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JANUARY 2026

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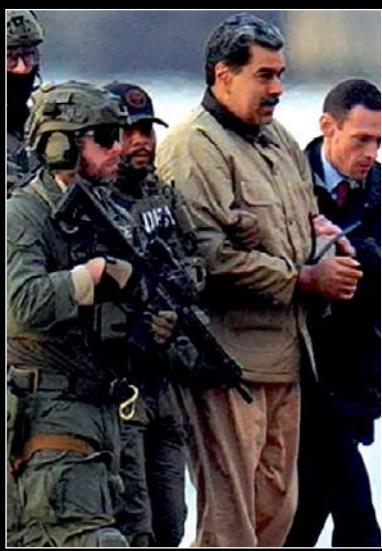


Vol. 37 No. 2

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(Photo Credit: X)



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Instagram)

## CARIBBEAN IMMIGRANTS MAKE WOW LIST

Hundreds Of CARICOM Nationals Are On The DHS' "Worst Of The Worst" List ... Page 3



Top to bottom, l. - r.: Kieron Jonas of Antigua And Barbuda; Joseph Thomas Of The Bahamas; Vince Ellis of Barbados; Ernel Chambers of Dominica; Peter Thomas of Grenada; Trevor Bassue of St. Kitts & Nevis; Stanfield Vitalis of St. Lucia; Aaron Sabal of Belize, Robert Savio Panton of Jamaica; Ronald Doodnauth of Guyana; Nathalie Premier of Haiti and Vijai Dube of Trinidad and Tobago. (Montage from DHS images)

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## REGIONAL NEWS

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

## REGIONAL

Caribbean Community (CARICOM) leaders convened an emergency meeting on January 3, 2026, following United States military action in Venezuela, reaffirming the region's commitment to international law, sovereignty, and peaceful dialogue.

In a statement, the Bureau of the Conference of Heads of Government said CARICOM remains guided by the principles of the United Nations Charter and is calling for diplomatic engagement to ensure stability, democracy, and prosperity in Venezuela. Leaders also stressed that efforts are underway to safeguard Caribbean citizens and to monitor potential regional impacts, particularly on air travel and economic activity.

Barbados Prime Minister Mia Mottley described the developments as "uncharted territory," noting that the rapidly evolving situation required caution. She emphasized that small states depend on a rules-based international order to survive.

Meanwhile, The St. Vincent and the Grenadines government says it is monitoring the situation in Venezuela very closely. Foreign Affairs Minister Fitz Bramble said Kingstown recognizes that

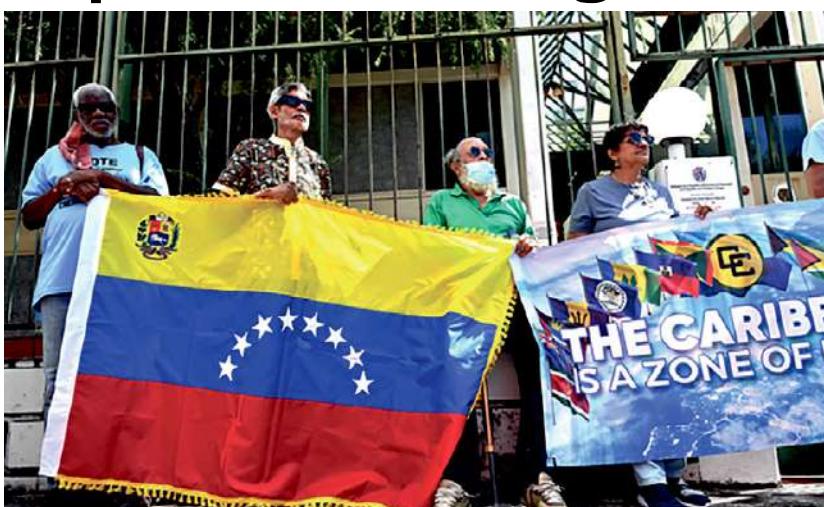
there are "possible, far-reaching implications" for St. Vincent and the Grenadines as a small island developing state.

He said Prime Minister Dr. Godwin Friday and his just over one month old government remain committed to the development of St. Vincent and the Grenadines and the Caribbean region.

Venezuela has declared a national emergency following reports of President Nicolás Maduro's detention by U.S. forces, while Washington says the intervention is linked to drug and terrorism charges. CARICOM leaders continue to urge restraint, dialogue, and respect for international norms as the situation unfolds.

Trinidad & Tobago Prime Minister Kamla Persad-Bissessar distanced T&T from the United States' military operation in Venezuela even as a group of civil society activists gathered outside the Venezuelan Embassy in Port-of-Spain Sunday, accusing the PM of being complicit in the attack.

The protesters, who have been vocal in opposing US military involvement in the region, said the Government failed to uphold regional solidarity and the Caribbean's designation as a zone of peace.



Supporters of ousted Venezuela's President Nicolas Maduro take part in a demonstration outside the Embassy of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela in Port of Spain on Jan. 4, a day after he was captured in a U.S. strike. [AFP/YONHAP]

"When regional solidarity was required, we chose proximity to empire. When Caricom asserted the Caribbean as a zone of peace, we undermined it. When sovereignty was under threat, we offered access, legitimacy, and silence," social activist Abeo Jackson said.

In an immediate response, Persad-Bissessar did not directly address Jackson's claims but instead pointed to the small turnout at the protest, saying she respected the right of citizens to express their views once it was done within the law.

"Although the protest was an abysmal failure with about twelve persons ... that is their democratic right, and I don't see anything wrong with them expressing their views," she said in a WhatsApp response.

Among those at the protest were the All Mansions of Rastafari, Concerned Muslims of T&T, the Emancipation Support Committee, Fishermen and Friends of the Sea, the Ifa/Orisa Council of T&T, the Movement for Social Justice (MSJ), the Network of NGOs for the Advancement of Women, the T&T Scrap Iron Dealers Association, Trinbago for Palestine, and the Warao Nation of Trinidad and Tobago. Activists Khafra and Shabaka Kambon and Wayne Kublalsingh were also present.

Under the watch of a delegation of police officers, MSJ leader David Abdulah argued that the PM's position amounted to tacit support for the US action.

"She says that Trinidad and Tobago did not participate in the attack. Well, of course, the police and army did not participate," Abdulah said. "But if someone is in a house where another person is abusing a child, and you stand by and support that individual, you cannot say you did not participate."

## HAITI

Haiti's Prime Minister Alix Didier Fils-Aimé has reaffirmed that the country's provisional government will not negotiate with criminal gangs attempting to destabilize the French-speaking CARICOM nation, insisting that restoring security remains the state's top priority.

"The government's fight is against gangs. The government's fight is to secure the country. The state will not compromise. The state will not negotiate with criminals," Fils-Aimé said during a visit to the headquarters of the Haitian National Police, (PNH), in Clercine, a gang-affected area near Port-au-Prince's international airport.

Fils-Aimé also expressed gratitude to the United States State Department's Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs for donating

25 armored personnel carriers to strengthen police operations and officer protection. He said the equipment would help reclaim territory held by gangs and improve long-term security.

The prime minister reiterated that security is essential to restoring constitutional order, noting that 2026 is slated for general elections. Haiti continues to face severe gang violence, mass displacement, and humanitarian hardship, prompting CARICOM leaders, including Jamaica's Prime Minister Andrew Holness, to press for sustained international support.

## SURINAME

Police in Suriname say Dennis Aroma, 43, a man accused of killing nine people in the Commewijne district on December 28, 2025, has died by suicide while in custody. Authorities said Aroma was found unresponsive on December 29th inside his cell at the Centrum Police Station on Keizerstraat. While police did not release details, local media reported that he hanged himself.

Aroma had been accused of going on a violent rampage in Commewijne, on the eastern bank of the Suriname River, after allegedly stabbing his four children and several neighbors. Investigators later confirmed that some of the victims were neighbors who had previously supported the family and attempted to intervene during the attack. The death toll remains nine. Two victims, including Aroma's eldest daughter, survived and remain hospitalized with stab wounds.

President Jennifer Gerlings-Simons expressed shock, saying the tragedy highlights "the harsh reality that there is another side to the world" at a time when families should be supporting one another. Preliminary investigations suggest Aroma may have been mentally disturbed and had argued with his estranged wife shortly before the attack over arrangements to collect their children.

## BAHAMAS

A 26-year-old man is scheduled to return to court on March 26, 2026, after being charged with raping a 14-year-old girl he allegedly met online. The accused, Latrell Rolle, appeared before Senior Magistrate Shaka Serville, where he was charged with three counts of unlawful sexual intercourse.

Rolle was not required to enter pleas at this stage of the proceedings and was denied bail. Prosecutors allege the offences occurred on December 16th, 17th and 19th, 2025. The case has been adjourned to March 26 for the presentation of a voluntary bill of indictment.

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## CARICOM Immigrants Make DHS “Worst Of The Worst” List

BY FELICIA J. PERSAUD

Hundreds of Caribbean immigrants from the 15-member Caribbean Community, (CARICOM), are among those identified on a newly released U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) “Worst of the Worst” (WOW) list, which highlights non-U.S. citizens arrested by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, (ICE), in 2025, following prior criminal convictions.

According to DHS data, approximately 320 CARICOM nationals appear on the list. Jamaicans make up the largest group, with 129 individuals, followed by Haitians with 103. Smaller numbers were recorded from countries including Guyana, Trinidad and Tobago, The Bahamas, Belize, Barbados, and several Eastern Caribbean states.

Arrests were heavily concentrated in Florida, reflecting both its role as a major ICE enforcement hub and its large Caribbean diaspora population. Significant numbers



L-R: On the WOW list are Robert Savio Panton of Jamaica, who is convicted for conspiracy with intent to distribute heroin and is with the Black Guerrilla Family gang; Vijay Dube of Trinidad and Tobago, who is convicted for homicide and Jolene Boni of Haiti who is convicted of selling cocaine. (DHS image)

of arrests also occurred in New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Georgia, Texas, and Massachusetts, mirroring long-standing Caribbean settlement patterns in the United States.

The conviction histories cited by DHS span a wide range of serious offenses. The most common categories include weapons violations, drug trafficking, violent crimes such

as homicide, robbery, and sexual assault, and financial crimes, including wire fraud, identity theft, and credit card fraud. Several individuals were also listed for illegal re-entry, human trafficking, and child exploitation offenses.

DHS records indicate that the scale of enforcement grows substantially when nationals from the Spanish-speaking

Caribbean are included. When Cuban and Dominican nationals are added, the total number of individuals on the WOW list rises sharply to 1,797, with Cubans accounting for more than 1,100 cases and Dominicans for over 300.

Federal officials describe the WOW list as a transparency

measure designed to demonstrate ICE’s focus on non-citizens with serious criminal records. However, immigration advocates caution against broader generalizations, emphasizing that the vast majority of Caribbean immigrants are law-abiding residents who contribute economically and culturally to U.S. society.

Community leaders have also warned that lists such as these can fuel stigma and misinformation if not placed in proper context, particularly at a time of heightened immigration enforcement and political debate. They stress the importance of distinguishing between individual criminal cases and entire immigrant communities.

The release of the WOW list is expected to intensify discussions around immigration policy, enforcement priorities, and public perceptions of immigrant communities in the United States.



## Speculation Grows Over Caribbean Politicians Referenced In U.S. Maduro Indictment

As Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro appeared in a New York federal court this week, speculation has intensified across the Caribbean and its global diaspora over the identity of regional politicians referenced - but not named - in a sweeping U.S. indictment linked to the former Venezuelan leader.

The unsealed indictment alleges that politicians operating along a so-called “Caribbean route” accepted payments from cocaine traffickers in exchange for protection from arrest and safe passage for narcotics moving from Venezuela toward the United States. While no Caribbean officials are identified in the court filing, the language has fueled widespread debate online and within political circles across the region.

Trinidad and Tobago Prime Minister Kamla Persad-Bissessar added to the discussion with pointed remarks on social media, suggesting that further revelations could expose “respectable” and “celebrated” figures across multiple sectors as the case unfolds.

U.S. prosecutors allege that Venezuela became a major hub for cocaine trafficking beginning in the late 1990s, with shipments routed through the Caribbean, Central America, and Mexico. By 2020, U.S. estimates suggested as much as 250 tons of cocaine transited



Captured Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro at the Downtown Manhattan Heliport, as he was taken to the Daniel Patrick Manhattan United States Courthouse for an initial appearance to face U.S. federal charges including narco-terrorism, conspiracy, drug trafficking, money laundering and others in New York City, U.S., January 5, 2026. (REUTERS/Eduardo Munoz)

through Venezuela annually. The indictment claims trafficking profits helped entrench political power while strengthening transnational criminal and narco-terrorist networks across the region.

Maduro, who was captured by U.S. forces earlier this month and transferred to New York, faces charges including narco-terrorism conspiracy, cocaine importation, and weapons offenses. His detention has sparked protests and celebrations globally, particularly among Venezuelan diaspora communities. Maduro was represented in court by David Wikstrom, a long-time criminal defense lawyer in the city.

Meanwhile in Antigua and Barbuda, Prime Minister Gaston

Browne confirmed that a senior official of the West Indies Oil Company, (WIOC), in which Venezuela holds a 25 percent stake - was questioned by U.S. authorities during a recent trip. Browne stressed that the company remains compliant with U.S. sanctions and said no violations were identified.

As court proceedings continue, the indictment’s references to unnamed Caribbean political figures have raised uncomfortable questions, with many watching closely for further disclosures that could reverberate well beyond Venezuela’s borders.

- NewsAmericasNow.com



## Guyana High Court Rejects Bid To Halt Extradition Proceedings Against Nazar And Azruddin Mohamed

Guyana’s High Court has refused an application by businessmen Nazar Mohamed and his son, Azruddin Mohamed - leader of the WIN political party and the presumed opposition leader - to halt ongoing extradition proceedings while their constitutional challenge to the country’s extradition laws is determined.

