

# **News Items and Public Crime Summary for Week Ending November 7, 2009**

## **Aruba – Mike Eman Cabinet and New Parliamentarians Sworn In**

Aruba's incoming PM Mike Eman, six ministers, and 21 members of parliament were sworn in last Friday. Eman called on all Arubans to work towards improving the island, fighting poverty, and developing education. Foremost, Eman wants to strengthen the ties with the Kingdom partners. (Various media)

## **Kingdom – Dutch Cabinet Members Visit Antilles and Aruba**

Dutch State Secretary of Kingdom Relations Ank Bijleveld-Schouten and Dutch Minister of Social Affairs and Employment, Piet Hein Donner are visiting the Netherlands Antilles and Aruba. They will tackle social security issues and future distribution of duties with Bonaire, Saba and St. Eustatius. Also, they represented the Netherlands during the Cabinet Eman inauguration ceremonies in Aruba. State Secretary Bijleveld-Schouten will leave for the Netherlands on Tuesday and Minister Donner on Thursday. (Various media)

## **Aruba – Dutch: Compliance With FATF Requirements Aruba's Responsibility**

Dutch State Secretary of Kingdom Relations Ank Bijleveld-Schouten stated in a written reaction to questions in Dutch parliament that it is Aruba's responsibility to comply with Financial Action Task Force (FATF) anti-money laundering regulations and terrorism financing requirements.

A recently released draft FATF report stated that Aruba lacked proper legislation and supervision to combat money laundering practices and terrorism financing. (Various media)

## **Antilles/Aruba - Financial Secrecy List Ranks Netherlands Ahead of Kingdom Partners**

UK-based Tax Justice Network (TJN) ranked the Netherlands (15) ahead of Aruba (36) and the Netherlands Antilles (38) on its Financial Secrecy Index. The list was headed by the U.S. (State of Delaware), Luxembourg, and Switzerland. TJN compared the countries on bank secrecy, transparency of financial laws, and financial activities abroad. According to TJN, international regulation and automatic exchange of financial information are essential to fight against tax havens.

"Leading economic centers including the US, UK and Singapore are among the countries most to blame for promoting international financial secrecy, according to a new index comparing the harm allegedly done by tax havens and rich nations."

The Tax Justice Network (TJN) is an international, non-aligned coalition of researchers and activists with a shared concern about the harmful impacts of tax avoidance, tax competition and tax havens. (ANP)

## **Curacao – Election Poll Predicts Current Coalition Will Lose Majority**

A bi-weekly pre-election poll predicts that the current PAR\PNP\FOL coalition will not maintain its majority at the January 25, 2010 parliamentary elections.

Two weeks ago organizers Stradius Research and Dragonfly media predicted a current government 52.1% majority, but the latest poll foresees that the current coalition will receive only 45% of the votes - PAR (25%), PNP (10%) and FOL (10%) The MAN\NPA\Forsa Korsou combination will get 17% while the Sovereign People Party which strives for independence is expected to get 13% of the votes.

The polling organizers stated that their poll is independent and scientifically based. The poll is also available on [www.opinionkorsou.com](http://www.opinionkorsou.com). (Extra, Antilliaans Dagblad)

### **• Aruba – Valero Decided to Re-Start Refinery With Sale in Mind**

The Amigoe newspaper announced that negotiations with PetroChina concerning the possible take-over of the US-owned Valero refinery in Aruba are ongoing. A visit last week by Chinese refinery representatives was deemed successful. Valero has announced that it has initiated the process to re-start production in an attempt to convince the Chinese government to purchase the refinery. The startup procedures will take approximately three weeks and temporary contract workers are hired. Aruba PM Mike Eman stated that he does not expect an influx of Chinese refinery workers, if PetroChina decides to purchase the refinery. (Amigoe)

## **Curacao - USNS HENSON on Oceanographic Survey Mission**

The USNS HENSON (T-AGS 63) will conduct oceanographic surveying operations in the Caribbean through next year in support of U.S. Southern Command survey requirements and U.S. Naval Forces Southern Command in support of Partnership of Americas, which seeks to strengthen partnerships and improve regional security.

The USNS HENSON will use the port of Curacao as a staging point for crew turnover, basic maintenance and fuel, equipment testing and an end of the year break for the crew.

Also, the USNS HENSON will conduct equipment testing of an autonomous underwater vehicle (AUV) in territorial waters during the next several months. The AUV is an autonomous vehicle which measures the bottom contour of the ocean floor and samples the water column. The testing location was selected based on the critical bathymetry requirements for testing the AUV.

Curacao is ideal for those testing requirements. Furthermore, data that is collected during the testing will be shared with Netherlands Antilles authorities. The U.S.

Government welcomes local government participation in the testing. USNS HENSON is one of the seven Oceanographic Survey Ships that are operated by the Military Sealift Command for the Naval Meteorology and Oceanography Command.

