

# Caribbean Today

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(Photo - Yrneh Gabon Brown)

## HISTORY MAKER

Haitian American Star Makes NFL Draft Pick History... **Page 18**



Ashton Jeanty, the No. 6 pick of the NFL Draft, is the highest-drafted running back since Saquon Barkley went second overall in 2018. (Kirby Lee-Imagn Images)

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# REGIONAL NEWS



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## Here Are Some Of The Top Headlines Making Caribbean News This Week:

### REGIONAL

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Dominica, and Barbados have been ranked global "Transparent Titans" by the 2025 Nasdaq Global Financial and Economic Crime Outlook from the Secretariat Economic Crime Index (SECI). Saint Vincent and the Grenadines led the Caribbean, ranking 14th globally, followed by Dominica at 17th and Barbados at 19th. Their strong scores reflect commitment to financial transparency, enforcement, and anti-crime frameworks. These nations join leaders like Finland and Denmark in promoting integrity. Several others, including St. Lucia and Grenada, were named "Vigilant Players," while Guyana and Suriname were noted as "Reactive Reformers" needing faster regulatory reforms.

### BELIZE

Police in Belize are investigating the tragic death of a 46-year-old man who was fatally injured while trying to prevent a pig from destroying his plants. Assistant Commissioner of Police Hilberto Romero, Regional Commander of the Eastern Division, confirmed that Anton Andrewin was at Gales Point when he attempted to chase away the pig. The animal attacked him, causing a severe injury. Andrewin was rushed to the hospital but was pronounced dead upon arrival. Authorities are also examining

whether the owner of the pig could face legal repercussions. "An investigation will be carried out, and we will have the results at the end," Romero told reporters.

According to media reports, Andrewin, a father of five, had been enjoying time with friends in his yard when the pig entered his property. As he tried to move the animal away, it turned aggressive, using its tusks to fatally sever an artery in his leg.

Jason Altschaft, the village chairman, emphasized the importance of responsible pet ownership, noting that it is illegal for animals to roam freely in public spaces. "When we heard that he didn't make it, I went back to the family. After confirming what happened, I retrieved my licensed firearm, and we put the pig down," he said.

Reports indicate the pig's owner had moved out of the village earlier this year, leaving the animal to roam wild in search of food.

Michelle Andrewin, the grieving widow, recounted the harrowing incident. "We were sitting and laughing when the pig came into the yard," she said. "He went after the pig along with our dog. It was not the first time this pig had hurt him - it had been aggressive before." She described seeing her husband bleeding profusely after the attack, a sight that ended a joyful afternoon in tragedy.

### ST. KITTS & NEVIS

St. Kitts and Nevis has officially launched its Medicinal Cannabis Authority (MCA), advancing safe access to cannabis-based treatments for adults over 21. MCA Chairperson Jihan Williams-Knight stressed the agency's mission to expand access, promote education, and prevent misuse. Agriculture Minister Samal Duggins celebrated the launch as a milestone, announcing waived licensing fees for Rastafarians under the Rastafari Rights Recognition Act 2023. The government heralded the MCA's establishment as a step toward progressive, science-based policymaking. With this move, St. Kitts and Nevis joins Jamaica, Barbados, and St. Vincent and the Grenadines in pioneering medicinal cannabis regulation in the Caribbean.

### GUYANA

Guyana's oil production dipped slightly by 3% in March 2025 to 627,000 barrels per day (bpd), yet first-quarter output rose 3% year-on-year to 631,000 bpd. Now ranked as Latin America's fifth-largest oil exporter, Guyana's production is set to surge with ExxonMobil's Yellowtail project and a new FPSO vessel, boosting capacity toward 940,000 bpd. The government projects an average output of 786,000 bpd by late 2025. ExxonMobil is also

preparing to relinquish 2,534 square kilometers of unexplored Stabroek Block territory. Oil revenues remain strong, with \$605.46 million earned last quarter, reinforcing Guyana's position as a rising regional energy powerhouse.

### JAMAICA

Jamaica-based Rainforest Seafoods is expanding its operations in St. Vincent and the Grenadines, with plans to retail local and imported fish as well as farm produce at its Calliaqua facility.

Agriculture and Fisheries Minister Saboto Caesar told Parliament that the new retail outlet, under construction, would complement - rather than compete with - the nearby Calliaqua Fish Market and local agricultural vendors. Rainforest Seafoods opened its state-of-the-art, 25,000-square-foot seafood processing facility, known as "Big Blue," in Calliaqua in July 2022 following an investment of EC\$10 million (US\$3.7 million). The facility features extensive cold storage and advanced packaging equipment designed to meet international standards.

Minister Caesar emphasized that local fishers would benefit directly from the expansion, noting that Rainforest would prioritize sourcing local snapper, mahi-mahi, tuna, lobster, and conch. Imported fish would only be allowed when

local supplies were insufficient and import duties would apply.

The retail outlet will also feature a farmers' market section, offering local produce such as okra, tanya, eddoes, sea moss, carrots, and yams. Around 100 farmers are expected to benefit from selling their products through the new space. Opposition legislator Daniel Cummings had raised concerns about potential unfair competition with local vendors and questioned whether the original duty-free concessions granted to Rainforest would unfairly extend to the retail operation. Minister Caesar clarified that the retail outlet is not covered by the original concessions and that any future requests for concessions would be evaluated separately.

He also reassured Parliament that the government remains committed to supporting Vincentian fishers and farmers, highlighting the ongoing issuance of concessions across the islands to bolster the local fishing sector. Rainforest Seafoods currently employs 120 people during peak operations and will add five more staff for the new retail outlet, with a total of approximately 250 producers - fishers and farmers - expected to benefit from the company's expanded operations.

- Compiled from CMC and NewsAmericasNow.com



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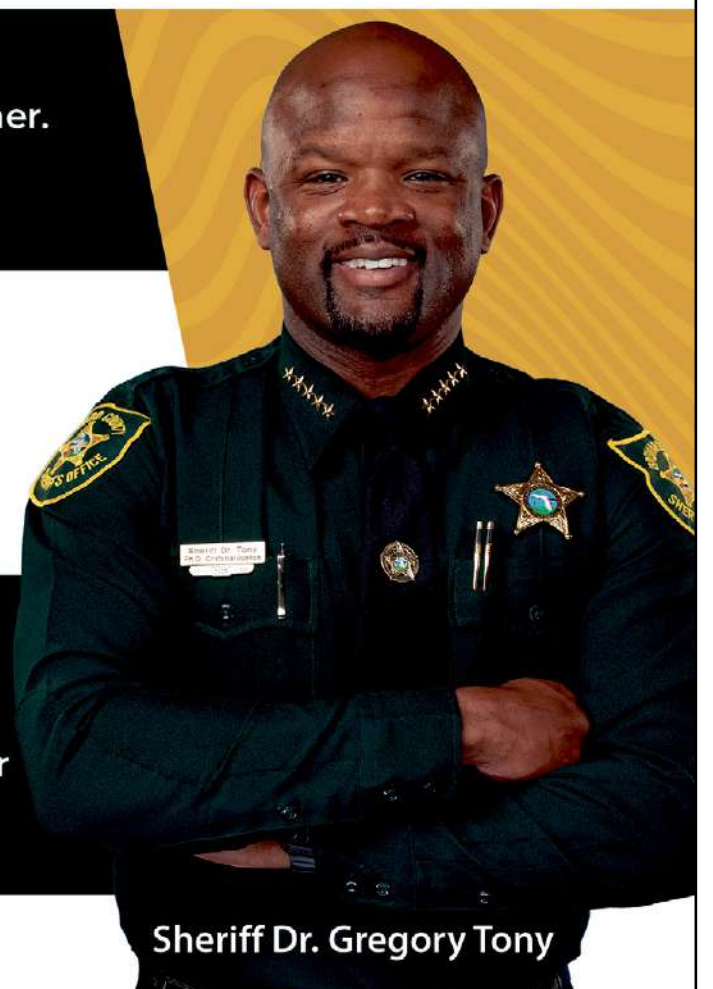
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Sheriff Dr. Gregory Tony



# Can Prime Minister Holness Win A Third Term Amid Growing Opposition Momentum?

By HOWARD CAMPBELL  
Copyedited By Felicia J. Persaud

With just five months to go before Jamaica's constitutionally due general elections, the question looming large is: Can Prime Minister Andrew Holness secure a third straight term?

During a four-day visit to South Florida - a stronghold for influential Jamaican Diaspora voices - Holness set out to bolster his case. Major highlights included "An Evening With The Prime Minister" at ChristWay Baptist Church in Miramar on April 4th and the American Friends of Jamaica gala in Miami the following evening.

At the Miramar gathering, Holness focused on issues vital to Jamaicans both at home and abroad: crime, the economy, and healthcare. He pointed to a sharp drop in homicides, crediting aggressive policing strategies, and highlighted improvements in infrastructure and housing aimed at working-class Jamaicans.

"Let me thank the diaspora — because the diaspora didn't fail us," Holness said. "There's a view that the diaspora is important only because of remittances — well, that's not true. Yes, remittances matter; it's a system of social welfare that's not run by the state. You take care of the people we may miss



Jamaica's Prime Minister Andrew Holness made a four-day visit to South Florida - a stronghold for influential Jamaican Diaspora voices — last month.

— your close relatives and even people in your communities. But the diaspora is also the repository of incredible skills and para-diplomacy connections. ... The diaspora is an incredible resource."

Dr. Clovis B. Nelson, a member of the Jamaica Diaspora Education Committee who attended the Miramar event, praised Holness' detailed presentation.

"He provided specific statistics and examples of initiatives aimed at reducing crime, which indicated a positive trend and a commitment to enhancing public safety," said Nelson. "I was particularly impressed by his metaphor of Jamaica's transformation, which effectively illustrated the nation's progress and future potential.

His clear communication on key issues like infrastructure, healthcare, and education resonated deeply with me."

Yet, Nelson acknowledged areas where Holness' vision appeared less clear.

"I was hoping for more detailed plans on how the government intends to tackle persistent bureaucratic inefficiencies. I quickly realized that one may accurately conclude that such a process will require a long term strategic planning process across all stakeholders," said Nelson. "Therefore, such a process he probably could not have stated clearly then."

Healthcare remains another critical issue for the Diaspora. Dr. Rosemarie Lewis, a South Florida healthcare professional who frequently leads medical

missions to Jamaica, zeroed in on Holness' remarks about modernizing outdated hospital infrastructure.

"The prime minister acknowledged that outdated hospital structures, such as Cornwall Regional Hospital (in rural St. James parish), hinder the effective use of modern medical equipment. To address this, they are modernizing existing facilities or building new ones, although progress takes time," she told Caribbean Today.

Lewis also cited continuing bureaucratic hurdles when shipping medical supplies to Jamaica. "Despite progress, bureaucracy remains an issue. My personal connections with the ministry of health have facilitated medical team deployments to Jamaica for necessary procedures. However, they are working to resolve these bureaucratic hurdles," she said.

Holness' visit to South Florida, home to major Jamaican elected officials and Diaspora leaders, was not just about boosting morale — it was strategic political positioning ahead of a tough election fight.

First ascending to office in 2010 after Bruce Golding's resignation, Holness quickly lost the December 2011 election to Portia Simpson Miller. However, he roared back in February 2016, narrowly defeating

Simpson Miller, and expanded his mandate with a landslide in 2020, beating the Peter Phillips-led PNP by a 49-13 seat margin.

Yet recent events suggest his grip on power could be loosening. The JLP's showing in the 2024 Local Government elections - winning seven of 13 municipal corporations but losing the popular vote - signals possible vulnerabilities. Corruption allegations have further dented the administration's image.

According to Jamaica's leading pollster Don Anderson, the opposition PNP, led by Mark Golding, is gaining momentum. Anderson's February poll showed the PNP leading by five percentage points.

"What we're seeing is momentum with the People's National Party, which again, based on these numbers that we're looking at now for the last poll, that has dampened a bit - five percentage points. But the trend is a key factor. The trend is the greatest predictor of the outcome of an election," Anderson told Radio Jamaica.

As the election clock ticks down, Prime Minister Holness faces a critical test: convincing Jamaicans - both at home and abroad - that he deserves another term to finish what he started.



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# Guyana Erupts In Protest As Questions Mount Over 11-Year-Old Adrianna Young's Death

Guyana remains in a state of national unrest following the tragic death of 11-year-old Adrianna Young, whose body was found in a hotel swimming pool on April 24, hours after she went missing. The incident has sparked widespread outrage, protests, and deepening calls for justice, prompting President Irfaan Ali to issue repeated pleas for calm and national unity.

"The destruction of public infrastructure and private property, burning of vehicles, and inconveniencing others is not what we want to demonstrate as a people and as a nation," President Ali said, addressing growing tensions in the country.

Adrianna's body was discovered in a pool at the Double Day Hotel in Tuschen, East Bank Essequibo. An autopsy conducted by three internationally recognized forensic pathologists—Dr. Glenn Rudner, Dr. Shubhakar Karra Paul, and Dr. Gary Collins—determined she died by drowning, with no signs of physical or sexual trauma. However, the body's state of decomposition prevented

determination of an exact time of death, and toxicology results are still pending.

Despite the findings, public distrust has escalated, with several political leaders and civil society groups calling for an independent international probe. Critics have raised concerns over the integrity of the investigation and questioned President Ali's statement that there was no evidence of "forceful drowning."

To manage the mounting unrest, the Guyanese government imposed a nightly curfew from 12:30 a.m. to 5:00 a.m. and warned of increased enforcement if tensions persist. The curfew was also intended to ensure safety around Adrianna's funeral and the start of the CXC examinations.

The young girl's funeral, scheduled for May 5, was postponed by her grieving family. Her mother, Amecia Simon, shared the heartbreaking decision in a message posted to Facebook.

"Due to ongoing matters and our family's need for space and clarity as we grieve, we have made the painful decision



Pathologists says 11-year-old Adrianna Young died from drowning even as protests turned violent in the South American CARICOM nation of Guyana. (Newsroom Guyana image)

to postpone Adriana's funeral today," Simon wrote. "Please know this was not easy, but we want to honor her with the peace, love and the dignity she deserves."

As emotions run high, President Ali has called for transparency and pledged a full review of the procedures and events surrounding Adrianna's death. "Her death must serve as a reminder of our need for national unity," he stated.

Opposition Leader Aubrey



Norton of the People's National Congress Reform (PNCR) denounced the violence and looting, reaffirming the party's commitment to justice. "We do not support the looting or destruction of property. We are fully in support of the struggle for justice," Norton said.

In the Caribbean Diaspora, the call for justice has reverberated across communities. In Brooklyn, New York, a candlelight vigil was held in Adrianna's honor. Rickford

Burke of the Caribbean Guyana Institute for Democracy and Bonita Montique of the United Bridge Builders Mission led the event, calling for sweeping police reform and accountability.

"She was only a child," said activist Melissa Atwell Holder. "They say she drowned—but did she drown in that pool? Because that

pool was searched, over and over again. And she wasn't there. So we ask: when did she die? And how?"

As investigations continue and a nation grieves, the family has promised to announce a new funeral date "once we are able to," Simon said.

