

Migration and Refugees

Agreement Between the Government of the United States of
America and the Government of Belize for Cooperation
Regarding the Examination of Protection Requests

Signed at Belmopan October 20, 2025.

Entered into Force April 15, 2026.

*With Exchange of Notes constituting a Joint
Implementation Plan dated April 20 and 22, 2026*



NOTE BY THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Pursuant to Public Law 89—497, approved July 8, 1966
(80 Stat. 271; 1 U.S.C. 113)—

“ . . . the Treaties and Other International Acts Series issued under the authority of the Secretary of State shall be competent evidence . . . of the treaties, international agreements other than treaties, and proclamations by the President of such treaties and international agreements other than treaties, as the case may be, therein contained, in all the courts of law and equity and of maritime jurisdiction, and in all the tribunals and public offices of the United States, and of the several States, without any further proof or authentication thereof.

**AGREEMENT BETWEEN
THE GOVERNMENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
AND
THE GOVERNMENT OF BELIZE
FOR COOPERATION REGARDING THE EXAMINATION OF PROTECTION
REQUESTS**

THE GOVERNMENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA and THE GOVERNMENT OF BELIZE, hereinafter referred to individually as a "Party" or collectively as "the Parties,"

DESIRING TO enhance mutually beneficial cooperation and to ensure the dignified, safe, and timely transfer from the United States of America to Belize of third country nationals who may seek protection against return to their home country or country of former habitual residence;

CONSIDERING that Belize regulates its relations with other states in accordance with international principles, rules, and practices, with the purpose of contributing to the maintenance of peace and freedom, the respect and defence of human rights, and the strengthening of democratic processes and international institutions that guarantee the mutual and equitable benefit among the states, and that Belize maintains relations of friendship, solidarity, and cooperation with those states whose economic, social, and cultural development is analogous to that of Belize;

CONSIDERING FURTHER that Belize is a party to the Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees, done at Geneva July 28, 1951 (the "1951 Convention"), the Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees, done at New York January 31, 1967 (the "1967 Protocol"), and the Convention against Torture and Other Treatment or Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Penalties, done at New York December 10, 1984 (the "Convention Against Torture"), and that the United States of America is a party to the 1967 Protocol and Convention against Torture, and

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reaffirming the obligation of the Parties to provide protection in accordance with their respective obligations under those treaties, subject to their respective reservations, understandings, and declarations;

RECOGNIZING, in particular, the obligation of the Parties to comply with the principle of nonrefoulement, as outlined in the 1951 Convention and the 1967 Protocol, as well as the Convention Against Torture, subject to the Parties' respective reservations, understandings, and declarations and reaffirming their respective responsibility to promote and protect human rights and fundamental freedoms consistent with their international obligations;

RECOGNIZING FURTHER the Parties' respective obligations under any other international agreements and their national constitutions laws, regulations, and immigration and visa policies;

UNDERSCORING that the Parties offer protection systems that are consistent with their respective obligations under the 1951 Convention, the 1967 Protocol, and the Convention Against Torture;

CONVINCED, in keeping with advice from the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and its Executive Committee, that agreements among states may enhance the international protection of refugees by promoting the orderly handling of asylum applications and the principle of burden-sharing;

DETERMINED to maintain access to a full and fair procedure for determining a claim to refugee or asylum status or equivalent temporary protection, as an essential aspect of the protection of refugees or asylees, and at the same time wishing to prevent fraud in the refugee or asylum application process, which undermines its legitimate purpose, and to strengthen the

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integrity of the process for requesting asylum or refugee status as well as public support for that process; and

AWARE that the cooperation described herein is expected to ensure in practice that persons in need of international protection are identified and that breaches of the fundamental principle of nonrefoulement are avoided, and therefore determined to safeguard access to a full and fair procedure for determining claims for refugee status or equivalent temporary protection as a means to guarantee that the protections of the 1951 Convention, 1967 Protocol, and Convention Against Torture are effectively afforded,

AGREE as follows:

ARTICLE I

For the purposes of this Agreement:

1. "Protection Request" means the request of a person from Central America (excluding Guatemala) and Caribbean Community member states in accordance with their respective international obligations under the 1951 Convention, the 1967 Protocol, or the Convention Against Torture, and in accordance with the respective laws and policies of the Parties as well as any other type of equivalent temporary protection available under Belizean immigration law.
2. "Protection Applicant" means any person who is a citizen or national of a Central American country (excluding Guatemala) or Caribbean Community member states who submits a Protection Request before one of the Parties.
3. "Protection Determination System" means the set of laws, policies, and administrative and judicial practices that each Party uses to make a decision on Protection Requests.

