

BELIZE:

**CARIBBEAN COMMUNITY (FREE MOVEMENT AND
CONTINGENT RIGHTS) BILL, 2026**

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BILL

For

AN ACT to give effect to the decision of the Heads of Government of CARICOM to authorize nationals of the participating member states to enter, re-renter and remain freely within Belize in accordance with the provisions of the Protocol on Enhanced Cooperation; and to provide for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto.

(Gazetted, 2026)

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:

PART I

Preliminary

1. This Act may be cited as the

Short title.

CARIBBEAN COMMUNITY (FREE MOVEMENT AND CONTINGENT RIGHTS) ACT, 2026.

2.-(1) In this Act—

Interpretation.

“Caribbean Community national” means a person who is a citizen of a protocol member state;

“common law union” means the relationship that is established when a man and a woman who are not legally married to each other or to any other person, cohabit together continuously as husband and wife for a period of at least five years;

“Director” has the meaning assigned under section 2 of the Immigration Act;

CAP. 156.

“economic enterprise” includes any type of organisation for the production of, or the trade in, goods or the provision of services;

“family member of a Caribbean Community national” means a person who is not a Caribbean Community national nor registered as such, and who is—

- (a) a spouse of a Caribbean Community national unless such spouse is living apart from the Caribbean Community national under a deed of separation or the decree of a competent court;
- (b) a person with whom a Caribbean Community national shares a common law union;
- (c) an unmarried child, stepchild, or adopted of the Caribbean Community national—
 - (i) under the age of 18 years; or
 - (ii) under the age of 25 years and enrolled full-time at a school or tertiary institution; or
- (e) any other natural person certified as a dependent of the Caribbean Community national by an order of the Court;

CAP. 156.

“immigration officer” has the meaning assigned under section 2 of the Immigration Act;

“Indefinite Stay Stamp” means a stamp or endorsement placed in the passport or other travel document of a Caribbean Community national or a family member of a Caribbean Community national, evidencing their right to enter, re-enter, and remain in Belize for an indefinite period as conferred under this Act;

“Minister” means the Minister responsible for immigration;

“motor vehicle” means any mechanically propelled vehicle intended or adapted for use on roads;

“prohibited immigrant” means a person who is refused the right to enter, re-enter or remain in Belize for an indefinite period under section 3(2);

Schedule I.

“protocol member state” means a member state of the Caribbean Community listed in Schedule I;

“relative” in relation to an Caribbean Community national, means a child, stepchild, adopted child, parent, step-parent, grandparent, brother, sister, uncle or aunt, whether of the full blood, of the half-blood or by affinity;

“right to establish” includes the right to—

- (a) engage in self-employment; or
- (b) create and manage an economic enterprise;

“social support” means a benefit derived wholly or mainly from moneys provided out of public funds aimed at safeguarding vulnerable persons from the effects of economic shocks, natural disasters, and other crises and includes short term employment programs, public works initiatives, and school feeding programs, and includes scholarships and bursaries provided out of public funds.

“spouse” means a man married to a woman, or a woman married to a man in accordance with the Marriage Act; CAP. 174.

(2) For the purposes of this Act a person enters Belize if that person arrives by land, sea or by air, with the intention of disembarking or if that person disembarks in Belize.

PART II

Right of entry and stay

Right of entry and stay of a Caribbean Community national.

3.—(1) Subject to sub-section (2), an immigration officer shall, upon entry into Belize, grant a Caribbean Community national or a family member of a Caribbean Community national the right to enter, re-enter and remain in Belize for an indefinite period, if—

- (a) in relation to a Caribbean Community national, that person presents to the immigration officer at the place of entry—
 - (i) a valid passport of the respective protocol member state that is valid for not less than six months;
 - (ii) a return ticket or other evidence of the means of departure from Belize; and
 - (ii) proof of the address at which the Caribbean Community national intends to reside within Belize; and
- (b) in relation to a family member of a Caribbean Community national, that person presents to the immigration officer at the place of entry—
 - (i) the necessary documents to establish the family relationship to the Caribbean Community national;

- (ii) a return ticket or other evidence of the means of departure from Belize; and
- (iii) proof of the address at which such person intends to reside within Belize.

(2) An immigration officer shall not grant a Caribbean Community national or a family member of a Caribbean Community nation the right to enter, re-enter and remain in Belize for an indefinite period if that person—

- (a) presents a genuine, present and sufficiently serious threat to public morals, public order and safety and public health; or
- (b) is likely to become a charge on public fund.

CAP. 156.

Indefinite Stay Stamp.

