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PRESS RELEASE

The Government of Belize announces the establishment of the Belize Coast Guard Drone Squadron

Belize City, August 28, 2024.

The Government of Belize, in its commitment to strengthening the monitoring and enforcement of Belize's ocean space and the conservation and sustainable use of its associated resources under the Blue Bond Program, launched the Belize Coast Guard Drone Squadron. This new squadron will bolster the Belize Coast Guard's capabilities by supporting a second fleet in national enforcement involving modern technology to realize effective surveillance and protection of the Blue Space.

The squadron is equipped with two Perimeter 8+ Long Range System UAVs, fuel-injected hybrid military drones capable of flying up to 5 hours at a range of 110 miles at a maximum altitude of 13,000 ft. The UAVs are equipped with an Infra-Red (EO/IR) stabilized camera capable of delivering thermal observation alongside long-range visible imagery, which gives the BCG Drone Squadron the ability to conduct missions at night.

The Belize Coast Guard is mandated by law to function as a maritime specialized force for the enforcement of Belize's Maritime Laws, resource protection, safety and operations at sea, and function to enforce or assist in the enforcement of fisheries and the protection of Belize's territorial sea, continental shelf, exclusive economic zone and fishery zones.

Today's investment in the sum of the **BZ\$525,450.00** has been made under the framework of the Government Strategic Allocation project funded by the Belize Fund for a Sustainable Future.

At the launch ceremony, Prime Minister Hon. John Briceño said, "*The establishment of the Coast Guard Drone Squadron marks a monumental step forward for development within the Belize Coast Guard—a step that*

will fortify our nation's commitment to safeguarding our precious marine resources for the benefit of all Belizeans now and in the future."

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