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4. "Unaccompanied Minor" refers to a Protection Applicant who has not reached the age of eighteen (18) and who does not have a parent or legal guardian present and available to provide care and custody in the country where the Unaccompanied Minor is located, whether in the United States or in Belize.

ARTICLE 2

1. The Government of the United States of America, in furtherance of the mutually beneficial cooperation between the Parties, and in its complete discretion, may propose to the Government of Belize the transfer of Protection Applicants.
2. The Government of Belize shall consider accepting, in its complete discretion, in whole or in part, the transfer of Protection Applicants proposed by the Government of the United States of America in accordance with this Agreement. The Government of Belize may consider, among other factors, the professional skills or criminal history of an individual proposed for transfer.
3. The Government of the United States of America shall not propose citizens or nationals of Belize or individuals who, having no country of nationality, are or were habitual residents of Belize.
4. The Government of the United States of America shall not transfer Unaccompanied Minors pursuant to this Agreement.

ARTICLE 3

Both Parties' actions under this Agreement shall be in accordance with their obligations under the 1951 Convention, the 1967 Protocol, the Convention Against Torture, and any other respective international obligations, national constitutions, laws, regulations, and immigration and visa

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policies of the Parties, including consideration by the Government of Belize of requests by Protection Applicants for asylum, refugee protection, or equivalent temporary protection.

ARTICLE 4

The Parties may exchange information when necessary for the effective implementation of this Agreement, subject to their respective national laws and regulations. Such information shall not be disclosed by the recipient country except in accordance with its national laws and regulations.

ARTICLE 5

1. To ensure that Protection Applicants transferred to Belize by the United States of America have access to a Protection Determination System, the Government of Belize agrees not to return any person transferred to Belize by the Government of the United States of America to their home country or country of former habitual residence until a final decision has been made regarding any Protection Request made to the Government of Belize.
2. The Government of Belize shall determine a procedure, consistent with its relevant obligations, to resolve the status of those who may abandon pending claims or fail to seek protection.

ARTICLE 6

1. The Parties shall develop operating procedures to assist with the implementation of this Agreement. These procedures shall incorporate a provision on the process through which the Government of the United States will notify the Government of Belize in advance of the transfer of any person pursuant to this Agreement to enable

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Belize to confirm the identity of the individuals to be transferred to Belize's territory.

2. The Parties may regularly evaluate this Agreement and its implementation to correct any deficiencies found. The evaluations may be carried out jointly by the Parties. The Parties may invite, by mutual decision, other relevant organizations with specialized knowledge on the subject, such as the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, to participate in such evaluation(s).
3. In the event of a conflict of interpretation or implementation, the Parties commit to resolve such matters through dialogue or diplomatic channels.
4. The Parties intend for the operating procedures to contain gradual steps, and address, among other things: (a) procedures necessary to effectuate the transfer of individuals under this Agreement and (b) institutional capacity requirements. The Parties plan to operationalize this Agreement upon the completion of the operating procedures.

ARTICLE 7

1. This Agreement shall enter into force on the date of the latter note in an exchange of notes between the Parties indicating that each Party has completed the necessary domestic legal procedures for the Agreement to enter into force, for the term of two (2) years, renewable before its expiration with the exchange of diplomatic notes.
2. Either Party may terminate or suspend this Agreement at any time by notifying the other Party in writing.
3. The Parties may agree in writing to any amendments to this Agreement, and such amendments shall constitute an integral part of this Agreement, consistent with any applicable legal requirements.

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4. Nothing set forth in this Agreement shall be interpreted in such a way that commits the disbursement or allocation of funds by the Parties. The implementation of this Agreement shall be subject to the availability of funds and technical capacity of each Party. The Government of the United States of America, upon request, shall endeavour, in accordance with applicable law and regulations, to provide financial and technical assistance to strengthen the institutional capacities of the Government of Belize.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the undersigned, duly authorised by their respective governments, have signed this Agreement.

DONE at Belmopan on the 20th of October, 2025, in duplicate, in the English language.

