

[Home](#) > ... > [Joint Statement of the 2023 Caribbean-U.S. High L...](#)

# Joint Statement of the 2023 Caribbean-U.S. High Level Security Cooperation Dialogue

**MEDIA NOTE**

**OFFICE OF THE SPOKESPERSON**

NOVEMBER 22, 2023

The text of the following statement was released by the Government of the United States, Caribbean Community (CARICOM), and Government of the Dominican Republic on the occasion of the eleventh ministerial meeting of the Caribbean-U.S. High Level Security Cooperation Dialogue under the auspices of the Caribbean Basin Security Initiative.

*Begin Text:*

We, the Governments of the Caribbean and the United States have gathered to: REAFFIRM our commitment to the Caribbean Basin Security Initiative (CBSI) Partnership launched on 27 May 2010, at the inaugural Caribbean-United States Security Cooperation Dialogue in Washington, D.C.;

UPHOLD our partnership through the CBSI to advance three shared goals: substantially reduce illicit trafficking, advance public safety and security, and prevent youth crime and violence in the Caribbean;

REAFFIRM the breadth of Caribbean-U.S. Security Cooperation and Engagement, including longstanding cooperation on core CBSI issues (maritime law enforcement, firearms trafficking,

border and port security, transnational crime and gangs, money laundering, law enforcement and justice sector capacity building, and youth crime and violence prevention); and broader engagement complementary to CBSI on matters including but not limited to combatting trafficking in persons, cybersecurity, and cybercrime;

COMMIT to the urgent need to substantially reduce illicit trafficking, advance public safety and security, and further promote social justice; FURTHER DEEPEN the coordination, cooperation, and sustainability of our joint and complementary efforts among Caribbean states and international partners to more effectively address security challenges in the Caribbean; including by strategically allocating resources to address these challenges and ensuring the monitoring and evaluation of program implementation for sustainable results;

COLLECTIVELY ADVANCE the following critical efforts aimed at increasing the security and safety of our citizens.

RECOGNIZING ALSO that the UN Security Council has determined that the situation in Haiti continues to constitute a threat to international peace and security and to stability in the region, CARICOM, the Dominican Republic, and the US welcome the authorization, under Chapter VII of the UN Charter, of a Multinational Security Support (MSS) mission in Haiti, through UN Security Council Resolution 2699 on "The situation in Haiti" of October 2, 2023, to support the efforts of the Haitian National Police to re-establish security in Haiti and build security conditions conducive to holding free and fair elections."

In furtherance of the three shared goals, we the Governments of the Caribbean and the United States of America PLEDGE TO:

1. Continue to work together to forge a more effective partnership and concrete actions to reduce illicit trafficking in the Caribbean in 2023-2024. Towards this end we commit to:

With respect to the illicit trafficking of firearms

- i. Continue to implement the 2019 Caribbean Priority Actions on the Illicit Proliferation of Firearms and Ammunition across the Caribbean (approved by the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) Heads of Government in May 2019) and the 2023 Addendum to the Caribbean Priority Actions;