- *Rewritten from CMC News & Caribbean Life*



## Kamla Persad-Bissessar Returns To Power In Trinidad And Tobago

Trinidad and Tobago has a new prime minister, and the Caribbean Community, (CARICOM) and the United States government have extended congratulations to United National Congress, (UNC) leader Kamla Persad-Bissessar on her electoral victory.

Persad-Bissessar led her United National Congress (UNC) coalition to a decisive victory in the nation's general elections. Results show the UNC coalition capturing 26 of the 41 parliamentary seats, defeating the incumbent People's National Movement (PNM), which secured 13 seats, while the newly formed People's Tobago Party (TPP) took two seats on the island of Tobago. Official confirmation from the Elections and Boundaries Commission (EBC) is pending.

CARICOM and the United States were among the first to congratulate Persad-Bissessar, who previously served as Prime Minister from 2010 to 2015. CARICOM called the results "a clear mandate from the people," and lauded the peaceful conduct of the elections.

"We look forward to welcoming Prime Minister-elect Persad-Bissessar to the Conference of Heads of Government, and to her participation, as we continue to tackle emerging geopolitical issues," the Guyana-based CARICOM Secretariat said.

The U.S. State Department echoed similar sentiments, commending the people of



Kamla Persad Bissessar has been returned to power in T&T. (CMC image)

Trinidad and Tobago for their "commitment to democratic values" and expressing hope for enhanced cooperation on energy, security, and regional prosperity.

### A New Cabinet with a Focus on Security, Justice, and Energy

On Saturday, May 3rd, Prime Minister Persad-Bissessar unveiled a new 24-member Cabinet with an emphasis on security, legal reform, and economic revitalization. In a significant move, she announced plans to revoke the controversial Revenue Authority Act, which had established the Trinidad and Tobago Revenue Authority (TTRA) - a semi-autonomous body responsible for revenue

collection and border control.

### Energy Strategy: Looking Beyond Venezuela

In a notable policy shift, Persad-Bissessar hinted her administration will not prioritize the Dragon Gas Field project with Venezuela, especially in light of the recent revocation of U.S. sanctions waivers for Trinidad and Tobago's involvement.

Instead, she said Trinidad and Tobago will focus on partnerships with Guyana, Suriname, and potentially Grenada, where she noted offshore reserves "may exceed those of the Dragon Field."

Her newly appointed Minister of Energy and Energy

Industries, Dr. Roodal Moonilal, has been tasked with exploring new regional energy alliances. "Let us explore the offer being made by Guyana to bring gas to Trinidad and Tobago," she said. "And I intend to send my Energy Minister to Grenada because I am being told Grenada offshore has more gas and oil than the Dragon Field."

### Cabinet List:

- **Kamla Persad-Bissessar** – Prime Minister
- **John Jeremie** – Attorney General
- **Ravi Rattiram** – Minister of Agriculture, Land & Fisheries
- **Devesh Maharaj** – Minister of Justice
- **Michelle Benjamin** – Minister of Culture & Community Development
- **Wayne Sturge** – Minister of Defense
- **Dr. Michael Dowlath** – Minister of Education
- **Dr. Roodal Moonilal** – Minister of Energy and Energy Industries
- **Davendranath Tancoo** – Minister of Finance
- **Sean Sobers** – Minister of Caricom & Foreign Affairs
- **Lackram Bodoec** – Minister of Health
- **Rishard Seecharam** – Minister in the Ministry of Health
- **Roger Alexander** – Minister of Homeland Security

- **Dr. David Lee** – Minister of Housing
- **Leroy Baptiste** – Minister of Labour
- **Saddam Hosein** – Minister of Legal Affairs
- **Barry Padarath** – Minister in the Office of the Prime Minister & Public Utilities
- **Vandana Mohit** – Minister of Social Development & Family Services
- **Kennedy Swaratsingh** – Minister of Planning & Economic Affairs
- **Dominic Smith** – Minister of Public Administration & Artificial Intelligence
- **Khadijah Ameen** – Minister of Rural Development & Local Government
- **Phillip Watts** – Minister of Sport & Youth Affairs
- **Prakash Persad** – Minister of Tertiary Education
- **Eli Zakour** – Minister of Transport & Civil Aviation
- **Jerlean John** – Minister of Works & Infrastructure
- **Colin Gosine** – Minister of Trade and Investment

Persad-Bissessar ended the swearing-in ceremony with a call for accountability and teamwork. "I look forward to working with all of you," she said. "We must deliver for the people."

- *Rewritten from CMC News*





# Legal Immigrants And U.S. Citizens Face Rising Threats Under Trump-Era Immigration Policies

BY DAWN A. DAVIS

Legal immigrants, green card holders, and naturalized citizens - who remains safe from the Trump-era deportation dragnet in the United States today? That was the central question raised by American Community Media, (ACoM), during a recent national online media briefing. Featuring a panel of legal and immigration experts, the discussion examined the broad impacts of the Trump administration's aggressive new policies targeting immigrant communities.



**Zenobia Lai, Executive Director of Houston Immigration Legal Services Collaborative**

Focusing on the Campaign of Fear, Zenobia Lai, Executive Director of Houston Immigration Legal Services Collaborative, explained that Trump's immigration policy changes operate under three damning principles: 1) Let No One In, 2) Kick Everyone Out, and 3) Shut the Back Door.

Lai added that several of Trump's executive orders give weight to these tactics.

## CLOSE THE BACK DOOR

By declaring a national

emergency based on what Trump deemed a massive invasion of criminal immigrants into the country, he can now expand military and federal power as a show of force, said Lai.

The shutdown of the CBP, (Customs and Border Patrol) mobile app, the Biden administration era initiative that allowed migrants to schedule appointments at legal ports of entry, virtually denied any right to asylum for those seeking to do so through a legal route and the bid to upend birthright citizenship, the fourteenth amendment to the US constitution that guarantees citizenship to children born to parents without permanent status, is indeed his attempt to "close the back door," Lai added.

Lai also said that the use of the antiquated Alien Enemies Act gives the president the power to detain and deport any immigrant seen as an enemy of the nation. The deportation of hundreds of Venezuelan nationals to the mega terrorism prison in El Salvador is a perfect example of such powers, said Lai, while denying many due process under the law.

In fact, wrongly arrested and deported man, Kilmar Abrego Garcia, is still languishing in the infamous prison as the Trump administration, who acknowledged his arrest was an administrative error, has no plans to come to his aid despite a Supreme Court order to return him to the United States.

"No one should be subjected to this, declared Todd Schulte, president of FWD.us, an advocacy group for immigration and criminal justice reform. "We are as a



**Todd Schulte, president of FWD.us, an advocacy group for immigration and criminal justice reform.**

country, arresting people and secretly sending them away to another country where they are not from, where they are being incarcerated in one of the most abhorrent prisons in the world. There is no place for this in any sort of even failed immigration system. And we do have a failed immigration system."

Underscoring the power of the Alien Enemies Act and why it should never be used, Schulte explained that the Act gives the president wartime powers for such things like an invasion, and "we are not, in fact, at war with Venezuela."

"Migration is not an invasion," he stated. "Certainly, the act of people seeking refuge is absolutely not an invasion." Schulte added that these immigration policy changes are "actually the Project 2025 playbook," which is meant to overwhelm justice advocates. In fact, more than 100 cases have been filed, but the slow legal process and continuing onslaught of illegal actions will effectively slow things down so damage to the legal system may be inevitable, he added.

## SORDID HISTORY

Immigration lawyer David Leopold bemoaned the dark history of the Alien Enemies Act. "This act was last used during World War II. It led to the incarceration, the internment



**Immigration lawyer David Leopold**

of Japanese Americans, both of Japanese descent and citizenship, into internment camps," he said. "So it's got a long, sordid history." Leopold added that this is the first time the act has been used since WWII completely bypassing rule of law and due process.

Underscoring these observations, Martin Kim, director of Immigration Advocacy at Asian Americans Advancing Justice, warned of the creeping effects.

"We can really see day by day how the weakening of rights for immigrant communities, for disfavored communities, has led to the weakening of rights for everyone," he said. "ICE (Immigration & Customs Enforcement) officers have already erroneously detained some US citizens. That has happened before Trump, but under Trump, it's happening without shame."

Kim added that the targeting of people with green cards, those

studying on valid student visas, and the fact that community organizations are having trouble continuing to provide vital services like English language education, citizenship workshops, and legal assistance has created fear and confusion in communities.

Leopold agreed, noting that



**Martin Kim, Director of Immigration Advocacy at Asian Americans Advancing Justice**

it's quite possible that all sorts of folks who normally would not fall within the scope of immigration law or immigration enforcement are going to be targeted, are going to be at risk, even in contravention of current law or the protections of the Constitution. Speaking out publicly, he added, is the best remedy against oppression.

"I'm an immigration attorney. I'm the past president of the Immigration Lawyers Association, and we've been targeted directly in a directive," Leopold revealed. "I've never been anxious about speaking publicly. I'll admit I'm anxious now. But my father fled the Nazis as a Jew. My grandfather did not outsmart the Nazis to get to the United States so that I could cower in fear."



# Caribbean Tourism Growth Continues Despite Global Economic Challenges

The Caribbean tourism sector is on track to continue its upward trajectory in 2025, though global economic uncertainties and slower growth in key source markets could slightly temper its pace, according to the Barbados-based Caribbean Tourism Organization, (CTO).

Aliyyah Shakeer, CTO's Director of Research, reported that overnight visitor arrivals are expected to rise by two to five percent this year, reaching an estimated 35 million travelers. Meanwhile, the cruise industry outlook remains strong, with cruise arrivals projected to grow by seven percent to about 36 million visitors.

"The Caribbean's continued growth is a testament to the strength of our regional

collaboration and the enduring appeal of our destinations," said Dona Regis-Prosper, CTO Secretary-General. She emphasized the need for ongoing investment, innovative partnerships, and sustainable practices to secure the future of Caribbean tourism amid global challenges.

According to the CTO's newly released "Caribbean Tourism Performance Review 2024," international tourist arrivals to the region rose to an estimated 34.2 million last year — a 6.1 percent increase over 2023 and nearly seven percent above pre-pandemic levels, marking the second consecutive year the Caribbean outperformed its 2019 benchmark.

The Dominican Republic

maintained its position as the Caribbean's most visited destination in 2024, attracting 8.5 million tourists. Jamaica followed with 2.9 million, and Cuba welcomed 2.2 million visitors. Other strong performers included The Bahamas (1.9 million), Aruba (1.4 million), and Puerto Rico (one million). These six destinations collectively accounted for roughly 56 percent of all arrivals.

Emerging markets showed impressive growth, with Montserrat recording the highest year-over-year increase at 29.4 percent, followed by St. Vincent and the Grenadines (27.2 percent), Belize (22.8 percent), and Curaçao (20.3 percent). Compared to 2019, Curaçao saw a remarkable

51.1 percent growth, while St. Maarten and the U.S. Virgin Islands recorded gains of 48 percent and 41.8 percent, respectively.

The United States continued as the leading source market with approximately 16.8 million visitors, up 3.5 percent from 2023. Canadian arrivals reached 3.3 million, a four percent rise, though still slightly below pre-pandemic numbers. European arrivals posted a modest increase of 1.4 percent, reaching 5.3 million travelers.

Intra-Caribbean travel also expanded, with Caribbean residents making an estimated 1.6 million trips within the region, a 5.1 percent increase over 2023. However, this figure remains below pre-pandemic travel volumes.

The South American market showed the highest overall growth, driven by robust travel demand from Argentina, Brazil, and Colombia, pushing arrivals to two million - a 17.8 percent increase from the previous year.

The Caribbean cruise sector rebounded strongly in 2024, with cruise visits totaling 33.7 million, up 10.3 percent from 2023 and surpassing 2019 levels by 10.9 percent.

Additionally, the Caribbean hotel sector remained resilient, achieving an average occupancy rate of 66.6 percent and an Average Daily Rate (ADR) increase of 4.2 percent to US\$437.02.

- Rewritten from CMC





## CNN's Abby Phillip Honors Eric Williams' Legacy In Texas With Powerful Call For Truth In Journalism

To a captivated audience of over 250 both in-person and online, CNN anchor Abby Phillip, proudly of Trinidad and Tobago heritage, delivered a powerful keynote recently at the 23rd Eric E. Williams Memorial Lecture, held at The University of Texas at Austin.

In a talk titled "Journalism in Challenging Times," Phillip demonstrated the clarity, courage, and command that has made her a standout voice in U.S. media. She emphasized the urgent need for journalism that not only amplifies all voices – including those we may disagree with – but also stays rooted in facts, amidst a rising tide of misinformation on social media.

Drawing inspiration from

Dr. Eric Williams' legendary "University of Woodford Square" addresses, Phillip reflected on her own upbringing and her family's journey from Trinidad and Tobago to the U.S. "His policies around free secondary and tertiary education shaped generations – including mine," she said, noting how her parents, thanks to Williams' vision, believed in limitless possibilities.

Phillip shared the challenges of moderating polarized discussions on her show, comparing it at times to managing a classroom of unruly students. Still, she holds fast to the principle that respectful, informed dialogue is essential—even when passions run high.

"You have to be willing to listen, to check yourself, and to bring the facts," she stressed.

A lively Q&A followed, with a standout moment coming from Eric Williams' 15-year-old granddaughter, who asked how her generation could use social media for good. Phillip's advice: "Seek truth. Be politically aware. Think before you post."

The lecture marked its first year at UT Austin's John L. Warfield Center for African and



CNN anchor Abby Phillip, proudly of Trinidad and Tobago heritage, delivered a powerful keynote recently at the 23rd Eric E. Williams Memorial Lecture, held at The University of Texas at Austin.

African American Studies, after 19 years at Florida International

University. It continues to honor the enduring legacy of Dr. Eric E. Williams – Caribbean scholar, author of the revolutionary *Capitalism and Slavery*, and Trinidad and Tobago's first Prime Minister.

Notable past speakers have included scholars, heads of state, and icons like Angela Davis, Portia Simpson-Miller, and Mia Mottley. The Lecture series offers a platform for critical reflection on Caribbean and African Diaspora politics, history, and media – making Phillip's voice this year a timely and resonant one.

- NewsAmericasNow.com



## NY Man Sentenced To Life Without Parole For Brutal Murders Of Jamaican Girlfriend And Her Family

A New York man has been sentenced to life in prison without the possibility of parole for the brutal 2022 murders of his Jamaican girlfriend and two of her family members in the Jamaica section of Queens, New York.

Queens District Attorney Melinda Katz announced that 31-year-old Travis Blake was convicted last month of first-degree murder and multiple related charges in the deaths of Karlene Barnett, her son Dervon Brightly, and niece Vashawna

Malcolm. The victims were discovered with multiple stab wounds, blunt force trauma, and were in a state of decomposition in their shared home.

"Travis Blake viciously murdered his girlfriend, her son and a visiting cousin with knives,

hammers, and a screwdriver, and then fled New York to avoid capture," said DA Katz. "This defendant deserves every day of his sentence, and we stand with the victims' family as they continue to mourn this overwhelming loss."

The triple homicide shocked the community. Malcolm, 22, was a nursing student visiting from Jamaica for the summer. Brightly was Barnett's son, and all three lived with Blake in the same home on 155th Street. A fourth family member, Barnett's other son, also lived in the house and later discovered Malcolm's body after noticing a foul odor.

