

Parliament of the Cayman Islands

Parliamentary Question

From: The Elected Member for George Town Central, Mr. Kenneth Bryan, MP, to the Honourable Minister responsible for Caymanian Employment and Immigration, Mr. Michael Myles, MP.

Question:

Can the Honourable Minister say:

- a) How many people categorised as Prohibited Immigrants in other countries have been located in the Cayman Islands, on work permits or otherwise, within the last five (5) years, broken down annually; and
- b) What are the particulars of each person's prohibited status?

Supplementary Questions:

- c) Can an update be provided in regard to the data sharing agreement between the USA and the Cayman Islands; and
- d) Does the Ministry of Caymanian Employment and Immigration have access to the data held by the Ministry of District Administration and Home Affairs regarding prohibited immigrants?

Answers:

- a) With the assistance of Customs and Border Control Service, the Ministry of Caymanian Employment and Immigration was able to obtain statistics confirming that between the years 2021 – 2025, 269 persons who had been identified as Prohibited Immigrants prior to their arrival in the Cayman Islands were identified in the relevant records.

Of those 269 persons, 29 were issued work permits despite having been identified as Prohibited Immigrants prior to their arrival. None of these 29 persons remain in the Cayman Islands, all have since been removed.

Additionally, during the same period, 21 persons were approved for work permits, arrived in the Cayman Islands and subsequently became Prohibited Immigrants as a result of having

gained convictions locally. Of these 21 persons, three (3) remain in the Cayman Islands and are currently serving terms of imprisonment.

The Government takes seriously the importance of ensuring that information relevant to immigration eligibility and border security is identified and shared in a timely manner. The statistics also demonstrate the importance of continued collaboration between WORC and CBC, as well as with other law enforcement and border security agencies.

- b) The 29 persons who have been deemed to be Prohibited Immigrations prior to arriving on the Islands and were subsequently issued work permits no longer remain in the Cayman Islands and have all since been removed.

Furthermore, of the 21 persons who became Prohibited Immigrants following their arrival as a result of local convictions, three (3) remain in the Islands, each currently serving a term of imprisonment.

The Government is mindful that information concerning individual persons and their prohibited status may involve personal and law-enforcement information and, accordingly, any further particulars must be considered within the applicable legal and privacy framework.

- c) Government continues to recognise the importance of effective information sharing with international partners, particularly where information may assist in identifying persons who may present a risk to the Cayman Islands' borders or national security. As such, the Ministry of District Administration and Home Affairs, has been working with relevant partners, including the United States Department of Homeland Security to better understand potential arrangements for information sharing, including any formal instruments that may need to be considered.

However, at the regional level, CBC is a signatory to the Memorandum of Understanding Regarding Mutual Assistance and Co-operation for the Prevention and Repression of Customs Offences in the Caribbean Zone. The MOU provides a framework for cooperation among participating Customs Administrations, including information sharing, mutual assistance and coordinated enforcement in relation to customs offences, smuggling, narcotics trafficking and related matters, subject to national laws and applicable safeguards.

The MOU includes 37 signatories, including Canada, the United Kingdom and the United States of America.

While this MOU is principally a customs and law-enforcement cooperation framework, it provides an important mechanism through which CBC can obtain and share intelligence where information concerning a person is relevant to a customs offence or customs fraud.

More broadly, Government is continuing to strengthen the way in which information is shared domestically and internationally. CBC, WORC, RCIPS, the Cayman Islands Coast Guard and

other relevant agencies work together, within their respective mandates, to identify and respond to persons and activities that may present risks to the Cayman Islands.

This includes the sharing of relevant intelligence, operational coordination and referrals between agencies, as well as engagement with regional and international law-enforcement and border-security partners. The objective is to ensure that risks are identified as early as possible, whether before a person travels, at the point of entry, or after arrival in the Cayman Islands.

Government is also exploring ways to strengthen its technology and data capabilities, including the systems, data integration and information-sharing tools available to frontline officers. The objective is to improve the timeliness, quality and accessibility of information and support more effective, intelligence-led and risk-based decision-making at our borders.

Government recognises, however, that there are inherent challenges and gaps in the vetting and information available across jurisdictions. These challenges are not unique to the Cayman Islands and cannot be addressed through local systems or technology alone. Effective pre-arrival screening and border protection depend, in part, on the availability, quality and timeliness of information from international partners, as well as the ability and willingness of jurisdictions to share relevant information within their respective legal and policy frameworks.

Strengthening this capability is therefore a long-term undertaking that requires continued investment in technology and local systems, stronger domestic coordination, and sustained engagement and cooperation with regional and international partners. Government is carefully considering these areas as part of its longer-term border management planning, including the associated resource and budgetary requirements, with the objective of building a more connected, intelligence-led and resilient border security framework for the Cayman Islands.

- d) The Department of Workforce Opportunity and Residency Cayman (WORC) has access to information relating to Prohibited Immigrants (PIs) held by the Customs and Border Control (CBC) through the following means:
 - i. direct access to records maintained in the Immigration Management System (IMSS); and
 - ii. where information relating to known PIs is available to CBC but is not recorded in IMSS, through a request to CBC for the relevant information.

The relationship between WORC and CBC is an important part of the Government's overall border-management and immigration-control framework. While each agency has distinct statutory responsibilities, both agencies recognise the importance of ensuring that relevant information is available to support timely and informed decision-making.

The Government's approach is therefore not limited to responding to prohibited immigrants after they arrive. It is about strengthening the entire border management system, from

intelligence and information sharing, to pre-arrival screening, immigration decision making, border control, law enforcement and post-arrival monitoring.

Both the Ministry of Caymanian Employment and Immigration and the Ministry of District Administration and Home Affairs recognise the value of continued collaboration in this area and will continue to explore opportunities to further enhance the timely and effective sharing of information, while ensuring that such arrangements operate within the appropriate legal, privacy and security frameworks.