In a ruling delivered on Monday, Acting Chief Justice Navindra Singh found that the applicants failed to meet the high legal threshold required to justify an interim stay of the committal proceedings now before Principal Magistrate Judy Latchman.

The proceedings stem from a request by the United States Government under the 1931 Extradition Treaty between the United States and Great Britain. Following an Authority to Proceed issued by Guyana’s Minister of Home Affairs, the Mohameds were arrested on October 31, 2025, and subsequently released on bail pending the outcome of the committal hearings.

Before the Magistrate’s Court, the applicants challenged the constitutionality of the Fugitive Offenders (Amendment) Act 2009 and sought a referral of constitutional questions to the High Court. That request was rejected by Magistrate Latchman, who ruled the arguments to be frivolous and vexatious. The Mohameds then filed a Fixed Date Application in the High Court and sought a stay of the extradition process.

In refusing the stay, Chief Justice Singh emphasized that the filing of constitutional proceedings does not automatically suspend parallel statutory processes. He

noted that stays in extradition matters are “exceptional, not routine,” and outlined three key considerations: whether the constitutional challenge raises serious and arguable issues, whether irreparable prejudice would result if proceedings continue, and where the balance of convenience lies between private rights and the public interest.

The Court rejected claims that the 2009 amendments allow the Minister to bypass judicial oversight, ruling instead that the Minister’s role is limited to authorizing proceedings, while the courts retain full control over committal hearings. It also dismissed arguments concerning alleged deficiencies in the 1931 treaty, noting written assurances from the United States that the Mohameds would not be extradited to a third country without Guyana’s consent.

Chief Justice Singh further held that no irreparable harm would arise from allowing the proceedings to continue, stressing that extradition hearings are preliminary and do not determine guilt or innocence. Balancing the interests, he concluded that the public interest in honoring Guyana’s international obligations outweighed the request for interim relief.

The application for a stay was therefore refused, with costs awarded. The substantive constitutional challenge is scheduled to be heard on January 14, 2026.

- NewsAmericasNow.com



# Jamaican-Born U.S. Veteran Facing Deportation Following Traffic Violation

BY DAVID L. SNELLING

In a cruel twist of fate, a Jamaican-born U.S. military veteran who risked his life for the United States, is facing deportation after he was arrested for driving without license in Georgia.

Godfrey Wade is currently being held at a detention center in Lumpkin, Georgia. His fiancée,

April Watkins, has mounted an all-out campaign in hopes of sparing him from deportation.

Wade was swept up by Trump's immigration policies after canceling the Biden administration executive order which protected non-citizen veterans from being deported. Watkins said Wade was detained by ICE agents during a traffic stop for driving without a valid

license.

She said the 65-year-old grandfather has endured inhumane conditions in Atlanta's ICE detention center and then was transferred to the overcrowded Stewart Detention Center in Lumpkin, Georgia, where the conditions are worse.

Watkins said there, he has been denied a bed and sleeps on the dirty floor. "This is a very real possibility for him to be deported, even though we secured an attorney who submitted a legal motion to temporarily halt deportation," she said. "We are currently waiting for his case to be reviewed by a judge which could take anywhere between weeks to months."

Watkins has set up a GoFundMe Page to help pay for attorney's fees.

She's hoping the family can hire an attorney to present Wade's case before a court to prevent being deported but time is running out.

Watkins said Wade is a legal resident who emigrated from Jamaica to New York as a teenager. He was seeking U.S. citizenship, but the process was difficult and often delayed. She said during that process, a notice to appear before an immigration court in 2014 was sent to the wrong address, resulting in a removal order his lawyers have been fighting till this day.

According to his military record, Wade served in the U.S. Army's 7th Infantry Division during the 1970s and earned



April Watkins and her grandfather, Godfrey Wade. (Contributed image)

service medals and an honorable discharge.

He went on to earn several college degrees and was employed during his time in the United States.

Wade was working at a cafe when he was detained by ICE.

U.S. Rep. Robert Garcia, (D-California), who sits on the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, condemned the arrests of Wade and other U.S. military vets who are non-U.S. citizens, by ICE agents and vowed to fight the Trump administration on his immigration policies.

"These are U.S. veterans who served our country and were detained by ICE for days without due process or ability to call their families," he said during a December 11 Congressional hearing on the issue. "They are betrayed by their own country,

which they fought so hard for, which they still fight for today. This is not the America we believe in."

Garcia added: The Donald Trump government is now arresting and detaining United States citizens with no right and no access to lawyers. That's why we are here and what we are fighting against."

Members of Congress have accused the Trump administration of targeting non-citizens veterans for deportation.

According to the New York Times, Congress launched a probe in July and discovered that roughly 10,000 veterans have been deported since Trump returned to office in January 2025.

About 16 million U.S. military veterans were born abroad.

Watkins said relatives visiting their loved ones detained at the ICE detention centers in Georgia are left disheartened. She said the inmates allegedly face drugs and theft, and some families are turned away from visitation after driving over 300 miles to see their family members.

"If they allow you to visit, only five families can visit per hour on a first come, first serve basis," Watkins said.

"And the food is sub-par and repurposed for different meals, and the temperature stays below 60 degrees and detainees are constantly coughing."



## Haiti's Gang Suppression Force Vows Continued Crackdown On Criminal Gangs

Haiti's Gang Suppression Force, (GSF), says it remains firmly focused on dismantling criminal gangs, restoring public security, and laying the groundwork for lasting peace and democratic governance in the country.

In a New Year statement, the GSF said it continues to work closely with the Haitian National Police, (HNP) and the Forces Armées d'Haiti (FAd'H) as coordinated operations intensify across gang-affected areas. These efforts are taking place alongside national preparations for elections later this year.

The GSF was formally established following a United Nations Security Council resolution adopted on September 30 last year, which authorized the transition of the Kenya-led Multinational Security Support, (MSS) mission into the new force. The mandate allows for the deployment of up to 5,550 police officers and soldiers, with authority to detain suspected gang members.

According to the GSF, joint operations since the transition have produced "observable security milestones," including arrests, the recovery of illegal

weapons, and the reclaiming of territory previously under gang control, marking what officials describe as measurable progress toward stabilizing Haiti.

### US Support

Meanwhile, the United States has promised to continue playing a role in the future of Haiti while Pope Leo XIV, a fervent advocate of international harmony, has called for a "disarmed peace" for the French-speaking Caribbean Community, (CARICOM) country.

In a message marking the country's 222nd anniversary of political independence from France, United States Secretary of State, Marco Rubio, said Washington remains "committed to working with you to strengthen security, restore stability, and build the foundations for a more prosperous future."

Haiti's capital Port-au-Prince has been devastated by gang



Haiti's capital Port-au-Prince has been devastated by gang violence

violence. "We continue to support the establishment of a Gang Suppression Force that can work with Haitian security forces to end the reign of terror by gangs and U.S.-designated Foreign Terrorist Organizations," the State Department said in a statement.

Meanwhile, Bishop Gontrand Décoste of Jérémie, has welcomed the Roman Catholic Pontiff's calls for "disarmed peace" for Haiti, adding that the country stands "strong despite its trials."

- Rewritten from CMC



## ICED Guyana-Born Former School Superintendent Gets March Court Date



ICE arrested Guyanese Guyana-born, former school superintendent, Ian Roberts, who was serving as Des Moines Public Schools Superintendent.

districts have since faced scrutiny over how Roberts' background and eligibility were vetted. In Pennsylvania, the Millcreek School Board has publicly acknowledged reviewing potential legal action related to the matter, while education officials in Iowa have faced questions from parents and lawmakers.

### Defense Seeks Time Amid "Voluminous" Discovery

In court filings, Roberts' attorney described the discovery process as extensive, noting that while the charges themselves are not complex, the defense requires significant time to prepare. The filing states that Roberts has not yet had sufficient opportunity to review the materials provided by prosecutors.

The court agreed, granting the delay and setting a new timeline that keeps Roberts in custody as the case proceeds.

### What Comes Next

As the March trial date approaches, Roberts remains in ICE custody while federal prosecutors pursue the case. Legal observers say the outcome could have implications not only for Roberts, but also for how public institutions evaluate credentials and immigration status in senior-level hires.

For now, the case continues to underscore the far-reaching consequences of immigration enforcement - extending well beyond borders and into classrooms, communities and public trust.

- NewsAmericasNow.com



The federal criminal case against Guyana-born, former school superintendent, Ian Roberts, will move into the spring of 2026, as a U.S. court has set a new trial date of March 2, 2026, following a defense request for additional preparation time.

Court filings show Roberts' legal team sought a continuance, citing the volume of evidence involved in the case and the need for more time to review discovery materials. Federal prosecutors agreed to the delay, pushing the trial from its original December 1st date. Roberts has pleaded not guilty to all charges and has until February 2, 2026, to enter any additional plea.

### A Case At The Intersection Of Immigration And Public Trust

Roberts has been in custody since September 26th, when he was arrested by Iowa State Police and transferred to US Immigration and Customs Enforcement, (ICE) custody. Federal authorities allege that Roberts falsely claimed U.S. citizenship when he was hired by the Des Moines Public Schools and later illegally possessed four firearms while lacking lawful immigration status.

ICE has said Roberts entered the United States from Guyana in 1999 on a student visa, but later lost legal authorization to work. According to the agency, a final order of removal was issued by an immigration court in May 2024, months before his arrest.

The case has drawn attention not only because of the criminal charges, but also because Roberts rose to the top of public school systems in two U.S. states while allegedly lacking legal status - raising questions about hiring oversight, credential verification, and institutional safeguards.

### From Superintendent To Federal Defendant

Roberts was appointed superintendent of the Des Moines Public Schools in July 2023, following three years in the same role at the Millcreek Township School District. His tenure came to an abrupt halt after federal authorities disclosed details of his immigration history and criminal allegations.

School boards in both

# Charged SSL Executives To Appear In Court On January 26th

BY HOWARD CAMPBELL

Three senior managers of a Jamaican investment firm that bilked sprint legend Usain Bolt of \$12 million, are to face a Kingston, Jamaica court on January 26th to answer multiple fraud charges.

Hugh Croskery, founder of Stocks & Securities Limited (SSL), his daughter Sarah Meany and former CEO Zachary Harding, were charged by police on December 28th, one day after being arrested in the Jamaican capital.

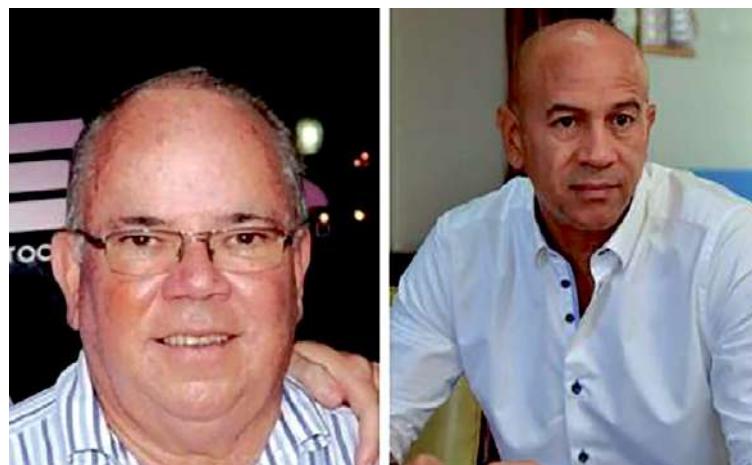
The Financial Investigations Division, (FID), a government agency that has probed the case since revelations broke in January, 2023, said they were each charged with fraudulently inducing persons to invest money under section 28 of the Larceny Act; failure to register a company carrying on business in Jamaica, under section 363 of the Companies Act; carrying on a securities business without a dealer's license, per Section 7 of the Securities Act); failure to apply to the [Financial Services]

Commission to be registered for securities issued, under section 26 of the Securities Act; and breaches of section 22A of the Banking Services Act.

Croskery and Meany were taken into custody on December 27th following a joint operation by several law enforcement squads at four premises - three in St. Andrew parish and one in St. James parish, located 170 kilometers west of Kingston. Croskery, according to the FID, was arrested at a St. Andrew address where electronic devices and several documents were also seized.

Prior to their arrests, only Jean-Ann Panton, a former SSL wealth advisor, had been implicated. She has confessed to stealing from clients' accounts and is charged with three counts of larceny as a servant, three counts of falsification of accounts, five counts of forgery, five counts of uttering forged documents, three counts of engaging in transaction involving stolen property, and three counts of breaches of the Cybercrimes Act.

Just over 200 people



Hugh Croskery, l., founder of Stocks & Securities Limited (SSL) and former CEO Zachary Harding, r., were charged by Jamaica police on December 28, 2025.

were fleeced of \$26 million in the sensational scam that grabbed international headlines because of Bolt's celebrity. The multiple Olympic and World Championship gold medalist has remained silent on the matter and did not issue a statement following the arrests. Aware that the SSL case has made Jamaicans even more skeptical of a justice system they believe shields the upper-class, Inspector Brenton Williams, head of the

Constabulary Financial Unit, (CFU), said his team conducted a diligent investigation.

"The alleged fraud was long-standing and sophisticated. Probing it required a comprehensive review of events dating back to SSL's inception in 2006, including careful analysis of investor activity and how funds moved across that entire period. Work of this nature takes time and must be done diligently," he said.