4.—(1) A person granted the right to enter, re-enter and remain in Belize for an indefinite period in accordance with the Act shall receive an Indefinite Stay Stamp in the passport or other travel document establishing the identity of that person.

(2) An Indefinite Stay Stamp shall be in the form approved by the Director.

Notice and grounds of decision and appeal.
CAP. 156.

5.—(1) Where an immigration officer is of the opinion that a Caribbean Community national or a family member of a Caribbean Community national is a prohibited immigrant under sections 3(2), the immigration officer shall refer the matter to a Senior Immigration Officer on duty at the port of entry for final determination.

(2) Subject to sub-sections (6) and (8), a Senior Immigration Officer who determines that a Caribbean Community national or a family member of a Caribbean Community national is a prohibited immigrant may—

- (a) order that person to leave Belize and proceed immediately in the same vessel in which that person arrived;
- (b) order that person to leave Belize within sixty days of entering Belize, and, if the Senior Immigration Officer thinks fit, by a specified vessel; or
- (c) cause that person to be arrested and brought before a magistrate's court with a view to an order being made for removal.

(3) Where a Senior Immigration Officer determines that a Caribbean Community national or the family member of a Caribbean Community national is a prohibited immigrant and should be refused entry, the Senior Immigration Officer shall—

- (a) inform that person of the right to—
 - (i) contact a family member, consular officer or attorney;
 - (ii) activate the CARICOM Complaints procedure;
 - (iii) seek administrative review in accordance with subsection (4);
 - (iv) apply to the High Court for judicial review;
- (b) inform and provide that person with reasons for the refusal in the form set out in Schedule II; and
- (c) inform the Ministry responsible for CARICOM Affairs and National Security in the protocol member state of the Caribbean Community national.

Schedule II.

(4) A person who has been refused entry may, at the port of entry, immediately apply to the Director for an administrative review of the decision in such form as may be approved by the Director.

(5) The Director may—

- (a) confirm the decision to refuse entry; or
- (b) may permit the Caribbean Community national or family member of the Caribbean Community national, as the case may be, to enter, re-enter and remain in Belize for an indefinite period.

(6) A person who has applied for administrative review shall be permitted to remain in Belize pending the decision of the Director, subject to such restrictions as may be imposed by the Director.

(7) A person who has been refused entry after an application for administrative review may apply to the High Court for judicial review.

(8) A person who has applied for judicial review shall be permitted to remain in Belize pending the decision of the High Court.

6. Where a Senior Immigration Officer decides that a Caribbean Community national or a family member of a Caribbean Community national is a prohibited immigrant under section 3(2), the Minister shall, as soon as is practicable, inform the Ministry responsible for CARICOM Affairs of the Member State of the Caribbean Community national and the Council for Trade and Economic Development of the reasons for the prohibition of entry, except that, where the matter pertains to the interests of

Notification of refusal or prohibition of entry.

defence, public safety or public order, the Minister is not required to provide detailed reasons.

Revocation

7.—(1) An Indefinite Stay Stamp, may be revoked by an immigration officer acting on the direction of the Minister, if after the right has been granted, the Caribbean Community national of the family member of a Caribbean Community national, as the case may be—

- (a) is on the basis of available information communicated to the Minister, an immediate threat to national security; or
- (b) has become a charge on public funds.

(2) Upon revocation of an Indefinite Stay Stamp the right to enter, re-enter and remain in Belize for an indefinite period shall be forfeited.

(3) The decision to revoke an Indefinite Stay Stamp shall be communicated in writing and shall state the reasons for the revocation.

(4) A person whose Indefinite Stay Stamp is to be revoked shall, upon request, surrender the passport or travel document containing the Indefinite Stay Stamp to an immigration officer for the Indefinite Stay Stamp to be revoked.

(5) The Indefinite Stay Stamp shall be clearly marked or stamped “Revoked” by an immigration officer and such marking shall constitute prima facie evidence that the rights conferred under this Act have been revoked.

(6) A person whose right to enter, re-enter and remain in Belize for an indefinite period has been revoked shall be ordered to leave Belize.

(7) A person whose right to enter, re-enter and remain in Belize for an indefinite period has been revoked may apply to the High Court for judicial review.

(8) A person who has applied for judicial review shall be permitted to remain in Belize pending the decision of the High Court.

PART III

Contingent Rights

Effect of permit to enter, re-enter and remain.

8. For the purposes of this Act, a Caribbean Community national and family members of a Caribbean Community national permitted to enter, re-

enter and remain in Belize for an indefinite period shall be treated as a national of Belize.

9. A Caribbean Community national and family members of a Caribbean Community national shall be entitled to engage in gainful employment in Belize without—

Right of employment.