Emergency responders and police found Malcolm's decomposing body in an upstairs bedroom. Two more victims were found behind a locked basement door. Investigators recovered a bloodied screwdriver next to Brightly's body, with the missing bit found embedded in his neck during the autopsy. DNA evidence and fingerprints linked Blake to the crime scene, including on a blood-stained mop.

Online searches on Blake's phone revealed that he had researched which U.S. states had the death penalty shortly after the killings.

Following a three-and-a-half-week trial, a jury found

Blake guilty on April 2 of murder in the first degree, three counts of second-degree murder, and two counts of criminal possession of a weapon.

Queens Supreme Court Justice Ushir Pandit-Durant sentenced Blake to life without parole for the first-degree murder charge, 25 years to life on each second-degree murder charge –served consecutively – and 364 days for each weapon possession charge.

Blake was apprehended weeks later in Maine and extradited to Queens to face charges.

DA Katz praised the work of investigators and reaffirmed her office's commitment to justice for victims of domestic violence and community safety.

Barnett's cousin, Carl Gray, reacted on social media, posting of Facebook: "Though this sadistic killer got sentenced, he deserves the DEATH PENALTY for the brutality he inflicted on my family. I sit here with such anger that he will receive three meals a day in this prison system, walk, talk, have sight & breath after beating & stabbing three innocent human beings in their heads with a hammer, screwdriver & knife...No SAH! DEATH PENALTY & SLOW TORTURE."



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# “Heartbreaking And Inhumane” - Haitian Woman Dies In ICE Custody As 2 Congressmembers Demand Answers

BY DAVID L. SNELLING  
Copyedited By  
Felicia J. Persaud

Caribbean American Congresswoman Sheila Cherfilus-McCormick of South Florida has joined fellow Florida Representative Frederica Wilson in calling for an investigation into the death of Haitian immigrant Marie Blaise and the alleged mistreatment of undocumented immigrants at the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE)-run Broward Transitional Center in Pompano Beach, Florida.

The Congresswomen toured the facility following the death of 44-year-old Blaise on April 25. Blaise, who had complained of chest pains, reportedly became the third undocumented immigrant to die in ICE custody since January.

"The tour was heartbreaking to see how many people were pulled off the streets and brought to this facility," said Rep. Cherfilus-McCormick, the only Haitian American in Congress. "When we tried to speak to the health care facilitator, we were met with hostility and evasiveness... They refused to give us complete information." She noted with concern that there is only one doctor on staff to treat



U.S. Reps. Sheila Cherfilus-McCormick, Frederica Wilson and North Miami Councilwoman Mary Irvin. (Photo courtesy of the Office of Congresswoman Sheila Cherfilus-McCormick)

over 500 detainees. "This is not humane," she stated. "It's logical with so many people here that the facility would have more than one doctor on call."

According to Cherfilus-McCormick, Blaise had received her prescription at 8 a.m. and died just 34 minutes later. "I did not see evidence they followed procedures, or they had proper healthcare provided to them," she said, blaming the Trump administration's immigration crackdown for such tragedies.

"This administration's deportation process has been sloppy and reckless since day one and as a direct result, innocent

people are losing their lives, including Marie Blaise," she added. "Her loved ones and so many other immigrant families deserve justice now. I am calling for a full transparent investigation into Marie's death."

ICE officials have said the cause of Blaise's death remains under investigation. She had reportedly been in custody since February after attempting to board a flight to North Carolina.

Rep. Wilson, who also participated in the tour, said, "The recent death in the Broward facility is just a tragic example of what happens when we let this government go unchecked.

It doesn't have to be this way." She is pushing for Congressional oversight over all ICE detention centers nationwide.

"Congress must use its oversight power to hold this administration accountable and ensure the humane treatment of immigrant detainees," she continued. "We are an immigrant-rich nation, and we must do better."

Wilson recently visited the Krome Detention Center in Southwest Miami-Dade after protests over reports of overcrowding and poor conditions. Though she did not witness mistreatment during her visit, she noted changes had been made.

"I am positive that they took people out today, so I wouldn't see the overcrowding," Wilson remarked. "It was like somebody went in there yesterday and put on a whole new coat of fresh paint." Wilson observed that some detainees had mental and physical disabilities. "I saw some who weren't quite sure what was going on," she said.

She also revealed that Miami-Dade Mayor Daniella Levine Cava was denied access to the facility after requesting a tour through the Department of Homeland Security, (DHS).

Wilson, along with Rep. Debbie Wasserman Schultz, said they plan to introduce legislation for oversight of Krome and similar facilities.

They also criticized DHS for shutting down three oversight offices - the Citizenship and Immigration Services Ombudsman, the Immigration Detention Ombudsman, and the Office for Civil Rights and Civil Liberties—on March 21, citing budget cuts. Human rights group Americans for Immigrant Justice has also raised alarms, collecting testimony from immigrants who described daily mistreatment. The organization has since alerted the United Nations Human Rights Council.

Four women at Krome, in anonymous interviews, spoke of a lack of water, food shortages, unsanitary conditions, medical neglect, and overcrowding. Two other detainees - Genry Ruiz Guillen of Honduras and Maksym Chernyak of Ukraine - have died of natural causes in recent months.

Wilson said she will continue to request access to Krome to monitor improvements and advocate for humane treatment.



## Bronx Man Convicted In Killing Of Jamaican Artist's Daughter In Connecticut

A three-judge panel unanimously found a Bronx, NY, man guilty recently, of murder in the tragic 2023 killing of Brianna McKoy, a young mother and daughter of Jamaican reggae icon Ricky Trooper, inside her North End condominium while her one-year-old son was present.

As 43-year-old Derrick Francis was led from the third-floor courtroom of the Bridgeport Judicial District Courthouse following the verdict, McKoy's mother shouted "Murderer!" expressing the profound pain of the loss.

Throughout the trial, Francis remained largely emotionless, seated beside his attorney as Judge Earl Richards, along with Judges Eliot Prescott and Peter McShane, announced their verdict after reviewing testimony from 17 witnesses and 78 exhibits over four days.

Francis, who had sought a lesser conviction of manslaughter based on extreme emotional disturbance, now faces 25 to 60 years in prison at his sentencing scheduled for June 5. The judges found the defense had fallen "far short" of meeting the burden of proof, with Judge Richards stating that the testimony of Yale psychologist

Dr. Andrew Meisler, who supported Francis' claim, was not persuasive due to its heavy reliance on Francis' own accounts and the lack of review of investigative interviews.

Richards further noted that while Francis may have experienced anger, frustration, and distress, these emotions were not deemed "extreme or unusual" under the law.

Defense attorney Gerald Klein declined to comment after the verdict. During closing arguments, Klein had argued that Francis had reached "a breaking point" in his relationship with McKoy and described the incident as "a crime of passion." However, State's Attorney Joseph Corradino countered that the evidence showed a man focused on possession and control, citing Francis' shifting accounts to investigators.

Corradino, who prosecuted the case alongside Inspector Edward Zack and Paralegal Christina Bennet, commended the efforts of law enforcement in both Bridgeport and Ohio. "Through their dedication, we were able to achieve justice for the victim's family," Corradino said.

Following the killing,

Francis fled to Ohio where he was apprehended by the U.S. Marshals Violent Fugitive Task Force and extradited back to Connecticut. Authorities recovered the firearm used in the crime from a vehicle Francis had abandoned during a pursuit.

According to the arrest affidavit, police responded to a call on April 6, 2023, at the Coachlight Square condominium complex. Upon arrival, they discovered McKoy deceased in her bedroom. A neighbor testified to hearing a heated argument between McKoy and Francis, followed by McKoy's desperate cries for help and a gunshot. Afterward, the witness encountered Francis leaving the apartment and pleaded with him to stop the violence, to which Francis reportedly apologized before fleeing.

Inside the apartment, McKoy's body was found on her bed, with the couple's young son unharmed in a nearby playpen.

The conviction brings a measure of justice for the family and highlights the resilience of a community that continues to stand against domestic violence.

- Rewritten from CTPost.com



## Florida Tightens Rules For Non-Immigrant Driver Licenses And ID Card

ariel Fernandez, Miami-Dade County Tax Collector, is urging non-immigrant residents to take note of a significant update issued by the Florida Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles, (FLHSMV) regarding the issuance and renewal of Florida driver licenses and identification cards.

Effective immediately, all licenses and ID cards issued to non-immigrant individuals - those legally residing in Florida but who are not U.S. citizens or permanent residents - will now align strictly with the expiration date listed on their U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) documentation. If no expiration date is included in the applicant's immigration documents, the driver's license or ID will be limited to a maximum of one year from the date of issuance.

The change is based on Florida Statutes 322.051 and 322.18 and applies to all non-immigrant applicants across the state.

**Key Points of the Advisory:**

- Applies to non-immigrant applicants for Florida driver

licenses and ID cards.

- The validity of the credential will match the expiration on USCIS documents, or be limited to one year if no expiration is noted.
- Policy is in effect immediately.

The Miami-Dade County Tax Collector's Office emphasized that while it is not the policy's issuing authority, it is committed to informing and assisting residents who may be impacted.

"Our office is here to help ensure Miami-Dade residents are prepared and informed," said officials from the Office of Tax Collector Fernandez. "We understand that immigration status can be complex, and we're committed to providing guidance and assistance to those navigating these changes."

Non-immigrant residents are encouraged to review their USCIS documentation and prepare accordingly for any renewal or new issuance of their Florida license or ID.

For help with appointments or more information, residents can visit [mdctaxcollector.gov](http://mdctaxcollector.gov).





## FEATURE



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# Richest Caribbean Woman Entrepreneur Inducted Into UConn Business Hall Of Fame

BY DAVID L. SNELLING

The University of Connecticut has five new 2025 inductees into its Business Hall of Fame and among the honorees is the richest woman from the Caribbean.

Dr. Trish Bailey, a self-made billionaire, made history last month as the first Jamaican-born and first woman of color to be inducted into the UConn Business Hall of Fame. The UConn Business Hall of Fame recognizes alumni who exemplify exceptional business leadership, innovation, and service.

According to her professional profile, Bailey is an entrepreneur in the real estate industry and philanthropist. She experienced poverty while growing up in Jamaica and endured sexual abuse as a youth. Bailey was a domestic violence victim as an adult. She and her family migrated to the United

States to seek her opportunity to make a better living for herself.

And what a journey. Today, she's a billionaire.

Bailey's family moved to Hartford, Connecticut, where she attended Weaver High School and was a track and field star in the 800-meter race. She earned a degree in liberal arts and science from UConn and an MBA and Ph.D in organizational leadership from the University of Phoenix.

Bailey commenced her career in the financing industry, first working for First Union National Bank in Connecticut and later became a financial advisor and working on Wall Street in New York. She also ventured into the real estate industry, investing in land in the U.S. and Caribbean island nations.

Bailey is also founder and CEO of Bailey's Pharmacy and Medical Equipment and Supplies, a company built on a



The School of Business inducted five outstanding business leaders into its 'Hall of Fame' on Friday. Seated from left: Laurie Havanec '82, '94 JD and Trisha Bailey, Ph.D. '99, '23 H. Standing (from left): Interim Dean Greg Reilly; Gregory Lewis '91; UConn President Radenka Maric; Robert Skinner '93 and John Hodson '85. (Photo courtesy of Thomas Hurlbut for the University of Connecticut)

culture of exceptional service.

She oversees her flagship company, as well as other successful enterprises, employing more than 500 people and generating revenue in the hundreds of millions annually.

In 2005, she founded her own Medical Recruiting Company called Association Medical Recruiters, and donated funds to fund research and treatments against blood cancer at The Leukemia and Lymphoma

Society.

But Bailey didn't forget about her Caribbean roots. She started financial aid and scholarships programs for over 270 Caribbean students to attend college through her Bailey-Archie's Charitable Foundation. Bailey made the largest athletic donation in the history of University of Connecticut to renovate and expand the Hugh S. Greer Field House.

During her Hall of Fame induction ceremony, Bailey said she hopes that her success inspires many other girls and women. "Make sure your excellence is so profound it cannot be denied," she said during her acceptance speech. "I want young girls across the globe to see that this honor is for you. Keep striving. Don't count yourself out. You are amazing!"

Her best-selling memoir, *'Unbroken: The Triumphant Story Of A Woman's Journey,'* continues to inspire thousands of readers with its raw and honest portrayal of overcoming trauma, institutional bias, and financial struggle.



## Meet The First Black/Caribbean And Youngest Mount Carmel Guild Executive Director

BY DAVID L. SNELLING

In just two years since joining one of the oldest and largest non-profit food pantries in the United States, Jamaican-born Daren Miller has already made history twice.

Miller, 33, is the youngest executive director for New Jersey-based Mount Carmel Guild and the first Black/Caribbean to hold the position in the organization's 104-year history.

When Miller migrated from Jamaica in 2023 to be closer to his father and siblings, he was seeking a job that reflected his affinity for helping people less unfortunate which was deeply rooted in his Caribbean upbringing.

Mount Carmel Guild was the perfect fit.

Miller, who previously was a communications director in Jamaica and held an executive position at a cargo and freight company, started out as a public relations and social media manager with Mount Carmel Guild and then quickly moved up to assistant executive director.

Now, he's in charge. "I was humbled and at the same time excited," Miller told the Caribbean Today. "I was thrilled at the prospect and the reality of what Guild had to offer."

Miller oversees the organization's food pantry which focuses on addressing food insecurity in underserved areas spanning three counties in New Jersey.

He said Mount Carmel Guild helps roughly 70,000 individuals living at or under the poverty threshold. Miller

also supervises the organization's Home Health Nursing program which provides stay-at-home medical support services for senior citizens.

Nurses visit their homes to monitor their blood pressure and make sure they are taking their medication. Miller said the program was created for the most vulnerable population who decline to visit their doctors or go to a medical facility.

"Currently, we have 15 patients and we are trying to increase the number," he said. "But the challenge is some seniors are reluctant to have nurses in their homes because they like to be independent. We are struggling to convince them they need this kind of medical support."

Miller said he's planning to attenuate the plight of food insecurity among the underserved population by addressing the root of the problem. He said the organization is focusing on workforce development and other economic opportunities so the poor can depend less on food banks and pantries.

Miller said the group is also a job and education referral service to help people become independent by building bridges toward new careers.

"We're more than a food pantry, we offer these opportunities for people to help people deal with everyday



Jamaican-born Daren Miller is the youngest executive director for New Jersey-based Mount Carmel Guild and the first Black/Caribbean to hold the position in the organization's 104-year history. (Photo courtesy of Daren Miller.)

challenges," Miller said. "We help them to be professionally grounded."

Supporting the poverty-stricken population is deeply rooted in Miller's pedigree. Originally from Linstead, St. Catherine in Jamaica, his mother taught him important values while growing up including volunteering for charity work and uplifting people.

His family's older generations passed down humanitarianism to them despite living in poverty themselves. Miller said he was mostly raised by a single mother after his father migrated to the U.S. when he was kid.

"She raised us on her own integrity and taught us at an early age to be ambitious," Miller said. "She helped us recognize we are not alone and the work we did had an impact on others."

