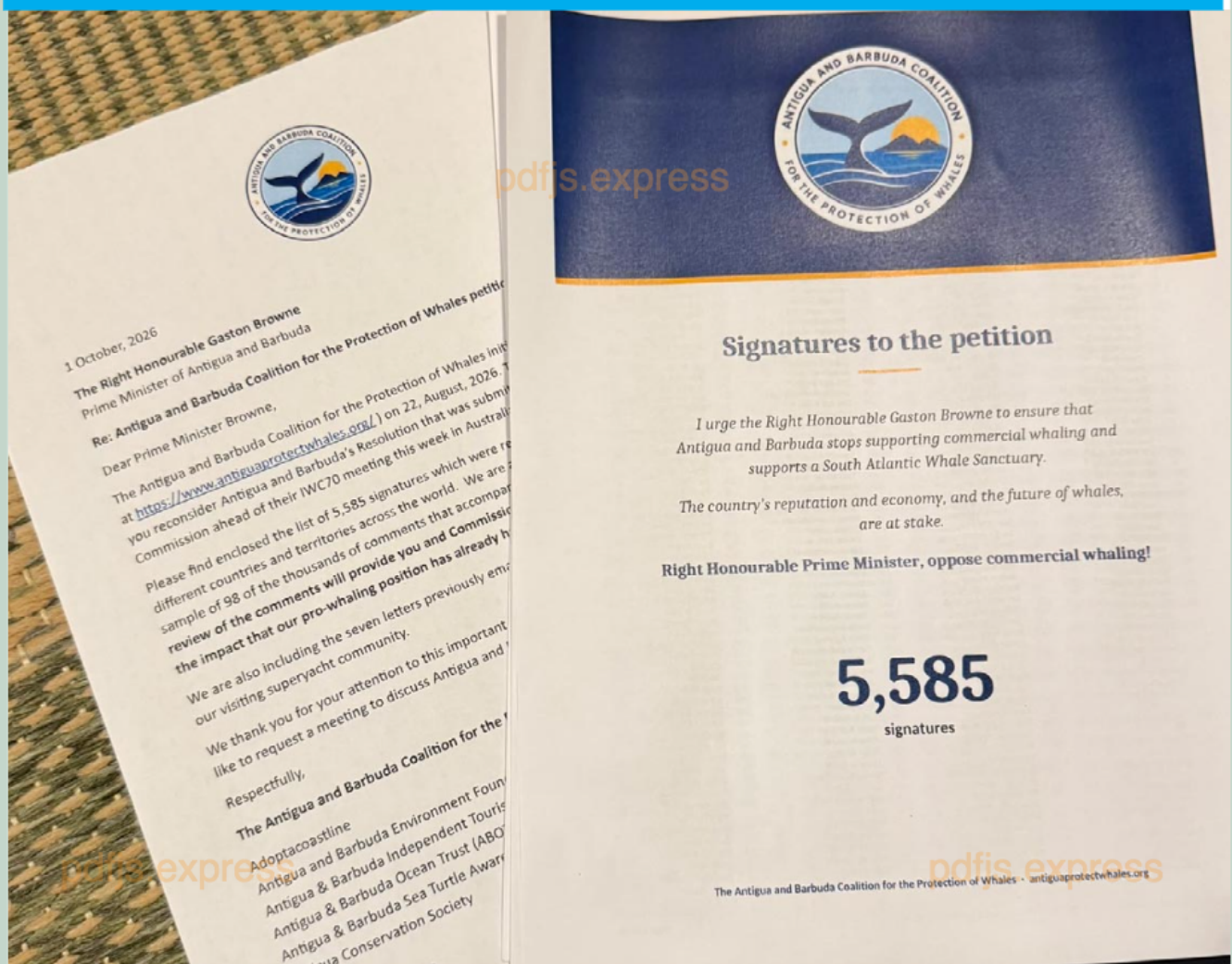


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Coalition delivers 5,585-signature petition urging PM to withdraw whaling resolution - Pg 3



Coalition delivers 5,585-signature petition urging PM to withdraw whaling resolution

Observer News Desk

**PETITION PRESENTED TO
PRIME MINISTER GASTON BROWNE**

**Antigua and Barbuda Coalition
for the Protection of Whales**

Signatures to the petition

I urge the Right Honourable Gaston Browne to ensure that Antigua and Barbuda stops supporting commercial whaling and supports a South Atlantic Whale Sanctuary. The country's reputation and economy, and the future of whales, are at stake.

