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Cybersecurity laws in Central America and the Caribbean

Who has a law, an authority and a CSIRT across twelve countries, and why almost all of it still rests on decrees

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10 pages

WHY NOW

One of twelve has a law in force, and a second has just passed one

Of twelve countries, from Guatemala to The Bahamas, only El Salvador has a cybersecurity law in force, published in November 2024. Guatemala passed its own on Tuesday 3 November 2026, Decree 26-2026, but it still awaits the Executive's signature and is not in force. No national CSIRT has a mandate in law today.

And yet the clock is already running: Costa Rica requires central government to report incidents within 24 hours, Trinidad and Tobago asks the same of telecom operators, and Panama gave the whole State 30 days to report on minimum controls. All by decree or sector regulator, ahead of any law.

The Digecam breach revived the debate that ended in Guatemala's law, and Panama's AIG issued its resolution days after reporting five high-impact incidents.

> **Twelve countries, one law in force, one passed and no CSIRT with a legal mandate.**

THE MAP

Central America: law, authority, CSIRT and stage

- Guatemala. Framework Law (Decree 26-2026) passed on 3 November, not yet signed. Conciber and Diciber, under the Interior Ministry, once it takes effect. GTCERT (2018), no law behind it; CRIC-GT would come with the law. Law passed, awaiting signature.
- Belize. No law and no bill. Ministries of National Security and of e-Governance. No national CIRT. No specific law.
- El Salvador. Cybersecurity Law (Decree 143, 2024). State Cybersecurity Agency, created by the law. No government team in FIRST. Law in force, early implementation.
- Honduras. No law; draft bills announced. Conatel, de facto. No CSIRT. No specific law.
- Nicaragua. No law. TELCOR and the Foreign Ministry, by decree. No CSIRT identified in open sources. No specific law.
- Costa Rica. No law; File 24.939 in committee. MICITT, under Decree 45061 (2025). CSIRT-CR under that decree, in FIRST. Bill in progress.
- Panama. No law; draft bill under consultation. AIG, with mandatory controls by resolution. CSIRT Panamá under Decree 709 (2011), in FIRST. No specific law.

THE MAP (2)

The Caribbean: law, authority, CSIRT and stage

The stage measures legal status, not operational capacity. Same snapshot, from open sources consulted between 23 October and 9 November 2026, now in the Caribbean.

- Dominican Republic. No law; bill back in committee. CNCS and DNI, under Decree 612-24. CSIRT-RD under the DNI, in FIRST. Bill in progress.
- Jamaica. No law; text yet to be drafted. Office of the Prime Minister. JaCIRT, with no legal powers. No specific law.
- Trinidad and Tobago. No law; the 2014 agency bill went nowhere. Ministry of Homeland Security. TT-CSIRT (2015), an administrative creation. No specific law.
- Barbados. No law and no bill; the Cybercrime Bill 2024 stayed in committee. Authority and CIRT not confirmed in open sources. No specific law.
- The Bahamas. No law and no bill. CIRT-BS (2023), the government's focal point, in FIRST, with no mandate in law. No specific law.

THE CSIRTS

No national response team has a mandate in law yet

The most mature teams rest on instruments an executive can change without going through Congress: CSIRT-CR on Decree 45061-MICITT of 2025, CSIRT-RD on Decree 612-24, which placed it under the National Intelligence Directorate, and CSIRT Panamá on Executive Decree 709 of 2011. Those of Trinidad and Tobago, Jamaica and The Bahamas are administrative creations.

In October 2026 the head of JaCIRT asked for legal authority to demand standards and incident reports, as the Jamaica Observer reported. Today he does not have it. The first to get it would be Guatemala's CRIC-GT, created by the law passed on 3 November, if that law is signed and takes effect.

Without a law, the supervising authority changes with the government of the day, and there are fewer guarantees on confidentiality, data use and appeal.

