



# General Assembly

Distr.: General  
6 March 2025

Original: English

## Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples

### Cayman Islands

#### Working paper prepared by the Secretariat

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*Note:* The information contained in the present working paper has been derived from public sources, including those of the territorial Government, and from information transmitted to the Secretary-General by the administering Power under Article 73 *e* of the Charter of the United Nations. Information was transmitted by the administering Power on 5 December 2024. Further details are contained in previous working papers, available at [www.un.org/dppa/decolonization/en/documents/workingpapers](http://www.un.org/dppa/decolonization/en/documents/workingpapers).



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### **The Territory at a glance**

*Territory:* The Cayman Islands is a Non-Self-Governing Territory under the Charter of the United Nations administered by the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

*Representative of administrative Power:* Governor Jane Owen (since April 2023)

*Geography:* Located some 290 km west of Jamaica and about the same distance south of Cuba, the Territory comprises three islands: Grand Cayman, Cayman Brac and the adjacent Little Cayman.

*Land area:* 264 km<sup>2</sup>

*Exclusive economic zone:* 119,137 km<sup>2</sup>

*Population:* 84,738 (men: 42,774; women: 41,964); (46 per cent Caymanians; 54 per cent non-Caymanians) (2023 estimates).

*Life expectancy at birth:* 83.1 years (men: 80.3 years; women: 86.0 years, 2023)

*Language:* English

*Capital:* George Town

*Head of the territorial Government:* Premier Juliana O'Connor-Connolly (since November 2023)

*Main political parties:* Cayman Islands People's Party, People's Progressive Movement and United People's Movement

*Elections:* The most recent elections were held on 14 April 2021. The next elections are scheduled for 30 April 2025.

*Legislature:* Parliament (19 elected and 2 ex officio members)

*Gross domestic product per capita:* CI\$ 71,106 (2023 estimate)

*Economy:* International financial services and tourism

*Main trading partners:* United States of America

*Unemployment rate:* 2.9 per cent (October 2024)

*Monetary unit:* Cayman dollar, pegged to the United States dollar (CI\$ 1 = US\$ 1.20)

*Brief history:* The Territory, reportedly sighted by Christopher Columbus in the late fifteenth century, was first settled by the British between 1661 and 1671. A tradition of self-government gradually grew in the Territory beginning in 1734 and a legislative assembly was established in 1831 and was known as the Assembly of Justices and Vestry. Slavery was abolished in 1834. In 1863, the Cayman Islands became a dependency of Jamaica and, when the latter achieved independence 99 years later, the Islands remained under the British Crown.

## I. Constitutional, legal and political issues

1. The current Constitution entered into force on 6 November 2009 and was amended in November 2020. Under the Constitution, the Governor, appointed by the British Crown, is responsible for external affairs, defence, internal security and the appointment of persons to the civil service.

2. In accordance with the 2020 constitutional amendment, the Parliament of the Cayman Islands consists of the Speaker, 19 elected members and 2 ex officio members, the Deputy Governor and the Attorney General. The Speaker can be either an elected member of Parliament who is not a minister, or a person qualified to be an elected member of Parliament.

3. The Territory's Cabinet, chaired by the Governor, is composed of the Premier, seven other ministers and two ex officio members, namely, the Deputy Governor and the Attorney General. The Premier is a member of Parliament who is recommended by the party with the majority of seats and appointed by the Governor. The seven other ministers are appointed by the Governor upon the advice of the Premier from within the elected membership of Parliament. The last general election took place in April 2021, resulting in a Government of 12 independent members of Parliament led by G. Wayne Panton as Premier. According to the administering Power, Mr. Panton resigned as Premier and was replaced by Juliana O'Connor-Connolly in November 2023. On 15 November 2023, a new political group, the United People's Movement, comprised of 12 existing members of Parliament, came together under the leadership of Ms. O'Connor-Connolly as Premier. On the same day, the Governor accepted the group's proposal to form a new territorial Government. On 31 October 2024, four members of Parliament resigned from the Government. According to the administering Power, the Cabinet is constitutionally quorate and therefore fully able to function. Following the Governor's consultation with the Premier, it has been decided that the next general election will be held on 30 April 2025.

4. The judiciary comprises the following jurisdictions, in ascending order within the hierarchy of the courts: the Summary Court (including Family, Youth and Coroner's Courts); the Grand Court; the Court of Appeal; and the Privy Council. The Summary Court has civil and criminal jurisdiction. The Grand Court is a superior court of record, having unlimited jurisdiction in both criminal and civil matters. The Court of Appeal does not exercise inherent jurisdiction but is a creature of statute and of the Constitution. The Privy Council is the final appellate court.

5. According to the then Premier, the Constitution (Amendment) Order 2020, which was approved by the Privy Council on 11 November 2020, laid before Parliament on 18 November 2020 and came into effect on 4 December 2020, brought the Territory "a step forward to greater self-determination". The amendment was introduced following the constitutional review by the Cayman Islands Review Committee and the meetings between the territorial Government and the Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland on 7 and 10 December 2018, during which they discussed the proposed constitutional changes and confirmed that the territorial Government had autonomous capacity in respect of domestic affairs and that the United Kingdom would not seek to legislate, directly or indirectly, for the Cayman Islands without, at a minimum, consulting with the territorial Government.

## II. Budget

6. The territorial Government forecast operating revenues of CI\$ 1.095 billion for 2024 and CI\$ 1.137 billion for 2025 and operating and financing expenditures of CI\$ 1.052 billion for 2024 and CI\$ 1.083 billion for 2025.

7. The unaudited financial results of the core Government for the nine-month period which ended on 30 September 2024 showed a surplus of CI\$ 135.7 million (CI\$ 148.6 million for the entire public sector) and bank account balances of CI\$ 485.0 million in cash and deposits.

