responding to migrants’ health needs, PAHO/WHO has developed a comprehensive *Guidance Document on Migration and Health* for governments to: strengthen health surveillance and information management at border points; improve access to health services; improve communication and information to counter xenophobia; strengthen partnerships and networks; and strengthen policy framework to protect migrants.¹²¹ This document was shared with the Government of Belize in 2019 and has yet to be implemented.

MIGRANTS’ ACCESS TO HEALTH CARE

Access to primary health services		Free of cost with social security card; however, migrants without social security card will not be denied access.
Access to secondary health services		Free of cost with social security card; however, migrants without social security card will not be denied access.
Access to psychosocial care		Migrants, irrespective of status, have access to emergency psychosocial health care.
Access to post-exposure prophylaxis treatment		Free of cost regardless of migration status.
Access to the national plan to combat HIV/AIDS		
Access to interpretation services		

RELEVANT INTERNATIONAL TREATIES

Convention or treaty		Year of ratification
<i>Constitution of the World Health Organization</i>		1990
<i>International Health Regulations (IHR)</i>		2007
<i>Resolution on the health of migrants (WHA 61.17)</i>		2008
<i>International Convention on the Rights of the Child</i>		1990
<i>Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women</i>		1990
<i>International Covenant on Economic Social and Cultural Rights</i>		2015

117. PAHO/WHO, 2017.

118. WHO, 2020.

119. Government of Belize, 2014.

120. Ibid.

121. PAHO/WHO, 2019.

The country aims to reach all persons in Belize without distinction when it conducts health campaigns. Campaigns are provided in English and Spanish, which facilitates access for Spanish-speaking migrant populations.

Belize has made significant progress since 2005 to implement the International Health Regulations (IHR) by conducting a gap analysis in 2008 and an external evaluation in 2016 identifying strengths and needs to guide its plan to meet IHR requirements. However, according to PAHO/WHO there is still a need to implement the recommendations of the IHR external evaluation to establish a multisectoral operational planning mechanism¹²² and to adapt the *Public Health Act* to formalize the role of other ministries and institutions in implementing the IHR and to be in alignment with international agreements or regulations.¹²³

MIGRATION AND HEALTH



Health-care system

- Free primary health care is provided for all persons in Belize with a social security card; however, migrants without a card will not be denied access.
- The National Health Insurance (NHI) provides free primary health care and covers additional medical services for a reduced cost for citizens and residents.



Protocols and guidelines

- There is no action plan or protocol specific to migrant health care.



Training

- Health-care professionals are trained on the International Health Regulations.
- Training has been provided to community volunteers surrounding COVID-19.

122. Ibid.

123. PAHO/WHO, 2017.



Mental health services

- Services are available through primary care health centres.
- The Belize Red Cross provides psychosocial care in times of emergency.



Data collection

- Data are collected in certain regions through the Belize Health Information System (BHIS) and only on migrants with a social security card through RAWA.
- There is currently no data collection on the specific health needs of migrants.

MAIN NEEDS IDENTIFIED BY IOM AND OTHER UN AGENCIES¹²⁴

- Implement the WHO/PAHO *Guidance Document on Migration and Health*.
- Integrate health policy provisions addressing the health needs of migrant populations.
- Create a formal mechanism for the referral of vulnerable migrants in need of health care.
- Implement mechanisms to address the health needs of migrant populations.
- Provide formal access to translation services for non-English speaking migrants, in health-care facilities.
- Increase training of health-care officers to identify and respond to the needs of migrants and train non-health related officials on health vulnerabilities of migrants.
- Station health services personnel at all border points permanently.
- Provide interpretation services in health-care facilities.
- Provide specific provisions for migrants with irregular status to access primary health care.
- Develop and implement a mental health and psychosocial support plan for migrants, including subsequent protocols and referrals.

¹²⁴ Due to the global emergency surrounding COVID-19 during the primary data collection, access to government health officials was limited, and, as a consequence, the information included in this chapter comes mainly from other government officials and health stakeholders.

LABOUR MIGRATION AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

This chapter is divided into two subsections: a) labour migration, which briefly presents a panoramic view of labour migration in the country, as well as the relevant systems to manage labour migration governance; and b) human development, which describes the extent to which the migration perspective is mainstreamed in national development policies, strategies incorporating the diaspora into the socioeconomic development of the country and how remittances contribute to local development and to migrant families.

LABOUR MIGRATION

Belize is heavily dependent on migrant labour, notably in its commercial, service, agriculture, tourism and fruit production sectors.¹²⁵ According to a 2012 International Labour Organization (ILO) Country Report of Belize, the country has seen a steady economic growth after the arrival migrants from Central America who contributed to the workforce of the country.¹²⁶ This is especially significant in the agricultural sector, which requires seasonal and migrant workers, who are mainly recruited from border region communities.¹²⁷ Data obtained from a 2004 Labour Force Survey showed that migrant workers were primarily between the age of 25 and 44 years; most of them entered the labour force at the age of 14 and continued working past their retirement age. Recent data showed that the labour participation rate in September 2019 was 69.7 per cent Belizeans, 73.9 per cent Guatemalans, and 78.6 per cent Hondurans.¹²⁸