"We understand the public's

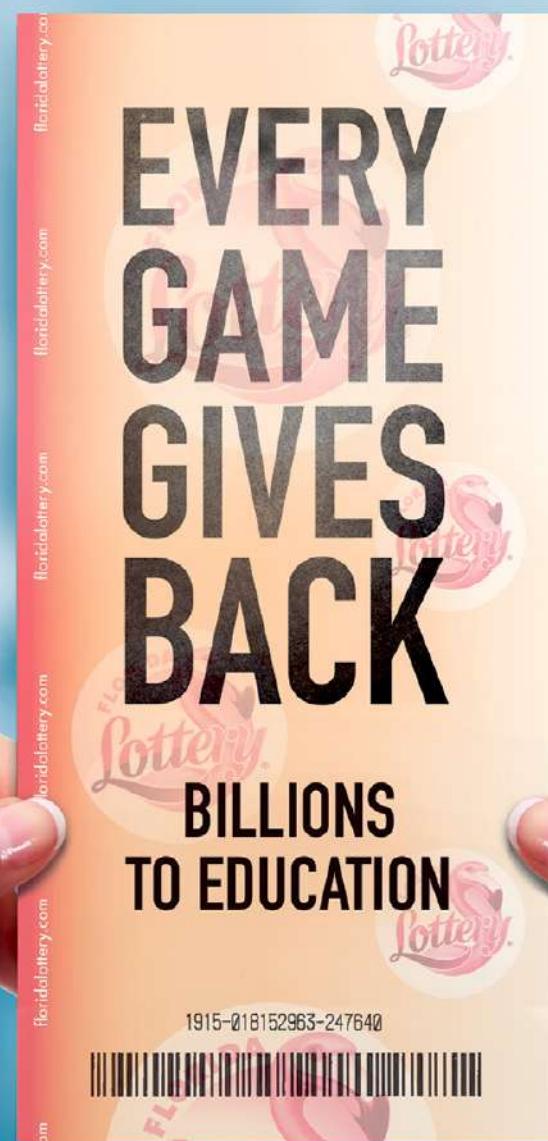
expectation for swift results, and that delays can be viewed negatively. However, the JCF (Jamaica Constabulary Force), the FID, and our law enforcement partners, including MOCA (Major Organized Crime and Anti-Corruption Agency), have the capacity and expertise to conduct these investigations thoroughly and bring matters forward in keeping with the rule of law."

Croskery and Harding are members of Jamaica's gentry and leading figures in the country's commercial sector. The former attended Ryerson University in Canada, where he worked for Bank of Nova Scotia.

Returning to Jamaica, he held important positions in the banking sector before starting the SSL 19 years ago.

Harding is the son of Ossie Harding, a respected lawyer who was Jamaica's Attorney General during the 1980s. He is the younger brother of Jeremy Harding, who produced Sean Paul's hit song, 'Infiltrate,' and once managed the Grammy-winning artist. Harding is also

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 6)



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# New York Medical Team Brings Critical Care And Healing To Hurricane-Ravaged Westmoreland

BY HOWARD CAMPBELL

Of the many medical missions she has been to Jamaica, the latest in December 2025 was most critical for Morvia Reid-Williams. The Jamaican, who lives in New York, was part of a six-member team that visited the parish of Westmoreland, one of the areas hardest hit by Hurricane Melissa.

Reid-Williams and colleagues from Emirates Facial and Dental Implants Center in New York, collaborated with local medics to treat people recovering from the devastation caused by the Category 5 system that made landfall in Jamaica on October 28, 2025.

People who showed up at the Little London Primary School in Westmoreland were examined for various illnesses, including hypertension, glucose levels, wounds, fungal infections, oral hygiene and trauma. Most of them received free medication. Reid-Williams, who is chief financial officer of the Bronx-based organization, said although the situation in Westmoreland is desperate, there were silver linings in the clouds.

"Sometimes out of bad things comes good things. There was a lot of trauma bonding, with people coming together due to their similar circumstances,"



Dr Jodian Manderson, Dental Director of EFDIC treating a patient at the dental mission in Westmoreland. (Contributed image)

she noted. "The lack of shelter, the lack of access to medical and dental care has added to their brokenness. For some, this trauma is compounded with preexisting trauma, so the healing has to begin from the mental health to the physical health."

The mission from Emirates Facial and Dental Implants Center was accompanied by four psychologists from the Caribbean Technical Assistance and Education Center For Health (C-TECH), based in Kingston. Dr. Mindi Fitz-Henley, president of the Medical Association of Jamaica; Dr. Sydney Tenn, Dr. Leesha Schaafé, Dr. Opeyemi Afolabi and Dr. Gayan Smith, were also part of the local

contingent. The greatest concern was the high rate of cavities among adults and children.

"Access to dental care has always been a challenge, even before Hurricane Melissa. This is why it was imperative for us to bring this service to this community at this time,"



Social worker Nereyda Franco doing one on one counseling at medical mission in Little London, Westmoreland. (Contributed image)

Reid-Williams disclosed. "Unfortunately, our dental team was not able to treat everyone who came, the volume was so great. It was quite heartbreaking for us but we did the best we could in such little time."

A social worker by profession, Reid-Williams is a senior partner in Emirates Facial and Dental Implants Center, which is owned by her

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husband Dr. Dwight Williams, a Westmoreland native. It was her 13th medical mission to Jamaica. On previous visits, she worked with the United Mission of Goodwill Inc, an American company registered in Jamaica.

Westmoreland and neighboring St. Elizabeth parish were most affected by Hurricane Melissa, the most powerful storm to hit Jamaica. Thousands of people were left homeless, and without electricity and water for weeks.

Hurricane Melissa resulted in the deaths of 45 people, with the Jamaican government estimating the cost of damage at \$8 billion.

Reid-Williams said it

was the first time she and her colleagues had responded to such devastation. The psychological effect on residents was glaring, she said.

"Our Mental Health team moved with grace throughout the crowd with words of encouragement. One-on-one counseling sessions were given to those who were open to it," she revealed. "Individuals sharing feelings of despair, sadness, depression and loneliness.

Incidences of different forms of abuse were expressed by individuals. Some stated that the feeling after the session was like a burden lifted off their shoulders."



## Jamaican Media Mourns Loss of Two Influential Figures Days Before End Of 2025

The Jamaican media fraternity is in mourning following the deaths of two respected figures within days of each other, just before the close of 2025 - veteran journalist and broadcaster Alma Mock Yen and award-winning sports journalist Donald Oliver.

The media community was shaken by the sudden death of Donald Oliver, 40, who collapsed Tuesday morning, Dec. 30th, after complaining of chest pains. Oliver, the PAJ's Sports Journalist of the Year in 2015, had worked at CVM TV, TVJ and SportsMax, and joined the Jamaica Observer as audiovisual manager in August 2025 following the closure of SportsMax.

Observer Executive Editor Vernon Davidson described Oliver as a consummate professional and "a wonderful human being," while sports journalist Leighton Levy paid an emotional tribute, calling him a "genius producer" whose documentaries helped shape Jamaica's sporting narrative.

The PAJ described Mock Yen as a "trailblazer whose legacy will continue to influence Jamaican media practice for years to come." She died on Dec. 31, 2025, at age 97, following a brief illness.



With the passing of Mock Yen and Oliver, the PAJ said Jamaica has lost two voices that profoundly shaped its media and public discourse - one after a lifetime of service, the other far too soon.



## Charged SSL Executives To Appear In Court On January 26th

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5)  
executive chair and co-founder of Delta Capital and has been featured in Forbes. He has previously declared to the Jamaica Observer that "my hands are clean" during an interview with the Observer Online on January 21, 2023 at a time when the fraud, the largest in Jamaica's history, was just unfolding.

Peter Champagnie, Croskery's lawyer, called on the public to resist speculation and allow the case to run its course through the courts.

"The matter is going to be before the court and we should allow the justice system to work and not rush to any judgement, or be given to any wild speculation," Champagnie said in a statement,

dated December 28th. "My client has consistently maintained his innocence and has always made himself available to all of the regulatory bodies that are involved in this matter. I just want to indicate that we should be cautious in rushing to judgement."

Croskery and Meany were released on bail in the sum of USD \$6,300 and ordered to surrender their travel documents. They are scheduled to make their first court appearance on January 26th, their attorneys King's

Counsel Peter Champagnie and Michael Hemmings confirmed. Harding was also released on bail but no details on his bail sum.

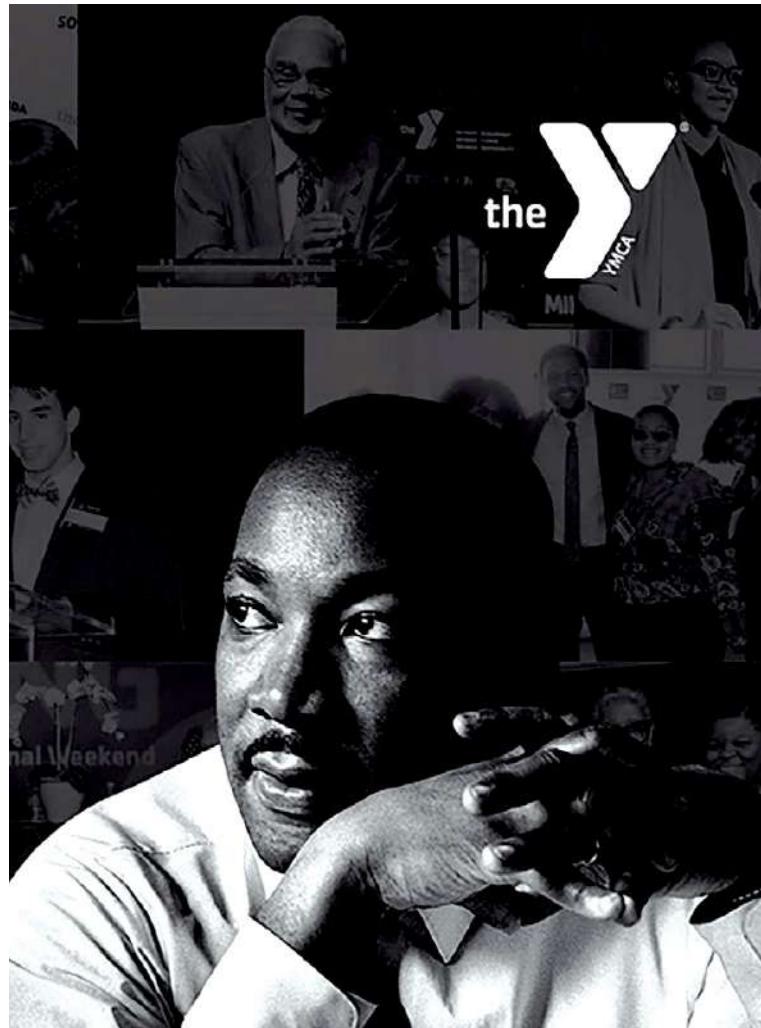


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## YMCA Of South Florida To Host 22nd Annual MLK Jr. Inspirational Celebrations



Highlights of the YMCA 22nd annual Martin Luther King Jr. Inspirational Celebration include an Inspirational Breakfast on January 16th at First Baptist Church in Fort Lauderdale.

The YMCA of South Florida will host its 22nd annual Martin Luther King Jr. Inspirational Celebrations from January 15-19, bringing together more than 1,400 community members across Broward and

Miami-Dade counties to honor Dr. King's legacy of service, justice, and unity. Delta Air Lines is the signature sponsor.

Highlights include an Inspirational Breakfast on January 16th at First Baptist

## Trump Administration Drops MLK Day And Juneteenth From National Park Service Free Days

The Trump administration has revised the National Park Service's list of fee-free days for 2026, dropping several long-standing holidays and adding new ones - a move that has sparked controversy.

Among the removed dates are Martin Luther King Jr. Day and Juneteenth, two holidays tied directly to Black history. Both had been included as free-entry days in 2024 and 2025. Juneteenth became a federal holiday in 2021, commemorating the end of slavery in the United States.

The Interior Department has not explained why the holidays were removed, though President Donald Trump has made rolling back diversity, equity and inclusion initiatives a priority of his second term.

Other eliminated free

days include the opening day of National Park Week (April 19), Great American Outdoors Day (Aug. 4), National Public Lands Day (Sept. 27), and National Wildlife Refuge Week (Oct. 12).

At the same time, the administration added new fee-free dates for 2026, including June 14 - Flag Day, which also marks Trump's birthday. Additional free days include Presidents Day, Memorial Day, Independence Day weekend, Constitution Day, the National Park Service's 110th birthday, and Theodore Roosevelt's birthday.

Critics say the changes reflect shifting political priorities rather than public access goals.

\*

Church in Fort Lauderdale and an Inspirational Luncheon the same day at Jungle Island in Miami. Both events will feature keynote speaker Dr. Joyce Ladner, a renowned civil rights activist and former Howard University interim president who helped organize the 1963 March on Washington.

The celebrations conclude on Monday, January 19th, with a Day of Service at YMCA locations in Fort Lauderdale and Miami, where volunteers will lead community improvement projects.

Proceeds support the YMCA's "I Have a Dream" Youth Scholarship Fund.

The YMCA will also present youth leadership and community awards recognizing individuals who embody Dr. King's ideals.

For more information, visit [ymcasouthflorida.org/standforsomething](http://ymcasouthflorida.org/standforsomething)

\*

## VP Music Group Partners With Food For The Poor To Support Jamaica's Post-Hurricane Rebuilding

VP Music Group has partnered with Food For The Poor to support long-term recovery efforts in Jamaica following the devastation caused by Hurricane Melissa.

The partnership focuses on helping families and communities rebuild after the storm, which displaced thousands and caused widespread damage across the island. As part of the initiative, VP Music Group has launched an official donation portal in collaboration with Food For The Poor to raise funds for essential building materials, including lumber, roofing supplies, cement, hardware, and construction tools.

Food For The Poor will manage the procurement and distribution of materials, prioritizing communities most severely impacted and ensuring assistance reaches households with the greatest rebuilding needs.

"Our island home Jamaica

is facing a very difficult moment, with families left without homes, resources, and in some cases, hope," said Patricia "Miss Pat" Chin, co-founder of VP Records.

"Through our partnership with Food For The Poor, we are committed to helping families as they rebuild."

The initiative builds on VP Music Group's broader Hurricane Melissa response, which has included support for humanitarian flights, benefit concerts in New York and South Florida, and early recovery funding through existing partnerships.

Donations to support Jamaica's rebuilding efforts can be made through the Food For The Poor campaign portal - <https://champions.foodforthepoor.org/campaign/751771/donate?A0W2DaB-9jNkLqW9liE1M-PJSIIteICh-JqMJxBSDR43c.ULRawb>

\*

## Spring Health



The April issue of Caribbean Today will feature a comprehensive examination of how the healthcare industry serves the Caribbean community.