(a) discrimination on the ground of nationality; or

(b) the need to obtain an employment permit under the Immigration Act.

CAP. 156.

10. A Caribbean Community national and family members of a Caribbean Community national shall, without discrimination on the ground of nationality, be entitled to establish themselves, provide services and move into and within Belize, and out of Belize goods, instruments, tools, motor vehicle, equipment, devices, and machinery that are for personal use and necessary to live and reside in Belize, or as would be usually used in the normal course and scope of their profession, trade, or occupation, in accordance with custom laws.

Rights to establish, provide services.

11. A Caribbean Community national and family members of a Caribbean Community national shall be entitled to—

Right to financial services.
CAP. 52.

(a) access financial services of financial institutions without discrimination on the ground of nationality;

(b) open an account at a financial institution in local currency without the need to obtain approval from the Central Bank of Belize; or

(c) engage in the sale of land or property to Belizean residents or register a company without the need to provide written notice to the Central Bank of Belize.

12. A Caribbean Community national and family members of a Caribbean Community national shall be entitled to access education at a public school or public tertiary institution, scholarships and educational bursaries without—

Right to education.

(a) discrimination on the ground of nationality; or

(b) the need to obtain a student permit under the Immigration Act.

CAP. 156.

13. A Caribbean Community national and family members of a Caribbean Community national shall be entitled to access emergency and primary health care services at a public hospital, public clinic, community

Right to health care.

health centre or other public health care facility without discrimination on the ground of nationality.

Recognition of driving licence.

14.—(1) A valid driving licence issued in a protocol member state to a Caribbean Community national or family members of a Caribbean Community national with a photograph of the person to whom it relates affixed thereto authorises such person to drive in Belize the category of motor vehicle that is specified in the licence.

(2) The authorisation under sub-section (1) expires one year from the date on which the Caribbean Community national or the family member to the Caribbean Community national, as the case may be, is granted the right to enter, re-enter and remain in Belize for an indefinite period.

CAP. 230.

(3) On expiry of a driving licence issued in a protocol member state, a Caribbean Community national and the family members of a Caribbean Community national are entitled to apply to the licencing authority under the Motor Vehicles and Road Traffic Act for the issue of a licence to drive the category of motor vehicle that is specified in the expired licence, without discrimination on the ground of nationality.

Recognition of registration of motor vehicle.
CAP. 230.

15.—(1) A motor vehicle duly registered in a protocol member state and owned and brought into Belize by a Caribbean Community national or a family member of a Caribbean Community national for personal use or as a tool of trade is exempt from registration under the Motor Vehicles and Road Traffic Act.

(2) A motor vehicle exempted under sub-section (1) is deemed registered under the Motor Vehicles and Road Traffic Act until the period of exemption expires in accordance with sub-section (4).

CAP. 231.

(3) Sub-section (1) does not exempt a Caribbean Community national or a family member of a Caribbean Community national, as the case may be, from vehicle insurance requirements under the Motor Vehicle Insurance Third Party Risks Act.

(4) The exemption under sub-section (1) expires the later of three months from the date of importation or the date of expiration of the registration in the protocol member state.

(5) On expiry of the registration in the protocol member state, a Caribbean Community national or a family member of the Caribbean Community national, as the case may be, shall apply to the licencing authority under the Motor Vehicles and Road Traffic Act for registration of the motor vehicle, without discrimination on the ground of nationality.

Right to social support.

16.—(1) Subject to sub-section (2), a Caribbean Community national and family members of a Caribbean Community national shall be entitled to

access social support benefits without discrimination on the ground of nationality.

(2) The Minister may, by Order published in the *Gazette*, apply such restrictions on the right to access social support benefits as the Minister considers reasonably required.

(3) Any restrictions applied under sub-section (2) shall be for a specified period, which shall be set out in the Order.

(4) Before any restriction is applied under sub-section (2), the Minister shall notify the Council for Trade and Economic Development.

(5) If the Minister is unable to comply with sub-section (4), the Minister shall, upon applying the restriction immediately notify the the Council for Trade and Economic Development.

(6) In giving notification under sub-section (4) or (5) the Minister shall include—

- (a) the reasons for which the restriction is required; and
- (b) the period for which the restriction will be applied.

PART IV

Miscellaneous

17. Notwithstanding any provision of this Act, where a matter relating to the entry, re-entry, or stay of a Caribbean Community national or a family member of a Caribbean Community national is not expressly provided for in this Act, the provisions of the Immigration Act shall apply, mutatis mutandis, to the extent necessary to give effect to this Act.