Provisions regarding the employment of migrants are stipulated in the *Immigration Ordinance Act* (Chapter 156). According to Section 16, migrants from countries outside the CARICOM Member States wishing to enter Belize for the purpose of employment must apply for a Temporary Employment Permit (TEP), issued by the Department of Border Management and Immigration Services (DBMIS). The Act also states that a TEP is exclusively linked to an employer with a validity of the specific period as stated on the

permit,¹²⁹ with a limited multiple-entry visa of one year.¹³⁰ While TEPs are developed for a specific period, renewal is possible with the submission of a new TEP request; after receiving the second permit, migrants are entitled to apply for permanent residence. In order for a migrant to receive a TEP, an employer must present an application on behalf of the applicant, including an approved visa application form as proof of a migrant's legal status, a letter of financial support, a copy of the applicants' passport, employment letter, bank statement, registration license of business in case of self-employment, a one year open return ticket, among other required documents.¹³¹ The Labour Department, located within the Ministry of Labour, vets TEP applications through the National Work Permit Committee. Key officials noted the importance of migrant workers to fill gaps in many different sectors.

Workers from participating CARICOM Single Market and Economy (CSME) Member States may be employed in Belize through the CSME regimes facilitating the free movement of persons using Skills Certificates, service providers and those establishing businesses.¹³² Belize is one of three CSME Member States in which CSME Skills Certificates are used more often than long-term work permits for labour migration in the region.¹³³ Moreover, bilateral agreements regarding labour migration have been established with Cuba to ensure the presence of health professionals and training of human resources in Belize.¹³⁴ A 2017 agreement created a visitor card programme for cross-border workers from Belize and Guatemala to work in Campeche, Chiapas, Tabasco and Quintana Roo in Mexico.¹³⁵ In 2014, Belize and Guatemala signed the *Guatemalan Temporary Migrant Workers Agreement*, but it was never implemented.

In Belize, labour agencies and recruitment agencies may influence the employment experience of migrant workers. The *Labour Act* (Chapter 297) stipulates the requirements for recruiting agencies that manage the recruitment and employment of more than 20 individuals. Under the Act, recruiters are granted a recruitment licence for a maximum of

125. IOM, ILO, and the Government of Belize, 2012.

126. Ibid.

127. IOM, 2013.

128. Government of Belize, 2019b.

129. Government of Belize, 2000d.

130. Government of Belize, n.d.b.

131. Ibid.

132. Government of Belize, n.b.j.

133. IOM, 2019b.

134. San Pedro Sun, 2019.

135. ILO, 2017b; Library of Congress Law, 2015.

one year, with possibilities for renewal, if they have adequate measures to safeguard the health and well-being of prospective workers,¹³⁶ including migrants. This helps promote ethical recruitment processes and facilitate safe workplaces, including for migrants.

The Statistical Institute of Belize (SIB) guides and informs the decision-making process of vetting TEPs, conducting surveys and developing quarterly reports on the Belizean labour market disaggregated by sex, district, sector and type of employment (including unpaid family work), but not by nationality. The SIB also provides information on employment growth and unemployment rates that is utilized by the Department of Labour to match skills to the demands of the labour market and make the job matching and advisory functions of the Department more effective. Although these statistics provide a general scope of the labour market and its demands, key government labour officials have identified the need for a comprehensive labour management tool or system for data collection that will allow the processing and analysing of data internally, which is currently being developed with support of the World Bank.

The *Decent Work Country Programme (DWCP) for Belize (2012-2015)*, launched by the Government in partnership with the International Labour Organization, identified several priority areas for the labour market, including the need to develop a Labour Market Information System (LMIS).¹³⁷ The continued development of the LMIS is key to accurately identify skills gaps and evaluate the labour market need for foreign labour force.

The *Constitution of Belize* includes a stipulation against forced labour, prohibiting that anyone “shall be held in slavery or servitude” or “shall be required to perform forced labour,”¹³⁸ and labour officials require the skills competencies to prevent labour exploitation and to achieve sustainable labour migration management. Labour government officials also identified the need to include victims of trafficking identification training, noting that labour migrants may be vulnerable to human trafficking, which is prohibited through the *Trafficking in Persons (Prohibition) Act*.¹³⁹

Migrant workers with a valid work permit can access the national social security scheme stipulated in the *Social Security Act* (Chapter 44).¹⁴⁰ Under the Act, all individuals between the ages of 14 and 65 employed in an insurable employment shall receive social security benefits in Belize. This includes migrants employed in the public sectors as well as self-

MIGRANTS' ACCESS TO LABOUR

Access to work in the private sector	✓	Same access as nationals with TEP, exclusively linked to an employer
Possibility of self-employment	✓	Same access as nationals with TEP, exclusively linked to an employer
Access to work in the public sector	✓	Same access as nationals with TEP, exclusively linked to an employer
Data collection on migrants accessing the labour market	✓	Information gathered through labour data of SIB
Shortage occupation list	✗	

RELEVANT INTERNATIONAL TREATIES

Convention or treaty		Year of ratification
<i>International Convention on the Rights of the Child</i>	✓	1990
<i>ILO Convention on Migration for Employment (Revised, No. 97)</i>	✓	1983
<i>Complementary provisions of the ILO Convention on Migrant Workers (No.143)</i>	✗	
<i>Domestic Workers Convention (No. 189)</i>	✗	
<i>International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families</i>	✓	2001