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## FEATURE

# Caribbean Immigrant Educator Is Now New York City's Schools Chancellor

New York City's newly-sworn-in mayor, Zohran Mamdani, has appointed Caribbean immigrant educator Kamar Samuels as the next chancellor of the nation's largest public school system, a move being widely welcomed by educators and diaspora leaders alike.

Samuels, a Jamaican-born lifelong educator, will lead a school system serving more than one million students with an annual budget exceeding US\$40 billion. His appointment places a Caribbean immigrant at the helm of one of the most powerful education roles in the United States.

"As someone who has spent nearly two decades in our classrooms, schools, and districts, I know that our students thrive when schools are fully funded, educators are supported, and systems are designed around equity and opportunity," Samuels said

in a statement. He pledged to confront school segregation, invest in teachers, strengthen literacy outcomes, and ensure every child receives the support needed to succeed.

Among his early priorities, Samuels said he will work with Mayor Mamdani to address student homelessness, hire thousands of additional teachers, and, for now, maintain the city's Gifted and Talented program for kindergarten students.

The United Federation of Teachers endorsed the appointment, describing Samuels as a leader with the "experience and perspective" that comes from being both a former classroom teacher and a seasoned education administrator.

Samuels attended Jamaica College before migrating to the United States. He earned an accounting degree from Baruch College, City University



New Jamaican born Schools Chancellor, Kamar Samuels, at podium with New York City's newly-sworn-in mayor, Zohran Mamdani, at right.

of New York, followed by a master's degree in childhood education from Lehman College. Before entering public education full-time, he worked

as a finance manager with the National Basketball Association, experience that later proved valuable in managing large school budgets.

Samuels began his education career through the NYC Teaching Fellows program, teaching elementary school in the Bronx before rising through school leadership and district administration. He has since served as a principal, deputy superintendent in Brooklyn, and superintendent in both Brooklyn and Manhattan.

Beyond New York, Samuels has remained deeply engaged with the Caribbean diaspora, previously serving as education chair and president of JAMPACT, an organization supporting early childhood education in Jamaica.

His appointment is being seen as both a milestone for Caribbean immigrants and a signal of the Mamdani administration's focus on equity-driven education reform.

- *NewsAmericasNow.com*



BY DAVID L. SNELLING

Florida Republican Gov. Ron DeSantis has appointed Haitian American Pascale Achille as judge for Florida's 17th Judicial Circuit Court.

The former Broward prosecutor is among a few judges of Haitian descent in Florida.

In 2025, Woody Clermont was appointed judge in the 17th Judicial Circuit Court in Broward County; Lody Jean was the first Haitian-American woman to be appointed on the Miami-Dade County Court and is the first Haitian-American to be appointed to the Eleventh Circuit Court, and Florence Taylor Barner became the first Haitian American judge elected in Broward County in 2016.

Achille fills the judicial vacancy created by the resignation of Judge Gary Farmer Jr. "I am truly grateful to the Governor's Office and the Judicial Nominating Commission for the privilege of serving the people as a circuit court judge," said Achille. "It has

## Haitian American Jurist Appointed Judge In Florida



New Haitian American Circuit Court Judge Pascale Achille

been an honor to serve Broward County as an assistant state attorney."

Achille, who lives in Fort Lauderdale, was a prosecutor for Broward County's Homicide Trial Unit for 10 years and she

previously was an associate for Bast Amron LLP, handling federal and state civil cases and arguing before the Second and Fifth Districts Courts of Appeal.

She earned her bachelor's degree from Florida State

University and her juris doctorate from Nova Southeastern University.

According to the Haitian American community, Achille's judicial appointment reflects her commitment to the American judicial system and her role in enhancing Caribbean representation in South Florida's judiciary.

Chief Judge of the 17th Judicial Circuit Court Carol-Lisa Phillips welcomed Achille to the bench. "We would like to formally congratulate and extend a warm welcome to Judge Pascale Achille on her appointment to the 17th Judicial Circuit Court bench. We greatly look forward to working alongside her," she said.

The state's 17th Judicial Circuit Court is the second largest in Florida and covers Broward County. It includes 90 judges: 32 county court judges and 58 circuit judges.

The circuit consists of four courthouses: the main Broward County Courthouse in Fort Lauderdale and three satellite

locations in Deerfield Beach, Plantation, and Hollywood.



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**Vol. 37, Number 2 - JAN. 2026**

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# Pope Leo Appoints Caribbean-Born Bishop Over Mar-a-Lago Diocese

In a move rich with symbolism amid intensifying U.S. immigration debates, Pope Leo XIV has appointed a Caribbean-born priest and outspoken migrant advocate to lead the Catholic diocese that includes Mar-a-Lago, the private estate of former U.S. President Donald Trump.

The Vatican announced that Rev. Manuel de Jesús Rodríguez, a native of the Dominican Republic and longtime pastor in Queens, New York, has been named Bishop of Palm Beach, Florida. The



Caribbean immigrant Priest Rev. Manuel de Jesús Rodríguez named Palm Beach Bishop.

parish suffered significant losses, deepening his focus on

- *NewsAmericasNow.com*



## Get Ready To Shell Out More For Immigration Services In 2026

As 2026 gets underway, immigrants and travelers alike are being reminded of a familiar truth in America: access now comes with a higher price tag.

Effective January 1st, the U.S. government quietly increased several immigration-related fees, citing inflation. On paper, the hikes appear modest - a few dollars here, a few dollars there.

In practice, they add up for families already navigating an increasingly hostile, complex, and expensive immigration system. According to a Federal Register notice, the Department of Homeland Security has adjusted certain H.R. 1 immigration fees for fiscal year 2026 to reflect inflation from July 2024 through July 2025. Anyone submitting applications postmarked on or after January 1st must now pay the higher rates.

Among the increases: the annual asylum application fee rises from \$100 to \$102. Initial employment authorization documents for asylum applicants, parolees, and Temporary Protected Status holders increase from \$550 to \$560. Renewal or extension fees for parole and TPS work permits go from \$275 to \$280. Application fees for Temporary Protected Status has risen from \$500 to \$510.

While some fees - including the initial asylum filing fee and certain renewals - remain unchanged for now, DHS has made clear that inflationary adjustments will continue annually.

For many immigrants, especially asylum seekers and TPS holders, these increases land at a time when work authorization delays,



**FELICIA J.  
PERSAUD**

enforcement pressure, and legal uncertainty are already pushing families to the edge. Ten dollars may not sound like much in Washington. For households juggling rent, food, legal fees, and remittances, it matters.

And the costs don't stop there.

### REAL ID

Beginning February 1, 2026, travelers who arrive at airport security checkpoints without an acceptable form of identification - including a REAL ID-compliant driver's license - will be offered a new option: pay \$45 to fly.

Under a new Transportation Security Administration program called ConfirmID, passengers without proper ID can pay a \$45 fee for a temporary identity verification process that allows them to proceed through security. The payment covers a 10-day window and can be used for multiple flights during that period.

TSA officials describe the program as a "last resort," urging travelers to secure REAL ID-compliant documents in advance. But for immigrants, seniors, low-income travelers, and those stuck in DMV backlogs, "last resort" may quickly become routine.

The ConfirmID process may involve additional screening and longer wait times, and while TSA says more than 94% of travelers already present acceptable identification, the remaining six percent will now face a financial barrier on top of inconvenience.

The policy shift reflects a broader philosophy taking hold across federal agencies: the cost of heightened screening and enforcement should be borne by individuals, not the government.

REAL ID enforcement, signed into law decades ago but delayed repeatedly, fully took effect in May 2025. Now, the message is clear - comply, pay, or don't travel.

## Man Realities

Men say that women are nagging and miserable, while women say that men only have one thing on their misogynistic minds and are insensitive to their needs. It's a question of misunderstanding, miscommunication and mystifying conclusions by both parties.

There is no quick fix, no formula, no blueprint to display and say, "Here I am, this is me, accept me for what I am." Not at all, for after centuries of dealing with men, many women have become suspicious, jaded, wary.

Now on to the realities that every man should take heed of. It's often been said that nice guys finish last, and good guys only win in the movies. It's also been proven too, hence the old saying, "Women love bad men." But apart from those home truths that have become cliché, there are

many others that men should be aware of.

Now maybe back in the day when chivalry and civility were the order of the day, those rules may not have applied, but as Bob Dylan sang, "The times they are a changing."

The first reality is: Nice men are used. That is so sad, for it's natural for human beings to be nice to each other for the most part, and for men to be nice to women...for the most part, ulterior motives notwithstanding. But unfortunately, there are



**TONY  
ROBINSON**

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 10)

Taken together, the immigration fee increases and the new TSA identity charge points to a deeper reality. Mobility, work authorization, safety, and legal status are being steadily monetized. For immigrants in particular, compliance is no longer just bureaucratic - it is financial.

DHS insists these measures improve security and efficiency. But for the communities most affected, they feel like yet

another layer of deterrence - one more way to make life harder, movement costlier, and belonging conditional.

As we move deeper into 2026, immigrants and travelers would be wise to plan ahead: file early, double-check documents, budget for higher fees, and expect less flexibility from systems that increasingly treat access as a privilege you pay for. In today's America, freedom of movement - whether across

borders or through an airport checkpoint - comes with a receipt.

**Felicia J. Persaud** is the founder and publisher of NewsAmericasNow.com, the only daily syndicated newswire and digital platform dedicated exclusively to Caribbean Diaspora and Black immigrant news across the Americas.



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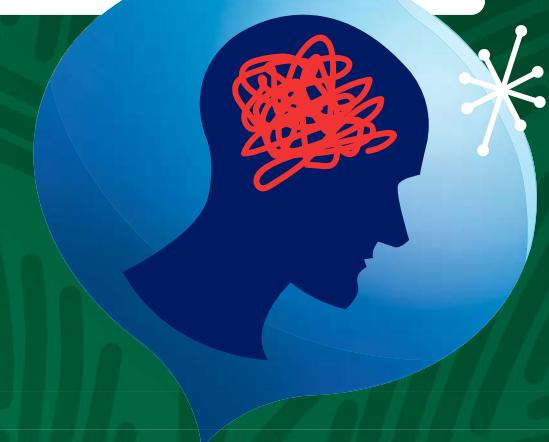
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# How Responsible Engagement Secured Antigua And Barbuda's Interests

BY E.P. CHET GREENE

In an era where international relations are often dominated by headlines of discord and unilateral action, the recent and successful engagement between Antigua and Barbuda and the United States over new security proclamations stands as a masterclass in mature, effective diplomacy.

The outcome, which safeguards the interests of our citizens while respecting U.S. security imperatives, is not a matter of luck. It is the direct result of calm, professional and persistent diplomatic efforts, led with distinction by our Ambassador to the United States and the OAS, Sir Ronald Sanders.

Faced with the potential disruption caused by the U.S. proclamation of December 16, 2025, our government moved with swiftness and strategic clarity. Under the direct guidance of Prime Minister Gaston Browne and my ministerial leadership at the Foreign Affairs Ministry, Ambassador Sanders was instructed to engage immediately with the highest levels of the U.S. State Department.

He did not go to Washington to protest or posture but to negotiate, clarify and secure the interests of every Antiguan and

Barbudan citizen

The results, as detailed in Ambassador Sanders' statement, are unequivocally positive. The U.S. has confirmed it will respect all existing visas, providing immediate certainty to our students, business travelers, tourists and families. It has guaranteed no revocation of pre 2025 visas, protecting the substantial investments and plans of our people.

This immediate clarity alleviated the foremost anxieties of our citizens, a testament to diplomacy that listens to and acts upon the concerns of the people.

For future arrangements, Ambassador Sanders, working in lockstep with the Cabinet, secured a cooperative path forward.

The alignment of biometric systems is a practical measure of enhanced security cooperation and must not be seen as a punitive barrier. As he emphatically stated, the process for our citizens will be no different; only the technology will be harmonized. This was a key concession achieved through negotiation, ensuring our systems are compatible while preserving the dignity and ease of travel for our people.

Throughout this delicate process, Ambassador Sanders exemplified the highest standards of diplomatic service. He kept

Prime Minister Browne, Attorney General Cutie Benjamin and I continuously abreast of all developments, ensuring our leadership was fully informed and that our national strategy was executed with precision. His approach, combining unwavering advocacy for Antigua and Barbuda with a deep respect for the U.S.'s security prerogatives, created the atmosphere of the mutual trust necessary for a rapid and fair resolution.

This successful outcome also speaks to the receptive and professional conduct of the officials within the United States Department of State. We express sincere appreciation for their expeditious and good-faith response to our request for engagement. Their willingness to listen and work constructively reflects the enduring strength



of the bilateral relationship our nations have nurtured over decades.

This entire episode underscores the outstanding and effective leadership of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. From the strategic direction set at the political level to the expert execution by our ambassador in the field, our diplomatic machinery proved its worth.

We demonstrated that a small state, when guided by principle and professional diplomacy, can engage with the world's largest power not from a position of weakness but from one of respect and reasoned

partnership

Antigua and Barbuda has reaffirmed our commitment to being a responsible international partner, pledged to security cooperation and steadfast in protecting the rights and interests of our citizens. This is what effective governance looks like.

We have achieved clarity, preserved vital people-to-people ties while at the same time strengthening the framework of our cooperation with the United States. For this, the nation owes a debt of gratitude to the diplomatic team, led by Sir Ronald Sanders, whose skill and dedication turned a potential challenge into a demonstration of diplomatic excellence.

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** E.P. Chet Greene, is the Foreign Affairs, Trade and Barbuda Affairs Minister in Antigua and Barbuda.

- CMC



## Man Realities



it's been said that power is the ultimate turn on.

Now honesty is the best policy they say, but many men have learnt the hard way that being totally honest with their women often blows up in their faces.'

But does honesty and being gullible go hand in hand, should a man hold back, not show his hand? But how can that go into the making of a good relationship?