**FOR THE GOVERNMENT OF
THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA**

Katha P.M.R. Beamer

**FOR THE GOVERNMENT OF
BELIZE**

[Signature]

No. 23

The Embassy of the United States of America presents its compliments to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Foreign Trade, Education, Culture, Science and Technology of the Government of Belize and has the honor to refer to the Agreement between the Government of the United States of America and the Government of Belize for Cooperation Regarding the Examination of Protection Requests, done at Belmopan on October 20, 2025 and to propose the enclosed Joint Implementation Plan to the Agreement between the Government of the United States of America and the Government of the Belize for Cooperation Regarding the Examination of Protection Requests (“Joint Implementation Plan”).

If this proposal is acceptable to the Government of Belize, the Government of the United States of America proposes that this note with the enclosed Joint Implementation Plan, together with the affirmative reply from the Government of Belize, would constitute a Joint Implementation Plan between the two governments that would become effective upon the date of the Government of Belize’s reply note.

The Embassy of the United States of America avails itself of this opportunity to renew to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Foreign Trade, Education, Culture, Science and Technology of the Government of Belize the assurances of its highest consideration.

Enclosure:

As stated.

Embassy of the United States of America,

Belmopan, April 20, 2026



JOINT IMPLEMENTATION PLAN
BETWEEN
THE GOVERNMENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
AND
THE GOVERNMENT OF BELIZE
FOR COOPERATION REGARDING THE EXAMINATION OF PROTECTION
REQUESTS

Section 1. Purpose of the Initial Joint Implementation Plan

The purpose of the Joint Implementation Plan (“Plan”) is to establish the necessary processes and procedures for the implementation of the Agreement Between the Government of the United States of America and the Government of Belize for Cooperation Regarding the Examination of Protection Requests, signed at Belmopan October 20, 2025 (hereinafter, “the Agreement”).

Section 2. Eligibility of Individuals for Removal

Protection Applicants, as defined in Article 1, paragraph 2 of the Agreement, are intended to be eligible for transfer to Belize under the Agreement if they:

- a) are medically authorized to travel;
- b) have not been convicted of crimes against humanity, drug trafficking, terrorism, human trafficking, smuggling of migrants, child pornography, human rights violations, crimes of violence, or crimes related to organized criminal activity, whose convictions are known to the Government of the United States of America, including through Interpol notifications;
- c) in accordance with Article 2, paragraph 4 of the Agreement, are not Unaccompanied Minors;
- d) in accordance with Article 2, paragraph 3 of the Agreement, are not citizens or nationals of Belize or individuals who, having no country of nationality, are or were habitual residents of Belize; and
- e) in accordance with Article 1, paragraph 2 of the Agreement, are citizens or nationals of a Central American country (excluding Guatemala) or Caribbean Community member state who submits a Protection Request, as defined Article 1, paragraph 1, before the Government of the United States or the Government of Belize.

Section 3. Preliminary Number of Individuals Removed

Unless the Government of the United States and the Government of Belize (collectively, “the Governments”) mutually decide otherwise, they intend to implement the Agreement as follows: for a total of no more than 100 individuals per year with transfers of no more than 10 per month throughout the year. Notwithstanding such numerical limitations, the Government of Belize may decide to accept additional nationalities or exceed the numerical limitations at its discretion and in such case would inform the Government of the United States. The Governments of the United States and Belize intend to discuss in good faith the opportunity to broaden this Implementation Plan after the first year.

Section 4. Cooperation for Assistance

The Governments may seek assistance from other actors to support the development, evaluation, and implementation of this Plan.

Section 5. Action Plan

This Plan is informed by its Annex (also known as the Action Plan), which establishes the processes and procedures for receiving, admitting, and handling persons with Protection Requests who are removed under the Agreement. The Annex to this Plan is understood to be an integral part of this Plan.

Section 6. Resources

This Plan and the implementation thereof do not commit the financial resources of the Governments. However, the Government of the United States of America intends to review available foreign assistance funds to support this initiative.

Section 7. Cooperation for Institutional Strengthening

The Government of the United States intends to cooperate with the Government of Belize to further the goal of strengthening the institutional capacities of the Government of Belize as outlined in the Annex. The Government of the United States further intends to cooperate with the Government of Belize in repatriating individuals present in Belize whose claims for protection are denied or withdrawn.

Section 8. Discontinuation or Modification of this Plan

This Plan discontinues upon the termination or expiration of the Agreement. This Plan may be modified by mutual written decision of the Governments.

