

News Items and Public Crime Summary for Week Ending November 20, 2010

Curacao - Government Is Checking Passengers Arriving From Haiti

All passengers entering Curacao from Haiti are required to undergo questioning and medical tests if they show symptoms of cholera, according to a news report. The regulations, which reportedly came into force last week, were enacted in light of a recent outbreak of the disease in Haiti after hurricane Tomas related flooding and heavy rain. There are no reported cases of cholera in Curacao. (Various media)

Statia – U.S. Vice-Consul in Statia For American Citizen Services

The Vice-Consul of the United States for the Netherlands Antilles and Aruba will be in St. Eustatius for American citizen services on Tuesday, November 16, from 11:30 to 12:30 pm at the Government's Guest House. On a first come, first served basis only, the Vice-Consul will be accepting applications for U.S. passports and applications for reports of birth abroad to a U.S. citizen. Visitors are requested to visit website <http://curacao.usconsulate.gov> to make sure they have all necessary documents to avoid delays. The Vice-Consul will not take applications, offer advice or otherwise about non-immigrant visas. (Daily Herald)

Aruba - Dutch Experts Test Bone in Holloway Case

Dutch forensic experts are testing a piece of bone found on Aruba to see if it comes from missing American teenager Natalee Holloway, a spokeswoman said Tuesday. Experts first will establish whether the bone is human before comparing its DNA to that of Holloway, said Netherlands Forensic Institute spokeswoman Inge Oevering. Holloway, then 18, disappeared in 2005 while on a high school graduation trip to Aruba. Her remains have never been found, despite extensive police searches. If the bone turns out to be from Holloway, it would be the first concrete evidence of her death. Aruban Joran van der Sloot, who faces separate murder charges in Peru, is the last person seen with Holloway and is suspected in her disappearance. The Dutch daily De Telegraaf reported Tuesday the bone was found by tourists on a beach last Friday. The newspaper reported it was a human lower jaw bone, but Oevering said the bone was still being analyzed to establish whether it was human. Oevering said prosecutors in Aruba will announce the results of the tests. She could not say how long the tests would take. Van der Sloot is in jail in Lima charged with killing a woman in Peru five years to the day after Holloway's disappearance. Van der Sloot has told several people he was involved in Holloway's disappearance, only to later retract his confessions. He has also admitted in interviews that he is a pathological liar. Among his explanations, Van der Sloot has claimed that Holloway accidentally fell from a balcony and that he disposed of her body in a swamp. He also told an undercover reporter that she died unexpectedly while they were kissing and he dumped her body in the ocean. Aruban prosecutors say they lack evidence to charge Van der Sloot.

U.S. law enforcement officials say Van der Sloot extorted \$10,000 from Holloway's mother, Beth Twitty, after offering to help find Holloway's body in Aruba, then used the money to travel to Lima. (Various media)

Curacao – SUDS Program Absolute Success

The first Soldiers Undertaking Disabled Scuba (S.U.D.S) dive trip to Curacao turned into an absolute success. It was the best trip ever, according S.U.D.S. organizers Carla Chatterton and John Thompson. The Curacao group consisted of seven disabled U.S. military veterans, mostly amputees. The trip included a fantastic dolphin open water dive which was filmed by NBC's Today Show from the Substation Curacao Submarine. The program aired on Veteran's Day, November 11, 2010. This extraordinary trip was made possible thanks to the support of Hilton Curacao, Breezes Superclubs, the U.S. Forward Operating Location, the United States Consulate General, Marriott Hotel, Dolphin Academy, the Curacao Tourist Board, and Substation Curacao. Ocean Encounters Diving is planning on turning this trip into an annual Curacao event.

<http://today.msnbc.msn.com/id/26184891/vp/40132598#40132598> (S.U.D.S. interviews)

<http://today.msnbc.msn.com/id/26184891/vp/40114287#40114287> (S.U.D.S. in the submarine) (Various media)

St. Maarten – Five Persons Held in New TIP Case

St. Maarten law enforcement authorities arrested five persons for allegedly being involved in trafficking in persons and arrested nine Cubans who entered St. Maarten illegally, according to a Prosecutor's Office press statement on Monday.