8. Since 2012, the United Kingdom and the Cayman Islands have been working together under a framework for fiscal responsibility that commits the Territory to prudent and transparent fiscal management through effective medium-term planning. According to the administering Power, the Territory complies with the required debt and cash reserve ratios specified in the framework.

9. The Cayman Islands is a jurisdiction with no direct individual or corporate income tax. The principal sources of government revenue are import duties, financial services licence fees, work permit fees and stamp duties. There is also an environmental tax on visitors, which they are required to pay as they depart the Territory.

### **III. Economic conditions**

#### **A. General**

10. The economy of the Cayman Islands is based on the provision of financial services – the dominant sector in the economy – and tourism. There are no commercial fisheries.

11. Real gross domestic product (GDP) for 2023 was estimated at CI\$ 4.95 billion, compared with CI\$ 4.75 billion in 2022. GDP at constant prices in 2023 was estimated to have expanded by 4.4 per cent, compared with a 5.2 per cent expansion in 2022. Most sectors of the economy expanded in 2023. Economic performance was largely driven by the services sector, which accounted for 88.8 per cent of GDP and increased by 4.5 per cent. The hotel and restaurant sector led the expansion with a growth of 34.4 per cent.

#### **B. Financial services**

12. According to the administering Power, the financing and insurance services sector is estimated to have accounted for 30.7 per cent of the Territory's GDP in 2023 and is estimated to have expanded by 4.2 per cent.

13. According to the Cayman Islands annual economic report for 2023, the Cayman Islands was ranked twentieth in terms of international assets and twenty-first in terms of international liabilities, as reported by the Bank for International Settlements. Financial services industry indicators were mixed for 2023. Compared with 2022, the total number of insurers increased by 1.9 per cent, the highest increase in over a decade, to 708; the total number of registered companies fell minimally by 0.6 per cent, to 118,443; and new company registrations decreased by 17.0 per cent, to 9,794. Mixed performance in fund registrations were the result of a fall in mutual fund registrations by 1.5 per cent, to 12,802, as private funds rose by 4.4 per cent, to 16,551. The number of bank and trust licences continued its downward trend, declining by 7.4 per cent, to 87. Over the past five years, the number of banks with category B licences has steadily decreased, owing partly to banks' ongoing consolidation and restructuring aimed at achieving optimal cost, risk management and governance structures.

14. Following the conclusion of the bilateral arrangement with the United Kingdom on the exchange of beneficial ownership information, the Cayman Islands beneficial

ownership regime came into force on 1 July 2017. Under the law, companies incorporated or registered in the Cayman Islands are required to maintain a register of information about their beneficial owners or to file, with the competent authority on beneficial ownership, the reason they are not required to maintain a beneficial ownership register. A centralized platform allows law enforcement and local competent authorities to conduct instantaneous searches of the beneficial ownership registers of all companies incorporated or registered in the Cayman Islands, which in turn facilitates the swift sharing of information on beneficial ownership with international law enforcement or the competent authorities. The Limited Liability Partnership (Amendment) Law, 2018, which came into force on 30 November 2020, requires limited liability partnerships that are exempt from these requirements to file written confirmations of exemption. Under the Limited Liability Companies (Amendment) Act, 2022, existing limited liability companies no longer have to file a certificate of amendment in relation to membership changes.

15. In May 2018, the Parliament of the United Kingdom passed the Sanctions and Anti-Money Laundering Act, pursuant to which the Secretary of State was required to provide all reasonable assistance to the Governments of overseas territories to enable each of those Governments to establish a publicly accessible register of the beneficial ownership of companies registered in its jurisdiction and to prepare, no later than 31 December 2020, a draft Order in Council requiring any overseas territory that has not introduced such a register to do so. On 14 December 2020, the Government of the United Kingdom published a draft Order in Council setting out a framework for the registers. The Government of the Cayman Islands has committed itself to introducing such a register with access limited to those with a legitimate interest by June 2025 or earlier. The Government of the Cayman Islands has committed itself to implementing the maximum possible degree of access and transparency, while containing the necessary safeguards to protect the right to privacy in line with its constitution. The Government of the United Kingdom is providing support where required and maintains the expectation that the overseas territories will implement fully publicly accessible registers.

16. The Cayman Islands Monetary Authority is the body responsible for monitoring compliance with international financial standards in the Territory and for reporting findings to the territorial Government on a regular basis. According to the administering Power, the Authority continued throughout 2023 to strengthen the regulatory framework within the jurisdiction, expanding its powers to issue administrative fines for breaches of anti-money-laundering and combating the financing of terrorism regulations to a wider class of legal persons under its supervision, including partnerships, exempted limited liability partnerships and limited liability partnerships. In 2021, the Authority imposed eight administrative penalties totalling approximately CUS\$ 6.17 million and CUS\$ 831,300 in 2022 for various breaches of those regulations. In 2023, the Authority carried out a further 10 enforcement actions connected to various breaches of those regulations and, for 2024, 6 such actions had been carried out as of October. The Authority has implemented the use of supervisory technology for the purposes of data collection, data analysis and risk assessment of regulated entities, thereby enhancing its risk-based supervisory efforts. Pursuant to the Virtual Asset (Service Providers) Act, which came into effect on 31 October 2020, the recommendations of the Financial Action Task Force on registering and licensing virtual asset service providers were implemented and the Authority was appointed as the supervisor with responsibility for enforcing the regulations on anti-money-laundering and combating the financing of terrorism. The “travel rule” for virtual asset service providers, similar to requirements for wire transfers, came into effect in the Cayman Islands on 1 July 2022. In January 2023, the Authority commenced data collection analysis of cross-border transactions within the virtual asset service provider sector and, in February 2024, it updated its guidance

notes on the prevention and detection of money-laundering, terrorist financing and proliferation financing in the Cayman Islands in order to modernize sector-specific guidance for virtual asset service providers. An anti-corruption commission was established on 1 January 2010 under the Territory's Anti-Corruption Law (2008). The ratification of the United Nations Convention Against Corruption was extended to the Cayman Islands by the Government of the United Kingdom on 14 December 2020.

