

**AGREEMENT BETWEEN
THE GOVERNMENT OF BELIZE
AND
THE GENERAL SECRETARIAT OF THE
ORGANIZATION OF AMERICAN STATES
REGARDING
THE PRIVILEGES AND IMMUNITIES OF THE OAS
ELECTORAL OBSERVATION MISSION
FOR THE 2015 GENERAL ELECTIONS**

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The Parties to this Agreement, the General Secretariat of the Organization of American States (hereinafter referred to as the “GS/OAS” or the “Organization”) and the Government of Belize (hereinafter referred to as the “Government”),

WHEREAS:

On October 1st, 2015 the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Belize (hereinafter referred to as the “Ministry”) invited GS/OAS to observe the General Elections to be held on November 4th, 2015;

The Secretary General of the OAS informed the Ministry that he accepted the invitation to establish an Observer Mission (hereinafter referred to as the “OAS Mission” or the “Mission”) for the General Elections in Belize subject to obtaining the necessary resources to finance the establishment of the OAS Mission in Belize;

The OAS Mission will be comprised of officials of the GS/OAS and other persons contracted at GS/OAS headquarters, as well as any other international observers specifically under contract to the GS/OAS for the OAS Mission (hereinafter referred to as the “Members of the OAS Mission” or the “Members”); and

The basic privileges and immunities enjoyed by the OAS, the GS/OAS, and its staff in Belize are set out in the Charter of the Organization of American States, and in the Diplomatic Privileges (Organization of American States) Order, 1995. Statutory Instrument No. 63 of 1995, made by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Belize on May 29th, 1995.

NOW, THEREFORE THE PARTIES HAVE AGREED AS FOLLOWS:

CHAPTER I PRIVILEGES AND IMMUNITIES OF THE OAS MISSION

ARTICLE I

The privileges and immunities of the OAS Mission shall be those accorded to the OAS, the GS/OAS, its organs, and its Staff pursuant to this Agreement, which shall be in interpreted in accordance with Articles 133, 134, 135 and 136 of the Charter of the Organization of American States, which was signed and ratified by the Government of Belize on January 8th, 1991; the Diplomatic Privileges (Organization of American States) Order, 1995. Statutory Instrument No. 63 of 1995, made by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Belize on May 29th, 1995; and in accordance with relevant principles of international law.

ARTICLE II

2.1. The property and effects of the OAS Mission, located in any part of the territory of Belize and in possession of any person, shall enjoy immunity against any type of judicial proceeding; save in those specific cases for which said immunity is expressly waived in writing by the Secretary General of the OAS.

2.2 However, it is understood that said waiver of immunity by the Secretary General of the OAS shall not have the effect of subjecting any such property and effects to any type of measure of execution.

ARTICLE III

3.1 The premises occupied by the OAS Mission shall be inviolable.

3.2 Moreover, the property and effects of the OAS Mission, in any part of the territory of Belize and in possession of any person or entity, shall enjoy immunity against search and seizure, confiscation, expropriation and against any form of intervention, be it executive, administrative, judicial or legislative.

ARTICLE IV

The files of the OAS Mission and all of the documents pertaining thereto or in the possession of any person or entity shall be inviolable wherever they are located.

ARTICLE V

5.1 The OAS Mission shall be:

a) Exempt from any internal taxation, it being understood, however, that it may not claim any type of tax exemption that is in fact remuneration for public services;

b) Exempt from any type of customs duty, prohibition and restriction in respect of articles and publications that it may import or export for its official use. It is understood, however, that any articles imported duty-free may be sold within Belize only in accordance with conditions expressly agreed upon by the Parties; and

c) Exempt from ordinances, regulations or moratoria of any kind. Moreover, it may have currency of any type, carry accounts in any foreign currency and transfer funds in foreign currency.

ARTICLE VI

The OAS Mission may establish and operate in the territory of Belize an independent radio communication system to provide an on-going communications link between the Members and the vehicles used by the Members with Mission offices and regional headquarters, such as the central office in Belmopan or Belize City and between the latter and the headquarters of the GS/OAS in Washington, D.C., United States of America. The Government shall provide all the technical and administrative support necessary for this to be achieved.

CHAPTER II

MEMBERS OF THE OAS MISSION

ARTICLE VII

The Members of the OAS Mission shall be those persons who have been designated by the GS/OAS and accredited by the Belizean authorities.