The Cubans were arrested while in the vehicle of a local taxi driver. His house was searched, but the no further information was given pending the investigation. (Daily Herald)

Curacao – Chairman of Parliament to Attend Parlatino Meeting

Chairman of Parliament Ivar Asjes will attend a Latin American parliament (Parlatino) meeting November 17-22, 2010, in Mexico. Parlatino is a regional Latin America and Caribbean organization. Participating countries will discuss political, economical, social and cultural developments in the region. (Various media)

St. Maarten – Alleged Criminal Wins Extradition Appeal to Puerto Rico

Dutch citizen Hector A. - born in the Dominican Republic - who was arrested in May, for allegedly being a member of a criminal organization, has successfully appealed an extradition decision. His request to remain in custody in St. Maarten was granted by the Joint Court of Dutch Caribbean based on the „Ne bis in idem“ rule which means a criminal cannot be convicted twice for the same offense. U.S. authorities had filed an extradition request. (Antilliaans Dagblad)

Curacao - United States Help Curacao Flood Victims

U.S. Consul General Valerie Belon visited the offices of the Red Cross to present used clothing, shoes, canned goods, bookcases, a toddler bed and mattress, a bath tub, diapers, and toys donated by Consulate staff for flood victims in the poorest areas of Curacao. The assistance is in response to the extensive damage and the humanitarian need caused by recent heavy rains and floods. During her visit, Consul General Belon discussed damage assessments, disaster recovery plans and disaster preparedness with Red Cross manager Henk Stomp.

On behalf of the U.S. Government, the U.S. Consulate also donated computer equipment, office furniture and other items as well as US\$ 50,000 for disaster relief assistance to the International School of Curacao, which was severely flooded during Tropical Storm Tomas. The Consulate has been actively engaged with the school to help with disaster recovery. (Antilliaans Dagblad)

Curacao\St. Maarten - U.S. Boosts Mail, Cargo Scrutiny

The Curacao Post Office headquarter prohibited shipping "parcels, express mail service items and packages" weighing more than 400 grams (less than a pound) over the counter to U.S. territories, including the United States, Puerto Rico, Guam and the U.S. Virgin Islands. Curacao and St. Maarten residents can reportedly not mail mid-size to large packages to the U.S. via the Post Office until December 10. It is unclear how U.S.-based delivery services FedEx, DHL, and United Parcel Service (UPS) plan to deal with the restrictions.

The U.S. and allied governments tightened their scrutiny of air cargo and shipped packages two weeks ago as investigators tried to trace bomb parts and scanned for more mail bombs possibly sent from Yemen.

In the U.S., counterterrorism officials warned local law enforcement and emergency personnel to be on the watch for mail with unusual characteristics that could mean dangerous substances are hidden inside. The FBI and Homeland Security Department cautioned that foreign-origin packages without return addresses and excessive postage require a second look, according to U.S. officials. (Various media)

St. Maarten – Cruise Passengers Victimized By Car Break-In

Two families visiting St. Maarten on a cruise were victimized by a car break-in. Their visit took a sad turn when they learned that thieves had cleaned out their rented car of cell phones, credit cards and other personal items. Also, a crew member was assaulted and robbed, last week. A spokesperson for the St. Maarten Harbor Group of Companies is concerned about the crime increase and pledged to take appropriate action.

The U.N. Office on Drugs and Crime has linked recent Caribbean violence to a surge in regional drug traffic, estimating that as much as 50% of all cocaine bound for the U.S. and European markets from South America transits the Caribbean. (Various media)

Curacao – MinJus Wilsoe Limits D.A.R.E. Program

MinJus Wilsoe has told police management that D.A.R.E. (Drug Abuse Resistance Education) officers should return to their assigned jobs. D.A.R.E., founded in the U.S. in 1983 and active in Curacao since 2004, is a police officer-led series of classroom lessons that teaches children from kindergarten through 12th grade how to resist peer

pressure and live productive drug and violence-free lives. The police union, the D.A.R.E. officers and the opposition parties have criticized this new policy which could negatively impact a successful program. (Various media)

Curacao – Isla Refinery Stench; Schools Close

The Venezuela state-owned PdVSA-operated Isla refinery experienced technical problems which caused an increase of chemical odors sickening children in neighboring schools. Education Minister Rene Rosalia allowed schools in the vicinity of the refinery to close immediately. (Amigoe)

Dutch Caribbean – As Dengue Thrives, Fogging Starts

Health Ministers on Aruba and St. Maarten said that there are several confirmed cases of mosquito-borne dengue on their respective Islands, but also that a large number of cases are still unconfirmed. 140 “positive” dengue cases were recorded in St. Maarten, Health Minister Maria Buncamper-Molanus said and there are three confirmed cases on Aruba, Health Minister Richard Visser announced.

In the meantime, community assessments have started and residents are being advised to be vigilant. With the dengue spreading in St. Maarten, health authorities announced they will start fogging in a bid to kill mosquitoes.

Mosquito-borne dengue fever is has not reached an epidemic stage yet, but health authorities are concerned it could get much worse as the rainy season continues.