Right Honourable Prime Minister, oppose commercial whaling!

5,585
signatures

The Antigua and Barbuda Coalition for the Protection of Whales • antiguaprotectwhales.org

Opinion poll

64% vs 16%

Did you know that 64% of Antiguan and Barbudans oppose commercial whaling while only 16% are in favor?

5,585 signatures • 87 countries

GFX illustration

A petition carrying 5,585 signatures from 87 countries and territories has been delivered to Prime Minister Gaston Browne, urging the Government to withdraw a resolution before the International Whaling Commission (IWC) that the Antigua and Barbuda Coalition for the Protection of Whales says could pave the way for the resumption of commercial whaling.

The Coalition delivered the petition on Wednesday, one day before the resolution is due to be presented at the IWC's 70th meeting in Hobart, Australia.

According to the Coalition, the petition was accompanied by a sample of 98 comments from signatories, seven letters previously sent to the Prime Minister by members of Antigua's visiting superyacht community, and a letter from internationally respected ocean conservationist Wendy Benchley.

Benchley, the wife of the late Peter Benchley, author of "Jaws", added her voice to

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calls for Antigua and Barbuda to withdraw the resolution.

In its letter to the Prime Minister, the Coalition said the comments demonstrated concerns about the effect of the country's position on its international reputation.

"We believe that a review of the comments will provide you and Commissioner Joseph an important understanding of the impact that our pro-whaling position has already had on our country's reputation," the Coalition wrote.

Several prominent Antiguan have also publicly supported the campaign, according to the Coalition. They include London-based Jazzie B of Soul II Soul; New York-based supermodel Ann Marie Joseph; singer-song-

writer Asher Otto of Itchy Feet; Atlantic rower Christal Clashing of the Island Girls team; Olympic kiteboarder Tiger Tyson; astronaut Keisha Schahaff; and professional scuba diver and marine environmental spokeswoman Martha Watkins Gilkes.

"These signatures come from our own citizens and from the visitors, sailors and yacht owners who choose Antigua and Barbuda because of our healthy oceans," Watkins Gilkes said on behalf of the Coalition.

"They are telling us clearly that support for commercial whaling does not reflect who we are as a nation. We respectfully ask the Prime Minister to listen, and to withdraw this resolution."

The Coalition has also requested a meeting with the

Prime Minister following the completion of the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) hosted by Antigua and Barbuda, saying it wants to discuss the country's future position at the IWC.

The group said this is the third time Antigua and Barbuda has submitted a resolution of this kind to the Commission, following proposals in 2022 and 2024. Both earlier resolutions were withdrawn, including the 2024 proposal at IWC69 in Lima, Peru, after it failed to achieve consensus.

The Coalition said the 2026 resolution is co-sponsored by Palau, St Kitts and Nevis, and Togo.

It also cited a national opinion poll of more than 500 residents conducted in June, which it said found that 64

per cent of respondents opposed commercial whaling, compared with 16 per cent who supported it. According to the Coalition, 60 per cent opposed Antigua and Barbuda proposing the IWC resolution, while 62 per cent believed continued support for commercial whaling could damage the country's international reputation.

The IWC has maintained a moratorium on commercial whaling since 1986. Antigua and Barbuda joined the Commission in 1982 and, according to the Coalition, voted in favour of the moratorium. The Coalition also noted that local laws protect whales and dolphins in Antigua and Barbuda's waters.

The petition remains open to the public.