> **Four of the twelve teams are FIRST members: Costa Rica, Panama, the Dominican Republic and The Bahamas.**

THE OBLIGATIONS

The 24-hour clock arrived before the law

Costa Rica requires central government to report incidents to CSIRT-CR within 24 hours at most, under Decree 45061-MICITT. In Trinidad and Tobago, since January 2026, TATT requires notice within 24 hours of any significant incident in telecom and broadcasting, with a report five days after resolution.

Panama went further in May 2026: the AIG imposed mandatory minimum controls on the whole State, with a compliance report in 30 days and a corrective plan in 45. In the Dominican Republic the public sector reports to the DNI under Decree 612-24, and El Salvador's law asks for timely notification, with no deadline.

Guatemala wrote the shortest clock among these twelve countries into its law: six hours to report an incident, 72 for the full report and an even shorter deadline for critical infrastructure. It is not running yet: the law takes effect 30 days after publication, and the regulations have six months.

> **If you sell to the State or run telecom networks, the clock already applies even without a general law.**

THE BILLS

One cleared Congress and two are still stuck

Guatemala went in seven months from seeing Bill 6347 sent back to committee, on 14 April 2026, to passing it as a matter of national urgency on 3 November with 121 votes, as Decree 26-2026, 96 articles with amendments on the floor, according to Publinews and La Hora. The institutional design, with the Interior and Defence ministries at the front, was the most debated point. Once the window for objections in Congress closes, the Executive has 15 days to sign or veto it, and the law takes effect 30 days after publication.

The Dominican Republic passed its bill at first reading on 24 July 2026 and sent it back to committee the same day to be merged with other initiatives, according to the Chamber of Deputies. No movement has been recorded since.

In Costa Rica, File 23.292, which had a committee report since 2023, is listed as archived, and File 24.939 still sits in committee with no votes.

> **Snapshot as of 9 November 2026: one law passed but not in force, and two bills with no date.**

TREATIES AND MONEY

Five signatures, no ratifications and expired strategies

Five of the twelve have signed the UN Convention against Cybercrime: Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, Jamaica and Nicaragua in 2025, and Panama in 2026. None has ratified, according to the UN Treaty Collection.

For the region it is the framework that fits best: global, built for today's cybercrime and with technical assistance built in. Budapest, from an earlier era of the internet and joined by invitation, counts Costa Rica, Panama and the Dominican Republic as Parties.

Strategies are ageing: five have expired. And the money comes from donors: the US$25 million US donation for Costa Rica's SOC runs out in 2026, and MICITT's 2027 budget leaves ₡60 million that, according to the minister, only cover licences.

> **Seven of the twelve have not signed and the window closes on 31 December 2026.**

WHAT TO DO

What to ask in the boardroom and do as a regulator

If you sit on a board, do not wait for the law. Find out today which reporting deadline applies to your company as a State supplier or regulated operator, and test the response plan against it. Ask who receives the data from an incident, under what controls and where you can appeal.

If you regulate or legislate, four things would help more than any announcement:

- Give the CSIRT a legal basis and house it in a technical institution, with confidentiality for whoever reports.
- Principles in the law, detail in regulations that can be updated, and international standards, ISO/IEC and ITU, with technology neutrality.
- Sign the UN Convention before 31 December and put ratification on a calendar.
- Budget the operation for the day the donor money ends.

CLOSING AND SOURCES

The obligations are here; the law behind them is not yet

The region runs on response teams that work, 24-hour clocks already running and five signatures on the UN Convention, and almost all of it rests on decrees and donor money. Guatemala is the first to move that picture: its law has left Congress, and the signature, the publication and the regulations will tell whether 2027 starts with two laws in force instead of one. The Dominican merger and the Costa Rican committee still have no date.

This document draws on open sources consulted between 23 October and 9 November 2026: official gazettes, legislative orders of business, decrees, CSIRT and regulator websites, the UN Treaty Collection, the FIRST membership list, the 2025 IDB-OAS report and local press. The Guatemalan legislative picture is as of 9 November; processes may have moved since then.

> **Does anyone on your board know which reporting deadline applies to the company today?**