136. Government of Belize, 2000e.

137. ILO, 2012.

138. Government of Belize, 2011a.

139. Government of Belize, 2013e.

employed migrants, but excludes migrants with irregular status and migrants working fewer than eight hours a week.¹⁴¹ Migrants with a TEP have, upon registration and submission of the original permit at the Social Security Board, access to social security benefits for as long as their TEP is valid. In addition, their spouse will be issued a social security card, which allows access to social security and health benefits, if the spouse can present a valid Dependent Permit issued by the DBMIS.¹⁴² According to a 2016 ILO report, 71 per cent of the total employed labour force is covered by the social security system, 10 per cent of which are migrant workers.¹⁴³ Furthermore, the *CARICOM Agreement on Social Security* facilitates the portability of social security benefits for CARICOM nationals in Belize.¹⁴⁴ Additionally, migrants working via a TEP who meet the minimum amount required for social security system contributions are eligible by law to collect their Social Security Pension. Belize has also established a bilateral agreement with Mexico on matters of social security benefits, among other areas of cooperation.¹⁴⁵ Belize does not participate in agreements to allow portability of benefits with other Central American countries.

LABOUR MIGRATION



Labour migration

- Provisions regarding the employment of migrants are stipulated in the *Immigration Ordinance Act*.
- Migrants from countries outside the CARICOM Member States wishing to enter Belize for the purpose of employment must apply for a Temporary Employment Permit.



Access to labour markets

- Migrants have access to the labour market, including both the public and private sectors, with a valid work permit, but the Temporary Employment Permit is exclusively linked to an employer.
- Legally employed migrants are protected under labour legislations.
- The Government of Belize does not currently collect information on migrants with irregular status accessing the labour market.
- There are no specific provisions or mechanisms to promote extensive integration of migrants into the labour market.



Labour agreements

- The CSME free movement regime enables the free movement of skilled labour across Member States through the free movement for skilled nationals, the provision of services and the right of establishment.
- The *CARICOM Agreement on Social Security* facilitates the portability of social security benefits for CARICOM nationals in Belize.
- Bilateral agreements have been established with Mexico regarding social security benefits and with Cuba regarding labour migration.

140. Government of Belize, 2003c.

141. Government of the United States of America, 2017.

142. IOM, 2013.

143. ILO, 2017a.

144. Government of Belize, n.d.j.

145. ILO, 1987.



Data collection

- Migrants have access to the labour market, including both the public and private sectors, with a valid work permit, but the Temporary Employment Permit is exclusively linked to an employer.
- Legally employed migrants are protected under labour legislations.
- The Government does not currently collect information on migrants with irregular status accessing the labour market.
- There are no specific provisions or mechanisms to promote extensive integration of migrants into the labour market.



Forced labour

- The *Constitution of Belize* prohibits that anyone “shall be held in slavery or servitude” or “shall be required to perform forced labour.”¹⁴⁶
- The *Trafficking in Persons (Prohibition) Act* prohibits labour exploitation in the context of trafficking.



Access to social security

- Migrants with a valid Temporary Employment Permit have access the social security scheme of Belize.
- Spouses with a valid Dependent Permit are issued a social security card which allows access to social security benefits.

MAIN NEEDS IDENTIFIED BY THE GOVERNMENT

- Develop comprehensive labour management tool or system for data collection.
- Implement training for labour officials on identification of victims of trafficking, with a focus on labour exploitation.
- Implement training for labour department officials on migration issues and migration governance.

MAIN NEEDS IDENTIFIED BY IOM

- Ratify the Complementary provisions of the *ILO Convention on Migrant Workers (No.143)* and the *Domestic Workers Convention (No. 189)*.
- Include provisions to incorporate migration within labour policies and strategies.
- Facilitate migrants’ ability to apply for formal work permits and access the formal employment sector.
- Develop mechanisms to identify labour market gaps that could be filled by the migrant labour force.
- Implement CARICOM Labour Market Information System.
- Establish bilateral agreements with countries of migrants working in specific sectors to ensure a continuous flow of labour and the protection of migrants both for foreign nationals working in Belize as Belizeans working abroad.
- Promote equal opportunities for participation in the labour force for migrants of different genders.

146. Government of Belize, 2011a.

HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

Belize scored 0.720 in the Human Development Index (HDI) in 2018. The Index is composed of life expectancy, education and per capital income indicators and placed Belize in the high human development category, with a ranking of 103 out of 189 countries and territories.¹⁴⁷

Although Belize is located on the mainland of Central America, it is still considered a Small Island Developing State (SIDS)¹⁴⁸ due to its economic dependency on a few sources of income and its low-level resilience against natural disasters. To meet the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), Belize is a signatory to the SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA Pathway) – a global framework establishing intergovernmental partnerships to identify SIDS priorities in the formulation of international development goals.