Charity work helped prepare Miller for leadership roles. While his friends were involved

in extracurricular activities or watching cartoons after school, Miller took on leadership roles in the classroom and community.

He was the class president and after school, he worked on a farm picking and washing oranges to prepare them to be moved to a local factory. Miller said the extra income in the household helped his family.

"My mother worked hard but it was still not enough to take care of us," Miller said. "I was able to assist her. That's when I had to grow up fast. I know about poverty and my mother and mentor helped me overcome that. That's why I'm passionate about working with organizations that take care of the poor."

As the new executive director for Mount Carmel Guild, Miller said the organization is facing a challenge to address food insecurity.

He said federal grants have been cut off and if the trends continue, the program is in peril. "We would have a serious situation and we may have crime," he said. "When people in need lack resources, people are creative in unfavorable ways."

Miller said he has political aspirations which he hopes to address food insecurity on a bigger platform. He said many Caribbean nationals are in Congress and he hopes to gain a foothold in government.

"From a policy standpoint, I know I can have a greater impact on food insecurity and poverty," he added.



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# The Horror Of Trump's First 100 Days: A Democracy On Trial

There are chapters in a nation's history so jarring, so steeped in injustice, that they leave an indelible mark on its collective conscience. The first 100 days of Donald Trump's presidency stand as one of those haunting chapters - a period when the core values of American democracy were pushed to the brink by a government that cast aside the very Constitution it swore to defend.

Human Rights Watch didn't mince words - it labeled Trump's first 100 days "an assault on the rights of many Americans." But let's call it what it truly is: a nightmare unfolding in real time. A horror show, where due process is discarded, and the lives of immigrants - especially Black and Brown ones - are sacrificed on the altar of political spectacle. Fear now walks freely across the land, as it does in regimes where power is unchecked, and human dignity is expendable.

This isn't governance. This is targeted persecution.

From day one, the Trump administration has trampled over the legal protections meant to shield asylum seekers, naturalized citizens, and permanent residents. Court orders are treated as mere suggestions, not binding rulings. In one of the most egregious examples, Kilmar Abrego Garcia - a Salvadoran man fleeing danger - was deported in direct defiance of a federal court's order. The cruelty didn't stop there. His family, including young children, was forced into hiding after the government deliberately exposed their home address online. This isn't bureaucratic failure. This is calculated cruelty, weaponized against the vulnerable.

And it didn't end with Abrego Garcia.

Immigrants have been forcibly deported to El Salvador under conditions so secretive and severe, they amount to enforced disappearances. Asylum seekers from diverse nations are being expelled to Panama and Costa Rica, in blatant violation of international

law. These are not one-off mistakes - they are part of a calculated and coordinated purge, aimed squarely at the communities that have long enriched and sustained the soul of American society.

And disturbingly, not even U.S. citizens are beyond the reach of this escalating injustice.

Juan Carlos Lopez-Gomez, a dual citizen, was detained by ICE for nearly two days in Florida during a routine traffic stop - simply because he looked undocumented. His Social Security card was brushed aside. His citizenship, dismissed. His trauma? Real and lasting.

Then there is 19-year-old Jose Hermosillo, arrested and detained for nearly 10 days in Tucson, Arizona - because he allegedly said he was Mexican. Authorities either ignored or didn't care that he was a U.S. citizen with a learning disability. He said he told them the truth. No one listened.

And let us not forget those detained for speaking out.

Palestinian student and green-card holder Mohsen Mahdawi, a peaceful protester at Columbia University, was apprehended by ICE in Vermont during a naturalization interview. His only "crime"? Standing for Palestine.

Mahmoud Khalil, another green card holder, has been detained since early March for the same reason - protesting against the horrific war in Gaza that last left over 50,000 dead and many now starving. A judge ruled that his deportation was reasonable because it could impact U.S. foreign policy. Let that sink in: a protest, an exercise of free speech, became grounds for exile. This is not democracy. This is autocracy, dressed in red, white, and blue.

The tragedy deepens with the



**FELICIA J. PERSAUD**

stories of legal permanent residents like Fabian Schmidt, detained at Boston Logan Airport, and Lewelyn Dixon, an elderly Filipino green card holder, arrested in Washington state. Six Bhutanese men living peacefully in Pennsylvania, all green card holders, were taken by ICE without explanation. No reason. No warning. No justice.

Illinois Governor J.B. Pritzker put it plainly:

"The United States Constitution guarantees due process. We are witnessing Donald

Trump erode our fundamental Constitutional rights in real time."

I echo that sentiment. As an immigrant, a journalist, and a woman of color, I watched with heartbreak and fury as Trump's America targeted the vulnerable, silenced dissent, and turned a blind eye to the humanity of those who look like me.

We must never forget what happened during these 100 days. We must continue to speak out, to organize, and to protect our communities from the return of

such horror.

For in the words of Elie Wiesel, "The opposite of love is not hate, it's indifference." And we cannot afford to be indifferent.

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** Felicia J. Persaud is the publisher of *NewsAmericasNow.com*, a daily news outlet focused on positive news about Black immigrant communities from the Caribbean and Latin America.



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## Female Father Figure

Everyone talks about daddy's girl and women with daddy issues, but rarely do we hear of the impact that absent fathers have on daughters.

A research paper showed that girls who grew up without fathers, experienced puberty earlier than girls who did, and actually had earlier menstrual cycles.

According to research, "girls who grow up without a father in the household tend to hit puberty earlier than girls with a present father, with studies showing a link between father absence and earlier onset of puberty, particularly in breast development and pubic hair



**TONY ROBINSON**

growth."

But there's much more than those factors that men should take heed of. In fact, the research outlines a list of dangerous characteristics of women without a father figure. That lack of paternal stability can be most damaging.

It begins by stating, "A woman who grew up with a father figure or a strong father figure often carries unresolved issues that can make her difficult, unstable and dangerous to deal with in a relationship."

In the very same way that boys need that authority of a father to stabilize and shape their lives, so does a girl. The difference is though, a woman who didn't grow up with that father figure, may grow up having no respect for authority from any man.

She had no guiding force

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 10)



# The Caribbean Is Waking Up: Why People Are Voting For Change

BY DR. ISAAC NEWTON

Something powerful is happening across the Caribbean. From Montserrat to Anguilla and now in Trinidad and Tobago, people are making their voices heard. In election after election, seemingly strong and steady governments are being voted out, and opposition parties are taking their place with convincing strength. In Trinidad and Tobago Monday, Kamla Persad Bissessar, of the United National Congress, (UNC) coalition, was returned to power. What's behind these big political shifts? And could places like Jamaica, Guyana, St. Vincent, and even St. Kitts and Nevis be next?

At first glance, it might seem like voters are simply frustrated with rising prices, unemployment, or slow public services. And yes, economic pain plays a big part. Many people feel like their lives aren't improving, even though leaders continue to promise progress. But something deeper is unfolding. Voters are tired and they are demanding more. They want action, fairness, and leaders who actually listen.

To paraphrase the famous words of former U.S. President Bill Clinton: it isn't just the economy, stupid. A new generation is stepping up. Young people who use social media to speak out, who aren't afraid to challenge authority, and who no longer blindly follow old political loyalties are becoming more enraged and engaged. They want honesty. They want bold ideas. And they want leaders who understand the pressure young families, students, and workers face every day. Tribal political devotion is dying under



The UNC in Trinidad & Tobago was returned to power. (CMC image)

the surgical blade of a rising call for transformation. Change is being embraced as meaningful exchange rooted in fairness and vision.

When the ruling PNM party in Trinidad and Tobago lost the 2025 election, it sent a penetrating message with serious political consequences. The message was clear: doing the same old things in the same old way no longer works. Citizens and residents now expect their leaders to maintain stability and also to deliver real improvements in education, jobs, technology, energy, housing, healthcare, and public safety. They expect real results attached to promises and polished speeches.

So, what does this mean for countries like Jamaica, Guyana, St. Vincent, and St. Kitts and Nevis, where elections are on the horizon? It means the pressure is mounting. Politicians can no longer assume they'll win just because they've been in power for a long time or because voters gave them a clear mandate in the

last election. People want honest, humble, teachable, attentive, and accessible leadership. If they don't see it, they'll vote for someone else who promises to do better. And if that person fails, they'll vote them out just the same.

This wave of change might also shake up the Caribbean as a region. If more opposition parties take power, they could bring fresh ideas to the CARICOM table. Cutting edge ideas that

might reshape how countries cooperate on trade, climate policy, and global partnerships. But this could also bring new challenges. Will these leaders work together? Will they share a vision for the region's future prosperity? Or will competing priorities tear regional unity apart?

On the world stage, the Caribbean's new leaders may also demand more respect. They could negotiate more forcefully with powerful countries or seek innovative partnerships with nations in Africa, Asia, or Latin America. This could mark a new chapter that will require wisdom, humility, and collective effort. Still, the biggest question remains: Is this just a passing moment of frustration, or are we witnessing the beginning of a new kind of Caribbean politics? One where citizens hold leaders accountable both during campaigns, and every single day until the next national elections?

The truth is Caribbean voters are raising the bar. They are choosing results over party colours, action over promises, and truth over tradition. Now that the bar has been raised,

those in power, and those who seek it, must rise to meet it.

Right before our eyes, we are witnessing political expressions wrapped in national pride, development purpose, and the power of people who know they deserve better. It's a reminder that democracy is alive. It's a bold statement that even the smallest vote can spark the biggest change.

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** Dr. Isaac Newton is a Caribbean-born political advisor, global speaker, and leadership consultant. With more than 30 years of experience guiding leaders across the region, he has a deep understanding of how good governance works—and how bold, innovative, and ethical leadership should serve the people. Trained at Harvard, Princeton, and Columbia, Dr. Newton is passionate about empowering young people to recognize their influence and seize their role in shaping the future of the Caribbean, Latin America, and Africa.

- NewsAmericasNow.com



## Female Father Figure

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 9)

in her life, no man to show or influence her in a positive way, so when a man eventually comes into her sphere to start a relationship, he's met with resentment, hostility or lack of respect from her. "Who do you think you are, telling me what to do?"

Without a stable father figure, she often lacks emotional stability. We've often seen women with dramatic mood swings, erratic and unstable behavior.

Another drawback from having no father figure is a strong need for validation. Because she grew up without masculine love and approval, she constantly seeks validation from men, making her clingy, insecure and always seeking attention. Men always have to tell her how great she looks, how beautiful she is, how smart she is, how fantastic her clothes are, as that is the fuel that feeds her aura. "Mirror mirror on the wall, who is the fairest of them all?"

That also comes with deep seated trust issues, as she may have difficulty trusting men. After all, her father wasn't there from the beginning, or abandoned her when she was young, so in her mind, that's how all men are. "You men are all the same, my father left me and my mother, and you'll do the same to me."

Many of those women who grew up without fathers are fiercely independent, priding themselves on doing everything on their own, and in effect having no need of men. "I grew up with no man in my life from I



was little, so I can continue that trend."

You may have heard the term, "women love bad men." Many women without father figures gravitate towards toxic, unreliable and abusive men and avoid stable, good men, just because they love the drama.

The influence of a father on the life of a young girl can also be priceless, that strong masculine figure and influence plays such an important part in her life.

Many women tend to marry men who are like their fathers. At weddings, it's the father who gives away the bride, but there is also a danger of women substituting their fathers with their husbands. In effect, she marries a man but also sees him as the father that she never had.

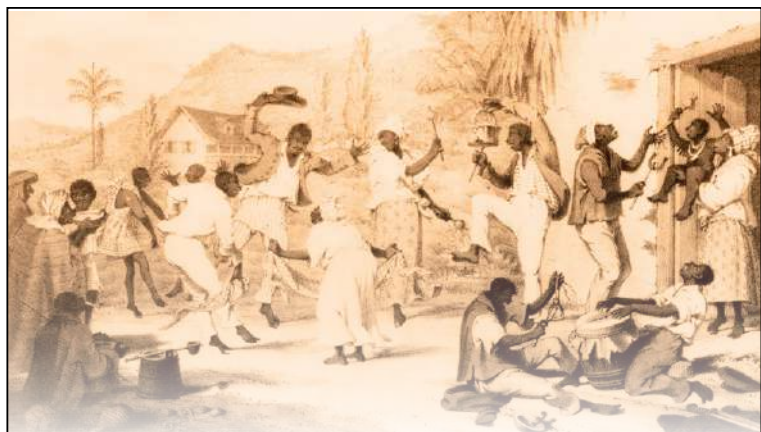
That not only emotionally stresses her but puts undue

challenges on the husband, who has to fill the roles of not only spouse but a father as well. He cannot be both.

It's difficult for some men to understand all the challenges, and often impossible to tolerate. But in many cases, it stems from a deep-rooted factor, that of females who had no fathers.

At no point in their lives were they ever referred to as daddy's little girl, or had someone to love, admire and respect and say: "That's my father, my hero."

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** Tony Robinson is an independent contributor to Caribbean Today and the views expressed here are his own. He can be reached at seido1yard@gmail.com for feedback.



## Caribbean History Month

June is Caribbean History Month, and this year we once again come together for this very special edition. Join Caribbean Today as we celebrate the fantastic strides that we have made and continue to make, as we pay tribute and salute the giants of Caribbean History. This is your chance to not just be a part of a most widely celebrated feature in Caribbean Today, but to be a part of a feature that will have its own special mark in Caribbean History.

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# Caribbean American Actress CCH Pounder Lends Expertise To Barbados Film Forum

BY DAWN A. DAVIS

Bringing together established and up-and-coming filmmakers, producers, directors, actors, writers, and other industry creatives, this year's 2nd annual Cross Continental Forum will take place on the island of Barbados from June 14-18th, under the theme "Decolonizing Co- Production."

With the aim to stimulate co-production between Black and global majority producers from Canada, the Caribbean, and Africa, the Forum has attracted the participation of some of the biggest names in the field, among them award-winning American filmmaker, screenwriter, and producer Ava DuVernay; Trinidad & Tobago-born acclaimed actress Lorraine Toussaint; much touted Jamaican writer Marlon James; and Guyanese-born celebrated actress, CCH (Carol Christine Hilaria) Pounder, who returns for the second year.

The five-day event is spearheaded by CaribbeanTales Media Group (CTMG), with support from the Canada Media Fund, Invest Barbados, the British Film Institute, The University of the West Indies Cave Hill, and the National Cultural Foundation of Barbados. Canadian-based CTMG, founded by Trinidad & Tobago-roots, Frances-Anne Solomon, has been creating and championing Caribbean-focused film projects for more than 20 years, creating an awareness of the diverse cultural talent in Canada and highlighting the best of Caribbean creatives like

## THE BIG PITCH

Known for her roles in the Hollywood film 'Avatar: The Way of Water,' the television series; 'NCIS: New Orleans,' FX series 'The Shield,' Hulu's 'Black Cake,' and too many more to mention, Pounder leads the Forum's Steering Committee as they seek to bring invaluable industry experience and insights to build global partnerships.

Caribbean Today recently caught up with Pounder for a chat about her role in the Cross Continental Forum, the industry in general, and her pursuits.