17. In June 2023, it was announced that the territorial Government had fully implemented the comprehensive action plan to address the 63 recommendations set out in a report by the Caribbean Financial Action Task Force of March 2019. In September 2023, a delegation from the Americas Joint Group, a sub-working group of the International Co-Operation Review Group of the Task Force, completed its on-site visit to the Cayman Islands. In October 2023, the Task Force announced that the Cayman Islands was no longer subject to its increased monitoring process. On 19 January 2024, the territorial Government announced that the Cayman Islands had been removed from the European Union's list of jurisdictions with deficiencies in their regimes for anti-money-laundering and countering the financing of terrorism, and that the removal would become effective on 7 February 2024. At the plenary meeting of the Financial Action Task Force Plenary held in October 2024, the Cayman Islands was invited as one of two initial jurisdictions to participate in the meetings of the plenary and working groups as guests.

18. In April 2022, the National Strategy for Combating Money Laundering, Terrorist Financing, and Proliferation Financing 2022–2025 was published, laying out a comprehensive action plan under seven strategic themes: enhancing the jurisdiction's legal and regulatory framework; implementing a comprehensive risk-based supervisory framework; strengthening sanctions, intelligence, enforcement and asset recovery; enhancing domestic cooperation and coordination; ensuring an efficient and effective system for international cooperation; raising awareness among all stakeholders and the general public; and strengthening the beneficial ownership framework.

19. The Cayman Islands is a Party to the Council of Europe-Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) Convention on Mutual Administrative Assistance in Tax Matters. In addition to a bilateral double tax arrangement and bilateral tax information exchange agreements, the Cayman Islands is a Party to the Multilateral Competent Authority Agreement on Automatic Exchange of Financial Account Information and bilateral competent authority agreements. The first exchanges under the OECD Common Reporting Standard were completed in September 2017. The Cayman Islands is also a Party to the Multilateral Competent Authority Agreement on the exchange of Country-by-Country Reports under Action 14 of the Action Plan on Base Erosion and Profit Shifting and bilateral competent authority agreements. According to the administering Power, the Cayman Islands will spontaneously exchange information with relevant jurisdictions for the purposes of the substantial activities requirements for non-tax jurisdictions or only nominal tax jurisdictions under Action 5 of the Action Plan on Base Erosion and Profit Shifting. In November 2022, the Cayman Islands became a signatory to the Multilateral Competent Authority Agreement on the Automatic Exchange regarding Common Reporting Standard Avoidance Arrangements and Opaque Offshore Structures.

## C. Tourism

20. In 2024, Cayman Airways and other airlines operated international service from various cities in Barbados, Canada, Cuba, Honduras, Jamaica, Panama, the United Kingdom and the United States of America. According to the administering Power, non-stop service to the Territory was available from 27 international gateways in

2024. On the basis of airline schedules for January to December 2024, inbound airline seats for that period were expected to be 8 per cent higher than capacity in 2023.

21. In 2023, the Cayman Islands welcomed 429,284 stayover visitors, which marked a significant milestone in the recovery of the Territory's tourism industry and represented a 51 per cent increase compared with the number of visitors in 2022, which stood at 284,274. The improvement is substantial when considering the challenges faced during the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, which saw visitor numbers fall to 121,819 in 2020 and reach a low of 17,308 in 2021. The recovery momentum that began in 2022 strengthened in 2023, with notable growth across most source markets. The United States remained the dominant source market, accounting for 82.8 per cent of air arrivals in 2023. Canada followed, providing 6.7 per cent of arrivals, while visitors from Europe comprised 4.6 per cent. The Territory's cruise sector welcomed 1,270,981 cruise passengers during 407 cruise ship calls in 2023.

22. This positive trend continued into 2024, with the Cayman Islands welcoming 330,514 stayover visitors in the first nine months of the year, a 2.3 per cent increase compared with the same period in 2023. This performance represents the third highest total for this time frame on record. March 2024 was particularly noteworthy as the number of visitors reached 57,040, which is the second highest monthly total ever recorded for the Cayman Islands.

#### **D. Agriculture**

23. The Department of Agriculture continues to develop sustainable agricultural production in order to promote measures of self-sufficiency and food security for the Territory. The territorial Government, through the Ministry of Planning, Agriculture, Housing, Infrastructure, Transport and Development, has approved and commenced the implementation of the Cayman Islands Food and Nutrition Security Policy. To support that implementation, several priority programmes and plans are being carried out, including the National Livestock Development Programme, the National Egg Strategy and the development of an agro-park and backyard farming programme. The Ministry, through the Department of Agriculture, continues to prioritize investment in domestic production, the training of producers and the promotion of competitiveness among farmers so as to reduce imports of certain crops. Simultaneously, the Department remains focused on strengthening its safeguarding initiatives to prevent the entry and establishment of new pests and diseases that could negatively affect the sector.

#### **E. Infrastructure**

24. A development plan for the Cayman Islands, known as PlanCayman, is a comprehensive, long-term policy designed to guide physical development and land use in the Cayman Islands. Its primary objective is to sustain and improve the Territory's economy, society and environment. It aims to achieve this by effectively guiding development to protect the economic, cultural, social and general well-being of the Territory's people while also safeguarding the environment. The Central Planning Authority, in conjunction with the Ministry of Planning, Agriculture, Housing, Infrastructure, Transport and Development, is revising the plan.