Development priorities for Belize are defined in *Horizon 2030*¹⁴⁹ and the *Growth and Sustainable Development Strategy 2016–2019*.¹⁵⁰ Both of these strategies are aligned with the SDGs, but they do not include any migrant-related issues or provisions to address target 10.7, to facilitate orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration.¹⁵¹

The Ministry of Human Development, Social Transformation and Poverty Alleviation (MHDSTPA) is responsible for facilitating the development of policies and implementation of programmes that “promote social justice and equity, enabling people to be self-sufficient, responsible and productive citizens.”¹⁵² It comprises the following four departments: the Community and Rehabilitation Department, focused on the development of youth; the Human Services Department, focused on the development and protection of children; the Women and Family Support Department, focused on the facilitation of shelters and the rights of children and families; and the Policy and Planning Unit. Having ratified the *Convention on the Rights of the Child*, Belize ensures basic education through the public system for all children of compulsory school age. According to the *Education Act* (Chapter 36), education in Belize is mandatory for children from ages 6 to 14. The Act also stipulates that all schools shall be free of biases based on gender, racial and other social categories in order to facilitate a harmonious school environment for all children,¹⁵³ including migrants with irregular status. However, key government officials identified several challenges for migrant children in

Belize, who encounter language, cultural and social barriers among their peers. In addition, schoolteachers do not receive any training in providing education responsive to the needs of migrants.

Migrants can access public assistance, such as food and education assistance, through the Department of Women and Family. As Belize does not have a scheme for public housing, the Department can provide assistance with rental housing. However, there are no formal programmes related to housing. Historically, migrants from neighboring countries have concentrated in settlements after being granted permission from the Government. Refugees and migrants continue to settle communities commonly known to be inhabited by immigrants, including the Valley of Peace and the migrant village of Bella Vista, expanded from a marginal settlement to being one of the largest areas in the district of Toledo.

Approximately 16 per cent of Belizeans nationals reside abroad,¹⁵⁴ with the majority (approximately 85,000) living in the United States of America.¹⁵⁵ Canada, Mexico and the English-speaking Caribbean countries are also common destinations.¹⁵⁶ The Belize Diaspora Program, managed by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA), promotes engagement with the diaspora community by identifying the skills, resources and return interests of members of the diaspora.¹⁵⁷ The Diaspora Returnee Incentive Program (DRIP) specifically targets those returnees with funds to invest in Belize by providing tax breaks, duty exemptions on personal items, tools of trade and a vehicle for those living abroad for ten years or more.¹⁵⁸ The programme hopes to attract Belizeans with military and law enforcement experience in order to participate in service provision, technical capacity-building and training in Belize.¹⁵⁹ According to key officials from the MFA, while the DRIP is intended to attract returnees to invest in the local economy of Belize, the programme facilitate all Belizeans from the diaspora community who meets the DRIP requirements. Although these programmes provide a comprehensive framework for diaspora engagement, key officials from the MFA have identified the need to map the diaspora, as well as increase human resources, in order to actively interact with the diaspora.

147. UNDP, 2019.

148. For more information, see www.sustainabledevelopment.un.org/topics/sids/list.

149. Government of Belize, 2011c.

150. Ibid.

151. SDG target 10.7 calls on countries to facilitate orderly, safe, regular, and responsible migration and mobility of people, including through implementation of planned and well-managed migration policies. This goal includes the indicator 10.7.2: *Number of countries that have implemented well-managed migration policies*.

152. Government of Belize, n.d.h.

153. Government of Belize, 2000c.

154. Government of the United States of America, 2020b.

155. Government of the United States of America, 2019c.

156. Government of the United States of America, 2020b.

157. Government of Belize, n.d.a.

158. Government of Belize, 2010.

159. IOM, 2013.

INCLUSION OF THE MIGRATION PERSPECTIVE IN PLANS AND PROTOCOLS

Human Development Index	✓	0.720, rank 103 of 189 countries and territories
Inclusion of migration population into development strategy	✓	
Development strategy in alignment with SDG target 10.7	✗	
Welfare programmes	✓	Through the Department of Women and Family
Programmes to engage the diaspora into development strategies	✗	Diaspora Returnee Incentive Program
Initiatives to reduce the cost of remittances	—	Data not available

In 2019, Belize received USD 99.5 million in remittances, constituting five per cent of the country's GDP. In 2018, individuals in Belize also sent USD 43 million in remittances.¹⁶⁰ Data are not available on the cost of sending and receiving remittances in Belize, but SDG target 10.c aims to reduce the transaction costs of migrant remittances to less than three per cent and to eliminate remittance corridors with costs higher than five per cent.

160. Migration Data Portal, 2020.

HUMAN DEVELOPMENT



Mainstreaming migration into development strategies

- Development priorities for Belize are encapsulated in *Horizon 2030* and the *Growth and Sustainable Development Strategy 2016–2019*.
- Both of these strategies are aligned with the SDGs, but they do not include any migrant-related issues or provisions to address target 10.7.



Diaspora engagement

- Approximately 16 per cent of Belizeans nationals reside abroad.
- The Ministry of Foreign Affairs established the Belize Diaspora Program and the DRIP to manage diaspora engagement activities and initiatives.



Migrant inclusion in social development programmes

- Education in Belize is mandatory for children from ages six to 14, regardless of migration status.
- Migrant children may encounter language, cultural and social barriers.
- Belize does not have a formal programme to facilitate access to housing for migrants.



Remittances

- In 2019, Belize received USD 99.5 million in remittances, constituting five per cent of the country's GDP.
- In 2018, individuals in Belize also sent USD 43 million in remittances.
- No data are available on the cost of sending or receiving remittances.

MAIN NEEDS IDENTIFIED BY THE GOVERNMENT

- Training for stakeholders, including school officials, for supporting unaccompanied minors.
- Improve and standardize access to legal services for migrants.
- Map the diaspora and increase human capacity within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to actively interact with the diaspora.