On the importance of the Forum, the actress said: "I think the big focus is the expanding of Caribbean-themed films. I think that our stories have not really been heard. And we want to be able to find our stories in every category, besides what I call disaster tourism."

"We need stories that highlight the real lives of a people without romanticising it for mass audiences," Pounder explained. "One of the things that I'm part of is something called the 'Big Pitch.' There will be participants from all over the world with a Caribbean connection story who will pitch in front of producers, and they will decide not whether their films would be made, but

whether their pitch is strong enough to go ahead into the arena."

Underscoring the seriousness of the event, the actress pointed out that the fact that there is collaboration between Black and global majority producers from Canada, the Caribbean, the UK, Europe, and Africa, means that the reach is wide and significant. She is particularly pleased by the many noted participants.

"Our coup last year was Paul Ganes. This year it's Ava DuVernay, and that really will change the whole prescription of what we're putting together," said Pounder. "I think folks will understand the seriousness of what this group is trying to do, and that's why I'm with them for the second year."

## ALLIANCES

Ganes and DuVernay have worked on several successful film projects together. Ganes, an American film and television producer, is best known for his work on 'Selma,' a 2014 feature film directed by DuVernay, that was nominated for a Best Picture Oscar. They also joined forces on DuVernay's 2023 feature film, 'Origin.'

Pounder is encouraged, noting that these kinds of collaborations are what's needed to bring more diversity into an industry that has not been traditionally open. And indeed, the fast-changing political and economic shifts, especially in the United States, makes alliances even more urgent. But how will the film industry be affected?

"It's all a mystery right now," she said. "We don't know what these interests, taxes, and tariffs will bring? Lord knows how swift the axe will come down, how long it will take?"

Beyond that, Pounder is more focused on making the industry more accessible to Black, Caribbean, and African voices. Passing on lessons, mentoring, and sharing her own experiences is also her way of creating those pathways.

As a young actress Pounder started in theatre and loved it. That's where she saw herself; she was not interested in being in films. Then she was asked to read for a part playing a Caribbean woman in Bob Fosse's 'All That Jazz.' She got the part, which Fosse had to persuade her to take. And this was the start of her career in the film industry, that came with challenges and prejudices she had to leap over.

A character actor who easily slides from one role to another, Pounder said she makes sure casting agents don't get lazy based on what they think she can



Actress CCH Pounder and Producer Paul Ganes at the 2024 Cross Continental Forum. (CaribbeanTales image)

and cannot do.

"You go from one snivelling character to the other, then you put your foot down and say, 'I don't want to do that, I want to play women of authority, women who have a sense of themselves, I want to exercise my comic bone,' she revealed. "And then finally they break down... That's what

## Vybz Kartel For South Florida, Sumfest Performance

BY HOWARD CAMPBELL

Copiedited By  
Felicia J. Persaud

Dancehall's undisputed king, Vybz Kartel, is officially set to perform in South Florida this month and headline Reggae Sumfest 2025 in July, marking one of the most anticipated performances in the history of the iconic Jamaican festival. Vybz Kartel mania is coming to South Florida! The flamboyant Jamaican artist, fresh from sold-out shows in New York, and the United States Virgin Islands, is scheduled to perform at Amerant Bank Arena on May 17th.

Located in the city of Sunrise, the venue is home to National Hockey League team, the Florida Panthers. It has a 20,000-seat capacity which Kartel fans believe will be easily filled.

His show takes place nine days before 'Best Of The Best' at Bayfront Park in downtown Miami. That event has a star-studded lineup led by Beres Hammond and Buju Banton, fan favorites in South Florida.

David Muir, who has covered the region's music scene for over 25 years, believes both shows will attract strong turnouts. "From my experience, it's not going to affect either. People these days have this desire to say they were there," he said.

Kartel goes into his Sunrise gig on a high. On April 11-12, he did sold-out shows at Barclays Center in Brooklyn, New York with guest appearances by Busta Rhymes, Shenseea and Spice.

Muir points to Kartel's troubled past as his drawing card. Like Buju Banton, he spent many years in prison, and his already substantial fan base has grown even more since his release last July.

"Anyone who wants to be a part of that show, it's because of his history. What that

we have to work to change."

At the same time, it's an entertainment industry, Pounder added. Every actor does not have to have an activist mantle on them. The actor, for the most part, is an artist.

## BEYOND HOLLYWOOD

Indeed, Pounder's artistic leaning goes beyond Hollywood. A serious art collector of contemporary African, American, and Caribbean art, the actress and her late husband, Boubacar Koné, amassed a massive collection. And in 1992 they founded and built the Musée Boribana, the first privately owned contemporary museum in Dakar Senegal, which they gifted to that nation in 2014. Her personal collection continues to grow reaching more than 500 pieces, many of which have been exhibited in museums and galleries throughout the United States and the United Kingdom.

"It's fulfilling because while I'm alive I get the opportunity to visit the museums, sit in the corner and watch the reaction of people, particularly people of color seeing images, not necessarily for the first time, but in a grouping that make them say wow," she said. "That's something."

So, what's CCH Pounder's next artistic endeavour?

The actress recently joined the Apple TV+ 10-episode series 'Cape Fear,' whose list of executive producers includes Martin Scorsese and Steven Spielberg, two of the most influential directors in the film industry.

Proudly Black, proudly Caribbean, proudly a creative force, CCH Pounder definitely commands the respect she's earned!



Vybz Kartel will play Amerant Bank Arena on May 17th.

man has been able to achieve without touring is remarkable... remember, two of his best-selling albums were done from behind bars," said Muir.

The self-proclaimed Worl Boss was released from the General Penitentiary nine months ago, after serving 13 years for murder. Citing jury misconduct, his conviction was overturned in March by the Privy Council in the United Kingdom. He was released from prison when the Jamaican Court of Appeal ruled against a retrial.

On December 31, Kartel's Freedom Street concert at the National Stadium in Kingston attracted an estimated 35,000 fans. Party With Me, his 2024 album, was nominated for Best Reggae Album at this year's Grammy Awards in Los Angeles which he attended.

Muir says he is likely to attend Best Of The Best because of Beres Hammond. He is not sold on Kartel.

"I'm not a Kartel fan, maybe it would be different if I was 15 years younger. But I do appreciate how much people love his music," he said.

The Florida stop is part

of Kartel's global Freedom Street tour, which kicked off with a sold-out homecoming show in Kingston, Jamaica, and includes appearances at the 2025 Grammy Awards, the MOBO Awards in the UK - where Kartel received the Impact Award - and upcoming performances at Germany's SummerJam Festival, (July 4-6), London's Wireless Festival, (July 13), alongside Drake, Burna Boy, and

Summer Walker.

He will then take over the 34th staging of Reggae Sumfest on Friday, July 18th. Kartel's one-hour performance promises to be a spectacle of lyrical power, showmanship, and surprise appearances - mirroring his jaw-dropping Barclays show where he brought multiple celebrity guests to the stage.

Joining Kartel on Festival Night 1 are several of dancehall's hottest names: Masicka, Tommy Lee Sparta, Skeng, Govana, Jamal, D'Yani, Laden, Shaneil Muir, and Jah Fabio - each bringing their own fire to the stage.

Now in its third decade, Reggae Sumfest continues to be the largest music festival in the Caribbean, known for spotlighting the biggest stars in reggae and dancehall while capturing the global heartbeat of Jamaican music culture. With early ticket tiers already gone and anticipation soaring, fans worldwide are gearing up for what could be Kartel's most legendary performance yet.





## ARTS &amp; ENTERTAINMENT



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## On the B Side Turns Twenty-Four

BY DAWN A. DAVIS

Catching up with Ingrid Bazin, aka Ingrid B, isn't easy. This busy 'Socialite' is the creative owner of the brand 'On The B Side,' bringing poetry, music, art, and 'nuff' more culture to South Florida since 2001.

Born in Jamaica and raised in Barbados, this Caribbean woman brings her passion for the urban arts to life through her curated events. When we finally connected, I asked her about the journey so far.

"Honestly, the journey has been equal parts grace and grind. I didn't plan to start it, and (I) definitely didn't expect it to last 24 years," said a passionate Ingrid Bazin, known simply as Ingrid B. "Since then, it's been a beautiful blur of open mics, standing ovations, last-minute cancellations, and unforgettable nights. But above all, it's proof that when you build community with intention, it lasts." In celebration and to give thanks to her audiences, 'On The B Side,' held a month-long series of poetry, music, arts events this past April, (National Poetry Month), throughout Miami, each with a different theme, energy, and vibe with new voices and old faces.

## FULLY-FLEDGED MOVEMENT

Bazin told Caribbean Today that the events venture started as a favor for a friend, then another, and another. She was natural and so in her element that 'The B Side' was born - growing from a vibe into a fully-fledged



Born in Jamaica and raised in Barbados, Ingrid Bazin, aka Ingrid B, is the creative owner of the brand 'On The B Side,' bringing her passion for the urban arts to life through her curated events. (Photo courtesy of Ingrid B)

movement.

Now celebrating its 24th year, the cultural curator explained that the South Florida scene is still strong, its diverse audiences growing with The B Side. "People who came to my shows as college students now return as parents," she said. "And those who were parents back then, they're pulling up with their grown kids now..." We get everybody, and that's the beauty of it. Aunties and Gen Z, Lawyers and Lyft drivers, PhDs and poets-in-progress. We've got melanin in every shade, but we're open to all. It's not about background - it's about soul. People come for the experience, for that 'I needed this' moment. And they leave full."

Being a Caribbean woman means that feisty spirit lives in you. And it is evident in Bazin who is proud of her heritage and freely taps into it for inspiration. "And don't forget - I'm half

Haitian too! All those roots show up in how I move," she proudly declared. "My upbringing didn't teach me much on purpose, but somehow, I learned how to host with heart, build community, and blend culture and conversation with ease. How I curate, how I connect, how I champion others - that's all my heritage showing up in real time."

## POWERED BY THE PEOPLE

The fact that spoken word has taken its legitimate place within the arts is indeed gratifying to Bazin, who noted it most poetically: "It's been powered by the people. Social media gave poets their own platforms - we stopped waiting for institutions to validate us. Now, we are the institutions. Add to that TV shows, ad campaigns, poets stepping into film and theater as writers and actors. Spoken words just hit differently. It's church, therapy, protest,

and party rolled into one. And with the Grammys recognizing it, the craft is finally getting its flowers."

But how does one choose the right spoken word artiste for an event? What's the criteria? "You've got to move me," said Bazin. "I don't care if you're a household name or fresh off your first journal entry - if your words touch people, your presence is real, and you honor the art and the audience, then you're 'B Side' material. I want range, joy, rage, softness, truth."

For Ingrid B, poetry is not just about art, it's also about being the voice of people, a community, a shared commitment to bring positive change.

"Poetry is protest. It's also healing. It's education," she

added. "I use the mic to shine a light - on voting rights, mental health, Black maternal health, domestic violence, and more... Silence isn't neutral. And if you've got a mic, you've got a responsibility."

This creative curator is using the poetic arts to build up and support her community. Now it's time to spread her wings and reach beyond, but with intention. "I'm focused on intentional expansion," said Ingrid B. "I'm not trying to franchise the vibe; I'm trying to extend the experience. I am willing to go where people want me, Atlanta, Philly, New York, back in the Caribbean. If the people are ready, I'm pulling up with a mic and a mission."



## Reggae Legend Max Romeo, Voice of Jamaica's 1970s Youth, Dies at 80

BY HOWARD CAMPBELL

For the generation of Jamaicans who came of age during the early 1970s, Max Romeo's hard-hitting songs helped frame their social awareness. The roots singer, who died on April 11 in St. Catherine parish at age 80, helped bring the socialist Michael Manley to power in the country's 1972 general election.

Romeo reportedly died in hospital from a heart-related illness. He was scheduled to tour Europe this summer with fellow roots-reggae act The Congos.

Among the many tributes to Romeo came from the People's National Party (PNP), which the flamboyant Manley led for many years. Deborah Hickling Gordon, a spokesperson for the PNP, noted that Romeo's influence transcended music.

"His contribution to nation building, culture, and consciousness will never be forgotten. His musical artistry will be remembered globally, but here at home, we will also remember the courage it took to lend his voice to the people's cause," she said.

'Let The Power Fall On I,' one of the songs that announced Romeo as a Rastafarian messenger, was the theme song for the PNP Bandwagon of 1971. Artists including The Wailers, Ken Boothe and Inner Circle campaigned island-wide with Manley who was elected prime minister in February 1972.

Born Maxwell Smith, Romeo was from St. Ann parish where Bob Marley and Burning Spear were also born. He first gained prominence in 1968 with 'Wet Dream,' a risqué song that was banned by the British

Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) but still reached the Top 20 of the British national chart.

His songs took on a more militant tone in the early 1970s as



Max Romeo and his wife at his 80th birthday with an all-white party in St. Mary parish, eastern Jamaica.

many Jamaican youth embraced black consciousness. He linked with Bunny Lee, who produced 'Let The Power Fall On I' and 'Macabee Version,' two of his biggest hits.

Romeo also formed a strong creative bond with the eccentric Lee "Scratch" Perry, who produced three of his seminal songs — 'War Ina Babylon,' 'One Step Forward,' and 'Chase The Devil,' which earned him a loyal following in Europe.

Last November, Max Romeo celebrated his 80th birthday with an all-white party in St. Mary parish, eastern Jamaica. He was looking forward to his next tour of Europe.

"Sometimes I don't really feel I'm that old, because my body don't tell mi dat. Mi still performing, mi do a series of shows last year, about 57 shows back-to-back, non-stop," he said, two days before that event.

In 2008, he was honored with the Order of Distinction, Jamaica's sixth-highest honor. Last February, he was inducted into the Reggae Hall of Fame by the country's government.



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# JRK! Brings The Authentic Flavors Of Jamaica To Downtown Miami

The unmistakable aroma of jerk spices and sizzling meats is drawing crowds to downtown Miami's newest culinary hotspot, JRK! - a restaurant bringing authentic Jamaican flavors stateside with a vibrant island vibe.

"The food is always fresh, the customer service is awesome, the environment, the music, everything. You feel like you're on an island without being on an island," Lavanda Simpkins, a loyal customer, told CBS News Miami recently.

Will Ham, a nearby worker who visits daily, also shared his enthusiasm. "The spices are just insane. It's the most flavorful

chicken in Miami. Doesn't get better than that," he was quoted as saying.

JRK! Downtown marks the second location for the restaurant, following its debut at Aventura Mall. Co-owner Wayne Sharpe, one of three partners, credits the restaurant's success to a strong community bond.

"They have embraced us and we have embraced them, and you know they look forward to JRK and we look forward to seeing them," Sharpe, who emphasized the importance of giving back — a value rooted



Chef Wayne Sharpe, the man behind JRK!. (EatJrk.com image)

in his Jamaican upbringing, told CBS.

"Growing up in Jamaica, you didn't have a lot. So as we progress, we tend to pay

forward," he added.

By day, JRK! offers a fast-casual takeout experience with a cozy dining room for guests. By night, it transforms into Mangrove, a full-service sit-down restaurant.

The menu features beloved Jamaican classics like jerk shrimp, chicken curry, and tender oxtail, with approachable prices ranging from \$12 to \$16. However, it is Sharpe's grandmother's jerk chicken recipe that remains the undeniable star.