25. According to the administering Power, the Grand Cayman road network consists of approximately 1,180 travel lane km with approximately 106 km of primary arterial roads and 245 km of secondary arterial roads. According to the National Roads Authority, the Linford Pierson Highway and Crewe Road will be widened to six lanes to help reduce traffic queues during peak hours, and the Bobby Thompson Roundabout, which is located on the eastern side of the Linford Pierson Highway, is



being reconfigured at the time of writing to accommodate the widening of both the Linford Pierson Highway and Crewe Road. As part of the environmental impact assessment of the east-west arterial extension, a shortlist of potential routes was drawn up and each route was subjected to careful analysis in order to understand the potential impacts, as a result of which, the most suitable route, called the “preferred alternative”, has been selected. The assessment is expected to be released for review by the public early in 2025. The proposed road would create a disaster-resilient central highway, serve as an emergency route when coastal roads are compromised and promote public transportation through dedicated bus lanes.

26. An outline business case and master plan for the proposed development of the Territory’s airports, published in June 2023, includes a runway extension, a general aviation facility, improvements to the runway strip and runway end safety area and a new air traffic control and management system at Owen Roberts International Airport, as well as an environmental impact assessment and airport works at Charles Kirkconnell International Airport. The master plan will cover at least 20 years and includes analysis to guide future business decisions.

## **F. Telecommunications and utilities**

27. According to the Economics and Statistics Office of the Cayman Islands, the information and communication sector accounted for 2.6 per cent of total GDP in 2022, which represents a decrease from 2.7 per cent in 2021 (revised). According to the administering Power, currently, four telecommunications companies provide fixed Internet, voice and television services, two of which also provide mobile services, while a third currently holds a mobile service licence but is not yet operational. The fourth telecommunications company, a new entrant, has been issued with a mobile service licence and is also not yet operational. According to the administering Power, the two existing mobile operators launched 5G service in 2024.

28. According to the administering Power, there are 21 FM radio broadcasting stations and four companies that are licensed to provide subscription telecommunication services in the Territory. From 2022 to 2023, the total number of fixed and mobile phone lines increased from 146,359 (revised) to 151,197, and the number of Internet connections decreased from 29,289 to 28,107. Much focus has been and continues to be placed on improving competition by enforcing rights to have access to telecommunications services and ensuring the protection of consumers. In 2024, the Cayman Islands Utility Regulation and Competition Office continued to enhance sector-wide enforcement and compliance by providers, resulting in investigations and litigation.

29. On Grand Cayman, where the Caribbean Utilities Company has a non-exclusive licence for electricity generation and an exclusive licence for its transmission and distribution, almost all power generation relies on imported diesel. In October 2024, the Caribbean Utilities Company successfully completed the installation and commissioning of its first set of utility-scale battery energy storage systems with a total capacity of 20 MW. The systems will enhance the renewable energy capacity on the grid and are expected to reduce fuel costs, improve fuel efficiency and decrease carbon dioxide emissions. Since 2011, Grand Cayman has had a consumer-owned renewable energy generation programme, which enables consumers to generate energy from renewable sources and to be compensated for their contribution to generation capacity with stable, long-term rates. In addition, since 2018, Grand Cayman has had a distributed energy resources programme of 3 MW, which was approved by the Cayman Islands Utility Regulation and Competition Office.

## **IV. Social conditions**

### **A. General**

30. The Ministry of Social Development and Innovation exists to advance the economic, social and political interests of the Government, people and businesses of the Cayman Islands. It is responsible for reimagining and reforming social development through changes to government policies and programmes. The Social Development Division includes the Department of Financial Assistance, the Sunrise Adult Training Centre and the Department of Children and Family Services. The Department of Financial Assistance provides financial assistance to people who find themselves unable to fund their basic needs, such as shelter, food and clothing. The Sunrise Adult Training Centre provides training, support and services for the empowerment, employment and independence of adults with disabilities. The Department of Children and Family Services protects and promotes the rights and welfare of children and families through preventive interventions, education, advocacy and community-based programmes. The Department works in collaboration with other community entities, such as through the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub, which has strategic and operational responsibility for all child welfare matters. The hub works in collaboration and partnership with the Royal Cayman Islands Police Service, the Health Services Authority and the Department of Education Services.

31. According to statistics released by the Royal Cayman Islands Police Service, the number of domestic violence referrals increased by 15 per cent from 1,740 in 2022 to 2,001 in 2023. While not all referrals become a recorded crime, they will all still be considered by the Police Service for early intervention and prevention opportunities. There were 399 domestic violence crimes in 2023, compared with 377 in 2021. In 2023, 52 per cent of violent offences involved an element of domestic violence, which is a proportional increase compared with 49 per cent in 2022. In 2023, 12 per cent of offences constituting serious violence involved an element of domestic violence, compared with 28 per cent in 2022.

32. The National Drug Council is an independent statutory body set up under the National Drug Council Law (2010 Revision) to coordinate anti-drug measures in the Territory. The Council works with both primary and high schools to provide evidence-based education on preventing the consumption of illegal drugs.

### **B. Labour and immigration**

33. In 2023, the labour force was made up of 60,513 persons (31,857 men and 28,656 women), an increase of 5.1 per cent compared with 2022. It was comprised of 22,706 Caymanians (37.5 per cent of the total labour force), 32,466 non-Caymanians (53.7 per cent) and 5,341 permanent residents with the right to work (8.8 per cent). The number of Caymanian workers increased by 2.2 per cent, non-Caymanians by 1.3 per cent and permanent residents by 31.8 per cent. In 2023, the unemployment rate was 5.0 per cent among Caymanians and 2.3 per cent among non-Caymanians (compared with 3.6 per cent and 1.0 per cent, respectively, in 2022). The overall unemployment rate in 2023 was 3.3 per cent, an increase from 2.1 per cent in 2022. Government statistics indicate that the number of work permits for non-Caymanians increased from 33,532 in 2021 to 36,153 in 2023.