MAIN NEEDS IDENTIFIED BY IOM

- Align national development strategies with SDG target 10.7 to facilitate orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration through a comprehensive and well-managed migration policy.
- Support migrant children's access to English-language lessons and education.
- Develop specific programmes or awareness campaigns for migrants in the human development schemes provided by the Ministry of Human Development, Social Transformation and Poverty Alleviation.
- Collect data on the costs of sending and receiving remittances in order to ensure alignment with SDG target 10.c.

REFERENCES*

- Amandala
2010 NEMO Creates Early Warning System for Tsunamis. Amandala. Available at www.amandala.com.bz/news/nemo-creates-early-warning-system-for-tsunamis/.
- Bello, O., M. Khamis, C. Osorio and L. Peralta
2017 Mainstreaming Disaster Risk Management Strategies in Development Instruments: Policy Briefs for Selected Member Countries of the Caribbean Development and Cooperation Committee. Santiago: ECLAC. Available at www.cepal.org/en/publications/42175-mainstreaming-disaster-risk-management-strategies-development-instruments-policy.
- Breaking News Belize*
2020 NEMO: Hurricane shelter procedures updating during COVID-19 pandemic. Breaking News Belize. Available at www.breakingbelizenews.com/2020/08/31/nemohurricane-shelter-procedures-updated-during-covid-19-pandemic/.
- Cantor, D.J.
2018 Cross-Border displacement, climate change and disasters: Latin America and the Caribbean. Study prepared for UNHCR and PDD at request of governments participating in the 2014 Brazil Declaration and Plan of Action. School of Advanced Study, University of London. Available at www.caribbeanmigration.org/sites/default/files/cross-border_displacement_climate_change_and_disasters_lac_david_cantor_2018.pdf.
- Caribbean Court of Justice
2016a Gay Rights Activist Receives Judgment in Immigration Case. Port of Spain: CCJ. Available at www.ccj.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/MEDIA-RELEASE-07-2016.pdf.
- 2016b In the Caribbean Court of Justice, CCJ Application No. OA 1 of 2013 and CCJ Application No. OA 2 of 2013, consolidated by Order of the Court dated 17th day of July 2013. Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago: Caribbean Court of Justice. Available at www.caribbeancourtsofjustice.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/2016-CCJ-1-OJ.pdf.
- Global Detention Project (GDP)
2016 Belize Immigration Detention Profile. Geneva, Switzerland: GDP. Last updated January 2016. Available at www.refworld.org/docid/5864d4fa4.html.
- Global Facility for Disaster Risk Reduction (GFDRR)
2010 Disaster Risk Management in Latin America and the Caribbean Region: GFDRR Country Notes Belize. Washington, D.C., United States of America: GFDRR. Available at www.gfdr.org/sites/default/files/publication/drm-country-note-2010-belize.pdf.
- Government of Belize
2000a Aliens Act, Chapter 159. (Revised Edition 2000). Belmopan.
2000b Criminal Code, Chapter 101. (Revised Edition 2000). Belmopan.
2000c Education Act Chapter 36 (Revised Edition 2000). Belmopan.
2000d Immigration Act, Chapter 156. (Revised Edition 2000). Belmopan.
2000e Labour Act, Chapter 297 (Revised Edition 2000). Belmopan.
2000f Representation of the People Act, Chapter 9 (Revised Edition 2000). Belmopan. Available at www.belizelaw.org/web/lawadmin/PDF%20files/cap009.pdf.
2003a Disaster Preparedness and Response Act Chapter 145: Revised Edition 2003. Belmopan, Belize
2003b Immigration Act, Chapter 156 (2003). Belmopan.
2003c Social Security Act, Chapter 44 (revised edition 2003). Belmopan.
2006 Belize National Hazard Mitigation Plan. Belmopan, Belize: Development Solutions Ltd. Available at www.docplayer.net/79767415-Belize-national-hazard-mitigation-plan.html.
2010 Belize Diaspora Returnee Incentive Program - 2010. Belmopan, Belize: Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Available at www.mfa.gov.bz/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/belizean-diaspora-returnee-incentive-program.pdf.

* All hyperlinks were active when this report was written.