The increase in cases is being blamed on warm weather and an unusually long rainy season, which has produced an explosion of mosquitoes.

There are four types of dengue, and all cause fever, headaches and extreme joint and muscle pain. Most victims recover within a week, and while they become immune to the specific type of dengue they caught, they are still vulnerable to other types, a Health Department spokesperson said.

The principal vector mosquito, *Ae. aegypti*, is most frequently found in or near human habitations and prefers to feed on humans during the daytime. It has two peak periods of biting activity: in the morning for several hours after daybreak and in the late afternoon for several hours before dark. The mosquito may feed at any time during the day, however, especially indoors, in shady areas, or when it is overcast. Mosquito breeding sites include artificial water containers such as discarded tires, uncovered barrels, buckets, flower vases or pots, cans, and cisterns.

Dengue fever is characterized by sudden onset after an incubation period of 3-14 days (most commonly 4-7 days), high fevers, severe frontal headache, and joint and muscle pain. Many patients have nausea, vomiting, and rash. The rash appears 3-5 days after onset of fever and can spread from the torso to the arms, legs, and face. The disease is usually self-limited, although convalescence can be prolonged. Many cases of nonspecific viral syndrome or even subclinical infection occur, but dengue can also present as a severe, sometimes fatal disease characterized by hemorrhagic manifestations and hypotension (DHF/ dengue shock syndrome). (Various media)

St. Maarten – Authorities Issue Haiti Travel Warning

At this time, the St. Maarten Collective Preventive Services have issued a travel warning for Haiti. These warnings recommend that St. Maarten citizens avoid all nonessential travel to Haiti. An epidemic cholera strain has been confirmed in Haiti, causing the first

cholera outbreak in Haiti in many years. Cholera is a potentially fatal bacterial infection that causes severe diarrhea and dehydration.

The disease is most often spread through the ingestion of contaminated food or drinking water. Water may be contaminated by the feces of an infected person or by untreated sewage. Food is often contaminated by water containing cholera bacteria or because it was handled by a person ill with cholera. (Daily Herald)

St. Maarten - Brooks Tower Accord resumed, extended until December 30

The Brooks Tower Accord (BTA), which allowed undocumented persons to legalize their residency status, will resume November 24, announced Justice Minister Roland Duncan. The BTA process will continue until December 30. BTA's purpose was to offer legal status to thousands of undocumented persons living in the Netherlands Antilles despite the circumstances of their arrival. Persons who had lived here longest were given temporary protection under the accord. Duncan had halted BTA last month on the grounds that the former Netherlands Antilles Government had been unclear about factors like the legal status of BTA permit recipients before handing over the project. Now that the Netherlands Antilles has been dissolved, BTA policies and cost become St. Maarten's responsibility. About 184 persons have yet to apply for extensions, which will allow many an additional three years of legal residence, while some will have only one more year to stay on the island. Once the extension expires, the Council of Ministers will have to decide how to handle the 4,196 BTA recipients who had been undocumented residents until earlier this year (Daily Herald, St. Maarten Island Time).

ST. MAARTEN

Police arrest eight in robbery and homicide investigation

Police arrested eight young men aged 19-26 recently for their suspected roles in a series of crimes on both the Dutch and French sides of the island, including at least seven armed robberies and a homicide. Several victims were injured during these robberies, and thousands of dollars in cash and belongings were stolen. Investigators also think that at least three suspects were involved in the death of a Dutchman more than a month ago. The robberies took place in areas such as Dawn Beach, Cole Bay, Cay Hill, Guana Bay, and Pointe Blanche (Daily Herald, St. Maarten Island Time, Antilliaans Dagblad).

SABA

Major changes for Saba police

During a recent meeting with the press, Saba Police Chief Ruud Meturan and Island Governor Jonathan Johnson addressed the concerns of Sabans, and explained what changes would be made to the police department. The Saba Police Department is now comprised of police officers of the former Netherlands Antilles Police Department (KPNA) and officers of the Royal Dutch Marechaussees (KMar). An important part of the new police organization is Neighborhood Director William St. Hilaire. The Neighborhood Office is a new

concept on Saba, but is quite common in the Netherlands. St. Hilaire's role is to mediate and address the concerns of people in the community, while at the same time building trust between the community and police. Meturan said that his organization is focused on increasing the quality of its investigations and making sure arrests are based on evidence. The police are in the process of acquiring the necessary tools to make this happen, such as the automated information system ActPol, which connects files and builds a database to tie cases together. Currently there are no specific files or dossiers on persons; as a result, every time a person goes to court, each case is treated differently and the court has no way to link cases. Other plans include improving the police detention cells and introducing foot patrols (Daily Herald).

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