34. The gross minimum basic wage in the Territory remains CI\$ 6 per hour for most employees, and CI\$ 4.50 per hour for service employees of employers that have a registered gratuities scheme. There are also special calculations for live-in domestic workers, as well as for employees who work on a commission basis.

## **C. Education**

35. Education is compulsory for all resident children between 5 and 17 years of age. According to the administering Power, in the 2023/24 school year, 9,258 students (50.8 per cent boys, 49.2 per cent girls) were enrolled in compulsory education. The mandatory school-age population that attends private schools decreased from 45.0 per cent in the previous school year to 40.3 per cent, while 59.7 per cent were in public education. Non-Caymanian children can access the public system if there is space available, in accordance with the government enrolment policy. According to the administering Power, two public and three private institutions provide tertiary education.

36. Students from overseas territories benefit from the home student rate for tuition fees at British universities, provided that they have lived in a British overseas territory, the European Economic Area or Switzerland for the three years prior to the first academic year of their course of study. Students will be eligible for tuition fee loans in England provided that they have settled status upon arrival in the United Kingdom and are starting full-time or part-time undergraduate courses in the 2024/25 academic year. Eligible students are encouraged to ensure that they hold a British passport before applying for home fee status to study in the United Kingdom.

## **D. Public health**

37. The Health Services Authority is responsible for the provision of all public healthcare. The Community Health Services provide primary care across Grand Cayman through five satellite health centres, one for each district on the island. Health insurance is compulsory in the Cayman Islands.

38. According to the administering Power, the territorial Government partners with various agencies, including the United Kingdom Health Security Agency and the Caribbean Public Health Agency, as well as the Pan American Health Organization.

39. In 2023, access to the healthcare quota system was expanded to include Ascension and Tristan da Cunha, Bermuda, the Cayman Islands and Pitcairn for the first time. Under the system, up to five patients per year from the Cayman Islands would have free access to primary healthcare through the National Health Service in the United Kingdom.

## **E. Crime and public safety**

40. The 486-strong Royal Cayman Islands Police Service is headed by a Commissioner, who reports to the Governor. Between 2022 and 2023, the total number of recorded crimes increased by 3.9 per cent or 150 crimes, from 3,805 to 3,955. This increase is attributed mainly to a rise in acquisitive crimes, especially vehicle-related theft. While there have been less significant increases in firearm-related crimes, sexual offences and crimes relating to violence against the person, levels of serious violence have reduced. The number of violent crimes increased by 1 per cent, from 762 to 770, and offences constituting serious violence decreased by 29 per cent, from 58 to 41. The number of traffic accidents increased by 10 per cent, from 3,196 to 3,224.

41. The Government of the United Kingdom has indicated its commitment to providing assistance to the overseas territories to deal with major storms and other disasters. The North Atlantic patrol tasking of the Royal Navy ensures a year-round maritime presence of the United Kingdom in the Caribbean to support the overseas

territories in preparing for and responding to the threat of hurricanes and other disasters and to provide humanitarian assistance, disaster relief and crisis communications support in the region.

## **F. Human rights**

42. The Human Rights Commission was established under section 116 of the Cayman Islands Constitution Order 2009 and appointments were first made in January 2010. The Commission's primary responsibility is to promote understanding and observance of human rights in the Cayman Islands. In addition, the Commission has powers to accept and investigate public complaints regarding potential breaches of human rights, to provide a forum for mediation or conciliation, to give advice and guidance and to publish reports on its own initiative on human rights issues. It is an independent body that is not subject to the direction or control of a person or an authority.

43. Part I of Schedule 2 of the Cayman Islands Constitution Order 2009 setting out the Bill of Rights, Freedoms and Responsibilities came into effect on 6 November 2012, with the exception of the provisions relating to the segregation of prisoners (non-convicts from convicted prisoners and juvenile from adult prisoners), which came into effect on 6 November 2013.

44. The Territory is subject to several major human rights conventions and instruments to which the administering Power has acceded, including the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the Convention on the Rights of the Child. The Gender Affairs Unit is the focal point for gender mainstreaming within the Government of the Cayman Islands and is responsible for sector-specific gender training, public education efforts and gender-awareness training.

45. Further to the Legislative Assembly passing the Disabilities (Solomon Webster) Law on 24 October 2016, which was aimed at implementing elements of the Cayman Islands Disability Policy 2014–2033, the National Council for Persons with Disabilities was established. The Council is responsible for overseeing policy implementation and the creation of a voluntary disabilities register to improve the quantity and quality of available data on persons with disabilities in order to inform policy, legislation and services.

46. According to the administering Power, the Council of Older Persons, established pursuant to the Older Persons Law, convened its first meeting in November 2017 and meets regularly; it oversees the implementation of the Cayman Islands Older Persons Policy 2016–2035 and promotes, protects and advances the well-being of older persons.

## **V. Environment and disaster preparedness**

47. The Cayman Islands is included in the ratification by the United Kingdom of several multilateral environmental agreements, including the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance especially as Waterfowl Habitat, the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals, the Convention on Biological Diversity, the Convention for the Protection and Development of the Marine

Environment of the Wider Caribbean Region and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and its Kyoto Protocol.

48. The National Conservation Law (2013) gives effect to various provisions in these conventions. The Law, by which the National Conservation Council was established in 2014, is intended to protect and conserve endangered, threatened and endemic wildlife species and their habitats. According to the administering Power, since the passage of the Law, approximately 12 per cent of the total land area of the Territory has been protected. The Ministry of Sustainability and Climate Resiliency is responsible for developing programmes and policies, with a focus on transforming environmental systems and building capacity to anticipate climate risks and hazards, to absorb shocks and stresses and to reshape and transform development pathways in the longer term. The Ministry is also responsible for revisions to the National Energy Policy 2024–2045 and its implementation. This policy is focused on expanding renewable energy, promoting energy efficiency and conservation measures and supporting energy security by reducing reliance on imported fossil-based fuels. The Climate Change Policy 2024–2050, published in October 2024, contains measures required to address the most pressing risks posed by current and continued climate changes to the people, economy and environment of the Cayman Islands.