- 2011a Belize Constitution Act Chapter 4 (Revised Edition 2011). Belmopan.
- 2011b Belize: Second National Communication United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. Belmopan, Belize: Ministry of Natural Resources and the Environment. Available at www.unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/blznc2.pdf.
- 2011c Horizon2030:NationalDevelopmentFrameworkforBelize2010-2030.Belmopan, Belize: Government of Belize. Available at www.observatorioplanificacion.cepal.org/en/plans/horizon-2030-national-development-framework-development-belize.
- 2013a Belize Population and Housing Census: Country Report 2010. Belmopan, Belize: Statistical Institute of Belize. Available at www.sib.org.bz/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/Census_Report_2010.pdf.
- 2013b Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children (Prohibition) Act. Belmopan, Belize.
- 2013c National Climate Resilient Investment Plan (NCRIP). Belmopan, Belize: Ministry of Finance and Economic Development. Available at www.med.gov.bz/national-climate-resilience-investment-plan-ncrip/.
- 2013d Passport Regulations Act Chapter 164 (2013). Belmopan.
- 2013e Trafficking in Persons (Prohibition) Act (2013). Belmopan.
- 2014 Health Sector Strategic Plan 2014 – 2024. Belmopan, Belize: Ministry of Health. Available at www.health.gov.bz/www/attachments/article/801/Belize%20Health%20Sector%20Strategic%20Plan%202014-2024-April%202014.pdf.
- 2016a Belize: Nationally Determined Contribution under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. Belmopan, Belize: Government of Belize. Available at www.unfccc.int/files/focus/ndc_registry/application/pdf/belize_ndc.pdf.
- 2016b Belize's Third National Communication to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. Belmopan, Belize: National Climate Change Office. Available at www.unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/blznc3.pdf.
- 2016c National HIV-TB Strategic Plan 2016 – 2020. Belmopan, Belize: Ministry of Health. Available at www.pancap.org/pancap-documents/belize-national-hiv-and-tb-strategic-plan-2016-2020/.
- 2019a Abstract of Statistics 2019. Belmopan, Belize: Statistical Institute of Belize. Available at www.sib.org.bz/wp-content/uploads/2019_Abstract_of_Statistics.pdf.
- 2019b Belize Labour Force Survey Report September 2019. Belmopan, Belize: Statistical Institute of Belize. Available at www.sib.org.bz/wp-content/uploads/LFS_Report_2019-09.pdf.
- 2019c National Domestic Tourism Survey Report 2019. Belmopan, Belize: Statistical Institute of Belize. Available at www.sib.org.bz/wp-content/uploads/NDTS_Report.pdf.
- 2020 Press Release: Temporary Suspension of Immigration Services. Belmopan, Belize: Department of Border Management and Immigration. Accessed 12 June 2020. Available at www.ins.gov.bz/.
- n.d.a. Belize Diaspora: About Us. Belmopan, Belize: Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Accessed 12 June 2020. Available at www.diasporaofbelize.org/about-us/.
- n.d.b. Belize Temporary Employment Visa (Entry) Requirements. Belmopan, Belize: Department of Border Management and Immigration. Accessed 8 May 2020. Available at www.ins.gov.bz/index.php/visa-requirements/temporary-employment-visas.
- n.d.c. Countries Not Requiring an Entry Visa. Belmopan, Belize: Department of Border Management and Immigration. Accessed 12 June 2020. Available at www.ins.gov.bz/index.php/visa-requirements/visa-exempted.
- n.d.d. Countries Requiring an Entry Visa. Belmopan, Belize: Department of Border Management and Immigration. Accessed 12 June 2020. Available at www.ins.gov.bz/index.php/visa-requirements/requires.
- n.d.e. Dependent Permit (DP) Application Requirements. Belmopan, Belize: Department of Border Management and Immigration. Accessed 12 June 2020. Available at www.ins.gov.bz/index.php/dbcc-requirements/dependent-permit-requirement.
- n.d.f. Laws Governing the Department. Belmopan, Belize: Department of Border Management and Immigration. Accessed 12 June 2020. Available at www.ins.gov.bz/index.php/departement/legal-framework.
- n.d.g. Mission. Belmopan, Belize: Ministry of Human Development, Social Transformation and Poverty Alleviation. Accessed 8 May 2020. Available at www.humandevlopment.gov.bz/.