Loyal men are taken for granted. Another reality. Who's the loyal man though? He's the guy who never cheats on his woman, defends her every action even when she's wrong, and forgives her indiscretions. But no good deed goes unpunished, for by doing all that, he's often taken for granted. In her mind, she has him by the nose ring and she can now do anything and get away with it.

Despite the bravado, machismo and physicality of most men, it's proven that many are

emotional creatures. Most do not show it though, but put on a brave face, are stoic, stiff upper lip and all that, old chap, and never ever show even a modicum of emotion.

Unfortunately, when men show their emotions, the women sometimes throw it in their faces, seeing it as a weakness: "Man up, stop sniveling."

Now we see how complex relationships can be, especially in this new age world. Many women no longer accept these realities of men who show any modicum of civility, sensitivity, being emotional or shyness. A new reality?

**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 [seidolloyd@gmail.com](mailto:seidolloyd@gmail.com) for feedback.



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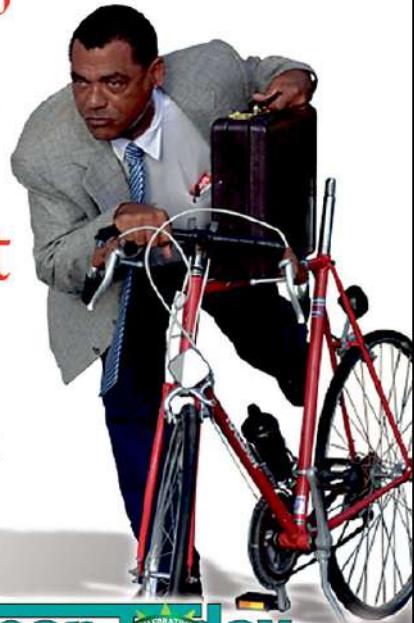
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## Petition Calling For Nicki Minaj's Deportation Draws Thousands Of Signatures

A controversial petition circulating on Change.org calling for the deportation of Trinidad-born rapper Nicki Minaj has drawn tens of thousands of signatures, igniting debate over celebrity, speech, and immigration rhetoric.

As of press time, the petition had surpassed 81,000 signatures. Created by an individual identified only as "Pedonika Minaj," it urges U.S. authorities to deport the artist, born Onika Tanya Maraj, citing alleged online harassment, controversial public statements, and concerns about her personal associations. None of the claims have been substantiated by medical or legal authorities.

Immigration experts stress that deportation is governed by federal law and requires clear statutory grounds such as criminal convictions or immigration violations - not online campaigns or public opinion. Legal analysts also note that U.S. citizens cannot be deported, regardless of controversy.



Erika Kirk, (L), speaks with Nicki Minaj during Turning Point's annual AmericaFest conference in Phoenix, Arizona on December 21, 2025. (OLIVIER TOURON/Getty Images)

The petition gained traction following Minaj's appearance at Turning Point USA's AmericaFest, where she voiced support for conservative causes and praised former President Donald Trump and Vice President JD Vance. Her remarks sparked fan backlash across social media, with critics accusing her of aligning with divisive political narratives.

### ADVOCATES

Advocates warn that calls for deportation aimed at immigrant and diaspora figures often reflect broader social tensions rather than legitimate legal pathways. Despite its rapid growth, the petition carries no legal authority, serving instead as a flashpoint in ongoing culture-war debates.

## New Caribbean Music Drops For Carnival 2026 Season



Leading the charge is Bunji Garlin, who returns with "Still A Road Man," released in both main and acoustic versions.

Carnival 2026 is next month and the march down the road has already started with new Caribbean music. From soca anthems built for trucks and fetes to melodic reflections and riddim-driven collaborations, a wave of new music is landing early - and loudly.

Leading the charge is Bunji Garlin, who returns with "Still A Road Man," released in both main and acoustic versions. The single, produced under Bad Beagle and exclusively licensed to Diaspora Sound, blends Bunji's signature grit with reflective lyrics that reaffirm his place as a Carnival mainstay.

heading into 2026.

Also setting the tone is Nailah Blackman with "Origins," a polished soca release produced by Stemz and Johann "Madman" Seaton. The track leans into heritage, rhythm, and identity, pairing contemporary soca energy with strong visual storytelling in its official music video.

Veteran energy meets fresh chemistry on "Come Back," a collaboration between Erphaan Alves and Sheriff, released under Soca Global Entertainment. The track keeps the tempo high while tapping into themes of return and

connection that resonate deeply with Carnival audiences.

Meanwhile, Carnival heavyweight Machel Montano links up with Skinny Fabulous and breakout duo Lil Natty & Thunda on "Pull D Pin," part of the Monkey Business Riddim. Produced by King Bubba FM, Dwaingerous, and Montano himself, the track delivers high-octane soca crafted for mass movement and crowd eruption.

Another standout collaboration comes from Mical Teja and Patrice Roberts on "Capital." The song blends smooth vocals with modern soca production, while its visuals add cinematic polish to an already radio-ready release.

The Heritage Riddim also arrives as a defining Carnival 2026 project, featuring tracks like Olatunji's "She Tempo" and "Body Talking" by Chromatics. Produced by Body Roc and Shot Master J, the riddim leans into cultural pride while keeping the energy primed for the road.

Rounding out the early drops are Healing by Tish Official featuring Evolution The Band, and "Come Down" by M1 aka Menace, Slammer Cutter, and Stemz - both releases signaling that Carnival 2026 will offer depth alongside bacchanal. The message is clear: the Carnival 2026 soundtrack is already taking shape - and the road is officially open.

- NewsAmericasNow.com

The backlash against Minaj, who is married to comes as the rapper appeared at Turning Point USA's four-day AmericaFest 2026 summit.

On the final day of the conservative conference, the rapper, 43, joined Charlie Kirk's widow, Erika Kirk, to speak about her newfound admiration for President Donald Trump and Vice President JD Vance.

Her remarks led to significant fan backlash, and as of Wednesday last week, her Instagram account now reads: "Sorry, this page isn't available." A number of followers, however, pointed out that the "Beez in the Trap" artist had previously quit Instagram, doing so in October. Minaj's X account remains active.

It came on the heels of her publicly backing President Donald Trump's allegations that Christians face persecution in Nigeria.

"In Nigeria, Christians are being targeted," Minaj said at an event organized by the US at the UN, adding: "Churches have been burned, families have been torn apart... simply because of how they pray."

Analysts say that jihadists

and other armed groups have waged campaigns of violence that affect all communities in the West African nation, regardless of background or belief.

### IN THE PAST

Minaj has been open about coming to the United States as an undocumented child. In an emotional social media post in 2018, she called out the separation of families at the border during Trump's first administration.

"I came to this country as an illegal immigrant. I can't imagine the horror of being in a strange place & having my parents stripped away from me at the age of 5," she reportedly wrote in the caption of a photo showing young children separated from their parents at the border being detained.

"This is so scary to me. Please stop this," she wrote. "Can you try to imagine the terror & panic these kids feel right now? Not knowing if their parents are dead or alive, if they'll ever see them again."

- NewsAmericasNow.com



## Who Will Take Home The 2026 Reggae Grammy?



The five reggae artists up for this year's Grammy's.

The race is officially on for the 2026 Grammy Award for Best Reggae Album, with five strong contenders vying for the genre's biggest international honor when the awards take place on February 1, 2026.

The nominees, announced November 7, 2025, during the Recording Academy's live stream, are Lila Iké's 'Treasure Self Love,' Vybz Kartel's 'Heart & Soul,' Keznamdi's 'BLXXD & FYAH,' Mortimer's 'From Within,' and Jesse Royal's 'No Place Like Home.'

For Kartel and Royal, this marks their second Grammy nod, while Iké, Keznamdi, and

Mortimer earn their first-ever nominations - signaling a fresh wave of reggae voices gaining global recognition.

The nominated albums span roots reggae, modern dancehall, and conscious reggae, reflecting the genre's evolving sound and depth. Last year's winner was 'Bob Marley: One Love - Music Inspired By the Film.'

Final voting runs through early this month, with the winner set to be revealed live from Los Angeles on Grammy night, Feb. 1st.



## ARTS &amp; ENTERTAINMENT NEWS

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**Jamaica Strong Benefit Concert Raises Over US\$500,000 For Hurricane Melissa Relief**

The Jamaica Strong Benefit Concert, staged on December 12, 2025, at UBS Arena in Queens, has raised more than US\$500,000, (approximately J\$80 million), in net ticket proceeds to support relief and recovery efforts following the devastation caused by Hurricane Melissa.

The fundraising total was confirmed by George Crooks of Jammins Events, one of the concert's organizers, who said the event united the global Jamaican diaspora in a powerful humanitarian response to the storm.

According to Bobby Clarke, co-founder of the Irie Jam Foundation, proceeds from the sold-out concert

will be distributed to trusted organizations already engaged in on-the-ground recovery. These include US\$150,000 each to the Shaggy Make A Difference Foundation, the Sean Paul Foundation, and the Government of Jamaica Hurricane Melissa Relief Fund. An additional US\$50,000 will go to the Irie Jam Foundation to support the repair and rebuilding of primary schools in Jamaica's western parishes, particularly Cornwall, one of the areas hardest hit by the hurricane.

"By directing funds to both national and community-based organizations, we are ensuring that support reaches families and communities where the need is most immediate and the impact



**Jamaica Strong Executives, L-R: Bobby Clarke, Irie Jam radio; Kacy Rankine, Roadblock radio and George Crooks, Jammins Events, share lens time with Grammy winning dancehall/reggae icon Shaggy (2nd from r.) (Photo Credit: Sam Johnston/ UBS Arena)**

most meaningful," Clarke said.

Kacy Rankine, CEO of RoadBlock Radio, emphasized the cultural significance of the

during a moment of national crisis.

Nearly 10,000 supporters filled UBS Arena, demonstrating strong engagement from the Jamaican diaspora and friends of Jamaica who came together in solidarity.

The concert was jointly organized by Irie Jam Radio, the Irie Jam Foundation, Jammins Events, and RoadBlock Radio. Organizers stressed that while the concert marked a major milestone, long-term recovery from Hurricane Melissa is ongoing and continued support remains critical.

"The spirit of Jamaica Strong lives on," Rankine said, "as communities continue the work of rebuilding with resilience and hope."

**Morgan Heritage, Gramps Morgan And Wayne Wonder To Be Honoured At South Florida Grammy Certificates Ceremony**

**FLASHBACK** - Guitarist Radcliffe Bryan and Kennedy Mensah of Back 2 Da Future Music Limited at the first Grammy Certificate ceremony at Island Space Caribbean Museum in Plantation, Florida in July 2024. Bryan was presented with seven certificates for playing on Grammy-winning and Grammy-nominated albums. (Contributed image)

**BY HOWARD CAMPBELL**

When Paul Simon decided to record a reggae song for his self-titled second album in 1971, he headed to Kingston, Jamaica where that hot, new sound was born. Two of the musicians he worked with were guitarist Hux Brown and bassist Jackie Jackson.

They played on 'Mother And Child Reunion,' the 1972 single that became one of Simon's biggest hits. Brown and Jackson established themselves as leading session musicians during the rock steady era from 1966-68. It superseded Ska and preceded reggae which emerged in 1969.

Responsible for some of the most sampled rhythms in Jamaican music, rock steady turns 60 in 2026. Arch-rival producers Arthur "Duke" Reid and Clement "Coxson" Dodd produced the lion's share of those songs for their Treasure Isle and Studio One labels.

Jackson, 77, played on many of the classic songs at Treasure Isle in Kingston, including 'Girl I've Got A Date,' by Alton Ellis, 'Ba Ba Boom,' (The Jamaicans), 'Intensified,' (Desmond Dekker and The Aces) and 'Hypocrites, Thank You Lord,' (The Wailers).

"The greatest legacy of rock steady is that it's the best genre of Jamaican music and it will always be remembered as such. Treasure Isle Studios was special for me, because I was given a chance to hone my craft and develop my creative ability without fear or intimidation," he said.

The rock steady era produced some of reggae's most influential singers and groups. They are led by Ellis, John Holt, Ken Boothe, Marcia Griffiths, Delroy Wilson, The Heptones,

Back 2 Da Future Music Limited, a London-based publishing company, will stage its fourth Grammy Certificates presentation in South Florida on January 22nd. The event is scheduled for the Island Space Caribbean Museum in Plantation.

Grammy-winning band Morgan Heritage, singers Gramps Morgan, Wayne Wonder and musician Robert Browne, will receive certificates sanctioned by the Recording Academy, for working on Grammy-winning and Grammy-nominated albums.

Morgan Heritage will be acknowledged for performing alongside Sting and Shaggy on the song, 44/876, from their album of the same name which won the Grammy Award for Best Reggae Album in 2019.

Gramps, the band's vocalist/keyboardist, will receive certificates for collaborating on J Boog's 'Wash House Ting,' and 'Evolution,' by The Wailers, which were nominated for Best Reggae Album in 2017 and 2025, respectively.

Wayne Wonder will be recognized for appearing on songs from Shaggy's 'Bombastic,' which won the 1996 Best Reggae Album Grammy; and Buju Banton's 'Friends For Life,' which was nominated in 2004.

Browne, a guitarist, is being recognized for playing on four Grammy nominees - Ziggy Marley and The Melody Makers' 'Free Like We Want 2 Be,' Burning Spear's 'Free Man,' Shaggy's 'Summer In Kingston' and 'A Matter of Time' by Protoje.

This is the second Grammy Certificate ceremony to be held in South Florida. The first took place at Island Space Caribbean Museum in July 2024, where guitarist Radcliffe Bryan was presented with seven certificates for his work on Grammy-winning and Grammy-nominated albums.

Kennedy Mensah, founder and principal of Back 2 Da Future Music Limited, has staged similar events in London and Kingston, Jamaica. Music producers and audio engineers have also been honored.

"We have been elated by the response to the four ceremonies we have staged thus far. In 2024 especially, we had so much media coverage we were finding it hard to keep up," he said. "Honorees were initially our clients alone but this has been extended to the clients of (New York-based publishing company) Royalty Network and now to individuals who wish to also receive their certification and be a part of our ceremonies."