49. The Department of Environment works with other agencies and the National Trust for the Cayman Islands to ensure that the Territory's natural resources are preserved and protected. The Department of Agriculture, a member of the National Conservation Council, collaborates with the Department of Environment to protect endangered flora and fauna from the introduction of invasive alien species that could have a negative impact on them and on crop and livestock production, as well as on public health.

50. Increasing recreational and artisanal fishing in the shallow waters around the Cayman Islands continues to threaten the Territory's marine environment. According to the administering Power, the new Marine Parks Regulations, enacted in March 2021, increased the proportion of near-shore shelf included in protected "no-take" areas, from 14.8 per cent to 45.2 per cent.

51. The territorial Government has obtained funding from Darwin Plus, also known as the Overseas Territories Environment and Climate Fund, for various projects. In 2022, Darwin Plus provided £299,249 to enhance monitoring and prevention of invasive non-native species across overseas territories, £439,897 to preserve endemic threatened wildlife populations and £490,384 to characterize the biodiversity of selected offshore seamounts to improve their management. These projects are due to end in 2025. In 2023, Darwin Plus provided £396,989 to mitigate the impacts of climate change on sea turtle populations; this project is expected to end in 2026. In 2024, Darwin Plus provided £599,303 of additional funding to continue work with the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds to investigate a potential feral cat eradication project in Little Cayman; this project is due to end in 2028. The National Conservation (Alien Species) Regulations, 2022, were passed by the Cabinet in October 2022 and set out ways to control feral animals and other alien species so as to reduce the threat to native species.

52. The Joint Nature Conservation Committee provides overseas territories with technical assistance in order to support their biodiversity and wider environmental management strategies. In December 2022, the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs of the United Kingdom launched a consultation on a new biodiversity strategy for overseas territories, in partnership with the Joint Nature Conservation Committee. According to the administering Power, the Committee facilitated a workshop in June 2023 with a view to developing a framework that would enable the Government of the United Kingdom and the territorial Government to

agree on priorities for regional and in-country biodiversity and nature conservation and identify gaps that could be filled by a new Darwin Plus local funding scheme.

53. The Blue Belt Programme is the flagship international marine conservation initiative of the Government of the United Kingdom. The Cayman Islands joined the Programme in 2023, and a two-day workshop was held with representatives from the Cayman Islands Department of Environment and Ministry of Sustainability and Climate Resiliency, as well as from across the marine sector. The Programme will provide support to the Cayman Islands, including through the conduct of a comprehensive review of fishing activity in the region to help inform management strategies; the development of satellite surveillance to support enforcement and explore alternative surveillance tools in the region; and the exploration of options for enhanced management of offshore natural resources, potentially including offshore marine protected areas.

54. According to the administering Power, following the adoption of the Paris Agreement at the twenty-first session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change in 2015, the territorial Government indicated its desire to join the ratification by the United Kingdom of that Agreement, and discussions with the United Kingdom Department for Energy Security and Net Zero are ongoing, with the aim of determining, by 2026, whether the Agreement will be extended to the Cayman Islands.

55. In 2017, the national energy policy 2017–2037 was introduced, which is focused on exploiting renewable energy, promoting energy efficiency and conservation measures and supporting energy security by reducing reliance on imported fossil-based fuels. Following a review, which is mandatory every five years, a draft national energy policy 2023–2050 and implementation plan were released for public consultation in 2023. On 16 April 2024, the Cabinet approved the revised national energy policy for 2024–2045 and its implementation and monitoring plan.

56. The Territory has one utility-scale solar power plant, which was completed in June 2017. Consistent with the national energy policy goal to have 70 per cent of total electric power generated from renewable energy by 2037, the project has successfully commissioned 5 MW of renewable solar power. According to the administering Power, this represents 3 per cent of total capacity in the Territory, while another 3 per cent is represented by 6 MW of distributed solar capacity in Grand Cayman. In 2022, the Cayman Islands Utility Regulation and Competition Office issued requests for a solar photovoltaic plant and a dispatchable photovoltaic generation plant, both with energy storage facilities. According to the administering Power, an additional 12 MW of capacity for distributed generation has been made available after the commissioning of a 20 MW utility-scale battery that was installed in October 2024. These projects would place the Territory on a pathway to achieving 38 per cent renewable energy by 2030.

57. Hazard Management Cayman Islands has overall responsibility for the Territory's disaster management programme, including preparedness, response, mitigation and recovery. An annual hurricane exercise continues to be conducted prior to each hurricane season, which runs from 1 June to 30 November, in addition to exercises related to other hazards. According to the administering Power, the Territory has also engaged in several initiatives sponsored by the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office to improve and better communicate the national hazard management plan and enhance resilience.

58. In 2020, the Cayman Islands joined the Charter on Cooperation to Achieve the Coordinated Use of Space Facilities in the Event of Natural or Technological Disasters, making it possible for the Territory to request satellite data in the event of a major disaster. In September 2020, the Cayman Islands joined the Caribbean

Disaster Emergency Management Agency, which conducted a comprehensive disaster management audit of the Territory, following which, according to the administering Power, a workplan is being developed to close the gaps and identify areas for further strengthening.

59. In 2022, a United Kingdom-funded seabed mapping survey of the Territory, which will help improve inundation modelling accuracy and support environmental resilience, was completed. In September 2023, the Cayman Islands Tsunami Hazard Assessment was produced by the United States of America National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration, as part of a wider Caribbean tsunami-readiness project funded by the United States Agency for International Development through the International Tsunami Information Centre Caribbean Office.