- ii. Provide robust support to the CARICOM Crime Gun Intelligence Unit (CCGIU) within the CARICOM Implementation Agency for Crime and Security (IMPACS) Regional Intelligence Fusion Centre to promote the development and sharing of crime gun intelligence within the Region and with international law enforcement partners, including the U.S. Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives (ATF), U.S. Homeland Security Investigations (HSI), U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP), U.S. Bureau of Industry and Security (BIS), and other relevant entities;
- iii. Address critical firearms investigation training needs in the Region, including continued training on the use of the ATF Electronic Tracing System (eTrace), and stressing the importance of crime gun intelligence, privately made firearms (PMFs or ghost guns), serial number restoration, and recognition and identification of firearms components, as well as other areas which may be identified in the future by the partners;
- iv. Encourage all Caribbean nations to finalize and formally adopt national action plans to implement reforms and support legislative and capacity-building priorities identified in the Caribbean Firearms Roadmap and the 2019 Priority Actions;
- v. Strengthen the sharing of firearms and ballistic evidence and tracing information between our countries to aid in solving firearms trafficking and violent crime cases, including by strengthening the Regional Integrated Ballistic Information Network (RIBIN) and working toward tracing 100% of all recovered firearms through eTrace. With respect to the illicit trafficking in the maritime domain
- vi. Implement the Caribbean Priority Actions on Strengthening Regional Maritime Law Enforcement Cooperation and Coordination as developed in the May 2019 CBSI Technical Working Group on Maritime Operations, including work to strengthen maritime prosecutions and encourage regional cooperation on maritime law enforcement;
- vii. Commence the implementation of the Caribbean Maritime Security Strategy (CMSS) to advance sustainable and complementary defense and law enforcement cooperation, improve maritime operational capacity and security;
- viii. Employ Maritime Domain Awareness (MDA) technology to identify and disrupt illicit networks and more effectively detect illicit maritime activity throughout the Region, including narcotics, firearms, and human trafficking, as well as migrant smuggling; Illegal, Unreported, and Unregulated (IUU) fishing; abuse of flags of convenience, and fuel smuggling. Accordingly, we will encourage Caribbean countries to complete Memoranda of

Understanding to access and share information via the Cooperative Situational Information Integration system (CSII), which integrates live feeds from sensors, radars, and identification systems;

- ix. Convene a meeting of the Maritime Technical Working Group focusing on maritime cooperation in 2024;
- x. Ratify the Agreement Concerning Cooperation in Suppressing Illicit Maritime and Air Trafficking in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances in the Caribbean Area, also known as the Treaty of San Jose, to more effectively partner and disrupt illicit trafficking across maritime borders. With respect to illicit trafficking at ports of entry
- xi. Convene a Border and Port Security Technical Working Group meeting in 2024;
- xii. Provide technical support, training, and information-sharing to Caribbean institutions charged with monitoring maritime borders, including formal and informal ports of entry through programs such as Advance Passenger Information System (APIS), Advance Cargo Information System (ACIS), the MDA Platform and Radar Programs, as well as through cooperation and engagement with the Regional Security System (RSS). With respect to trafficking in persons
- xiii. Vigorously investigate and prosecute trafficking crimes and convict traffickers, including complicit government officials; proactively and equitably screen populations of individuals at risk for trafficking, identify victims, and refer them to trauma-informed services; enact or amend anti-trafficking laws to be consistent with international law; continue to build investigative and judicial capacity through capacity building programs; and provide sufficient human and financial resources for anti-trafficking prosecution, protection, and prevention efforts.

2. Continue to work together to forge a more effective partnership and concrete actions to advance public safety and security through focused efforts to advance justice sector reforms and capacity building of our law enforcement, emergency response, and other relevant agencies in the Caribbean in 2023-2024. Towards this end we commit to:

With respect to criminal gangs and transnational organized crime

- i. Enhance efforts to investigate and prosecute the regional criminal organizations engaged in lottery scams by augmenting training, capacity-building, and information-sharing with local

law enforcement agencies combatting criminal gangs and transnational criminal organizations. With respect to money laundering and financial crimes