Application of
Immigration Act.
CAP. 156.

18. The Minister may, by Order published in the *Gazette*, amend the Schedules.

Amendment of
Schedule.

19. The Minister may, make regulations generally for carrying into effect the provisions of this Act.

Regulations.

20.—(1) The Immigration Act is amended—

Consequential
amendments.
CAP. 156.

- (a) in section 2, by inserting the following new terms and definitions in the proper alphabetical order—

““Caribbean Community national” has the meaning assigned under section 2 of the Caribbean Community (Free Movement and Contingent Rights) Act;

“family member of a Caribbean Community national” has the meaning assigned under section 2 of the Caribbean Community (Free Movement and Contingent Rights) Act;”; and

(b) by inserting after section 19J, the following new sections—

“Entry of
Caribbean
Community
national and
family members.

19K. Notwithstanding the provisions of this Act, an immigration officer shall permit a Caribbean Community national or a family member of a Caribbean Community national to enter, re-enter and remain in Belize for an indefinite period in accordance with the provisions of the Caribbean Community (Free Movement and Contingent Rights) Act.

Application to
Caribbean
Community
national.

19L. Sections 12, 13, 15, 16 and 17 of this Act do not apply to a Caribbean Community national or a family member of a Caribbean citizen permitted to enter, re-enter and remain in Belize for an indefinite period in accordance with the Caribbean Community (Free Movement and Contingent Rights) Act.”.

CAP. 17:02

(2) The Caribbean Community (Free Movement of Skilled Person) Act is amended in Schedule II by deleting items 2, 3 and 11.

CAP. 218.

(3) The Protected Areas Conservation Trust Act is amended in section 33—

- (a) in sub-section (1), by deleting the words “every non-Belizean person” and substituting the words “every person other than a citizen of Belize, a permanent resident of Belize, a Caribbean Community national or a family member of a Caribbean Community national”;
- (b) in sub-section (1A) by deleting the words “every non-Belizean person” and substituting the words “every person other than a citizen of Belize, permanent resident of Belize or a Caribbean Community national”; and
- (c) by repealing sub-section (9) and replacing it with the following—

“(9) For the purpose of this section a Caribbean Community national or a family member of a Caribbean means a person who is permitted to enter, re-enter and remain in Belize for an infinite period under the Caribbean Community (Free Movement and Contingent Rights) Act”.

SCHEDULE I
[section 2]

PROTOCOL MEMBER STATES

1. Barbados
2. Dominica
3. Saint Vincent and the Grenadines

SCHEDULE II
[section 5(3)(b)]

REFUSAL OF ENTRY FORM

To _____, a national of _____.

You have this day appeared before the _____ (designation of the Senior Immigration Office on duty) at this port, (name of port) _____ and you are hereby refused entry under section ____ of the _____ Act because you have been found to be

an undesirable person

a person who will become a charge on the public funds

for the reason(s) that:

I hereby order you to be [detained] and [returned] to _____

WARNING

1. This Order will be entered into the [Regional Security Register] and the [Regional Free Movement Database]

N.B.

1. You may consult an Attorney-at-Law, a Consular Official of your country and a family member.
2. You have a right of appeal to the Director against this Order in accordance with section _____ of the Act within _____.

3. You have a right to apply to the High Court for judicial review of this Order in accordance with section ___ of the Act within _____.

Date: _____

Signature: _____
(Designation)

SERVICE HEREOF ACKNOWLEDGED BY

I acknowledge that I have been advised orally and in writing of the reasons for refusal of entry and I understand that I have the right to:

- (a) Contact a family member, consular officer and attorney-at-law;
- (b) Activate the CARICOM Complaints Procedure;
- (c) Appeal the decision to the Director;
- (d) Remain in Belize while pursuing administrative review subject to such restrictions as required by Belize.
- (e) Apply to the High Court for review of this decision.

Circle appropriate response as applicable

I was/was not provided the facility to contact a family member, an Attorney-at-Law and a consular representative and I contacted/did not contact (set out persons contracted, if applicable)

I intend/do not intend to appeal the decision of the Director.

Date: _____

Signature: _____
(Caribbean Community national)

Declaration of the Senior Immigration Officer in the event that the Caribbean Community national refuse to sign the form.

Name of Caribbean Community national

_____ at _____ a.m./p.m.
(Where applicable)

I, _____ (designation of the Senior Immigration Officer on duty) at this port, (name of port) _____, hereby declare that I have informed _____ a national of _____ of the reasons for his/her refusal of entry as well as of his/her rights that the said national has refused to affix his/her signature to this Form.

Date: _____

Signature: _____
(Designation)