60. According to the administering Power, Hazard Management Cayman Islands, in collaboration with the Cayman Islands Ministry of Health and Wellness and the United Kingdom Health Security Agency, launched a hazardous materials risk management project in 2022 in order to establish a code of practice that will guide key stakeholders across the life cycle of hazardous materials and improve incident response capabilities.

61. The aim of the Green Overseas Programme, funded by the European Union, is to contribute to the sustainable, resilient and inclusive development of European Union and British overseas territories. According to the administering Power, officials from the Ministry of Sustainability and Climate Resiliency would submit applications for project funding and participate in virtual training sessions, hybrid workshops and forums on energy transition, climate finance and resilience to climate change until 2026.

62. The Cayman Islands Regiment is a military formation created in 2019, with the role of providing humanitarian assistance and disaster relief in both the Territory and the wider Caribbean region. In addition, the Regiment provides security assistance to the Royal Cayman Islands Police Service and Cayman Islands Coast Guard. The Regiment is currently made up of 11 full-time staff and 66 reservists and is expected to have 216 personnel by 2030.

## **VI. Relations with international organizations and partners**

63. The Cayman Islands is an associate member of the Caribbean Community, the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization and a member of the Caribbean Development Bank, the Universal Postal Union and the International Olympic Committee.

## **VII. Future status of the Territory**

### **A. Position of the territorial Government**

64. Information on the position of the territorial Government regarding the future status of the Cayman Islands is reflected in section I above.

## **B. Position of the administering Power**

65. The United Kingdom-Overseas Territories Joint Ministerial Council was held in London, from 19 to 21 November 2024, when the administering Power hosted the representatives of the Governments of its overseas territories.

66. In the communiqué adopted at the meeting, the elected leaders of the overseas territories welcomed the five principles put forward by the Government of the United Kingdom to guide its relationship with the elected Governments of the overseas territories: (a) devolution and democratic autonomy for the overseas territories and consistency on the principles of partnership and engagement; (b) listening to the overseas territories, following the principle of “nothing about you without you”; (c) partnership with the overseas territories based on mutual respect and inclusion; (d) good governance and ensuring proper democratic accountability and regulation; and (e) defending the security, autonomy and rights of the overseas territories, including the right of self-determination.

67. The Government of the United Kingdom and the leaders of the overseas territories indicated that the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples, as enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, applied to the peoples of the overseas territories. They reaffirmed the importance of promoting the right of those peoples to self-determination, a collective responsibility of all parts of the Government of the United Kingdom.

68. The Government of the United Kingdom and the leaders of the overseas territories stated that they would continue to explore ways in which the overseas territories could maintain international support in countering hostile sovereignty claims. It was also stated that, for those Territories with permanent populations that so wished, the United Kingdom would continue to support their requests for removal from the list of Non-Self-Governing Territories. The Government of the United Kingdom stated that it would engage closely and proactively with each overseas territory where the democratically elected territorial Government sought engagement on reviewing its constitution.

69. At the 8th meeting of the Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee), on 15 October 2024, during the seventy-ninth session of the General Assembly, the representative of the United Kingdom stated that the United Kingdom had a modern relationship with all its overseas territories based on partnership, shared values and the right of the people of each Territory to choose to remain British.

70. He added that the overseas territories were self-governing, subject only to the United Kingdom retaining powers that enabled it to carry out its obligations under international law. The Joint Ministerial Council met annually to monitor and drive forward collective priorities for action, and the United Kingdom was committed to supporting the territories in achieving those collective priorities, including environmental protection, and to carrying out its constitutional responsibilities, including ensuring security. His Government provided financial and practical support to build local capacity and resilience, and various infrastructure projects were under way (see [A/C.4/79/SR.8](#)).

## **VIII. Action taken by the General Assembly**

71. On 4 December 2024, the General Assembly adopted resolution [79/103](#) on the question of the Cayman Islands without a vote, on the basis of the report of the Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on



the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples for 2024 (A/79/23) and the subsequent recommendation by the Fourth Committee. In that resolution, the Assembly:

(a) Reaffirmed the inalienable right of the people of the Cayman Islands to self-determination, in conformity with the Charter of the United Nations and with General Assembly resolution 1514 (XV), containing the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples;

(b) Also reaffirmed that, in the process of decolonization of the Cayman Islands, there was no alternative to the principle of self-determination, which was also a fundamental human right, as recognized under the relevant human rights conventions;

(c) Further reaffirmed that it was ultimately for the people of the Cayman Islands to determine freely their future political status, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter, the Declaration and the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly, and in that connection called upon the administering Power, in cooperation with the territorial Government and appropriate bodies of the United Nations system, to develop political education programmes for the Territory in order to foster an awareness among the people of their right to self-determination in conformity with the legitimate political status options, based on the principles clearly defined in Assembly resolution 1541 (XV) and other relevant resolutions and decisions;

(d) Recalled the 2009 Constitution of the Cayman Islands, and stressed the importance of the work of the Constitutional Commission, including its work on human rights education;

(e) Requested the administering Power to assist the Territory by facilitating its work concerning public educational outreach efforts, consistent with Article 73 *b* of the Charter, and in that regard called upon the relevant United Nations organizations to provide assistance to the Territory, if requested;

(f) Welcomed the active participation of the Territory in the work of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean;

(g) Stressed that the Territory should continue to participate in the activities of the Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples, including regional seminars, in order to provide the Committee with up-to-date information regarding the decolonization process;

(h) Also stressed the importance of the Special Committee being apprised of the views and wishes of the people of the Cayman Islands and enhancing its understanding of their conditions, including the nature and scope of the existing political and constitutional arrangements between the Cayman Islands and the administering Power;