ANNEX: ACTION PLAN TO THE JOINT IMPLEMENTATION PLAN TO THE AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE GOVERNMENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA AND THE GOVERNMENT OF BELIZE FOR COOPERATION REGARDING THE EXAMINATION OF PROTECTION REQUESTS

Title I
Overall Objective and General Provisions

Chapter I. Overall Objective

This Action Plan establishes procedures for the reception, admission, and processing for protection, or voluntary return from Belize to their home countries, of Protection Applicants, as defined in Article 1, paragraph 2 of the Agreement, transferred from the United States of America to Belize, consistent with the provisions of the Joint Implementation Plan (“Plan”) for the Agreement Between the Government of the United States of America and the Government of Belize for Cooperation Regarding the Examination of Protection Requests, signed at Belmopan October 20, 2025 (hereinafter, “the Agreement”).

Chapter II. General Provisions

Section I. General Provisions

1. The Government of the United States intends to submit to the Government of Belize the flight manifest for the persons proposed to be removed 72 hours before their removal.
2. The Government of the United States intends to provide a file of documents as established in paragraph 3 of Chapter I, Title II of this Action Plan for each removed person directly to the Government of Belize.
3. The reception of the persons removed is expected to take place at Philip S. W. Goldson International Airport in Belize or another airport in Belize designated for such purpose by the Government of Belize, and the persons removed are expected to be accompanied by a U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) - Enforcement and Removal Operations (ERO) officer.
4. The Government of the United States intends to conduct a medical screening before departure of those removed under the Agreement, consistent with its current policy and procedures.
5. This Action Plan and the implementation thereof do not commit the financial resources of the Government of the United States or the Government of Belize.

However, the Government of the United States intends to review available foreign assistance funds to support this initiative.

Chapter III. Reception and Adjudication of Asylum

Section I. Objective

The objective is to establish the reception and admission of aliens removed to Belize from the United States for the processing of Protection Requests, as defined in Article 1, paragraph 1 of the Agreement, pursuant to the Agreement.

Section II. Reception and Processing

This Action Plan is intended to be administered by the Government of Belize through the Ministry of Immigration (MOI). The MOI may also arrange to include representatives of other agencies with responsibilities in the areas of migration and refugees.

Title II **Procedures for Reception and Admission**

Chapter I. Procedure Prior to Reception

1. Seventy-two (72) hours prior to a removal, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security intends to send the Government of Belize the flight manifest of the Protection Applicants expected to be removed. The Government of Belize intends to allow revisions to the flight manifest up to six (6) hours prior to the time of departure from the United States, although any persons not included on the manifest are not expected to be allowed on the flight.
2. The Government of the United States and the Government of Belize, through their respective systems, intend to collaborate to conduct searches in their databases regarding removed Protection Applicants and verify that they meet the eligibility criteria established in the Plan, including its Annex, and the Agreement.
3. For all Protection Applicants removed, the Government of the United States intends to provide the following information, if available:
 - a. Medical documents,
 - b. Confirmation of lack of a known criminal record,
 - c. Biometric information,

- d. Nationality,
- e. Information regarding whether the person is accompanied,
- f. Date of birth,
- g. Sex, and
- h. Any reasons given by the alien for leaving his or her home country.

Chapter II. Reception Procedure

The Government of Belize intends to ensure that Protection Applicants it receives under the Agreement have access to the same rights and services as other migrants and asylum seekers, without any discrimination.

Chapter III. Admission Procedures

Section I. Guidance

The removed Protection Applicants are expected to receive an orientation from the Government of Belize concerning how to pursue the following options:

- a. Mechanisms for protection in the country; and
- b. Assisted Voluntary Return (AVR) from Belize to their home country.

Title III **Confidentiality**

The Governments do not intend to disclose documents, data, and other information provided directly or indirectly except in accordance with their respective laws and regulations. The foregoing includes printed, written, oral, and electronic information. Likewise, it is expected that the Governments take measures, such that any counselor, official, specialist, technician, employee, medical staff member, representative, adviser, or agent involved in the provision of services does not disclose the information to which they have access except in accordance with the respective laws and regulations of their Governments.

Title IV **Evaluation of the Plan**

1. The evaluation described below is expected to be discussed at a quarterly meeting with the MOI.

- a. The Government of the United States and the Government of Belize intend to evaluate the implementation of the Agreement and Plan on an ongoing basis, convening meetings between the Governments as appropriate.
- b. The Government of the United States and the Government of Belize intend to share information related to the evaluation and execution of the plan as appropriate.

