



**PRESS RELEASE  
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**\$52M Invested to Reduce Motor Cycle Road Fatalities in Westmoreland**  
**– Minister Samuda**

The Ministry of National Security has invested approximately \$52 million in a Virtual Training and Motorcycle Simulation Programme in Westmoreland, in an attempt to reduce road fatalities and allow the relevant authorities to assess physical capabilities and readiness of motorcyclists.

According to Minister without Portfolio in the Ministry of National Security, the Hon. Matthew Samuda, the main causes of road fatalities observed are failure to keep to the left, travelling at excessive speed and turning right without due care.

During his keynote address, the Minister pointed out that motorcycle related deaths account for a large portion of road fatalities in Jamaica. He outlined that for the past five years, motorcycle related fatalities have been on the rise. **“So far, there have been 505 fatalities. Since this year alone, there are 79 recorded fatalities and interestingly, Westmoreland has recorded the highest number with 21 motorcyclists’ fatalities. This situation must be addressed as there are clear breaches in the National Road Safety Council guidelines by motorists who refuse to practice safety measures”**, he explained.

**“This is a very important beginning in the right direction that has brought together collective and creative minds, using a joint up government approach for innovative strategies, to reduce motorcyclist fatalities”**, he continued. The statement comes following this morning’s launch of the Ministry’s Outreach and Training Programme and the installation of a motorcycle simulator at the Petersfield Vocational Training Centre in Westmoreland. The programme is being supported by the National Road Safety Council with training delivery by Heart Trust/NSTA. The Motorcycle Operations Level I Programme will be introduced in September as part of the curriculum at the vocational training centre.

Minister Samuda noted that the second simulator will be placed at Grange Hill High School, where a remedial after school programme for high school drop outs takes place. **“This location was strategically chosen resulting from the parish being a hotspot for illicit activities and leading the list for most motorcyclists’ fatality”**, he added.

Meanwhile, Permanent Secretary Dianne McIntosh said Prime Minister the Most Hon. Andrew Holness, had issued a call in April 2019, to reduce motorcycle related fatalities. She said in response to the Prime Minister’s call, the Ministry and the National Road Safety Council convened and collaborated to form a Working Committee on Motorcycle Fatality Reduction.

**“We are pleased to know that this newly constructed facility will serve as the birthplace of a paradigm shift in our nation’s approach to community safety. As we make every effort to curb road fatalities, we hope this facility is not viewed merely as a community development project, but a hub with the potential to save lives and sensitise motorcyclists and provide well needed training for potential bikers in support of the parish’s rich motorcycle culture and its potential to influence motorcyclists residing in other counties**, she said.

The programme will sensitise participants to the Road Code, types of motorcycles, their parts and controls, along with defensive riding. The virtual platform will also provide re-enactments of common accidents and solutions on how to avoid collisions. The reality training will be delivered under four modules, incorporating the use of virtual reality headsets to accommodate persons who are unable to read and write.

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