



## SARSTOON TEMASH INSTITUTE FOR INDIGENOUS MANAGEMENT

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### Press Release

#### **SATIIM's response to GOB Relaxation of Sarstoon Prohibition Regulation**

Punta Gorda, Toledo, May 9th 2016

SATIIM welcomes Government of Belize's announcement of limited access to the Sarstoon. SATIIM recently returned from its monthly patrol of the Sarstoon Temash National Park on Saturday, May 7<sup>th</sup> 2016. It had been denied permission to travel on Sarstoon River on Thursday, May 5<sup>th</sup> 2016 so the relaxation of the Regulation came a little too late for the patrol team.

We must state that SATIIM noted the presence of two GAF vessels at the mouth of the Sarstoon and not at its base and this is a real concern for travelling in the Sarstoon. It would seem that even if 'lawful permission' is granted by Belize authorities, SATIIM would also be forced to get GAF permission to travel the Sarstoon. SATIIM will not undermine Belize's position by asking permission from the GAF to traverse our side of the river.

SATIIM is very pleased to note the increased presence of the Coast Guard along the southern border area of Barranco and Sarstoon. It is long overdue and hope that it not just a temporary patrol but that they are here for the long term. SATIIM realizes that just the mere presence of Belizean law enforcement in hot spots can do much to deter illegal activities. The patrol team observed many gill net sites on the Temash River, an area that does not have much traffic.

SATIIM is committed to its regular patrols to the neglected Sarstoon Temash National Park and is hopeful that talks between Guatemala and Belize provide a framework for travelling in the Sarstoon River in the very near future.

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Please see SATIIM website for pictures.