Asked about the secret to his sauce, Sharpe shared with a smile: "Spice, spice." The key ingredient? "Scotch bonnet pepper."

The signature jerk chicken is served juicy and tender,

accompanied by flavorful sides like rice and peas, chili roasted broccoli, and cabbage slaw. For those seeking comfort food with a tropical twist, the Blue Mountain curry chicken — served with coconut rice, cabbage, and mango salsa — offers a creamy, delicious alternative.

For those longing for the taste of Jamaica without leaving Miami, JRK! delivers an authentic culinary escape packed with flavor, community spirit, and island warmth.

For more information, visit [eatjrk.com](http://eatjrk.com).

- *Rewritten from CBS News Miami*



## Celebrate Mother's Day With Caribbean-Inspired Breakfast Recipes

This Mother's Day, treat mom to breakfast bursting with Caribbean flavor. Whether she's a fan of sweet treats, hearty classics, or tropical twists, these easy and flavorful recipes will help you say "I love you" the island way.

### Ripe Banana Fritters



Start her day on a sweet note with these crispy, golden fritters.

#### Ingredients:

- 3 ripe bananas
- 1 egg
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- ½ tsp cinnamon
- ¼ tsp nutmeg
- ½ cup brown sugar
- 2 cups all-purpose flour
- 1 tbsp baking powder
- ½ cup milk
- Oil for frying

#### Instructions:

1. Mash the ripe bananas in a bowl.
2. In a separate bowl, beat the egg with sugar, vanilla, cinnamon, and nutmeg. Combine with mashed bananas.
3. Add flour and baking powder, then gradually mix in enough milk to create a thick, pancake-like batter.

4. Heat oil in a frying pan over medium-high heat. Drop spoonfuls of batter into the hot oil. Flip when edges are golden.
5. Dust with confectioner's sugar or top with whipped cream. Serve warm.

### Coconut Bread

A Caribbean staple, perfect with tea or coffee and made to impress.

#### Ingredients:

- 2 large eggs
- 1¼ cups milk
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- 2½ cups all-purpose flour
- 2 tsp baking powder
- 2 tsp ground cinnamon
- 1 cup sugar
- ¾ cup shredded coconut
- ½ cup unsalted butter, melted

#### Instructions:

1. Preheat oven to 350°F and prepare an 8"x4" loaf pan.
2. Lightly whisk eggs, milk, and vanilla.
3. In a separate bowl, sift flour, baking powder, and cinnamon. Add sugar and coconut.
4. Make a well in the dry mixture and stir in the wet ingredients. Add melted butter and mix just until smooth.
5. Pour into pan and bake for 1 hour. Cool and serve in thick slices.

### Bake & Saltfish

A savory Trinidadian breakfast favorite that's sure to impress.

#### For the Saltfish:

- 1 lb salted cod (bacalao)



- 3 tbsp olive oil
- ½ cup each of chopped tomatoes, scallions, and onions
- ¼ tsp black pepper

#### For the Bakes:

- 2 cups flour
- Salt, to taste
- 2 tsp baking powder
- ¾ cup water
- 1½ cups oil

#### Instructions – Saltfish:

1. Boil saltfish for 10 minutes, drain, and repeat twice until salt is reduced. Flake fish, removing any bones.
2. Heat oil, sauté onions, scallions, and tomatoes. Remove from heat and stir in fish and pepper.

#### Instructions – Bakes:

1. Mix dry ingredients. Add water gradually to form a dough. Knead and let rest for 30 minutes.
2. Divide and flatten dough into circles. Fry until golden.
3. Slice open bakes and fill with the prepared saltfish.

Happy Mother's Day and Bon Appetite.

- [IslandOrigins.com](http://IslandOrigins.com)



## South Florida Chefs Join National Call To Congress: Protect SNAP

Eight South Florida chefs are joining more than 150 culinary professionals across the United States in urging Congress to reject proposed deep cuts to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), a federal initiative that helps millions of low-income families afford groceries.

Among the voices is South Florida-based Venezuelan chef Lorena Garcia, who signed a powerful letter to lawmakers warning that reductions to the program would increase hunger and hardship - especially for children.

"Cuts to SNAP will guarantee more hunger and hardship for families," Garcia stated. "At a time when millions of Americans are struggling to keep up with the rising cost of food, Congress must vote against budget cuts that will slash grocery benefits, making it harder for kids to get the food that they need."

SNAP currently assists nearly 42 million Americans, including one in five children. The chefs argue that it is one of the most effective tools in the nation to combat food insecurity, supporting families in need while also benefiting local economies.

The pushback from culinary leaders comes as House Republicans propose slashing \$230 billion from the U.S. Department of Agriculture's budget over the next decade, with a significant portion potentially

coming from SNAP. The Senate's version of the bill also proposes at least \$1 billion in cuts, raising alarms among advocates.

Chef Garcia emphasized the long-term importance of the program. "Kids who receive SNAP do better in school. They're healthier than those who do not have access to it," she said. "It is such a powerful tool that we need in order to combat hunger."

According to the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities (CBPP), nearly 3 million Florida residents could lose some or all of their SNAP benefits if the proposed cuts are enacted. The CBPP warns that such reductions would not only worsen food insecurity but also harm local businesses and undermine economic recovery by weakening job support in communities nationwide.

"We need to stay vigilant and take care of our next generation - the generation that is going to feed us in the future," Garcia added. "We must make sure that no child goes hungry."

The chefs' advocacy highlights the critical intersection of food, policy, and community—and underscores the call for Congress to prioritize America's most vulnerable families.

- *Rewritten from WLRN Public Media*



Most of us try to attract other people by the friends we keep and the way we carry ourselves.  
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Peter A. Webley  
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## TRAVEL NEWS



www.caribbeantoday.com

## A Caribbean American's Journey In The UAE

BY FELICIA J. PERSAUD

Thousands of miles away from the U.S. and the Caribbean, I recently found myself standing in a country that has turned desert into a dazzling oasis of ambition and innovation — the United Arab Emirates (UAE).

My journey took me first to Abu Dhabi for the AIM Congress 2025, and then to Dubai for the International Property Show (IPS) 2025. These two of seven Emirates are nothing short of a masterclass in precision, progress, and paradox.

**First Impressions:****Architecture, Infrastructure, and Greenery**

The first thing that strikes you is the stunning architecture, world-class infrastructure, and unexpected lush greenery thriving in a desert environment that is also a significant global oil producer and exporter. But the heat is undeniable — at 9:30 a.m., temperatures were already at 83°F under a hazy sky that hinted at poor air quality. Indoors, however, the story changes. Air conditioning is set to near-arctic levels, making even a full suit feel comfortable. Here, everything is about comfort, control, and curated

experience.

In Abu Dhabi, it becomes clear that sustainability is not a future goal — it's the present reality. The city is building green communities that integrate renewable energy, water conservation, and sustainable urban planning. Initiatives like electric buses, solar-powered charging stations, extensive cycling tracks, and carpooling apps reflect a city-wide commitment to lowering emissions and promoting eco-friendly living.

Solar panels now power residential and commercial buildings, and smart grids optimize energy use. Through smart home technology and AI analysis of consumption patterns, residents are encouraged to further conserve resources. Water sustainability is also prioritized through smart irrigation systems, desalination plants powered by renewable energy, and widespread use of treated wastewater for landscaping.

The Green Agenda 2030

guides these efforts, aiming for a 22% reduction in carbon emissions by 2027.

**Dubai: Innovation in Overdrive**

Dubai takes urban innovation to another level. From composting that nurtures desert trees to a waste-to-energy facility converting municipal waste into electricity, sustainability is at the forefront. Districts are

meticulously organized — the Education District, Internet City, Embassy Row — each masterfully executed.

Dubai's Clean Energy Strategy 2050 plans to have 75% of its energy from clean sources by 2050. Smart technologies, green building practices, recycling initiatives, and vast green spaces underpin the city's rapid growth.

Everywhere you turn, dynamic media walls flash promotions, and Noon delivery scooters zip through traffic, promising deliveries in just 15 minutes. It's a futuristic, fast-moving city that hasn't lost sight of its ecological responsibilities.

**A Country of Vision and Rules**

The UAE's broader sustainability agenda is aligned with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), emphasizing clean energy, food security, education, healthcare, economic growth, healthy ecosystems, and resource efficiency.

At the national level, the UAE is working toward bold economic goals: doubling its GDP to AED 3 trillion by 2031, boosting non-oil exports to AED 800 billion, and raising tourism's contribution to AED 450 billion. The nation also aspires to become a global talent hub, a leader in cybersecurity, and a top-10 country in key indices like the Human Development Index.

Yet, rules and structure define everyday life. WhatsApp and FaceTime calls are banned. Speeding, littering, and minor infractions are monitored through a network of cameras — reportedly, one every 12 miles. Fines are swift and enforcement is visible. For a Caribbean American like myself, used to a more relaxed vibe, the tight surveillance is an adjustment. But it undeniably contributes to the UAE's reputation as one of

the safest countries in the world.

**Honesty and Hospitality**

Taxis are abundant, metered, and the drivers incredibly honest. One colleague left her bag in a taxi, and the driver returned it directly to her hotel — a remarkable testament to the culture of integrity.

**Diversity and Demographics**

Perhaps most striking is the diversity. Emiratis make up only about 10% of the population. The rest is a vibrant mix of Indians, Pakistanis, Filipinos, Africans, and other nationalities, all contributing to the UAE's booming economy. It reminded me of the Caribbean diaspora — scattered globally but vital wherever we are.

Cricket has become the top sport, followed by horse and camel racing. Meanwhile, Dubai's gold and spice souks continue to keep cultural heritage alive amid the modern skyline.

**Contrasts Between Abu Dhabi and Dubai**

While Dubai feels cosmopolitan and lively, Abu Dhabi remains more conservative. Mosques dominate the skyline, and the call to prayer punctuates daily life. Late-night socializing, vaping outdoors, and vibrant nightlife are common in Dubai, but more subdued in the capital.

**The Departure: Organized Chaos**

Leaving through Dubai International Airport is an experience in itself. Though luxury services like AED 40 concierge bag check exist, navigating multiple security screenings, train rides, and passport controls requires patience — especially for women who must pass through gender-segregated security checks handled with professionalism by hijab-wearing officers.

**Final Reflections**

Despite the bureaucratic layers, what lingers in my mind is the UAE's relentless pursuit of sustainability, innovation, and global connectivity. Every inch of Dubai and Abu Dhabi speaks to resilience, reinvention, and resourcefulness — values that resonate with the Caribbean American experience.

The UAE may seem worlds away, but its story mirrors ours: built by immigrants, driven by ambition, and fuelled by strategic vision. As one panellist at IPS 2025 aptly put it: "Dubai is a test case for the entire world. It is one of the finest modules globally."

Maybe, just maybe, we in the US and the Caribbean can take a page or two from their playbook.



In the desert of Sharjah, UAE. (Contributed image/Felicia J. Persaud)

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VISIT SOUTH FLORIDA

## Canadians Cool On Florida Travel Amid New U.S. Policies And Tensions

Some Canadians who traditionally flock to Florida to escape harsh winters are now choosing to stay away, causing ripples across the state's tourism and hospitality sectors.

The shift comes amid tightened U.S. immigration policies under President Donald Trump's administration, including a new registration rule for foreign visitors staying longer than 30 days, which could lead to fines or jail time for non-compliance. Tariffs and Trump's past remarks about Canada have also fueled resentment among Canadians.

Former Toronto Star columnist Tim Harper noted a growing "elbows up" patriotism among Canadians, prompting many to withhold tourism dollars in protest.

The impact is already being felt in Florida's hospitality industry. Richard Clavet,

owner of Richard's Motel in Hollywood, reported a rise in cancellations, with customers citing political tensions and safety concerns. Some Canadians, he said, are even opting for alternative destinations like Cuba.

Despite a slight year-over-year increase in Canadian visitors in 2024, Florida tourism from Canada remains down 20% compared to 2019, the last full pre-pandemic year.

For many Canadians, the decision to avoid the U.S. is about more than politics—it reflects deeper concerns about safety, respect, and sovereignty. With uncertainty ahead, the Sunshine State may be feeling the chill for seasons to come.

- *Rewritten from WFSU News*



## Carnival Corp. To Open Massive New Global HQ In Miami



**CARNIVAL**  
CORPORATION & PLC.

Carnival Corporation & PLC, the world's largest leisure travel company, has announced plans to open a new global corporate headquarters in Miami, Florida, uniting most of its North American operations under one roof for the first time.

The company has acquired a site in the Waterford Business District, located just south of Miami International Airport, where a multi-building campus is scheduled to open in 2028. The new headquarters will serve as home base for approximately 2,000 landside team members, including staff from Carnival Cruise Line, Princess Cruises, Holland America Line, Seabourn, Cunard, and Costa Cruises.

"This is more than a building; it's a major step toward a more unified and collaborative future for Carnival Corporation," said Josh Weinstein, CEO of Carnival Corporation. "Co-locating our North America shoreside team members on a shared campus—designed from the ground up to support how we work and what we do - will foster even greater knowledge sharing, innovation, efficiency, and career growth."

Currently, many of the company's team members are dispersed across multiple offices. This strategic consolidation

will bring together staff from various locations across North America into a single centralized headquarters, fostering operational synergy and expanding collaboration across Carnival's brand portfolio.

The planned headquarters will feature between 600,000 and 700,000 square feet of workspace, which will include not only traditional offices but also facilities for onboard entertainment training and rehearsals—an essential component of the guest experience on Carnival's ships.

Earlier this year, Carnival announced the relocation of its West Coast operations to South Florida, with only a small satellite office to remain in Seattle. The headquarters move marks a continued investment in the Miami area, where Carnival has deep historical roots and where the cruise industry has played a major economic and cultural role.

The new campus reflects Carnival's commitment to innovation, growth, and enhancing the working experience for its global team - with a focus on delivering "unforgettable happiness" to more than 13 million guests each year.



## Florida House Moves To Axe Tourism Councils, Shift Billions To Tax Cuts

Just weeks after Gov. Ron DeSantis celebrated record-breaking tourism numbers, the Florida House is moving to dismantle organizations credited with helping drive those millions of visitors.

The House's proposed \$5.4 billion tax break package would eliminate the state's 62 tourist development councils, redirecting the \$1.8 billion they generate annually toward lowering property taxes for residents.

Currently, these councils promote tourism by funding local festivals, building convention centers, enhancing beach access, and supporting recovery efforts after hurricanes. Supporters argue the councils are vital to Florida's economy.

However, with lawmakers racing to finalize a major tax-cut package — likely extending beyond the scheduled May 2 adjournment — reducing property taxes has taken center stage.

Earlier this month,



In 2024, Miami-Dade County saw a record-breaking surge in tourism, with 142.9 million visitors, a 1.6% increase over 2023. (Greater GMCVB image)

the Florida Department of Transportation also unveiled new "Welcome to the Free State of Florida" signs along state lines.

Although Gov. DeSantis had proposed \$1,000 rebates for homesteaded property owners, that idea failed to gain traction among legislative leaders. Instead, the House Budget Committee introduced the plan

on April 22 to dissolve tourist development councils and make their funds more accessible to county governments and taxpayers.

