



PRESS RELEASE
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Minister Mayne reiterates Government's anti-human trafficking thrust

Minister of State in the Ministry of National Security, the Hon. Zavia Mayne, says the Government of Jamaica will continue its thrust in combating the scourge of Trafficking in Persons through the appropriate legislations and necessary legal actions.

Speaking on Saturday (January 22, 2022) at the award ceremony for the Art for Freedom, Stop Human Trafficking Competition at the Pegasus Hotel in Kingston, the Minister stated that all steps taken in the fight against human trafficking are geared towards improving Jamaica's Tier 2 ranking.

“Significant steps have been taken by our Government to increase the budget for anti-trafficking. We have also increased our efforts to investigate, prosecute and convict traffickers including officials who may be complicit in human trafficking in Jamaica.” the Minister said.

In addition to the budgetary support, Minister Mayne said that amendments have been made to the Trafficking in Persons (Prevention, Suppression and Punishment) Act, 2007. **“The amendments are to ensure that penalties that were commensurate with those for other serious crimes are applied to persons who are convicted for the crime of TIP. We have removed the option of a fine as a penalty for anybody who is convicted of the offense of TIP and increased the monetary fine, for persons who may be convicted of obstructing officers in the lawful execution of their duties to rid our country or reduce, if not eliminate the scourge of Human Trafficking that is on the rise,”** Minister Mayne noted.

He added that frontline workers, including police personnel, customs officers, immigration officers, healthcare workers and labour officers are being trained to identify human trafficking and enforce the law accordingly.

Minister Mayne said that the sensitization of parents, teachers and students is significant to increase awareness of trafficking in persons, and most importantly, how they can protect themselves from becoming victims of human trafficking. Key to this has been the publication of a TIP handbook, designed to increase the public's knowledge on various elements relating to TIP, including screening tools, referral mechanisms, definitions and indicators.

“Human trafficking is a most heinous crime and is likened to modern day slavery and none of us should ignore it,” Minister Mayne emphasized.



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Children, especially those in rural communities are the most vulnerable to this type of crime. As a result, the Government consequentially amended the Child Care and Protection Act with the passage of the TIP (Amendment) Bill, 2021, which removed the option of a fine as a penalty for persons who are convicted for the offence of Trafficking in Children.

The ‘Artwork for Freedom Competition’, is part of the Multi-Country Border Security Project, which is being implemented in Jamaica, Haiti and the Dominican Republic. The project is funded by the European Union and executed by the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and Ibero-American Foundation for Administration and Public Policies.

A total of 131 children and young adults between the ages of 6 to 25 years participated in the island wide competition, which showcased their interpretive visual and performing arts skills.

The Ministry of National Security’s National Task Force Against Human Trafficking (NATFATIP), which is chaired by Permanent Secretary, Courtney Williams, continues to collaborate with partners such as the IOM to spread awareness about human trafficking in Jamaica.

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