Title V

Public Affairs / Media Relations

All press statements or similar messages related to implementation of the Agreement are expected to be coordinated with the competent bodies in each Government.



MINISTRY OF

FOREIGN AFFAIRS, FOREIGN TRADE
EDUCATION, CULTURE, SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Ref: FA/BR/17/26 (48)

Note No. 321

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade of Belize presents its compliments to the Embassy of the United States of America and has the honor to refer to the Embassy's Note No. 23 dated April 22, 2026, which reads as follows:

"No. 23

The Embassy of the United States of America presents its compliments to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Foreign Trade, Education, Culture, Science and Technology of the Government of Belize and has the honor to refer to the Agreement between the Government of the United States of America and the Government of Belize for Cooperation Regarding the Examination of Protection Requests, done at Belmopan on October 20, 2025 and to propose the enclosed Joint Implementation Plan to the Agreement between the Government of the United States of America and the Government of the Belize for Cooperation Regarding the Examination of Protection Requests ("Joint Implementation Plan").

If this proposal is acceptable to the Government of Belize, the Government of the United States of America proposes that this note with the enclosed Joint Implementation Plan, together with the affirmative reply from the Government of Belize, would constitute a Joint Implementation Plan between the two governments that would become effective upon the date of the Government of Belize's reply note.

The Embassy of the United States of America avails itself of this opportunity to renew to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Foreign Trade, Education, Culture, Science and Technology of the Government of Belize the assurances of its highest consideration.

Annex:

As stated.

The Embassy of the United States of America

Belmopan, April 22, 2026



Government of
BELIZE

www.mfa.gov.bz

Note: For the purposes of this publication, certain information was redacted from this page.



The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade of Belize confirms that the proposal contained in the Embassy's note, including its enclosure, is acceptable to the Government of Belize. Accordingly, the Embassy's note and this note in reply constitute an understanding between the Government of Belize and the Government of the United States of America that becomes effective on this date of this Note.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade of Belize avails itself of this opportunity to renew to the Embassy of the United States of America the assurances of its highest consideration.

April 24, 2026



EMBASSY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
Belmopan





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The Government of the United States intends to cooperate with the Government of Belize to further the goal of strengthening the institutional capacities of the Government of Belize as outlined in the Annex. The Government of the United States further intends to cooperate with the Government of Belize in repatriating individuals present in Belize whose claims for protection are denied or withdrawn.





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General Provisions

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5. This Action Plan and the implementation thereof do not commit the financial resources of the Government of the United States or the Government of Belize.

However, the Government of the United States intends to review available foreign assistance funds to support this initiative.

Chapter III. Reception and Adjudication of Asylum Section I.

Objective

The objective is to establish the reception and admission of aliens removed to Belize from the United States for the processing of Protection Requests, as defined in Article 1, paragraph 1 of the Agreement, pursuant to the Agreement.

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This Action Plan is intended to be administered by the Government of Belize through the Ministry of Immigration (MOI). The MOI may also arrange to include representatives of other agencies with responsibilities in the areas of migration and refugees.

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3. For all Protection Applicants removed, the Government of the United States intends to provide the following information, if available:
 - a. Medical documents,
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- d. Nationality,
- e. Information regarding whether the person is accompanied,
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The removed Protection Applicants are expected to receive an orientation from the Government of Belize concerning how to pursue the following options:

- a. Mechanisms for protection in the country; and
- b. Assisted Voluntary Return (AVR) from Belize to their home country.

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The Governments do not intend to disclose documents, data, and other information provided directly or indirectly except in accordance with their respective laws and regulations. The foregoing includes printed, written, oral, and electronic information. Likewise, it is expected that the Governments take measures, such that any counselor, official, specialist, technician, employee, medical staff member, representative, adviser, or agent involved in the provision of services does not disclose the information to which they have access except in accordance with the respective laws and regulations of their Governments.

Title IV

Evaluation of the Plan

1. The evaluation described below is expected to be discussed at a quarterly meeting





with the MOI.

- a. The Government of the United States and the Government of Belize intend to evaluate the implementation of the Agreement and Plan on an ongoing basis, convening meetings between the Governments as appropriate.
- b. The Government of the United States and the Government of Belize intend to share information related to the evaluation and execution of the plan as appropriate.

Title V

Public Affairs / Media Relations

All press statements or similar messages related to implementation of the Agreement are expected to be coordinated with the competent bodies in each Government.”