- *Rewritten from the Tallahassee Democrat*



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## SUMMAR CAMP INSIGHTS



www.caribbeantoday.com

## Top Summer Camps In South Florida For 2025

Give the kids a break from screens and immerse them in fresh air, exciting outdoor adventures, and the chance to create lifelong memories! Enroll them in one of the dynamic Summer Camps offered in South Florida this summer, including by Inter Miami CF, the Miami-Dade Parks, Recreation and Open Spaces Department, running from June through August. These camps offer a vibrant mix of activities designed to keep children active, engaged, and making new friends all summer long.

**Soccer Camp**

For the first time in Club history, Inter Miami CF proudly announces the launch of Inter Miami Camps, offering young athletes the chance to train like a pro this summer. Boys and girls aged 6 to 16 are invited to participate in the inaugural official summer camps, led by certified Inter Miami CF coaches and rooted in the Club's Freedom to Dream philosophy.

Running from June 16 to August 5, the five-day, co-ed camps will be hosted across seven Florida locations. Each session features over 30 hours of elite training for field players and goalkeepers, following Inter Miami's official playing methodology.

Full camp details and registration are available at [intermiamicfcamps.com](http://intermiamicfcamps.com). Spaces are limited, so early registration is encouraged!

**Camp Dates and Locations:**

- Naples: July 7–11, 2025
- Palm Beach: July 14–18, 2025
- Fort Lauderdale: July 21–25, 2025
- Fort Lauderdale: July 28–August 1, 2025
- Doral: August 4–8, 2025.

**Junior Golf Camp at Palmetto Golf Academy**

This summer, young golfers can sharpen their skills under the guidance of trained PGA Professionals at the Junior Golf Camp. Whether your child is just starting out or already playing at an elite level, they will benefit from swing analysis and the latest instructional techniques.

Location: Palmetto Golf Academy  
Address: Palmetto Golf Course, 9300 SW 152nd Street, Miami, FL 33157  
Ages: 6–14  
Time: 9 a.m. – 3 p.m.

**Program Options:**

- Half-Day Camp: 9 a.m. – 12 p.m., \$350 per week
  - Elite Camp: 1 p.m. – 3 p.m., \$350 per week
- Contact: Derrick Payne, Director of Instruction  
Phone: 786-897-7533 | Email:

dpschoolofgolf@gmail.com

**Miami-Dade Parks, Recreation and Open Spaces Camps**

The Miami-Dade Parks, Recreation and Open Spaces Department is offering exciting Summer Camps from June 9 through August 1. Camps run Monday through Friday, 7:30 a.m. to 6 p.m., and are split into four two-week sessions. Participants must register for each session separately, and enrollment in one session does not guarantee placement in others.

**Session Dates:**

- Session 1: June 9 – June 20 (closed June 19)
- Session 2: June 23 – July 4 (closed July 4)
- Session 3: July 7 – July 18
- Session 4: July 21 – August 1

Each session costs \$90, with a one-time \$15 registration fee per child. Families can purchase sessions individually or all at once. A 10% discount is available for purchasing all four sessions at once, along with a 10% sibling discount for additional children in the same household.

**Camp Locations:****North Region:**

- Arcola Lakes Park, Biscayne Shores and Gardens Park, Country Club of Miami South, Country Village Park, Highland Oaks Park, North Glade Park, Marva Y. Bannerman Park

**Central Region:**

- North Trail Park, Rockway Park, Tamiami Park, Tropical Estates Park, Westwind Lakes Park, Continental Park

**South Region:**

- Deerwood Bonita Lakes Park, Devon Aire Park, Eureka Villas Park, Hammocks Community Park, Sgt. Joseph Delancy Park, South Dade Park

**For more information, contact each park directly.**

Girls Empowerment and Mentoring Summer Arts Camp  
The Girls Empowerment and Mentoring (G.E.M.) Summer Arts Camp offers a vibrant, creative experience for girls ages 6–14, set amid the natural beauty of The Women's Park. This enriching camp introduces participants to a wide range of artistic disciplines—including dance, music, painting, theater, arts and crafts, journalism, and women's studies—with the goal of helping each girl discover and express her unique creative voice.



Young athletes ages 6 to 16 can train like pros this summer at Inter Miami CF's inaugural official camps, led by certified coaches and inspired by the Club's Freedom to Dream philosophy. (Inter-Miami.com image)

**Camp Details:**

- **Location:** The Women's Park, 10251 W. Flagler Street
  - **Hours:** 9 a.m. – 4 p.m. (early drop-off from 8 a.m. and late pick-up until 5 p.m. at no additional cost)
  - **Cost:** \$100 per week, plus a one-time \$15 registration fee
  - **Contact:** 305-480-1717 or [VGreer@miamidade.gov](mailto:VGreer@miamidade.gov)
- Explore, Learn, and Adventure at Zoo Miami's Zoo Camp!

Give your child an unforgettable summer experience at Zoo Miami's award-winning Zoo Camp, where education meets excitement. Campers will dive into the wonders of wildlife, gain a hands-on introduction to

environmental conservation, and make lasting friendships.

- **Summer Camp (Ages 5–12)**  
Dates: June 6 – August 13, 2025\*

**Cost:** 5-Day Camp – \$275

- Register at <https://shop.zoomi-ami.org/mainstore?category-Id=2675&#cat2675>

**Girl Scouts of Southeast Florida**

Girls of all ages are invited to unplug, explore the outdoors, and build lasting memories this summer at Camp Welaka in Tequesta, with registration now open for the 2025 camp season.

Nestled across 640 acres of preserved woodlands, Camp Welaka offers girls from kindergarten through 12th grade

the opportunity to connect with nature, develop confidence, and form lifelong friendships. This year's programs feature three signature experiences, welcoming both newcomers and returning campers — no prior Girl Scout membership is required.

- **Resident Camp**, for girls entering kindergarten through 12th grade, will be offered across three sessions from June 13 through July 17. Campers will enjoy traditional overnight activities such as swimming, archery, hiking, canoeing, and themed events designed to foster independence and leadership skills.
- **Day Camp**, available from June 23 to 27 and July 21 to 25, offers a non-overnight option for girls in kindergarten through 5th grade. Campers will engage in activities like archery, slingshot practice, pool time, paddling, hiking, and arts and crafts, making it a wonderful introduction to camp life.
- **Camp 2gether**, a special weekend camp from June 6 to 8, allows girls to attend with a trusted adult. Open to kindergarten through 12th graders, this unique experience blends family bonding with traditional camp adventures. Camp registration is now open, but space is limited. For more information or to register, visit [gssef.org](http://gssef.org) or call 561-427-0177.



## Top Florida Prep School Opens Registration For 2025 Summer Camps

American Heritage Schools, one of the nation's top-ranked private college preparatory day schools, is set to open its summer 2025 programs with a blend of innovation, enrichment, and fun. Families can choose from both in-person and online options as the nine-week sessions run from June 9 through August 8. For over 40 years, American Heritage Schools has provided premier summer experiences, and this year is no exception. With campuses in Broward (Plantation) and Palm Beach (Delray Beach), the programs span from preschool to 12th grade and are designed to nurture academic growth and personal development.

**Summer Camp Programs for Ages 3–13**

Young campers can enjoy Day Camp or specialty camps, including Robotics, Art, Science, Musical Theatre, Sports, and Video Production, with offerings tailored by campus. Designed for children ages 3 to 13, the camps combine age-appropriate

activities with expert supervision from certified educators and experienced counselors - many of whom are school alumni or long-time program participants. Cabins are air-conditioned classrooms transformed into themed spaces for the summer. Children aged 3–5 are grouped in co-ed cabins, while older campers are separated by gender. Campers ages 8–13 also benefit from exciting off-campus field trips, fully supervised and supported by American Heritage Schools' trained staff and transportation services.

**Academic Excellence Through Summer Education**

American Heritage Schools' Summer Education program offers over 120 enrichment and reinforcement courses for students from Pre-K3 to 12th grade. Classes are available both live online and in person, accommodating families across South Florida and beyond. From weekly seminars starting at \$100 to three-week intensives beginning at \$1,550,

students can dive into core academic subjects, advanced test prep, and pre-professional tracks in medicine, law, and entrepreneurship. The program also features AP and honors courses, plus customized tutoring for students seeking to boost confidence ahead of the school year. All courses are taught by certified, degreed professionals and designed to engage and challenge students at every level, from elementary learners to future college applicants.

**Flexible Access and Transportation**

To make the programs more accessible, American Heritage Schools offers free non-stop transportation throughout Broward, Miami-Dade, and Palm Beach counties. Day Camp pricing begins at \$680 per week.

For registration and more details, visit [ahsummerprograms.com](http://ahsummerprograms.com) or contact 1-888-490-7467 or email [summer@ahschool.com](mailto:summer@ahschool.com).





# Haitian American Heritage Month - Haitian American Congressmember Aims To Stop Illegal Gun Trafficking To Haiti Gang Violence

BY DAVID L. SNELLING

In an effort to stymie the pipeline of illegal gun trafficking between the U.S. and the Caribbean island nations, U.S. Rep. Sheila Cherfilus-McCormick is co-sponsoring a bill in hopes of addressing the root of the escalating gang violence in Haiti as Haitian American Heritage Month is marked in the US this month.

Cherfilus-McCormick, a Democrat from South Florida and the only Haitian American woman in Congress, said the proposed bill would require the Department of Defense to expand the mission of the Joint Interagency Task Force South to include efforts to stop illicit arms trafficking.

The chaos in Haiti, which started in 2021 after the assassination of President Jovenel Moise, has escalated as the death toll has reached over 5,600 of Haitian citizens and law

enforcement officers since 2024. Moving firearms from the U.S. to the Caribbean is adding more fuel to the gang violence as Kenya military force and Haiti police struggle to restore law and order.

"Weapons trafficking by way of the United States is a major contributor to crime in the Caribbean and Haiti's growing gang crisis, driving the ongoing instability that plagues the country," said Cherfilus-McCormick in a statement. "All potential options must be on the table to effectively curtail the flow of arms. Our nation's national security depends on it."

Citing a Government Accountability Office report, Cherfilus-McCormick said nearly 75 percent of firearms recovered and traced in the Caribbean could be linked to the United States.

Many of those weapons were initially sold through legal U.S. retail channels before being



Haitian American U.S. Rep. Sheila Cherfilus-McCormick is co-sponsoring a bill in hopes of addressing the root of the escalating gang violence in Haiti.

trafficked abroad. The report suggested that the flow of gun trafficking is allowing gangs to control 85 percent of Haiti's capital city of Port-au-Prince. Recent gang violence has forced more than 60,000 people to flee their homes in one month alone, according to the U.N.'s International Organization for Migration.

Cherfilus-McCormick and U.S. Rep. Wesley Bell, (D-MO), are introducing the Caribbean Anti-Smuggling of Trafficked

Arms, (CAST) Act to curb illicit arms trafficking by requiring the Department of Defense to report on expanding the mandate of Joint Interagency Task Force South to include combating the issue.

"As a former prosecutor, I've seen how illegal guns can devastate neighbourhoods and fuel violence," Bell said in a statement. "Too many of those weapons are being trafficked out of the U.S. and into the hands of gangs in the Caribbean. This bill

strengthens our ability to stop that flow at the source, so fewer families, whether in St. Louis or Port-au-Prince, have to live in fear."

According to published reports, firearms including assault rifles, were routinely stashed in cardboard boxes among packages of food and clothes, on a cargo ship with shipping containers. They arrived in Haiti bypassing the UN embargo for inspections and weapons checks procedures.

However, in April 2024, Haiti police seized two boxes that contained 12 assault rifles, 14 handguns and large quantities of ammunition. According to the Tampa Bay Times, records revealed that a shipment of firearms travelled from a warehouse in Ft. Lauderdale, Florida to Cap-Haitian in northern Haiti in 2024.

Another container was shipped by the Florida-based shipping company Alliance International Shipping, which does not own vessels traveling to Haiti. The company only buys space on ships and sells it to clients.



## U.S. Declares Haiti's Most Feared Gangs Terrorist Groups

The United States has officially designated two of Haiti's most dangerous gangs — Viv Ansanm and Gran Grif — as Foreign Terrorist Organizations, (FTOs) and Specially Designated Global Terrorists, (SDGTs), marking a significant shift in Washington's efforts to combat violent instability in the Caribbean nation.

In a statement issued on May 2, U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio said the designations are aimed at holding accountable those who fuel violence in Haiti and threaten the region's security. "The age of impunity for those supporting violence in Haiti is over," Rubio declared.

According to the U.S. State Department, Viv Ansanm and Gran Grif are at the center of escalating violence in Haiti. These armed coalitions are reportedly responsible for widespread killings, targeted attacks on Haitian citizens and security forces, and assaults against personnel of the Multinational Security Support, (MSS) mission currently deployed in Haiti. The gangs are allegedly seeking to establish a gang-controlled state fueled by illicit trafficking and criminal activity.

"These gangs pose a direct threat to U.S. national security interests in our region," the statement noted. "Terrorist designations are a critical tool in our counterterrorism efforts, aimed at restricting financial and logistical support to these

groups."

The U.S. government warned that any individual or entity, including lawful permanent residents and citizens, found supporting the groups could face criminal prosecution, deportation, or other sanctions.

The designation is also seen as a show of support for the Haitian National Police and international partners involved in the MSS mission. Rubio praised their courage and dedication to restoring order in the country. He also urged Haiti's political leadership to come together, end the violence, and work toward democratic elections.

Additionally, Secretary Rubio spoke with Dominican Republic President Luis Abinader, reaffirming the strategic U.S.-Dominican partnership, especially in countering illegal immigration and addressing regional security challenges.

While gangs control at least 85% of Port-au-Prince, Haiti's capital, they have launched attacks in the country's central region in recent years.

A UN-backed mission led by Kenyan police that began last year to help Haitian police quell violence has struggled in its fight against gangs.

More than 5,600 people were killed across Haiti last year, with gang violence leaving more than one million people homeless.

- NewsAmericasNow.com



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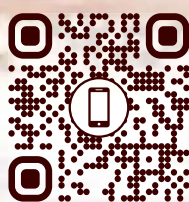
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## SPORTS NEWS



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# Haitian American Ashton Jeanty Makes History As Raiders' Top Draft Pick

Haitian American Ashton Jeanty made history last week by becoming the highest-drafted player in Boise State University's history, selected sixth overall by the Las Vegas Raiders in the 2025 NFL Draft. His selection also marks a proud moment for the Haitian diaspora and underscores the rising impact of Caribbean heritage athletes on the global sports stage.

Jeanty, a devout Christian and son of a Haitian father and a second-generation Haitian American mother, capped off a phenomenal collegiate career with a standout 2024 season, rushing for 2,601 yards and 29 touchdowns. The former Navy brat—born in Jacksonville, Florida and raised partially on a U.S. base in Naples, Italy—was runner-up for the Heisman Trophy and the winner of multiple national awards, including the Maxwell and Doak Walker Awards.

