

We want to hear your complaint!

The Ombudsman will investigate your complaint of wrongdoing, corruption, abuse, injustice or injury by an authority.

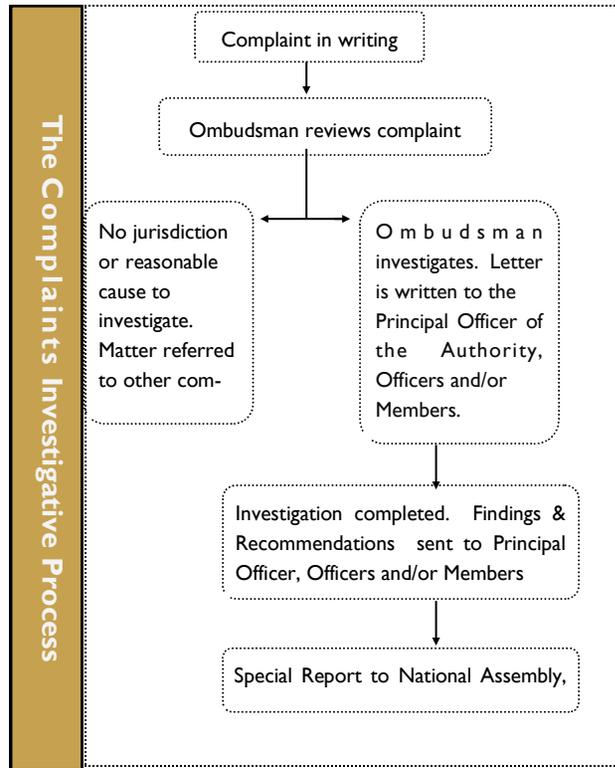
Your complaint will be treated with confidentiality and respect.

If for some reason we cannot help you, we will refer your complaint to another competent body.

And remember, no fees are charged for our services.

**Don't
Suffer
in
Silence!**

*A Message from the Ombudsman
Mr. Lionel Arzu, MSc.*



Ombudsman

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Web. www.ombudsmanbelize.com
Opening Hours
Mon. to Thur.: 8:00 a.m.—12:00 p.m.
1:00 p.m.—5:00 p.m.
Fri: Closes 4:30 p.m.



Office of the
Ombudsman



If you have been treated unfairly by a public authority, the Ombudsman may be able to help you.

Find out how 

The Ombudsman of Belize



Who is the Ombudsman?

The Ombudsman is a Parliamentary Commissioner appointed by the Governor General on the advice of both Houses of the National Assembly. He is appointed for a term of three years.

How can the Ombudsman help?

The Ombudsman investigates complaints made by any person or body of persons, or of his own initiative, that an authority has been guilty of wrongdoing, corruption or some action that has resulted in injustice, injury or abuse. Abuse includes any act motivated by discrimination based on religion, language, race, colour or creed.

In his investigations, the Ombudsman exercises all the powers of a Supreme Court Judge in relation to the summoning and examination of witnesses, documents, and other evidence.

Are the Recommendations of the Ombudsman binding?

The Ombudsman informs the Principal Officer, Officer and Member of the authority investigated of his findings and any recommendations. If these recommendations are not implemented, within the time specified, the Ombudsman will send a Special Report to the National Assembly. The National Assembly may adopt whatever recommendations the Ombudsman makes, if they think fit.

Which Authorities can the Ombudsman investigate?

- Any Ministry, Department or Agency of Government
- Any Minister or Minister of State or Officer or Member of a Ministry, Department or Agency of Government
- The Belize Police Department
- A City Council or Town Board
- Other Statutory Body or Authority
- Any company in which the government or an agency of government owns not less than 51%.

What actions are excluded from the Ombudsman's jurisdiction?

- ◆ Commencement or conduct of civil or criminal proceedings in any court of law in Belize or in any International Court or tribunal
- ◆ Actions, orders or directions pertaining to the Belize Defence Force or proceedings under the Defence Act.
- ◆ Actions relating to the extradition of persons
- ◆ Decision or action of the Governor General, Public Services Commission or Belize Advisory Council
- ◆ Grant of honours, awards, and privileges under the National Honours and Awards Act.
- ◆ Any matter which affects the security or external relations of Belize
- ◆ Actions of a private person or body of persons

Can the Ombudsman refuse to investigate a complaint?

YES, if there is NO reasonable cause to believe that the authority has committed the wrongdoing or corruption or has caused the injustice, injury or abuse; or, if there is no need for investigation or further investigation.

Moreover, the Ombudsman does not have to entertain very tardy, trivial, frivolous or vexatious complaints or complaints in which the complainant does not have sufficient personal interest in its outcome.

How do I make a Complaint?

Fill out a **Complaint Form**, which is available at the Ombudsman's Office or online at his website.

Make sure the complaint states in sufficient detail the following:

- ◇ The name and contact information of the Complainant and , the wronged, injured or abused person if different from the Complainant
- ◇ The identity of the Authority, officer or member complained against
- ◇ The actions complained of, including facts, date and time, location and other particulars
- ◇ Names and contact information for any witnesses
- ◇ Supporting documents preferably should be attached

Before complaining to the Ombudsman, you should make a report of the wrongdoing or action, in person or in writing, to the Human Resources Department of the Authority concerned. For complaints against the Belize Police Department, this will be the Professional Standards Branch.

How long does the complaints investigative process last?

On average, the investigative process, from the time the complaint was made to the time the Ombudsman completes his investigation and present his findings and recommendations, lasts anywhere between sixty (60) days to six (6) months. Other factors, however, will affect its duration,



Does the Ombudsman provide other Services to the Public?

YES. The Ombudsman can review, upon written application, the decision of any public authority refusing to *grant* or deferring access to public information under the Freedom of Information Act.

For further details, visit our website and/or contact the Ombudsman's Office.