ARTICLE VIII

8.1 For the period during which the Members of the OAS Mission exercise their functions and during their trips to and from Belize, they shall enjoy the following privileges and immunities:

a) Immunity from personal detention or arrest as well as immunity from any type of legal proceeding in respect of their actions and statements be they oral or written, done in the performance of their functions;

- b) The inviolability of all papers and documents;
- c) The right to communicate with the GS/OAS via radio, telephone, telegraph, email, satellite or other means, and to receive documents and correspondence through messengers or in sealed pouches, enjoying for that purpose the same privileges and immunities accorded to diplomatic mail, messages, and pouches;
- d) The right to utilize for their movements throughout the national territory, any means of transportation, be it by air, by water or over land;
- e) Exemption in respect of their persons and that of their spouses and children, from any type of immigration restriction and registration of aliens and any type of national service in Belize.
- f) The same privileges accorded to the representatives of foreign governments on official mission in respect to foreign-currency restrictions;
- g) The same immunities and privileges in respect of their personal baggage as are accorded to diplomatic envoys; and
- h) Such other privileges, immunities and facilities as are compatible with the foregoing, and enjoyed by diplomatic envoys, with the exception that they shall not enjoy any exemption from customs duties on imported merchandise (that is not part of their personal effects) or sales taxes or consumer taxes.

ARTICLE IX

The provisions contained in the preceding Article do not apply to nationals of Belize working as local contract staff in the OAS Mission, except in respect of official acts performed or statements issued in the exercise of their functions.

CHAPTER III

COOPERATION WITH THE AUTHORITIES

ARTICLE X

The OAS Mission shall cooperate with the relevant authorities of Belize to prevent any occurrence of abuse in respect of the specified privileges and immunities.

Similarly, the relevant authorities shall do whatever is possible to provide the cooperation requested of them by the OAS Mission.

ARTICLE XI

Without prejudice to the immunities and privileges accorded, the Members of the OAS Mission shall respect the laws and regulations existing in Belize.

ARTICLE XII

12.1 The Parties shall take any measures necessary to procure an amicable arrangement in the proper settlement of:

- a) Any disputes that may arise in contracts or other questions of private law; and
- b) Any disputes to which the OAS Mission and/or any of its Members may be parties with respect to matters in which they enjoy immunity.

CHAPTER IV

NATURE OF PRIVILEGES AND IMMUNITIES

ARTICLE XIII

13.1 The privileges and immunities are granted to the Members of the OAS Mission in order to safeguard their independence in the exercise of their functions of observing the General Elections of Belize, and not for personal gain or to perform activities of a political nature within the territory of Belize.

13.2 The Secretary General of the OAS may waive the privileges and immunities of any of the Members of the OAS Mission in the event that he determines, in his sole discretion, that the exercise of those privileges and immunities may obstruct the

course of justice and so long as the Secretary General determines that such waiver does not prejudice the interests of the OAS or of the GS/OAS.

CHAPTER V GENERAL PROVISIONS

ARTICLE XIV

14.1 The Government recognizes the "Official Travel Document" issued by the GS/OAS as a valid and sufficient document for purposes of travel by the Members of the OAS Mission who possess this document.

14.2 The Government shall issue to each Member of the OAS Mission a visa to enter the country and to remain therein until the end of the OAS Mission.

ARTICLE XV

The Government agrees to extend the privileges and immunities of the present Agreement to Members of the OAS Mission designated by the GS/OAS, who have been accredited by the Belizean authorities.

ARTICLE XVI

This Agreement may be amended by mutual consent in writing by the duly authorized representatives of the Parties.

ARTICLE XVII

This Agreement shall enter into force on the date of its signature and shall cease to have effect once the Members of the OAS Mission have completed their mission, in accordance with the terms of the request made by the Government.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the undersigned, duly authorized, do hereby sign this Agreement, in duplicate, on the date and locations indicated below.

FOR THE GOVERNMENT OF
BELIZE:



Ambassador Patrick Andrews
Permanent Representative
Permanent Mission of Belize
to the Organization of American States
Place: Washington, D.C., U.S.A.

Date: OCT. 16, 2015

FOR THE GENERAL SECRETARIAT
OF THE ORGANIZATION OF
AMERICAN STATES:



Luis Almagro Lemes
Secretary General
General Secretariat of the
Organization of American States
Place: Washington, D.C., U.S.A.

Date: OCT. 16, 2015