The USNS HENSON has a crew of about 55 Department of Defense surveyors and merchant marines aboard. For more information on USNS HENSON, please visit their webpage at: <https://oceanography.navy.mil/legacy/web/> (Antilliaans Dagblad)

## **Bonaire – New Political Party Against Colonization**

Bonaire Island Commissioner Andy Nicolaas has presented his new political party “List for Change” (Lista pa Kambio), for the upcoming January 2010 elections. Nicolaas said

that he is worried about the current Netherlands Antilles dismantling process and that the Dutch government and various Bonaire politicians are stepping on the island's right to self-determination. The Commissioner stated that Bonaire is struggling against the process of decolonization by the Netherlands. We have the right of self-determination and the Dutch have to respect that.

The right of self-determination is the right of a people to control their own social and political and cultural destiny, identity, and development. (Various media)

### **Aruba - The Netherlands and Aruba Agree to Investigate Corruption**

The new Aruban government and the Netherlands agreed upon a preliminary fact finding mission into possible corruption practices on Aruba by the former Aruban government. Dutch senators have noted their concern over the lack of good governance, the rule of law, and possible corruption and intimidation cases by Aruban government officials, and consider all these cases a Kingdom affair.

The previous PM Nelson Oduber always opposed to such an investigation, but this administration seems more willing to cooperate.

Aruba PM Mike Eman and Dutch State Secretary of Kingdom Relations Ank Bijleveld-Schouten announced that Aruba will 'constructively' participate in the dismantlement process of the Netherlands Antilles and actively contribute to the working groups.

The two again emphasized on the importance of good relations within in the Kingdom. Also, Bijleveld participated in meetings with Minister of Justice and Education Arthur Dowers, and Minister of Finance, Transportation and Utility Companies Mike de Meza. Bijleveld said that the Netherlands is prepared to assist and support Aruba, if necessary. (Various media)

### **St. Maarten – Island Joins The North American Numbering Plan**

The Government of St. Maarten has been granted permission to be part of North American Numbering Plan (NANP) and has been assigned the country code 721. The introduction of the 721 code will begin with a period of permissive dialing between May and November next year. During the permissive dialing period, the use of the current country code 599 and the new 721 will be acceptable for calls terminating in St. Maarten. The NANP is an integrated telephone numbering plan of 24 countries and territories: the United States and its territories, Canada, Bermuda, and now 17 of the Caribbean countries. The NANP is a standardized system of numbering plan areas (NPA), which have evolved over time into a system of three-digit area codes and seven-digit telephone numbers. (Daily Herald)

### **St. Maarten - Brothel Owner Fined for Hiring Undocumented Women**

A St. Maarten brothel owner was fined for hiring six undocumented women to work at his business in Sucker Garden and Dutch Quarter, last Friday.

The unidentified owner has to pay a US\$ 18,000 penalty for the women who worked as prostitutes in the club, a police spokesperson said. The six women were arrested. (Various media)

## **Aruba - Online Gambling Boss Jailed in U.S.**

A U.S. court has jailed the founder of an online gambling firm for more than four years and ordered him to forfeit more than \$43m in illicit earnings.

Gary Kaplan, 50, had admitted various charges of fraud and racketeering related to his company, BetOnSports. He founded his offshore betting company in 1995.

The London-based company encouraged American gamblers to place bets online, an illegal practice in the U.S.

Prosecutors say that Gary Kaplan still has millions of dollars in Swiss bank accounts.

U.S. authorities have been investigating offshore sports gambling since 1997, and BetOnSports since 2001.

In August, Kaplan admitted setting up offshore businesses in Aruba and other countries, to provide gambling for U.S. residents through the internet and toll-free telephone numbers. (Aruba Post)

## **Antilles - Islands Offer Amnesty To Illegal Immigrants**

The government of the Netherlands Antilles launched an amnesty program that will provide residence and working papers for thousands of illegal immigrants.

Hundreds of people lined up outside an immigration offices in St. Maarten and Curacao on Wednesday, the third day of the six-week amnesty program.

As many as 70,000 immigrants - mostly Haitian, Guyanese and Jamaican - are estimated to be living here without valid residency papers or work permits in the Netherlands Antilles.

Under a program called the "Brooks Tower Accord," papers will be given to those who can prove they have lived in the territory since Dec. 31, 2006, or can show a valid contract from an employer. (Various media)

## **Bonaire - Referendum Scheduled for January 15 Postponed**

Bonaire MP Anthony Nicolaas announced that the referendum scheduled for January 15, 2010 will possibly be postponed due to time constraints. Also, Bonaire is preparing for the visit of a United Nations representative at the end of this month to conduct a two-week referendum assessment study. The referendum question is whether the direct ties with the Netherlands, as opted for by the Bonaire people in 2004, should be molded into a free association or public entity format. (Antilliaans Dagblad)

## **Aruba - Valero Refinery To Disclose Tax Ruling's Effect Today**

US-based Valero Energy Corp. will disclose in a public filing today the effect of a Dutch ruling in a tax dispute related to the company's Aruba refinery.

