



National Assembly of Belize

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PRESS RELEASE

WOMEN'S PARLIAMENTARY CAUCUS **HUMAN TRAFFICKING TRAINING**

--- **Monday, 29th January 2024** --- at the initiative of the Women's Parliamentary Caucus (WPC), members of the Senate and House of Representatives participated in an ***Anti-Trafficking in Persons*** training session designed to equip parliamentarians with the necessary knowledge and tools to contribute to the eradication of human trafficking. Facilitated by the International Organization on Migration (IOM), the objective of the training was to define, identify, and highlight reporting mechanisms for suspected cases of human trafficking. The training covered inter alia, the push and pull factors, how trafficking presents itself in Belize and the region. Discussions also included information on the indicators, control mechanisms and protection measures necessary and highlighted the related interconnections and complexities.

During the training session, participants engaged in thought-provoking discussions, interactive group activities, and practical exercises to develop a comprehensive understanding of human trafficking, indicators, control mechanisms, and their respective impact on Belize's society. The presentations were led by Ms. Diana Locke, Director at IOM from the UN Migration, Ms. Juanna Murillo, Focal Point of the Government of Belize's Anti-Trafficking in Persons Council and Ms. Michelle Segura McGann – Program Manager, International Organization on Migration Western Hemisphere Program.

Training modules defined Human Trafficking and made the critical distinction in the differences between Human Trafficking and Human Smuggling and reviewed related legislation including the Trafficking in Persons Prohibition Act (2013) and the Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Child Prohibition Act (2023). According to the experts, sexual exploitation and forced labour are the primary reasons for human trafficking and human smuggling activities in Belize. It was noted that currently, there is no legislation against human smuggling in Belize's laws.

The training offered parliamentarians critical insight in identifying possible cases of human trafficking and human smuggling and highlighted how legislators can support national efforts to stop these heinous activities and help bring perpetrators to justice. The WPC reminds the public that they can report any suspicious activity directly to the Belize Police Department or anonymously via Crime Stoppers Belize by calling the 0-800-922 hotline or via the P3 TIPS app on your mobile device.

Present at the training at the Phoenix Business Center in Belmopan were the following parliamentarians: Honourable Jorge Espat, Honourable Alex Balona, Vice President of the Senate, Senator Collet Montejo, Senator Erica Jang, and Senator Janelle Chanona, Chair of the Women's Parliamentary Caucus.

ENDS.

