

**BELIZE:**

**DOMESTIC VIOLENCE (AMENDMENT) BILL, 2025**

ARRANGEMENT OF CLAUSES

1. Short title.
2. Amendment of section 2.
3. Insertion of new section 11A.
4. Amendment of Schedule II.

**BELIZE:**

**BILL**

**for**

**AN ACT** to amend the Domestic Violence Act, Chapter 178 of the Substantive Laws of Belize, Revised Edition 2020; to empower select Senior Justices of the Peace to issue interim protection orders under the Act in urgent and exceptional circumstances; and to provide for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto.

(Gazetted .....2025).

**BE IT ENACTED**, by and with the advice and consent of the House of Representatives and Senate of Belize and by the authority of the same, as follows:

Short title.

**1.** This Act may be cited as the

**DOMESTIC VIOLENCE (AMENDMENT) ACT, 2025**

CAP. 178.

and shall be read and construed as one with the Domestic Violence Act, which is hereinafter referred to as the principal Act.

Amendment of section 2.

**2.** The principal Act is amended in section 2 by inserting the following term and its corresponding definition in its properly alphabetical order–

CAP. 119:01.

“Select Senior Justice of the Peace” is a Senior Justice of the Peace who has been so designated under section 4A of the Justices of the Peace Act;”.

Insertion of new section 11A.

**3.** The principal Act is amended by inserting immediately after section 11, the following new section–

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“Interim protection orders by Select Senior Justices of the Peace.

**11A.** (1) Notwithstanding section 11, a Select Senior Justice of the Peace shall have the powers of a magistrate to issue an *ex parte* interim protection order to an applicant on the grounds that a person is engaging, has engaged or threatens to engage in domestic violence on the applicant and—

(a) the circumstances are such that at the time of the incident or threat—

(i) no magistrate is available; or

(ii) it is outside of normal working hours of the court;

(iii) the court is closed or otherwise unavailable;

(iv) it is an emergency situation where a life is at risk or there is an imminent threat of harm or injury and accessing a magistrate is, for reasons of distance or otherwise, not reasonable, practical or possible; or

(b) an exceptional circumstance is present.

(2) In determining whether the matter is a suitable one for a Select Senior Justice of the Peace to act under sub-section (1)(a) (i)—

(a) an applicant shall make representation to the Select Senior Justice of the Peace of the circumstances surrounding the fact that there is no magistrate; and

(b) the Select Senior Justice of the Peace shall, as soon as reasonable practicable, file a report with the Director of the Family Court to that effect.

(3) For the purposes of an *ex parte* application for an interim protection under sub-section (1), where on a balance of probabilities, a Select Senior Justice of the Peace determines that domestic violence has occurred or is likely to occur and that such Order is necessary for the protection of the applicant or any other person specified in the application, or is in the best interests of

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a child, the Select Senior Justice of the Peace may issue an interim protection order, in the prescribed form, if the circumstances under sub-section (1) exist, containing any or all of the prohibitions and directions set out in section 5 (1)(a).

(4) In determining whether or not to impose one or more prohibitions or directions under section 5(1)(a), in an interim protection order made under this section, the Select Senior Justice of the Peace shall, without limitation, have regard to the following—

- (a) the nature, history or pattern of the domestic violence that has occurred and whether any previous Order or Interim Order has been issued;
- (b) the need to protect the applicant and any other person for whose benefit an Order has been issued from further domestic violence;
- (c) the best interests and welfare of any child;
- (d) any other matter that in the circumstances of the case that the Select Senior Justice of the Peace considers relevant.

(5) An *ex parte* interim protection order issued under sub-section (1) shall—

Schedule II.

(a)  
be in  
Form  
3B  
prescribed  
in  
Schedule II;

- (b) not be for more than seventy-two hours;
- (c) be served on the respondent personally or otherwise; and
- (d) be forwarded to the magistrate of the judicial district in which the order was granted.”

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4. The principal Act is amended in Schedule II by inserting after Form 3A, Amendment of  
Schedule II.  
the following new form—

“Form 3B  
*Interim Protection Order*  
[section 11A(5)(a)]

In the district of .....

..... having heard an application  
(Name of Select Senior Justice of the Peace)

made by ..... in respect of the conduct or  
(Name of Applicant)

threatened conduct of .....  
(Name of Respondent)

Towards .....  
(name of person to be protected)

NOW IT IS ORDERED, that for the period from the.....day of.  
....., 20..... to the.....day of  
....., 20.....

YOU.....  
(Name of Respondent)\*

(The written named respondent)\* shall not engage in the following conduct, and you  
the within named respondent shall comply with the following prohibitions  
and conditions:

\*Specify prohibitions and conditions imposed and any period or periods for which they may be imposed (if  
different from the period of the order/interim order).\*

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AND IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that

you..... shall not engage in  
(Name of Respondent)

any conduct that constitutes an offence under this Act.

If the said..... fails to comply with any of  
(Name of Respondent)

the terms of this Order you shall be liable to imprisonment and/or a fine pursuant to section 23 of the Act.

.....  
Select Senior Justice of the Peace

Dated this.....day of....., 20.....

Place of sitting: .....”