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PRESS RELEASE

Government of Belize Responds to Guatemalan Fisheries Regulations

Belmopan. December 22, 2016. The Government of Belize wishes to remind the general public that the maritime spaces of Belize are established by the Maritime Areas Act of Belize which is wholly in accordance with international law. Recent reports in the media have referred to purported fishing zones claimed by Guatemala under its domestic legislation and regulations of 2002 and 2005.

The Government of Belize points out that the Administration in office in Belize at the time of the promulgation of the legislation and regulations by Guatemala, must have been unaware of their existence. Otherwise, that previous Administration would surely have protested the flagrant violation of International Law and Belize's maritime sovereignty, which the regulations constituted. In any event the present Administration makes clear that there can be no validity to, or international or Belizean recognition of, any law or regulation in Guatemala or any other country that purports to infringe on the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Belize.

Government further clarifies that nothing has ever been done by Guatemala, at time of passage and certainly not now, to seek to apply any zoning or administration regulation to Belize's internal and territorial sea or Exclusive Economic Zone. Nevertheless, Belize absolutely repudiates any and all aspects of the Guatemalan legislation and regulations that, even if only on paper, attempt to interfere with our territorial integrity. Moreover, such attempts are completely rejected by, and invalid under, International Law.

The Government of Belize, through its several official agencies, has always consistently exercised full jurisdiction and sovereignty over all its waters and has every intention of continuing to do so in accordance with its own laws and in full conformity with international law.

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