The dispute centers on a tax abatement the government of Aruba had granted Valero's refinery through the end of 2010. But after the abatement was in effect, Aruba adopted a new tax, saying the tax subsidy for the plant had ended, Valero spokesman Bill Day said.

An arbitration panel in the Netherlands ruled this week that Valero is entitled to a tax exemption through 2010, but "it didn't discuss the legality of the new tax, or what it should do with the money collected from Valero that is in escrow," Day said.

The ruling by the panel in the Netherlands supersedes the decision by the tax court of Aruba. (Various media)

## **St. Maarten - Drug Traffickers Arrested at Schiphol Airport**

With the arrest of 11 persons at Amsterdam Schiphol airport in the Netherlands, the Dutch military border police (KMar) believes to have uncovered a cocaine trafficking route between St. Maarten and Amsterdam. Among the arrested persons, there was at least one KMar employee and one employee of a company at the airport. (Various media)

## **Aruba - US Oil Refiner Reports on Aruba Tax Dispute Ruling**

US-owned Valero Energy Corporation announced that, on Nov. 3, an arbitration panel in the Netherlands handed down an interim decision on certain issues in dispute between Valero and the Government of Aruba. The panel ruled favorably on Valero's existing exemption from income tax liability for refining operations through 2010. Two other items in the arbitration - the applicable dividend tax rate and the turnover tax - were not fully resolved in the panel's decision and remain subject to further review. Valero continues to believe that its remaining claims against these taxes have significant merit, and intends to vigorously pursue these claims through the arbitration proceedings and in proceedings in Aruba. Also, the panel ordered Valero to pay US \$20 million in outstanding tax on dividends. (Various media)

## **St. Maarten – U.S. Consulate General Offers American Citizen Services**

The U.S. Vice Consul for the Netherlands Antilles and Aruba Bill Furnish will be on the island today for American Citizen Services. Services provided will include accepting applications for U.S. passports and applications for Report of Birth Abroad of a U.S. citizen. The Vice Consul will not take applications, offer advice or otherwise advise or otherwise advise about non-immigrant visas. To make an appointment for a nonimmigrant visa at the U.S. Consulate General in Curacao call 001-602-567-9833. (Daily Herald)

## **Antilles – H1N1 Vaccines to Arrive From The Netherlands Soon**

The Antilles will receive 150,000 vaccines against New Influenza A H1N1, in tranches, from the Netherlands. Only medical high-risk groups, health care workers and volunteer caregivers will be vaccinated. Family doctor practices will provide the vaccinations. The number of H1N1 cases on Curacao until now, has not been determined. There are no records of H1N1 related casualties.

The groups recommended, in the Netherlands and the Netherlands Antilles, to receive the 2009 H1N1 influenza vaccine include:

High-risk groups

- Family-members and volunteer caregivers supporting people with a high risk of serious illness and mortality through the influenza;
- Healthcare personnel who are in direct contact with patients in the medical high-risk groups.

Medical high-risk groups are:

- Persons with a medical risk who are also on the recommended list for the annual seasonal flu vaccination;
- All healthy senior citizens (over 60);
- Pregnant women from a medical high-risk group who are also on the recommended list for the annual seasonal flu vaccination, but only during the second and third trimester of the pregnancy. Experts do not recommend vaccination for pregnant women not belonging to a medical high-risk group. (Various media)

## **CURAÇAO**

### ***Crime October 30 – November 5***

On October 30 a business selling lottery tickets in Santa Maria was robbed by two men. On November 2, a housekeeper was robbed by three masked men in Lagunisol when she was about to leave her employer's home. The victim was tied and gagged while the suspects ransacked the house. The same evening, a man walking in the street in Santa Maria was robbed by three men. The victim was beaten during a struggle. On November 4, two security guards and an employee of the Lions Dive Hotel were surprised by four masked men at 3:45 a.m. The victims were tied and one guard was beaten. The suspects removed the ATM from the hotel lobby (Extra, Amigoe, Antilliaans Dagblad, La Prensa).

## **ARUBA**

### ***Crime October 30 – November 5***

In the evening of October 31 a Chinese family was robbed in their home in Oranjestad by two men. The male home owner was tied and personal items were robbed. On November 4 a lottery ticket-selling business in San Nicolas was robbed by two men (Diarario Aruba, Awe Mainta).

## **ST. MAARTEN**

### ***Crime October 30 – November 5***

On October 31 two suspects attempted to rob a man in Sucker Garden. When the intended victim saw the men, he quickly started his vehicle and sped away (Daily Herald, St. Maarten Island Time).

*"The Weekly Press Summary is a compilation of stories running in the Netherlands Antilles and Aruban press that is intended to alert readers about items of interest to them. There is no interpretation or verification of the facts contained therein."*