



**PRESS RELEASE
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Parade Gardens, Savanna-la-Mar (South) ZOSOs showing early progress

There have been no incidents of criminal violence within the geographical boundaries of the declared Zones of Special Operations (ZOSO) in the troubled spots of Parade Gardens in Kingston and Savanna-la-Mar (South) in Westmoreland, declared Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of National Security, the Hon. Dr. Horace Chang.

In updating Parliament on Tuesday (January 25, 2022), Minister Chang said residents in the two communities have responded favorably to the ZOSOs, and that the security forces are carrying out their operations **“respectfully and effectively”**.

A ZOSO was declared in Parade Gardens on January 9, and Westmoreland on January 16, 2022, to stem the increase in gun crimes particularly murder.

Minister Chang said: **“This Government is ensuring improved conditions for the residents of these communities in a move to progressively restore peace, safety and public order.”**

Minister Chang stated that as the administration continues to put measures in place to secure the right to life of all citizens, the Savanna-la-Mar (South) Zone of Special Operations was necessary given the extraordinary levels of criminal violence that were taking place within the area. Constabulary data indicated that Westmoreland accounted for one hundred and twenty-eight (128) murders last year, an increase of 60 per cent, when compared to the corresponding period of 2020.

According to the Minister, these acts of criminal violence are largely fueled and financed by lottery scamming, contract killings and feuds from ill-gotten gains. He said that in the face of such heinous violence, **“the greatest reassurance we can give to the residents is a long term community transformation strategy that is built on a foundation of safety and security. That is the objective of having implemented this ZOSO in Savanna-la-Mar.”**

In addition, he noted that the Zone of Special Operations is one of the tools the Government will utilize to bring the process of sustainable and meaningful change to the residents of these communities. **“Even as we utilize this tool within the limited boundaries of the declared Zone, the police have the full support of the Government in conducting intensified security operations across the entire parish,”** the Minister said.

The Zone of Special Operations in Savanna-la-Mar (South) is the 7th ZOSO in operation, and while there are approximately twenty-five (25) communities across Jamaica that would qualify for a ZOSO, the resources are lacking to sufficiently and adequately carry out this type of operation in such a simultaneous manner, the Minister stated. **“Given the equally critical levels of criminality in these communities, we should not limit the tools that are available to the police. We must put alternative measures in place and provide the critical tools to control the violence until we build out the capacity,”** Minister Chang urged.