**Rock Steady At 60: Jamaican Music's Golden Era That Shaped Reggae And The World**

**Bassist Jackie Jackson played on many of the classic songs at Treasure Isle in Kingston, including 'Girl I've Got A Date,' by Alton Ellis.**

The Melodians, The Paragons and The Techniques.

Interestingly, the man credited with crafting this dance craze was not born in Jamaica. That distinction goes to Lynn Taitt, a guitarist from Trinidad's San Fernando valley, who went to Kingston in 1962 as part of a delegation to celebrate Jamaica's independence from Britain.

In a 2003 interview with the Jamaica Observer newspaper, Taitt recalled conducting the session for Take It Easy by Hopeton Lewis, which many musicologists recognize as the first rock steady song.

"When I went to Jamaica and started playing with (bandleader) Baba Brooks and those guys, everything was fast, but in Trinidad they

had fast calypso and slow calypso. So that day, I told Gladys (keyboardist Gladstone Anderson) to slow the tempo and that's how Take It Easy and rock steady came about. Rock steady is really slow ska," he said.

Taitt, who died in 2010 at age 75 in Montreal, Canada, played on numerous hit songs such as (007) Shantytown by Desmond Dekker and The Aces, Hold Me Tight (Johnny Nash) and Stop That Train by Keith and Tex. He never received a national award in Jamaica.

Rock Steady enjoyed a major renaissance during the 1990s thanks to shows like Heineken Startime. There are plans to honor its pioneers and survivors this year.



## Start The New Year Right With This Healthy Recipe

It's the New Year and that means time to put those resolutions into action and ensure you eat your way to better health. Here is a recipe with a Caribbean twist to include in your weekly routine.

### Island Shrimp With Calypso Rice

#### INGREDIENTS

- 2 (8-oz) packages frozen island lime shrimp
- 1 cup frozen petite peas
- 1/4 cup pre-diced red onions
- 2 tablespoons Sofrito (Spanish cooking sauce)
- 2 (8.8-oz) pouches precooked yellow rice

#### METHOD

- Wash shrimp with vinegar and lime.
- Place shrimp in large sauté pan on medium. Cook 10–12 minutes, stirring occasionally, or until shrimp are pink and sauce is slightly thickened.
- Meanwhile, combine peas,

- NewsAmericasnow.com



onions, and sofrito in microwave-safe bowl. Cover and microwave on HIGH for 4 minutes or until hot.

- Stir in rice and microwave on HIGH for 2–3 more minutes or until rice is thoroughly heated. Stir rice; spoon shrimp mixture over rice and serve.
- Note: Sofrito is a cooking sauce made from tomatoes, garlic, peppers, and spices. It is used as a flavoring ingredient in many Caribbean recipes.

- NewsAmericasnow.com



Water isn't just something to drink; it flows through every aspect of life – from your morning coffee to your nightly skincare routine. The cleaner it is, the more it supports your health, beauty, your family's well-being, home and even the environment. Enhancing your home's water purity can make an impact every day.

#### 1. The Foundation Of Wellness

If you've ever filled a glass of water from the tap, taken a sip and thought something tasted off, it may have contained elevated levels of chemicals such as iron, manganese and hydrogen sulphide. Elevated levels of these contaminants not only make water less enjoyable to drink but also pose potential health hazards. Water filters, such as the Moen Whole Home Water Filtration System, can enhance water quality by helping remove elevated levels of contaminants, reducing odors and producing better-tasting water. This means quality meals, enjoyable drinks and a natural boost to your hydration. And when you drink more water, you support digestion, energy and overall health.

#### 2. Beauty Boost From The Tap

The benefits of clean water don't end in the kitchen. Chlorine and other harsh contaminants can strip your natural oils, leaving skin

dry and hair dull. Have you ever wondered why your skin feels tight after a shower, no matter the products you use? That culprit is likely those contaminants.

When your home uses purified water, your shower can become a more enjoyable experience. In addition to filtering water, you can also consider a water softener to help with skin sensitivity by reducing irritation and maintaining your body's natural moisture balance. With cleaner water, every shower can be transformed into a beauty ritual, creating a spa-like experience at home.

#### 3. Pure Water For Peace Of Mind

Kids and pets can be especially sensitive to what's in the water they consume and bathe in. Cleaner, filtered water can help support healthy growth, strong immune systems and development in kids, while four-legged family members benefit through better digestion, more hydration and a shinier coat of fur. Whether it's a sippy cup at dinner or bath time before bed, a whole-home water filtration system can provide peace of mind.

#### 4. Preserve Your Home, Protect Your Family

Purified water is better for your home's functionality. Contaminants and minerals such as

## Olive Oil Is Easier Than Ever To Cook With. Here's Why

Olive oil, fundamental to good living in the Mediterranean region and beyond, is a healthy, delicious ingredient that's now easier than ever to include in everything from salads and pasta to sautés and even desserts.

Recent bottle design innovations are tuning into how people actually cook today to put a fresh twist on time-honoured traditions and to give you more confidence and control in the kitchen. Bertolli, a trusted olive oil brand for 160 years known for its rich flavors and high quality, has rolled out a new 100% recycled PET squeeze bottle. Combining a comfortable grip and superior dosage control, the new design is a fun, affordable luxury that allows you to enjoy olive oil with precision. Available online and in grocery stores nationwide, Dress & Drizz is 15.5 ounces of rich extra-virgin olive oil suitable for dressing and drizzling salads, pastas and more.

To help inspire your culinary

adventures using the new bottle, Bertolli is sharing this recipe for Basil Pistachio Pesto from Sua Park, of @feedyourglow. Whip up a fresh batch and enjoy its creamy, herbaceous flavor on pasta, pizza, paninis and more!

#### INGREDIENTS:

- 3 cups basil leaves, lightly packed
- 2-3 large garlic cloves
- 1/4 cup toasted pistachios
- 1 tablespoon fresh lemon juice
- 3-4 tablespoons nutritional yeast
- Pink salt and pepper, to taste
- 1/4 cup Bertolli Dress & Drizz Extra Virgin Olive Oil
- Filtered water, to thin
- 2 teaspoons lemon zest

#### DIRECTIONS:

1. Place basil, garlic, toasted pistachios, lemon juice, nutritional yeast, toasted pistachios and a pinch of sea salt and pepper in a food processor. Pulse until it becomes a paste.

2. Drizzle in Bertolli extra virgin olive oil and process until smooth, scraping sides as needed.
3. Add filtered water until desired consistency, stir in lemon zest, then taste and adjust flavor, if needed.
4. Store extra pesto in an airtight glass container and refrigerate up to 4-5 days or pour large batches into ice cube molds and store in the freezer for up to 1-2 months.

To access more recipes and olive oil inspiration, visit: oliveoil.bertolli.com.

Olive oil is good for the body, good for the soul and essential to good living; and thanks to today's design innovations, incorporating it into your home cooking can be simple, joyful and satisfying.

- StatePoint



## 5 Ways Filtered Water Can Elevate Your Life

chlorine, calcium and magnesium can cause scale buildup and corrosion in appliances, affecting their efficiency and leading to stains on sinks and fixtures. Straining out these sediments helps appliances run smoothly and last longer, while keeping your home looking its best.

To further safeguard your home where water is concerned, consider installing the Flo Smart Water Monitor and Shutoff device, which constantly monitors water pressure and flow rate, helping detect and alert you of leaks as

small as a drop per minute.

#### 5. Water Without Waste

When tap water isn't up to par, it can be tempting to turn to bottled water. Filtration systems eliminate the need for single-use plastic, cutting down on waste and reducing your household's overall environmental footprint. In fact, water filters can save you up to 92% compared to buying bottled water, translating to \$354.05 per year per person. Additionally, whole-home systems eliminate the need for individual, short-

term filters on pitchers, sinks and showerheads for less waste, more savings, and a more consistent experience throughout the house.

For more information on how water can enhance your life, visit moen.com.

Whether it's drinking, cooking, bathing or protecting your home, improving your water quality has the power to elevate daily life.

- StatePoint



## Martinique Reclaims World's Best Rum Title at Caribbean Rum Awards



Rhum Depaz of Martinique won the World Championship at the 2025 Caribbean Rum Awards St Barth

celebrated Cuvée Prestige XO, praised by judges for its refined structure, layered aromatics and long, balanced finish that reflects the island's volcanic soils and meticulous aging traditions. The win follows last year's championship by another Martinique producer, Trois Rivières, underscoring the island's dominance in premium rum.

"This was the most competitive field we've ever seen," said awards founder Alexander Britell, noting the growing quality and diversity of global rum. More than 50 rums from across the Caribbean and beyond were judged by an international panel, making the accolade a milestone moment for both Rhum Depaz and Martinique.

- Rewritten from CaribJournal



Most of us try to attract other people by the friends we keep and the way we carry ourselves.  
If you are going to a party or a formal function, don't you dress well?  
We all want to promote a favorable impression of ourselves to other people we meet and talk to.  
If we agree on that, then think of this. Why should it be any different for your business?  
If you want to project a favorable image of your company, in order to win customers, you should keep your company with good friends and...dress your company well in...

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Peter A. Webley  
Publisher

# Haitian American Vice Mayor Bowen Launches Mental Health Awareness Program After Brother's Suicide

BY DAVID L. SNELLING

Coral Springs Vice Mayor Nancy Metayer Bowen is urging people who are suffering from a mental illness to seek professional help which might save their lives. Bowen, the first Haitian American to serve on the Coral Springs City Commission, is leading a mental health awareness campaign following the death of her younger brother, who committed suicide in December.

Bowen announced the death of Donovan Metayer on social media, calling him a "radiant child." He survived the 2018 Parkland shooting massacre and had struggled with mental health ever since, the family said.

"My baby brother, Donovan, died by suicide after a seven-year battle with schizophrenia," Metayer Bowen wrote in a Facebook post.

She thanked community members for their support in the days following Donovan's death, writing, "I see your

messages, hear your voicemails, and am deeply grateful for every expression of remorse."

"As I continue to navigate my grief, I am not in a space to carry conversations at this time, but please know your kindness has not gone unnoticed," she added.

Donovan Metayer was a senior at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida when alleged gunman Nikolas Cruz opened fire on Valentine's Day seven years ago, killing 17 students and teachers and seriously wounded 17 others. His family said the shooting left him reeling and slipped into a bout with depression.

He was later diagnosed with schizophrenia, a serious mental health condition that affects how people think, feel and behave, according to the Mayor Clinic. The condition can result in a mixture of hallucinations, delusions and disorganized thinking and behavior, and hallucinations involving seeing



Coral Springs Vice Mayor Nancy Metayer Bowen (l) and her late brother, Donovan Metayer. (Photos courtesy of Facebook)

things or hearing voices that aren't observed by others.

Delusions involve firm beliefs about things that are not true. People with schizophrenia can seem to lose touch with reality, which can make daily living very hard. People diagnosed with schizophrenia need lifelong treatment, which includes medicine, talk therapy and help in learning how to

manage daily life activities.

For Donovan Metayer, the condition derailed his plans of enrolling in college and earning a degree in computer science. According to his family, he was hospitalized for having suicidal thoughts and was Baker-acted in 2021 after a mental health breakdown.

The Baker Act, formally known as the Florida Mental Health Act, allows for the involuntary examination and treatment of individuals experiencing a mental health crisis who may pose a danger to themselves or others.

With the help of a psychiatrist and a mental health clinic, Metayer seemed to be getting better and even landed a job at Office Depot, where he earned a promotion and an IT certificate.

But he experienced a setback and later committed suicide. His family said Metayer purchased a gun from a gun shop and shot himself to death.

Nancy Metayer Bowen said her family is creating a mental health fund in Donovan's name, an effort that aims to expand access to mental health services and support for people and families who need it most.

"In lieu of calls, messages, or flowers, I invite you, if you are able, to consider a donation of any amount to support this effort," she wrote. "Thank you for holding our family in your thoughts and for honoring Donovan's memory with such grace, compassion, and love."

Nancy Metayer Bowen was the first Black and Haitian American female Coral Springs City Commissioner when she was first elected in 2020, according to her bio. Her vision for the city includes making the city a leader and sustainability and resilience and supporting small businesses and exploring opportunities in solar manufacturing, technology hubs and other community industries.



For the millions of Americans touched by Alzheimer's disease, last year brought major advances in understanding of brain health and progress in diagnosis and treatment. Here are the year's biggest advances, along with how you can take action with this knowledge in 2026:

## 1) A Structured Plan Can Sharpen Brain Health.

In a major U.S. clinical trial of older adults at risk for cognitive decline, two healthy lifestyle plans in the Alzheimer's Association's U.S. POINTER study improved memory and thinking skills over two years. Both interventions included exercise, brain-healthy nutrition, cognitive training and heart health monitoring. However, participants in a highly structured program that also included regular coaching and peer support showed significantly greater brain health gains, demonstrating that when brain-healthy habits are organized and supported, people stick with them and thinking skills benefit.

Next steps for families: Start small but structured: aim for 150 minutes of weekly exercise of at least moderate intensity, Mediterranean-style meals, 7–8 hours of sleep per night, and 2–3 short brain-training sessions each week. Put goals on a shared calendar, find an exercise or brain-health buddy, and schedule regular check-ins with your clinician or healthcare professional.

## 2) Simple Blood Tests Can Help Spot Changes Earlier.

In 2025, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) cleared two blood tests that detect Alzheimer's-related brain changes, offering a less invasive, less expensive option for those



experiencing memory changes to support diagnosis and potentially reduce the need for PET scans or spinal taps. Blood tests are not stand-alone diagnostic tools, but their use can help guide next steps for testing, treatment and planning. The Alzheimer's Association has developed clinical guidelines to help specialists determine when to use blood tests alongside established "gold standard" tests and clinical judgment.

Next step for families: Ask your health care team whether an Alzheimer's blood test makes sense for you or a loved one, and how your results would affect lifestyle and health care plans. If they recommend testing, ask them to refer you to a specialist who can explain the results and next steps.