- ii. Promote mutual legal assistance (MLA) in financial crimes cases, including facilitating communications and processes for effective MLA between Caribbean states as well as with international partners, and drafting, completing, updating, and publishing national level MLA fiches – compiled country-level information addressing MLA points of contact and processes – to facilitate regional MLA;
  - iii. Work to ensure proceeds of crime recovered by governments are managed transparently, and that appropriate proportions of recovered funds are reinvested into criminal justice agencies to combat and prevent crimes that generate illicit capital, national drug rehabilitation and education programs, and other national and regional citizen safety and security institutions;
  - iv. Identify and evaluate the necessary steps to build a financial crimes coordination body for the Caribbean analogous to EuroJust, to support regional efforts to combat financial crimes, including prioritizing action on challenges previously identified. With respect to strengthening the rule of law
  - v. Work to strengthen criminal justice institutions to more effectively investigate, prosecute, and adjudicate complex transnational organized crime cases and serious crimes such as homicides and violent crime; extending through traditional partners such as public prosecutor's offices, judiciaries, and police departments, as well as ministries for education and youth affairs, and civil society organizations that provide services to at-risk communities. With respect to the strengthening of cybersecurity and countering cybercrime
  - vi. Encourage countries to develop and enact national cybersecurity strategies; promote cybersecurity education and training to bolster cybersecurity awareness, policy making, network defense, and incident response capabilities; and review existing legislation, national and regional strategies and consider updating and/or improving it as necessary, to strengthen the ability to address existing and emerging cyber threats.
  - vii. Request that CARICOM IMPACS hold a special virtual meeting dedicated to cybercrime and cyber critical infrastructure protection and the status of countries' efforts to address these challenges.
3. Continue to work together to forge a more effective partnership and concrete actions to further promote social justice and to address youth crime and violence by addressing the

important issues of at-risk youth and alternative sentencing arrangements in the Caribbean in 2014. Towards this end we commit to:

With respect to supporting a community of practice on youth crime and violence prevention

- i. Convene a technical working group focused on advancing efforts to prevent youth crime and violence with the view of continuing to focus on restorative and rehabilitative approaches to juvenile justice, advancing community-based youth crime and violence prevention, improving institutional capacity for effective crime prevention, and protection of vulnerable populations.

4. Establish a stronger partnership for the future. Toward this end we commit to:

- i. Use CARICOM IMPACS as the secretariat and coordination entity for CARICOM states and international partners to strengthen awareness and coordination of efforts to advance citizen security in the Caribbean;
- ii. Advance the work and meet the objectives established above by convening three technical working group meetings in 2024. We will convene one meeting each of the technical working groups on Crime Prevention by Focusing on Vulnerable Youth and At-Risk Populations, Maritime and Aerial Domain Security Cooperation, and Port Security;
- iii. Call on a consultative process in 2024 to revise the 2017 Caribbean-U.S. Plan of Action on Security Cooperation for consideration and adoption by the 2024 Caribbean-United States Security Cooperation Dialogue;
- iv. Rely on the support of permanent representatives / national officials as focal points for coordination of regional efforts, and for assistance in identifying national-level focal points for CBSI technical working group meetings and related subject-matter specific programming and policy engagements;
- v. Coordinate our efforts with complementary Caribbean-U.S. initiatives, including but not limited to the U.S.-Caribbean Partnership to Address the Climate Crisis 2030 (PACC 2030); and the Caribbean Combined Working Group (CCWG) established at the July 2023 Caribbean Nations Security Conference (CANSEC) focused on cybersecurity, as well as climate and environmental resilience;
- vi. Continue to expand diplomatic and law enforcement cooperation with Caribbean partner governments such as the French Republic, Kingdom of the Netherlands, and United

Kingdom and their overseas territories and/or departments; and foster greater collaboration with U.S. Virgin Islands, Puerto Rico, and U.S. law enforcement and border security entities as highlighted in the U.S. Council on Transnational Organized Crimes Strategic Division's U.S. Strategy to Counter Transnational Organized Crime in the Caribbean.

- vii. Continue to expand cooperation and technical capacity building among regional entities in coordination with CARICOM IMPACS and the RSS.

WE ANTICIPATE continued success in our joint and shared efforts to improve the security and safety of our citizens in the Caribbean.

WE THANK the Government and people of Saint Lucia for their hospitality and efforts in hosting the Eleventh High Level Dialogue.

WE LOOK FORWARD to the next High Level Security Cooperation Dialogue to be held in Washington, D.C

*End Text.*

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#### TAGS

Caribbean Basin Security Initiative

Cooperative Arrangement

Office of the Spokesperson

Partnerships

Security

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