<p>n.d.h. NHI: A Gateway to Better Health for All. Belmopan, Belize: Ministry of Health. Accessed 9 May 2020. Available at www.socialsecurity.org.bz/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/NHI.pdf.</p> <p>n.d.i. Regional: CARICOM-CSME. Belmopan, Belize: Directorate General for Foreign Trade. Accessed 12 June 2020. Available at www.dgft.gov.bz/regional/.</p> <p>n.d.j. Visa Fees. Belmopan, Belize: Department of Border Management and Immigration. Accessed 12 June 2020. Available at www.ins.gov.bz/index.php/visit-belize/visa-extension-fees.</p> <p>Government of the United States of America</p> <p>2017 Social Security Programs Throughout the World: The Americas - Belize. Washington, D.C., United States of America: Social Security Office of Retirement and Disability Policy. Available at www.ssa.gov/policy/docs/progdesc/ssptw/2016-2017/americas/belize.html.</p> <p>2018 Child Labor and Forced Labor Reports: Belize. Department of Labor, Bureau of International Labor Affairs. Available at www.dol.gov/agencies/ilab/resources/reports/child-labor/belize.</p> <p>2019a 2019 Trafficking in Persons Report: Belize. Washington, D.C., United States of America: United States Department of State. Available at www.state.gov/reports/2019-trafficking-in-persons-report-2/belize/.</p> <p>2019b 2019 Trafficking in Persons Report: Honduras. Washington, D.C., United States of America: United States Department of State. Available at www.state.gov/reports/2019-trafficking-in-persons-report-2/honduras/.</p> <p>2019c U.S. Relations with Belize: Bilateral Relations Fact Sheet. Washington, D.C., United States of America: Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs. Available at www.state.gov/u-s-relations-with-belize/.</p> <p>2020a 2020 Trafficking in Persons Report 20th Edition. Washington, D.C., United States of America: United States Department of State. Available at www.state.gov/reports/2020-trafficking-in-persons-report/.</p> <p>2020b Belize. Washington, D.C., United States of America: Central Intelligence Agency. Last updated on 4 August 2020. Available at www.cia.gov/library/publications/resources/the-world-factbook/geos/bh.html.</p>	<p>Inter-American Development Bank (IADB)</p> <p>2014 Quality Improvement of Health Care in Belize: Focusing on Results. IADB. Available at www.publications.iadb.org/en/quality-improvement-health-care-belize-focusing-results.</p> <p>Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC)</p> <p>2016 Belize. Geneva, Switzerland: IDMC. Available at www.internal-displacement.org/countries/belize.</p> <p>International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC)</p> <p>2016 DREF Final Report Belize: Hurricane Earl. Belmopan, Belize: IFRC. Available at www.reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/MDRBZ005dfr.pdf.</p> <p>International Labour Organization (ILO)</p> <p>1987 Mexico, Belize: Agreement of cooperation on matters of Social Security entered into by the Mexican Social Security Institute and the Belize Social Security Board. Done at Mexico City. Statutory Instruments (1987), 5 p. (SECSOC - 1563).</p> <p>2012 Review of Decent Work Country Programme (DWCP) of Belize (2009-2011) and Re-Commitment to DWCP Implementation (2012-2015). Belmopan, Belize: ILO. Available at www.ilo.org/caribbean/newsroom/WCMS_227141/lang--en/index.htm.</p> <p>2017a Labour Migration in Latin America and the Caribbean: Diagnosis, Strategy, and ILO's Work in the Region. Lima, Peru: ILO Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean. Available at www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---americas/---ro-lima/documents/publication/wcms_548185.pdf.</p> <p>2017b Migrant access to social protection under Bilateral Labour Agreements: A review of 120 countries and nine bilateral arrangements. Geneva, Switzerland: ILO. Available at www.social-protection.org/gimi/gess/RessourcePDF.action?ressource.ressourceId=54405.</p> <p>International Organization for Migration</p> <p>2012 IOM Migration Crisis Operational Framework. IOM, 101st Session of the Council. Available at www.iom.int/files/live/sites/iom/files/What-We-Do/docs/MC2355_-_IOM_Migration_Crisis_Operational_Framework.pdf.</p> <p>2013 Diagnostic on Belizean Migration Trends and Migration Management Regulations. Belmopan, Belize: IOM. Available at www.caribbeanmigration.org/sites/default/files/repository/diagnostic_on_belizean_migration_trends_migration_management_regulations.pdf.</p>
---	--

- 2016 World Day Against Trafficking in Persons. IOM. Available at www.iom.int/sites/default/files/mission_newsletter/file/IOM-Caribbean-WDATIP-Newsletter-2016.pdf.
- 2019a Free Movement in the Caribbean: Economic and Security Dimensions. San José, Costa Rica: IOM. Available at www.publications.iom.int/books/free-movement-caribbean-economic-and-security-dimensions.
- 2019b Migration Initiatives 2020. Geneva, Switzerland: IOM. Available at www.publications.iom.int/system/files/pdf/mi_2020.pdf.
- 2019c Preliminary Results of Migration Governance Profile of Belize Presented at Inter-Ministerial Consultation. San José, Costa Rica: IOM. Available at www.rosanjose.iom.int/site/en/news/preliminary-results-migration-governance-profile-belize-presented-inter-ministerial.
- 2019d World Migration Report 2020. Geneva, Switzerland: IOM. Available at www.publications.iom.int/system/files/pdf/wmr_2020.pdf.
- 2020 IOM organizes double return flight between Belize and El Salvador. San José, Costa Rica: IOM. Available at www.rosanjose.iom.int/SITE/en/news/iom-organizes-double-return-flight-between-belize-and-el-salvador.
- n.d. MIDAS: A Comprehensive and Affordable Border Management Information System. IOM. Accessed 12 June 2020. Available at www.rosanjose.iom.int/sites/default/files/Documents/midas-brochure-3-v1-web-english.pdf.
- International Organization for Migration (IOM), International Labour Organization (ILO) and the Government of Belize
- 2012 Intraregional Labour Migration Flows: Current situation, challenges and opportunities in Central America and the Dominican Republic: Country Report Belize. Belmopan, Belize: IOM, ILO and the Belize Ministry of Labour. Available at www.caribbeanmigration.org/sites/default/files/repository/research_report_-_intraregional_labour_migration_flows.pdf.
- Library of Congress Law
- 2015 Guest Worker Programs: Mexico. Washington, D.C., United States of America: Library of Congress. Accessed 21 September 2020. Available at www.loc.gov/law/help/guestworker/mexico.php.
- Migrants in Countries in Crisis (MICIC) Initiative
- 2016 Guidelines to Protect Migrants in Countries Experiencing Conflict or Natural Disaster. Geneva, Switzerland: IOM. Available at www.micicinitiative.iom.int/guidelines.
- Migration Data Portal
- 2020 Belize. Geneva, Switzerland: IOM Global Migration Data Analysis Centre. Accessed 31 August 2020. Available at www.migrationdataportal.org/.
- Organization of American States (OAS)
- 2015 International Migration in the Americas: Third Report of the Continuous Reporting System on International Migration in the Americas (SICREMI). Washington, D.C., United States of America: OAS. Available at www.oas.org/docs/publications/SICREMI-2015-ENGLISH.pdf.
- Pan American Health Organization (PAHO)/World Health Organization (WHO)
- 2017 Country Cooperation Strategy: Belize 2017-2021. Washington, D.C., United States of America: PAHO/WHO. Available at www.paho.org/en/documents/pahowho-country-cooperation-strategy-belize-2017-2021.
- 2020 Country Report: Belize. PAHO/WHO. Available at www.paho.org/salud-en-las-americas-2017/?page_id=91.
- Palacio, J.
- 1993 Social and Cultural Implications of Recent Demographic Changes in Belize. *Belizean Studies*, 21(3): 2–12.
- Passport Index
- 2020 Passport of Belize. Passport Index. Accessed 1 September 2020. Available at www.passportindex.org/?country=bz.
- San Pedro Sun
- 2019 Belize and Cuba Renew Medical Agreement. San Pedro Sun. Available at www.sanpedrosun.com/health/2019/03/02/belize-and-cuba-renew-medical-agreement/.
- 2020 NEMO Belize Rural South producing COVID-19 preparedness signs in San Pedro Town. San Pedro Sun. Available at www.sanpedrosun.com/health/2020/03/13/nemo-belize-rural-south-producing-covid-19-preparedness-signs-in-san-pedro-town/.
- Sistema de la Integración Centroamericana, Comisión de Seguridad Centroamericana, and Centro de Coordinación para la Prevención de los Desastres Naturales en América Central
- 2011 Manual Regional de Procedimientos de las Cancillerías en casos de Desastres: Centroamérica, Belice y República Dominicana. Panama: CEPREDENAC. Available at www.reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/F28B3DD43EF8C320C12571300058A087-proced.pdf.