## 3) Americans Want To Know And Act Sooner.

A recent Alzheimer's Association national survey of adults 45 and older found most want to learn early if they have Alzheimer's, before symptoms impact their lives, and 9 out of 10 would take a simple test, if available, to clarify next steps. Nearly 3 in 5 respondents said they would accept a moderate or high level of risk to take medication that could slow the disease's progression.

Early awareness unlocks time to live healthfully, organize support, consider treatment options, and plan finances and care preferences.

Next step for families: Bring your top concerns, what's changed (memory, mood, function), and goals for the next three months to your next appointment.

## 4) Treatment Can Be Easier To Take.

The August 2025 FDA approval of Leqembi for delivery via weekly subcutaneous injections may ease treatment for some patients. Those who complete initial infusion treatments as directed for 18 months can now receive their subsequent weekly treatment using at-home autoinjectors.

Fewer infusion clinic visits can mean less travel and lower caregiver burden, making it easier to stick to treatments for eligible patients. Decisions depend on eligibility, monitoring requirements, side-effect profile, and your clinician's judgment.

The Alzheimer's Association encourages clinician participation in ALZ-NET, a nationwide program collecting real-world data on Alzheimer's treatments.

Next step for families: If treatment is on the table, ask whether at-home injections might be an option after the initial phase, and what monitoring you'd still need.

## 5) A New Clinician Hub Helps Care Teams Stay Current.

When clinicians have fast access to evidence-based resources, patients get clearer answers and more consistent care. The new centralized professional portal, ALZPro, launched by the Alzheimer's Association, now curates practice guidelines,

professional training, and point-of-care tools for earlier detection, appropriate test use, treatment eligibility and safety monitoring.

Next step for families: Let your health care professional know that the Alzheimer's Association has new research, training and support materials for professionals.

For information, support, research and public policy, visit

The Alzheimer's Association at [alz.org](http://alz.org) or call 800.272.3900.

From new diagnostic tools and treatments to proven lifestyle plans, major advances in Alzheimer's in 2025 can change how you manage the disease in 2026.

- **StatePoint**



## Chiropractors Back CBD For Inflammation Relief

A man arrived at the office of Doctor of Chiropractic, (DC), Andrew Lewis Jr. in excruciating back pain. A first-time patient, he explained that his daughter's wedding was that weekend and hoped a spinal adjustment would at least help him stand tall.

After Dr. Lewis' adjustments, he was able to stand upright, aided further by augmented hands-on treatment with a topical cannabidiol, (CBD), that was used to help reduce inflammation.

CBD is a non-psychoactive cannabis compound and does not require a medical marijuana qualified physician, the only Florida provider authorized to recommend medical cannabis.

"The patient was glad to report that on the following Monday... It was the CBD that really helped him go through the weekend," explains Dr. Lewis, owner of New Dimensions Health and Wellness Inc. in Tallahassee.

Chiropractors treat musculoskeletal and nerve-related conditions, especially in the spine and joints, through adjustments. Some, including Drs. Lewis and Misty Green, also use CBD for its anti-inflammatory effects.

"After each chiropractic

adjustment, I use a topical application... I also educate [my patients] on oral cannabinoids, which help from the inside out," notes Dr. Green of Alabar Chiropractic & Rehab Center in Cape Coral.

Both doctors emphasize that CBD isn't always appropriate and use only products from reputable manufacturers with clear ingredients and QR-coded certificates of analysis.

Dr. Lewis notes that patients who avoid medical marijuana because of THC's psychoactive effects can still experience therapeutic benefits from CBD, which he sees as complementary to chiropractic care.

**Editor's note:** This commentary is provided by the Medical Marijuana Education and Research Initiative (MMERI) of Florida A&M University. Visit <https://bit.ly/MMERINovember2025> to watch MMERI's Conversations on Cannabis Virtual Forum featuring Doctors of Chiropractic Misty Green and Andrew Lewis Jr. discussing why "Cannabis and Chiropractic."



# Jamaica Marking A Remarkable Recovery In The Aftermath Of Hurricane Melissa

BY DAVID L. SNELLING

Despite the massive damage caused by Hurricane Melissa that ripped through the Caribbean islands, Jamaica's tourism industry is booming.

According to the Minister of Tourism, Edmund Bartlett, the Caribbean nation, which suffered the most damage when Melissa left it in its wake in October, welcomed 300,000 visitors amid the nation's recovery efforts.

Donovan White, Director of Tourism for the Jamaica Tourist Board (JTB), told the Caribbean Today that the nation is making a remarkable recovery.

"This is a significant milestone, that includes both stopover and cruise visitors, in the island's recovery, with major resort areas fully operational and welcoming visitors for the crucial winter season," he said.

Immediately following the Category 5 storm that caused an estimated \$15 million in damage, which is nearly a quarter of Jamaica's gross domestic product, the JTB, government officials and business leaders went right to work to restore Jamaica's image as the premier tourist destination.

During the recovery and

clean-up efforts, key tourism resorts in areas including Montego Bay, Ocho Rios, Negril and Kingston were open and ready for business, rolling out the welcome mat for over 300,000 visitors.

Though Hurricane Melissa impacted over 626,000 people and damaged 120,000 buildings, mainly in southwest Jamaica, the tourism industry was left intact.

White has also confirmed that Jamaica has met its target of restoring tourism operations by December 15, marking an impressive turnaround just over six weeks after the storm.

Bartlett said he was impressed with Jamaica's resiliency as well.

"Our recovery has exceeded expectations," Minister Bartlett said in a statement. "Jamaica is not just back - we are stronger, more resilient, and more committed than ever to delivering the authentic Jamaican experience our visitors know and love. The dedication of our tourism workers, many of whom were personally affected by the hurricane, exemplifies the true spirit of Jamaica."

White said all major airports including Sangster International Airport in Montego Bay, Norman



Visitors are returning to Jamaica despite Hurricane Melissa government says. (JTB image)

Manley International Airport in Kingston, and Ian Fleming International Airport in Ocho Rios, have resumed normal operations.

He said major airlines have also resumed and maintained regular flight schedules.

By the end of December, 2025, 71 percent of hotels were set to be reopened, with projections indicating that number will rise significantly through early 2026.

"This has truly been a

collaborative effort. Hotels, attractions, transportation providers, and government agencies have worked around the clock to ensure that Jamaica is ready to welcome our guests," said Bartlett. "Every visitor who chooses Jamaica during this time directly supports the rebuilding of communities and the restoration of livelihoods."

White said popular attractions throughout the island are also fully operational, as visitors can once again

experience Jamaica's rich culture, vibrant music scene, authentic cuisine, and renowned hospitality in a safe and welcoming environment.

"The best way to support Jamaica is to visit Jamaica," said White. "We are ready to deliver unforgettable experiences while showcasing the incredible strength and hospitality of the Jamaican people."

White said tourism accounts for over 30 percent of Jamaica's gross domestic product and supports approximately a third of jobs across the island.

The swift recovery of the sector is critical not only for economic stability but also for the thousands of Jamaican families whose livelihoods depend on the tourism industry.

Jamaica received 4.3 million visitors in 2024, and tourism officials remain confident in a full recovery by December 2026.

"The resilience demonstrated by Jamaica's tourism sector, combined with the island's natural beauty and cultural richness, positions the destination for continued growth," White said.



## New Caribbean Hotels Set To Open In 2026

### Royalton Debuts Adults-Only Vessence Brand In Barbados

Set for summer 2026, Royalton Vessence Barbados introduces Royalton Hotels & Resorts' new adults-only luxury concept. Previously announced as Royalton CHIC Barbados, the resort has been reimagined with a stronger focus on wellness, design, and digital detox.

Features include glow-lit pools for night swimming, designated no-phone zones, hands-on workshops at The Studio, and the Moddo by Royalton FIT holistic wellness program.

### Curaçao Welcomes The Pyrmont Autograph Collection Resort

Expected to open in late 2026, The Pyrmont Curaçao will add 300 ocean-view rooms, including 28 suites, to the island's hospitality offerings. Located in Westpunt, the all-inclusive resort will feature eight restaurants, five bars, a diving and watersports center, and an infinity pool.

Family-friendly amenities include a kids club, while adults can retreat to a rooftop space designed exclusively for grown guests. A boardwalk and water breaker will create a seamless beach-to-pool experience.

### Royalton CHIC Makes Jamaica Debut

Jamaica will welcome its first Royalton CHIC resort in late 2026, with Royalton CHIC



new infinity pool, reinforcing Beaches' position as one of the Caribbean's leading family resort brands.

### Moon Palace Opens Flagship Punta Cana Resort

Also opening in March 2026, Moon Palace – The Grand Punta Cana will be Moon Palace Resorts' most ambitious Caribbean project to date. Billed as the brand's "biggest, best, and greenest" resort, the property targets multi-generational travelers with an expansive list of amenities.

Highlights include day and night clubs, a speakeasy, the Dreamery kids club, the O Spa, and a Greg Norman Eco Signature Design golf course. All rooms will offer either ocean

or golf course views, alongside multiple pools and restaurants.

### The Westin Playa Vallarta Goes All-Inclusive

In May 2026, The Westin Resort & Spa Puerto Vallarta will reopen as The Westin Playa Vallarta, an All-Inclusive Resort following a multi-million-dollar renovation.

The refreshed property will feature 281 redesigned suites, including private plunge pool and swim-up accommodation, alongside 10 new dining and entertainment venues. The relaunch emphasizes immersive cultural programming and wellness experiences aligned with Westin's global brand ethos.

Jamaica Paradise Cove opening in Runaway Bay. The adults-only resort will offer 345 suites, four à la carte restaurants, an international buffet, sports bar, lounge, and a signature Jerk Hut.

Its location places it within easy reach of both Montego Bay and Ocho Rios, strengthening Jamaica's growing adults-only luxury market.

### Secrets Macao Beach Punta Cana Planned For 2026

Hyatt's Secrets Macao Beach Punta Cana is also expected to debut in 2026 as the adults-only complement to the adjacent Dreams Macao Beach Punta Cana. The resort will feature 406 rooms, including 111 swim-out suites and panoramic high-level accommodations.

Guests will enjoy access to shared amenities across both properties, expanding dining and entertainment options.

### A Strong Signal For Caribbean Tourism

Collectively, these developments underscore the Caribbean's continued appeal as a global travel destination. With a mix of luxury, wellness, family-focused, and adults-only offerings, the region is positioning itself to meet shifting traveler expectations while driving investment, employment, and long-term tourism growth.



## New U.S. Travel Rules Tighten Scrutiny On Green Card Holders



U.S. Customs and Border Protection officers use facial recognition technology in their booths to screen travellers entering the United States at Miami International Airport. (Joe Raedle/Getty Images)

New U.S. travel and immigration enforcement measures affecting lawful permanent residents quietly took effect on December 26, 2025, reshaping how Green Card holders experience international travel—particularly those from Africa, the Caribbean and parts of Latin America.

Issued by the Department of Homeland Security, the updated protocols expand biometric tracking and introduce heightened residency scrutiny, signaling a move toward continuous monitoring rather than one-time vetting at entry. Under the new rules, all non-U.S. citizens, including Green Card holders, are now subject to mandatory biometric collection at every U.S. entry and exit

point, with no age exemptions.

The policy also authorizes intensified reviews of Green Cards issued to nationals of 19 countries, including Haiti, Cuba, Venezuela and several African nations. While legal status is not automatically revoked, immigration experts warn of increased questioning, longer inspections and additional documentation requests.

Advocates say the shift has heightened anxiety among immigrant communities, as routine travel for family, work or emergencies now carries added uncertainty.

- NewsAmericasNow.com



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## DHS Overhauls H-1B Visa System, Replacing Lottery With Weighted Selection

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security, (DHS), has announced major changes to the H-1B work visa program, replacing the long-standing random lottery with a weighted selection system that prioritizes higher-skilled and higher-paid foreign workers. The new rule, announced December 23, 2025, takes effect February 27, 2026, ahead of the FY 2027 H-1B registration season.

Under the revised process, H-1B visas will no longer be

awarded purely by chance. Instead, applications offering higher wages and reflecting advanced skills will receive greater weight, while employers may still petition across all wage levels. DHS and U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services say the change is designed to protect U.S. workers and curb abuses that allowed some employers to flood the system with low-wage registrations.

The H-1B program

remains capped at 65,000 visas annually, with an additional 20,000 reserved for advanced U.S. degree holders. Officials say the reform strengthens program integrity, aligns with congressional intent, and supports U.S. competitiveness by encouraging recruitment of top global talent.

- NewsAmericasNow.com



## USCIS Tightens The Violence Against Women Act Guidelines Amid Surge In Filings And Fraud Concerns

U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, (USCIS), has announced updates to its Policy Manual governing the Violence Against Women Act, (VAWA), program, citing a sharp rise in applications and growing concerns about misuse and fraud.

USCIS reports that VAWA self-petitions filed on Form I-360 surged by about 360% between fiscal years 2020 and 2024. Filings from male applicants increased by 259%,

while petitions filed by parents rose by more than 2,200%—a category that historically represented only a small share of cases.

While eligibility rules under VAWA remain unchanged, the agency said recent filing trends have strained the system and caused delays for survivors with legitimate claims. USCIS emphasized that the updated guidance aims to protect program integrity while ensuring genuine victims of abuse

continue to receive protection.

The revisions formalize existing practices and clarify evidentiary standards, including proof of shared residence with an alleged abuser, stronger requirements to establish good-faith marriages, and clearer rules for step-relationships. USCIS said the changes will improve consistency, efficiency, and prevent abuse of the program.

- NewsAmericasNow.com



## Trump Unveils 'Gold Card' Immigration Plan Tying Green Cards to Million-Dollar Donations

US President Donald Trump has introduced a new donation-driven pathway to U.S. permanent residence, branded the Trump Gold Card, marking a sharp shift in how green card applications may be prioritized.

Announced December 10, the initiative does not create a new visa category but accelerates processing for applicants who already qualify under existing employment-based standards, including

Aliens of Extraordinary Ability and Aliens of Exceptional Ability whose work serves the national interest. To receive expedited review, applicants must donate at least \$1 million to the U.S. Department of Commerce.

