



**PRESS RELEASE
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Amendments to TIP Act will Strengthen Sentencing Regime - Minister Chang

With proposed amendments now before the Senate, the Government of Jamaica is one step closer to strengthening its sentencing regime under the 14-year-old Trafficking in Persons (TIP) (Prevention, Suppression and Punishment) Act.

“Through these amendments, the Government of Jamaica is taking targeted action to discourage criminals from taking advantage of our most vulnerable population. We are enhancing our legislative framework in order to strengthen our Anti-Human Trafficking regime and sending a strong signal by enforcing custodial sentences”, explained Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of National Security, the Hon. Dr. Horace Chang.

Minister Chang was speaking in Parliament on Tuesday (October 26). He said **“egregious offences”** committed under this Act, which was first passed in 2007, should see a removal of the option of paying fines as penalty for convicted felons. The Act was first amended in 2013 and again in 2018, to allow a sitting judge to try cases without a jury.

“The amendments proposed are based on the need to create an Anti-Human Trafficking Regime that is a disincentive and promulgates deterrence of the offenders and recidivists”, said Minister Chang.

Citing a report from the International Labour Organization, he said approximately US\$150 billion in profits is generated annually from the crime of Trafficking in Persons.

According to Minister Chang, Trafficking in Persons is a **“cowardly, despicable and lucrative crime that continues to plague every country in the world”**. He said the reprehensible perpetrators of human trafficking target the most vulnerable in our society: our children, women, and marginalized persons.

He added that in February, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime also documented an increase in human trafficking since the start of the Covid-19 pandemic, which has resulted in the tripling of the number of children who have become trafficking victims. The report also indicated that the number of boys trafficked has increased five times in the last 15-years.

“This is one of the many reasons why governments around the world are required to strengthen legislative and policy parameters to combat the real and present threat of Human Trafficking”, Dr. Chang said pointing to the significance of the amendments being proposed by the Ministry of National Security.

The Trafficking in Persons (Prevention, Suppression and Punishment) Act, 2007, outlines protocols to prevent, suppress and punish Trafficking in Persons, especially women and

children. It criminalises human trafficking, outlines who can be charged, how to treat with persons charged and the specific rights afforded to victims of trafficking.

Human trafficking describes the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons by improper means (such as force, abduction, fraud, or coercion) for an improper purpose, including forced labour or sexual exploitation.