In a bold move leading up to the draft, Jeanty skipped the NFL Scouting Combine, choosing instead to participate in drills and evaluations during Boise State's pro day. A week before draft day, he published a letter addressed to NFL general managers explaining why he was the best choice. "It's TACKLE football ... you know what I'm saying? I'd



Haitian American Ashton Jeanty. (Instagram image)

draft the guy they can't tackle," he wrote.

Jeanty's explosive play style has drawn comparisons to Marshawn Lynch, particularly for his relentless ability to break tackles and turn broken plays into highlight-reel moments. Raiders Head Coach Pete Carroll, who previously coached Lynch in Seattle, noted the similarity: "There's a special makeup in there with Ashton."

Raiders General Manager John Spytek echoed that

enthusiasm, calling Jeanty "too valuable to pass up" as the team looks to revamp its rushing offense following the departure of Josh Jacobs. Jeanty now becomes the second-highest drafted running back in Raiders history, behind only Darren McFadden.

His journey to NFL stardom began humbly. A quarterback-turned-running back at a military base high school in Italy, Jeanty rushed for over 1,200 yards in just six games. He later transferred to Lone Star High School in Texas, where he logged 1,843 yards and 41 total touchdowns as a senior before committing to Boise State in 2021.

During his college career, Jeanty steadily ascended from promising freshman to national standout. In 2023, he led Boise State with 1,347 rushing yards and 14 touchdowns, while also recording 569 receiving yards—more than any other FBS running back. He followed that up with a record-breaking 2024, including a 267-yard, six-touchdown performance in the season opener and ending the season as the national leader in rushing yards and yards from scrimmage.

A unanimous All-American and two-time Mountain West Offensive Player of the Year, Jeanty's draft selection was a moment of celebration not only for Boise State fans but

also for the Haitian American community.

"I want to show everyone the running back position remains valuable when you have an exceptional player," Jeanty said following his draft night celebration.

With a grounded faith, a fierce work ethic, and deep cultural pride, Ashton Jeanty now steps onto football's biggest stage with the hopes of elevating the Raiders - and representing his Haitian heritage with distinction. Jeanty is slated to earn around \$32 million over the course of his fully guaranteed rookie deal.

- Rewritten from AP



## Team Jamaica Bickle Rewards Top Jamaican Performers At 2025 Penn Relays

New York-based non-profit, Team Jamaica Bickle, (TJB), founded by Caribbean advocate Irwine Clare, Sr., OD, has honored several Jamaican high school athletes for their exceptional performances at the 129th Penn Relays Carnival, held April 24-26 at Franklin Field in Philadelphia.

Among those recognized were Hydel High and Kingston College's 4x400-m relay teams, along with triple jump champions Jade Ann Dawkins of St. Jago High and Michael Andre Edwards of Jamaica College. TJB, a U.S.-based charity supporting Jamaican athletes at the Relays with meals and discounted accommodation, awarded US\$12,000 (approximately J\$1.9 million) to top-performing Jamaican teams.

For the first time, the TJB rewards were expanded to include field events, acknowledging the growing impact of Jamaican talent beyond the track.

Jamaican teams winning the prestigious 4x100-m, 4x400-m, and 4x800-m Championships of America relays each received

US\$1,200.

Among the standout winners were Calabar High and Edwin Allen High, who dominated the sprint relay events.

Special awards were also presented to Shema

Dunkley and Shanice Catnott of Oberlin High School for their outstanding contributions. One of the highlights of the event was Hydel High's record-breaking victory in the High School Girls' 4x400-m. The team of Natassia Fletcher, Abigail Campbell, Sashana Johnson, and Jody-Ann Daley clocked an astonishing 3:30.42 - slashing 2.35 seconds off the previous record and earning the school its fourth consecutive title in the event at Penns. The time now ranks as the fifth-fastest in history by an Under-20 female team worldwide.

Their performance broke the 3:32.77 mark set by Hydel



Team Jamaica Bickle also hosted several CARIFTA athletes this year. (TJB/Facebook image)

in 2022 and also bested the Franklin Field and American high school record of 3:31.68 set in 2024 by Montverde Academy of Florida.

Only five national Under-20 squads have ever gone faster, including the legendary Jamaican team of Kerron Stewart, Sheryl Morgan, Melaine Walker, and Patricia Hall, who ran 3:29.66 at the same venue in 2001.

TJB's continued commitment to rewarding excellence ensures that the next generation of Jamaican track and field stars receives both recognition and support on the international stage.



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## SPORTS NEWS

# Jamaica's Sprint Icons Lead Strong Squad To 2025 World Relays In China

Sprint legends Shelly-Ann Fraser-Pryce, Shericka Jackson, and Kishane Thompson will spearhead Jamaica's formidable 31-member squad for the 7th World Athletics Relays, set for May 10-11 in Guangzhou, China.

The iconic duo of Fraser-Pryce and Jackson, both Olympic and World Championship medallists, headline the women's 4x100m relay team, which also boasts a dynamic mix of experience and emerging talent. Joining them are Niesha Burgher, twins Tina and Tia Clayton, Serena Cole, Natasha Morrison, Alana Reid, and Krystal Soley.

On the men's side, Paris Olympics 100-m silver medallist Kishane Thompson will anchor the 4x100m relay unit alongside veteran sprinter Yohan Blake and a promising lineup that includes Ackeem Blake, Rasheed Foster,

Bryan Levell, Julian Forte, Javari Thomas, and Rohan Watson.

The women's 4x400-m relay team features a strong blend of middle-distance and quarter-mile depth, led by Kelly-Ann Beckford, Roneisha McGregor, Shian Salmon, Ronda Whyte, Jodean Williams, and Stacey-Ann Williams. For the men, national 400m record holder Rusheen McDonald will lead the charge, backed by Javier Brown, Zandrión Barnes, Demar Francis, Malik James-King, Tarees Rhoden, and Delano Kennedy.

Technical direction for the team will be provided by Mark Elliott, with coaching duties handled by Paul Francis, Sean Michael Samuel, and Olympic



Jamaican Olympic sensation Shelly Ann Fraser-Pryce returns this May as part of the Jamaica team at the World Relays in China. (Photo: Instagram.com/ Shelly-Ann Fraser-Pryce)

medallist Michael Frater.

**Full Squad:**  
**Women's 4x100-m & Mixed Relays:** Niesha Burgher, Tia Clayton, Tina Clayton, Serena Cole, Shericka Jackson, Natasha Morrison, Shelly-Ann Fraser-

Pryce, Alana Reid, Krystal Soley

**Men's 4x100-m & Mixed Relays:** Ackeem Blake, Yohan Blake, Julian Forte, Rasheed Foster, Bryan Levell, Javari Thomas, Kishane Thompson, Rohan Watson

**Women's 4x400m & Mixed Relays:** Shana Kaye Anderson, Kelly-Ann Beckford, Roneisha McGregor, Shiann Salmon,

Ronda Whyte, Jodean Williams, Stacey-Ann Williams

**Men's 4x400-m & Mixed Relays:** Zandrión Barnes, Javier Brown, Demar Francis, Malik James-King, Delano Kennedy, Rusheen McDonald, Tarees Rhoden.

- NewsAmericasNow.com



## Usain Bolt Pays Emotional Tribute To Late Father Wellesley Bolt

Jamaican-born Olympic sprint legend, Usain St. Leo Bolt, delivered a heartfelt tribute to his late father, Wellesley Bolt, during an emotional funeral service on Sunday, May 4, at the Falmouth Seventh-day Adventist Church in Jamaica, drawing mourners from across the island's political, sports, and entertainment spheres.

Wellesley Bolt, a respected businessman from Sherwood Content and former employee of the Jamaica Coffee Board, passed away on March 31st, after a prolonged illness.

The church was filled beyond capacity, with standing room only as family, friends, and supporters gathered to celebrate his life. Among those in attendance were Prime Minister Andrew Holness, Deputy Prime Minister Dr. Horace Chang, Minister of Sport Olivia Grange, former Prime Minister Bruce Golding, and former Minister of Sport Natalie Neita. Also present were Bolt's longtime coach Glen Mills, agent Ricky Simms, manager Nugent Walker, physical therapist Everaldo Edwards, Olympic champion Nesta Carter, and cricket star Chris Gayle.

In a moving eulogy, Bolt remembered his father as a man of generosity, discipline, and unwavering dedication - qualities he said were central to his own development and success.

"All he did was give - no matter what," Bolt shared. "Anyone from Sherwood Content can tell you, even if he didn't have it, he would give."

He recalled watching his father manage the family shop with integrity and respect, instilling in him the values of hard work and leadership.

"No matter how old you were, if you came in and misbehaved, he'd tell you to leave," Bolt said. "That's how my dad was, and that's how I'm trying to raise my kids - to respect, to understand, and to listen."



Wellesley Bolt's funeral was held on May 4, at the Falmouth Seventh-day Adventist Church in Jamaica. (SportsMax image)

The eight-time Olympic gold medallist credited his father's work ethic as a key influence on his athletic journey.

"Throughout my life, I've worked hard and dedicated myself - especially to track and field - to be the best I possibly can," he said. "That's one of the biggest lessons I learned from my dad."

Bolt described Wellesley as a quiet yet consistent provider whose actions spoke louder than words.

"He never had to tell me anything," he said. "I just watched him work hard and provide for us. I didn't see him much when he worked with the Coffee Board - he'd be up early and home late - but I understood. My mom would say, 'Your father is working hard to make sure you get everything you need. Not what you want - what you need.' That's something I always respected."

As a father himself, Bolt said he now strives to mirror those same values.

"Having my own kids now, I definitely want to live up to his character and be the best I possibly can be to them, just like he was to me," he added.

In a touching moment, Bolt turned to his mother, Jennifer Bolt, who sat in the front pew, and offered his continued support.

"Mom, just know that I'm here for you - fully," he said. "I'm not your husband, but I'm your child. You're going to see more of

me now than ever."

The service, rich with hymns and heartfelt tributes, honoured not just the father of a global icon, but a man whose values helped shape a champion's foundation.

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If your taxes remain unpaid on **June 1<sup>st</sup>**, your taxes will be sold as a Tax Certificate; a lien that is sold to investors that will accept the lowest rate of interest for your taxes. Interest will be added to the amount owed. However, if your taxes remain unpaid for two years after they become delinquent your property could be sold.

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Convenience fees may apply. For more information on ways to pay your property taxes, visit **mdctaxcollector.gov** and select Real Estate Tax Payments.

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If you pay online or in person your payment must be received by **May 31<sup>st</sup>**. To pay delinquent taxes in person, you can bring a cashier's check, certified funds, money order or cash to the Tax Collector's Office. Credit cards are accepted.

You can pay real estate and tangible personal property taxes online until Saturday **May 31<sup>st</sup>**, 2025 at 11:59 p.m. (EST) at **mdctaxcollector.gov** by eCheck, the funds must be available for immediate withdrawal from a regular checking account, open to ACH transactions; or pay by debit/credit card. We accept Visa, Mastercard, Amex, or Discover. Apple Pay, Google Pay, Samsung Wallet and PayPal are also accepted.

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On August 6, 2025, the island of Jamaica marks the 63rd Anniversary of its independence as a sovereign nation. Caribbean Today invites the business community in Jamaica and the United States to celebrate this significant milestone.

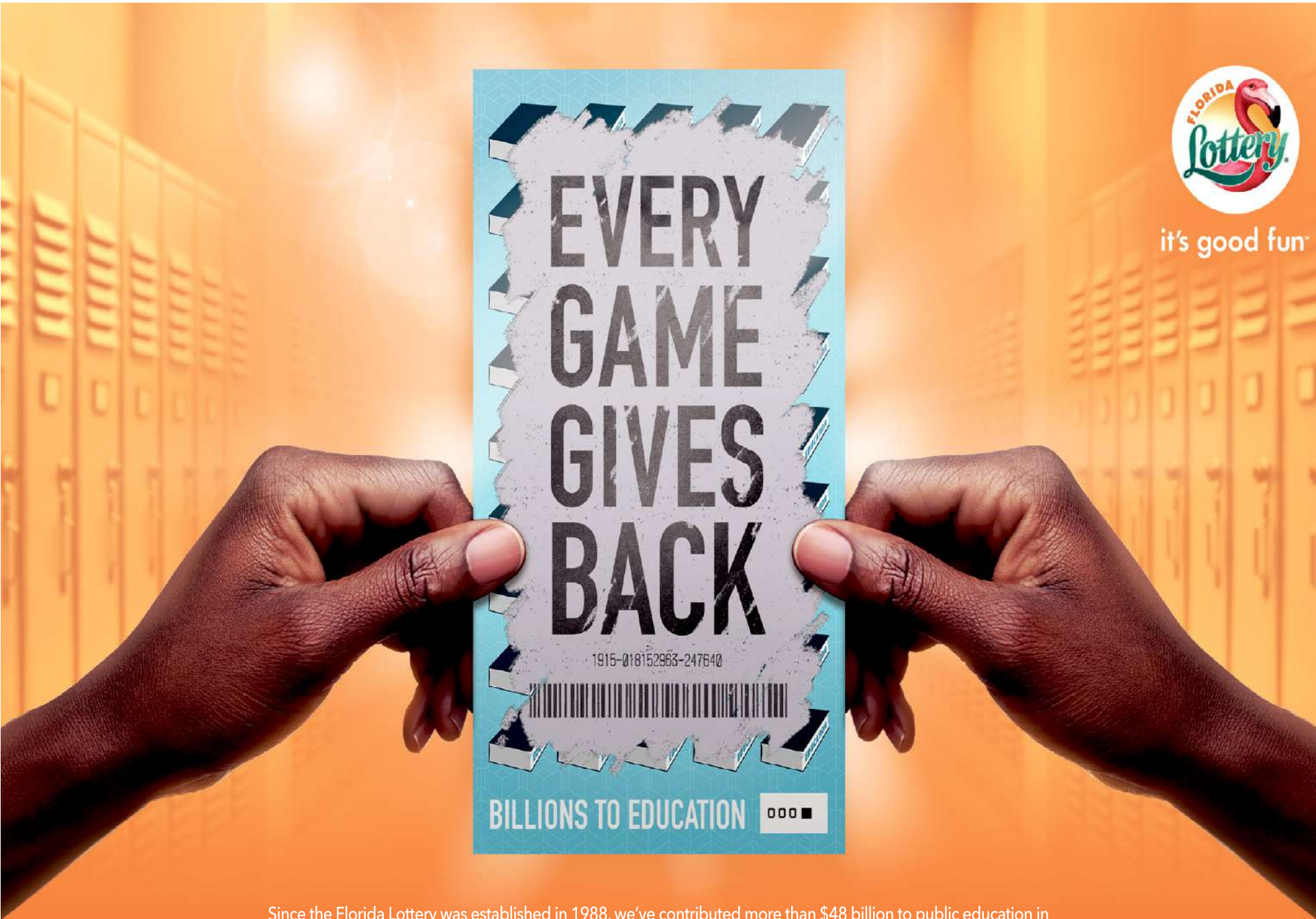
*Our Independence Supplement! Jamaica at 63* to be published in July 2025, will pay tribute to Jamaica's history, culture, growth and development including the achievements and global contributions of a remarkable people. Promote your products and services in this 28-page keepsake edition, to be distributed widely throughout Florida, New York, Atlanta, and the Caribbean.

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