- Sopelsa, B.
2016 Belize Supreme Court Overturns Anti-Gay Law. NBC News. Available at www.nbcnews.com/feature/nbc-out/belize-supreme-court-overturns-anti-gay-law-n627511.
- United Nations (UN)
2015 Small Island Developing States: UN Members. UN. Accessed 16 June 2020. Available at www.sustainabledevelopment.un.org/topics/sids/list.
- United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA)
2019 International Migration Stock 2019: Country Profile Belize," UN DESA. Accessed 16 June 2020. Available at www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/migration/data/estimates2/countryprofiles.asp.
- United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)
2018 Table 5: Gender Inequality Index (GII). UNDP. Available at www.hdr.undp.org/en/content/table-5-gender-inequality-index-gii.
- 2019 Belize: Human Development Indicators. UNDP. Available at www.hdr.undp.org/en/countries/profiles/BLZ.
- United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)
2019a Expanding Operations in Central America. UNHCR. Available at www.reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/2019%20Expanding%20Operations%20in%20Central%20America%20%28February%202019%29.pdf.
- 2019b Refugee Data Finder. UNHCR. Available at www.unhcr.org/refugee-statistics/download/?url=t9eN.
- United States of America Department of State
n.d. Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs: Belize Summary. Washington, D.C., United States of America: United States Department of State. Accessed 12 June 2020. Available at www.state.gov/bureau-of-international-narcotics-and-law-enforcement-affairs-work-by-country/belize-summary/.
- United States Immigration and Customs Enforcement
2019 U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement Fiscal Year 2019 Enforcement and Removal Operations Report. Washington, D.C., United States of America: ICE. Available at www.ice.gov/sites/default/files/documents/Document/2019/eroReportFY2019.pdf.
- World Bank
2018a Personal remittances paid (current US\$) - Belize. Washington, D.C., United States of America: World Bank, Available at www.data.worldbank.org/indicator/BM.TRF.PWKR.CD.DT?locations=BZ.
- 2018b Personal remittances, received (% of GDP) - Belize. Washington, D.C.: World Bank. Available at www.data.worldbank.org/indicator/BX.TRF.PWKR.DT.GD.ZS?locations=BZ.
- 2019a Current health expenditure per capita (current US\$) – Belize. Washington, D.C.: World Bank. Available at www.data.worldbank.org/indicator/SH.XPD.CHEX.PC.CD?locations=BZ.
- 2019b GDP per capita (current US\$) - Belize. Washington, D.C., United States of America: World Bank. Available at www.data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.PCAP.CD?locations=BZ.
- 2019c International tourism, receipts (current US\$) – Belize. Washington, D.C., United States of America: World Bank. Available at www.data.worldbank.org/indicator/ST.INT.RCPT.CD?locations=BZ.
- 2019d Personal remittances received (current US\$) – Belize. Washington, D.C.: World Bank. Available at www.data.worldbank.org/indicator/BX.TRF.PWKR.CD.DT?locations=BZ.
- 2020a GDP (current US\$) - Belize. Washington, D.C., United States of America: World Bank, 2020. Available at www.data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.MKTP.CD?locations=BZ.
- 2020b GDP per capita (current US\$) - Belize, Washington, D.C.: World Bank. Available at www.data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.PCAP.CD?locations=BZ.
- World Health Organization (WHO)
2006 Integrating Mental Health into Primary Care: A Global Perspective. WHO. Available at www.who.int/mental_health/policy/services/Belize.pdf?ua=1.
- 2020 Belize: PAHO/WHO supports Ministry of Health's training and donates testing kits. WHO. Available at www.who.int/news-room/feature-stories/detail/belize-paho-who-supports-ministry-of-health-s-training-and-donates-testing-kits.