The program establishes tiered options, including a \$2 million corporate sponsorship track and a proposed \$5 million "Platinum" level that could offer favorable tax treatment,

though details remain unsettled. All applicants must also file a new Form I-140G and undergo extensive financial vetting.

While supporters say the plan could attract capital and global talent, critics argue it raises legal and ethical concerns by explicitly linking immigration access to wealth.

- NewsAmericasNow.com



## New U.S. Rule Allows Asylum Denials Over Security, Health Risks

The U.S. Departments of Homeland Security, (DHS), and Justice, (DOJ), have finalized a rule clarifying when asylum seekers may be denied protection in the United States if they are deemed to pose a national security or public health risk.

According to a notice published recently in the Federal Register, the regulation confirms that declared public health emergencies can be considered a security-related bar to asylum and withholding of removal. The rule took effect December 31, 2025.

The measure updates the

Security Bars and Processing rule first introduced in December 2020 during the Trump administration. While earlier versions were repeatedly delayed, the revised regulation removes outdated provisions while preserving federal authority to factor public health risks into asylum decisions.

DHS said the rule ensures immigration agencies retain the ability to deny asylum to individuals whose presence could threaten public safety or national security during emergencies. Officials emphasized that the regulation

does not establish new public health standards but maintains existing legal authority.

The announcement follows a December 2, 2025, decision by U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services to temporarily pause asylum processing while reviewing the system. Immigration advocates have raised concerns about broad security-based exclusions, while federal officials argue the rule provides clarity during national or global health crises.

- NewsAmericasNow.com



# Reggae Boyz Eye Redemption Route As Play-Off Draw Tilts Heavily In Jamaica's Favor



Jamaica's Reggae Boyz are looking to make World Cup history again. (JFF image)

After missing out on automatic qualification for the 2026 World Cup, Jamaica's Reggae Boyz now find themselves on a redemption path that appears far more forgiving than the one they just escaped.

Interim head coach Rudolph Speid's side will enter

the intercontinental play-offs as overwhelming favorites against New Caledonia, an Oceania Football Confederation team ranked 149th in the world. By contrast, Jamaica sits around 70th, underscoring the scale of the challenge facing the Pacific island nation.

## Pelé's Three Crowns: Why Football's Most Untouchable Record Still Stands



FLASHBACK: Pelé poses with the World Cup trophy on March 9, 2014, in Paris. (Franck Fife/AFP/Getty Images)

As the world counts down to the 2026 FIFA World Cup, one record remains firmly out of reach - and will stay that way until at least 2030. No player has ever matched Pelé's extraordinary achievement of winning three World Cup titles.

Between 1958 and 1970, the Brazilian icon didn't just collect trophies; he helped redefine what greatness looked like on football's biggest stage. At just 17, Pelé burst into global consciousness in Sweden in 1958, scoring six goals and announcing the arrival of a generational talent. Four years later in Chile, injury limited his role, but Brazil still defended their crown, making him a two-time champion before his 22nd birthday.

Mexico 1970 became the

crowning chapter. Now a leader in a star-studded side widely regarded as the greatest team ever assembled, Pelé scored, created, and commanded the final against Italy, sealing his third title and his place in history.

Many legends - from Garrincha and Meazza to Ronaldo and Cafu - have won twice. None have won three.

In an era of expanded tournaments and relentless competition, Pelé's record stands as a reminder that some feats aren't just about longevity or luck - they're about timing, talent, and transcendent brilliance. For now, football's throne remains occupied by one king alone.

- Rewritten from FIFA.com

New Caledonia advanced through the OFC qualifiers with wins over Papua New Guinea and the Solomon Islands before losing 3-0 to New Zealand in the final. Coached by Frenchman Johann Sidaner, the team has limited preparation time and minimal recent international exposure, having played just six matches over the past three years.

Sidaner has already acknowledged the uphill task, citing Jamaica's superior ranking, experience, and expected fan support given the proximity to Mexico, where the play-offs will be staged.

For the Reggae Boyz, the match represents more than just a favorable draw - it is a chance to reset momentum, restore confidence, and keep their

World Cup hopes alive after the disappointment of finishing level with Curaçao in Concacaf qualifying.

Anything short of progression would be a major upset.

- Rewritten from Jamaica Gleaner

## Bajan Secures Two-Year MLS Next Pro Deal With Connecticut United



Andre Applewhaite's move to Bridgeport follows a remarkable year in which he top-scored for local club Weymouth Wales in the Caribbean Football Union (CFU) with five goals. (CMC image)

the CONCACAF Caribbean Cup, scoring in Barbados' 2-1 loss to Cibao FC at the Wildey AstroTurf.

In addition to winning the domestic treble with Wales, Applewhaite was named Most

Valuable Player and Best Defender in the Prime Minister's Cup, helping his club secure the \$100,000 first prize.

- Rewritten from CMC

## Bajans Named In England's Provisional Squad For T20 World Cup



Barbadians Jofra Archer and Jacob Bethell make England's 15-man provisional squad for the 2026 ICC Men's T20 World Cup.

against Nepal in Mumbai on February 8.

Bethell's inclusion was widely anticipated. The 22-year-old all-rounder made history in September when he became England's youngest T20I captain

against Ireland. Since debuting in 2024, he has played 20 T20 internationals, scoring 392 runs at an average of 30.15.

- Rewritten from CMC

## SPORTS NEWS

## Dwight Yorke To Remain T&T Head Coach Despite World Cup Qualifying Exit

President of the Trinidad and Tobago Football Association, (TTFA), Kieron Edwards, has confirmed that Dwight Yorke will continue as head coach of the national team, despite the country's failure to qualify for the 2026 FIFA World Cup.

Yorke, appointed last November with a mandate to secure qualification, saw T&T Soca Warriors finish third behind Jamaica and Curaçao, ending hopes of a second World Cup appearance. However, Edwards said the TTFA remains confident in the program Yorke has put in place.

"The most important thing was getting the fans involved again and seeing the stadium packed supporting the team," Edwards said, noting that the squad gave its best effort. "We are not going to scrap the program. We are continuing to build on it."

Edwards added that discussions are ongoing with Yorke and his staff regarding the next phase, expressing optimism about the team's future, particularly with



Dwight Yorke will continue as head coach of the T&T Soca Warriors.

its young core of players.

Looking ahead, Edwards confirmed that T&T will participate in the FIFA Series during the March international window, facing higher-ranked opponents Uzbekistan, Gabon and Iceland.

"That tournament will be a next step for Trinidad and Tobago," he said. "It helps us push forward over the next four years and improve our FIFA ranking."

- Rewritten from CMC



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## Infantino Frames World Cup Ticket Prices As A Test Of Global Demand, Not Access

As criticism mounts over the soaring cost of tickets for the 2026 FIFA World Cup, FIFA President Gianni Infantino is pushing back with one central argument: demand has never been higher.

Speaking at the World Sports Summit in Dubai, Infantino revealed that FIFA received more than 150 million ticket requests during the latest sales window alone - a figure he described as unprecedented in the tournament's history. The surge, he said, reflects the World Cup's unmatched global appeal as it heads to the United States,

Canada and Mexico next year. The announcement comes amid widespread fan frustration over prices that range from about \$140 for select group-stage matches to more than \$8,600 for premium seats at the final in New Jersey. The U.S. opening match in Los Angeles is also drawing scrutiny, with top tickets priced above \$2,700.

Infantino argued that revenue generated from the tournament is essential to sustaining the sport worldwide, noting that FIFA reinvests World Cup proceeds into football development programs across

more than 150 countries.

In response to backlash, FIFA has introduced a limited allocation of \$60 tickets for supporters of participating national teams, though those seats represent only a small share of total inventory.

With the ticket application window open until January 13, FIFA insists pricing reflects market demand -not exclusivity - as the most expansive World Cup in history approaches.

- Rewritten from NPR



## Jamaica's Junior 4x100-M Relay Queens Crowned Best Women's Team At Pan Am Games

Jamaica's women's junior 4x100 meter relay team has been named Best Women's Team at the Junior Pan American Games, following a dominant and record-breaking performance at the August championships.

The quartet of Alana Reid, Sabrina Dockery, Marissa Palmer and Serena Cole stormed to gold in a championship record 43.52 seconds, finishing comfortably ahead of Trinidad and Tobago, (43.89) and Colombia, (44.01).

Their electrifying run earned widespread acclaim, with the Jamaican team securing 24.1 per cent of the public vote, narrowly edging Colombia's sprint cycling team (23.48 per cent) and Brazil's volleyball team (20.58 per cent) in the final standings.

Argentina's hockey team, Chile's rowing team and Brazil's handball team placed fourth, fifth and sixth respectively.

The award will be formally presented at the next Pan Am Sports General Assembly,



The quartet of Alana Reid, Sabrina Dockery, Marissa Palmer and Serena Cole stormed to gold in a championship record 43.52 seconds in August 2025 and were honored in December as Best Women's Team at the Junior Pan American Games.

scheduled for next year.

The achievement was warmly praised by Jamaica Olympic Association (JOA) President Christopher Samuda, who said the honor reinforces Jamaica's global reputation for sprint excellence.

"The JOA celebrates with our juniors in winning Pan Am's Best Women's Team

award," Samuda said. "It was a powerful display of teamwork, commitment and national pride, and a reminder of Jamaica's enduring strength in track and field."

- Rewritten from CMC



## Julien Alfred Targets Historic 60-M World Record In 2026 Return



Julien Alfred champion has set her sights on breaking one of track and field's longest-standing records in 2026.

After a year marked by Olympic triumph and an untimely injury, sprint star Julien Alfred is turning her focus to history. The reigning World Indoor 60-metre

champion has set her sights on breaking one of track and field's longest-standing records in 2026.

Alfred, who is joint second-fastest woman of all time over

## Verizon Rolls Out Free Ticket Giveaways For World Cup And Super Bowl Fans

Sports fans could be in for a major win as Verizon rolls out a slate of ticket giveaways tied to two of the world's biggest sporting events - the 2026 FIFA World Cup and Super Bowl LX.

As FIFA launched its ticket draw for the 2026 World Cup, set to kick off June 11th in Mexico City and conclude July 19th at MetLife Stadium in New Jersey, Verizon announced it is giving away thousands of free tickets, including coveted "Golden Tickets" offering pitch side viewing.

During the third phase of Verizon's FIFA Ultimate Access promotion, running January

7th -11th, customers can try to claim free tickets to group-stage matches in every U.S. host city through the company's Verizon Access loyalty platform.

American football fans are also included. From January 9th – 18th, Verizon customers can enter the Super Bowl LX sweepstakes for a chance to win game tickets, VIP on-field experiences, player meet-and-greets, and travel packages.

The giveaways are exclusive to Verizon customers, leveraging the company's role as the official telecommunications sponsor for both events.

## Ambitious Infrastructure Plan Set To Transform Guyana's Sporting Landscape

Guyana is embarking on what officials describe as a sporting revolution, with the launch of a sweeping five-year infrastructure plan aimed at transforming athletics across the country.

Minister within the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sport, Steven Jacobs, unveiled the ambitious strategy, which will see major investments in modern facilities designed to elevate grassroots development while positioning Guyana as a regional and international sporting hub.

Planned upgrades and new developments include the Anna Regina Stadium, Bay Rock and New Amsterdam synthetic tracks, the McKenzie Stadium, and multipurpose sporting

facilities in Regions One, Seven, Eight, and Nine.

Flagship projects form the centerpiece of the plan, including a state-of-the-art velodrome, a 15,000-seat indoor arena for major sporting and entertainment events, a high-performance training center for elite athletes, and a national cricket academy at Albion.

- Rewritten from CMC

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60 meters, will open her indoor campaign at the Millrose Games in New York on February 11th, returning to an event she skipped entirely last season despite calling it one she "really loves." Her goal is clear: to eclipse Irina Privalova's world record of 6.92 seconds, set in 1993. Alfred's personal best of 6.94 leaves her just two-hundredths of a second away.

"I'm really looking forward

to competing in the 60m again," Alfred said on the CITIUS MAG podcast, describing 2026 as a year to enjoy the events she loves most.

The Saint Lucian standout endured a rollercoaster 2025, ending with a 100m bronze at the World Championships before injury cut her season short. With no major outdoor global championships in 2026, she is embracing the chance to chase

indoor greatness.

Currently training in Saint Lucia after resuming work in November, Alfred will face stiff competition at Millrose, including Aleia Hobbs, Jacious Sears and Britain's Dina Asher-Smith.

- Rewritten from CMC



## Daren Sammy's Future Could Hinge on West Indies' T20 World Cup Showing Says Ian Bishop

Daren Sammy's future as West Indies all-format head coach could depend heavily on the team's performance at the upcoming ICC Men's T20 World Cup, according to veteran cricket commentator Ian Bishop.

Sammy, a two-time T20 World Cup-winning captain, has had a challenging start since taking over as all-format head coach on April 1. To date, his tenure has produced only two series victories: a historic 2-1 ODI win over Pakistan in August and a dominant 3-0 T20I sweep of Bangladesh in October.

Those successes, however,

have been offset by defeats across formats. West Indies have lost Test and T20I series to Australia, a Test series to India, an ODI series to Bangladesh, and were comprehensively beaten by New Zealand in their most recent T20I, ODI and Test assignments.

With the 2026 T20 World Cup scheduled for February–March in Sri Lanka and India, Bishop believes the tournament could be pivotal for Sammy.

Speaking on iSports 95.5 FM, Bishop acknowledged the unflattering results but noted the context of the early challenges.

"The results so far are not

going to be a pleasing reflection for Daren Sammy," Bishop said, pointing to the difficulty of opening assignments against Australia, India away, and New Zealand away, where West Indies have not won a Test since 1995.

He added that Sammy's assessment will likely rest on white-ball cricket. "The real proof is going to be the T20 World Cup next year... and that judgment will weigh heavily on the white-ball component in the months ahead."

- Rewritten from CMC



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