(i) Called upon the administering Power to participate in and cooperate fully with the work of the Special Committee in order to implement the provisions of Article 73 *e* of the Charter and the Declaration and in order to advise the Committee on the implementation of the provisions under Article 73 *b* of the Charter on efforts to promote self-government in the Cayman Islands, and encouraged the administering Power to facilitate visiting and special missions to the Territory;

(j) Reaffirmed the responsibility of the administering Power under the Charter to promote the economic and social development and to preserve the cultural identity of the Territory, and requested the administering Power to take steps to enlist and make effective use of all possible assistance, on both a bilateral and a multilateral basis, in the strengthening of the economy of the Territory;

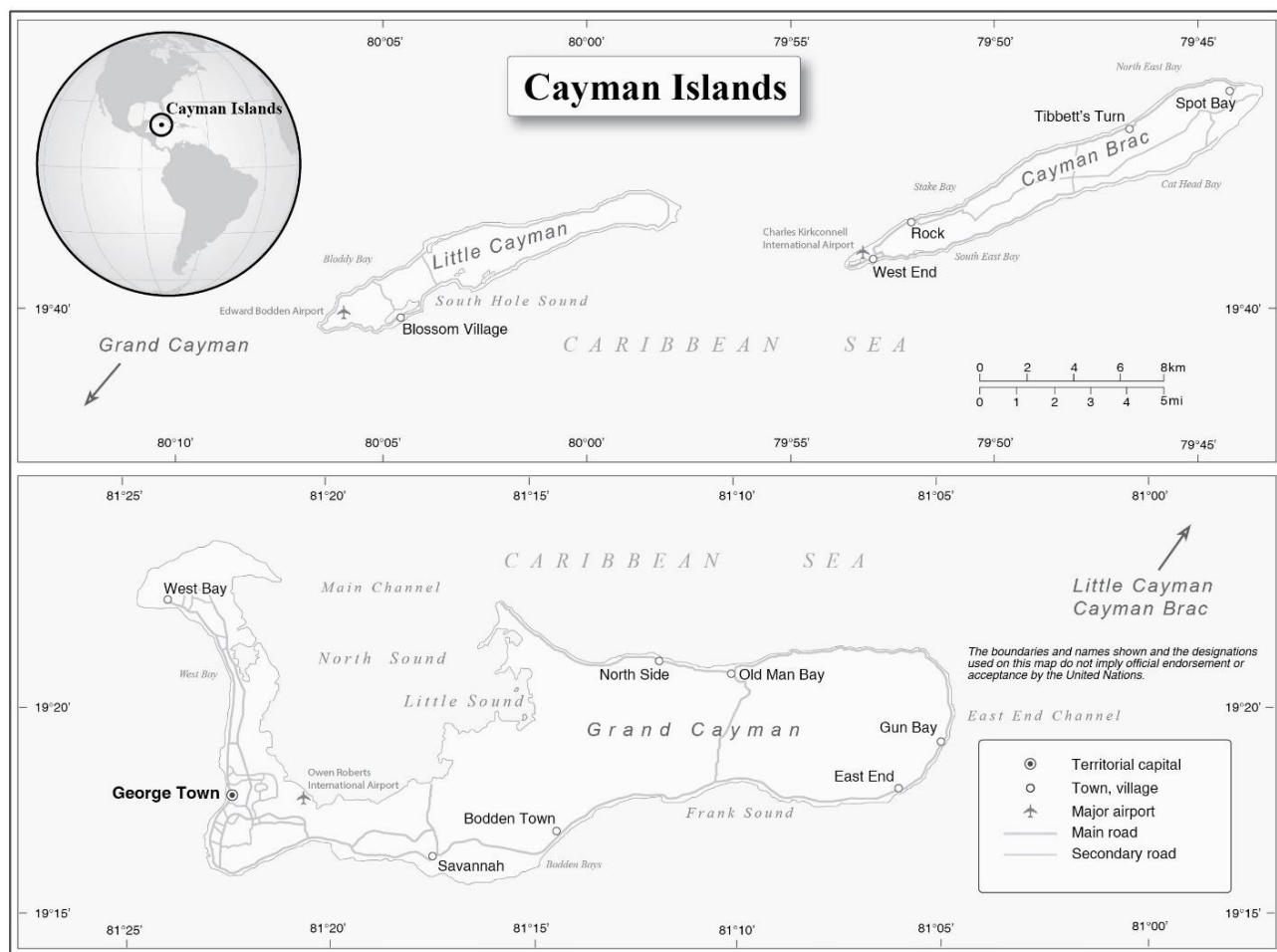
(k) Took into account the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, including the Sustainable Development Goals, stressed the importance of fostering the economic and social sustainable development of the Territory by promoting sustained, inclusive and equitable economic growth, creating greater opportunities for all, reducing inequalities, raising basic standards of living, fostering equitable social development and inclusion and promoting the integrated and sustainable management of natural resources and ecosystems that supported, inter alia, economic, social and human development, while facilitating ecosystem conservation, regeneration, restoration and resilience in the face of new and emerging challenges, and strongly urged the administering Power to refrain from undertaking any kind of illicit, harmful and unproductive activities, including the use of the Territory as an international financial centre, that were not aligned with the interest of the people of the Territory;

(l) Requested the Territory and the administering Power to take all measures necessary to protect and conserve the environment of the Territory against any degradation, and once again requested the specialized agencies concerned to monitor environmental conditions in the Territory and to provide assistance to the Territory, consistent with their prevailing rules of procedure;

(m) Requested the Special Committee to continue to examine the question of the Cayman Islands and to report thereon to the General Assembly at its eightieth session and on the implementation of the resolution.

## Annex

## Map of the Cayman Islands



Map No. 2945 (Rev. 1) UNITED NATIONS  
June 2016

Department of Field Support  
Geospatial Information Section (formerly Cartographic Section)