



**PRESS RELEASE
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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Securing Our Citizens

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of National Security Hon. Dr. Horace Chang said the Government is now more driven to pursue Plan Secure Jamaica - the administration's most comprehensive and strategic security programme, to date.

Speaking in Parliament today, Minister Chang said: **“Plan secure Jamaica is the most coordinated, inclusive and enduring security programme that has ever been introduced in Jamaica. It is geared towards creating a safe, secure, cohesive and just society, thereby setting a key condition for increased and sustained growth and prosperity”**.

In furtherance of this goal, Dr. Chang said those efforts are centred around ten (10) strategic focal areas, and supported by six (6) strategic objectives which the Government has delivered on. These include:

- 1) Strengthening the national security architecture
- 2) Strengthening the criminal justice system
- 3) Enhancing youth and community development
- 4) Protecting and securing borders, maritime space, and key sectors of the economy
- 5) Strengthening national integrity systems, and
- 6) Increasing and sustaining public support for law enforcement and public order.

The projected cost for implementing Plan Secure Jamaica is J\$176 billion or US\$1.2 billion over the first seven years starting FY 2016/2017 to FY 2022/2023.

He stated that the spend over the medium term is projected at approximately U\$346.7 million on the strengthening of the national security architecture between 2016/17 and 2022/23. (In light of COVID-19, and the required budgetary reallocation, these figures may be revisited).

Minister Chang said the **“callous, brazen, irreverent, and heartless, character of violence producers in our country is cause for concern and that the national shock and outrage that resulted from the horrendous manner in which Mrs. Lowe-Garwood's was gunned down, signals that even in the face of these heinous crimes, the majority of Jamaicans are still a people of compassion, of respect for expression and freedom of expression of faith, and of genuine concern for our neighbours”**.

“I wish to publicly express my heartfelt condolences to the loved-ones of Mrs. Lowe-Garwood for their loss, and in particular, her church family at the Agape Christian Fellowship church. May your faith in God give you solace during this difficult time”.

“This barbaric shooting on Sunday unfortunately reflects an increasing number of homicides perpetrated by killers who are hired by family members.”

He said the Government will continue to pursue strategic social investments within the inner-city and vulnerable communities in order to provide hope to residents and our young men particular.

In addition, Minister Chang said the horror of Sunday's attack, and the murders committed over the month of January have shaken the society but noted that the data does not indicate a spike in homicides, year over year.

The trend remains fairly flat when compared with the January 1 to 31, 2021 (131 murders) to January 1 to 31, 2020 (120 murders). In January 2019 there were 149 murders.

Further strengthening his point, Minister Chang said this is the first Government to put in place such a robust security plan, with the necessary institutional arrangements to ensure a sustainable, whole-of-government approach to the social investment and social transformation component of crime fighting. This is being enhanced through the formation of the Citizen Security Business Group and the Citizen Security Secretariat. **"The Citizen Security Governance Framework that we have implemented ensures accountability and sustainability of the Plan"**, Dr. Chang explained.

Strategic investments since 2016/17 have significantly improved the efficiency of the police. **"Admittedly, there is no single tool that will reduce crime and violence overnight. Our approach has been to invest in the myriad of security measures, tools and resources that are required for crime fighting, and have done so in partnership and collaboration with different sectors and interest groups."**

"Madam Speaker, some of these are still a work in progress, but we must, and we will, complete them so that the police can continue disrupt gangs, intercept drugs, seize guns, apprehend criminals and bring them to justice," the minister said.

He added: **"As a result of these strategic investments, the people of Jamaica are beginning to see the significantly improved intelligence and investigative capacity of the force, and will continue to see reduced lag time between the committal of a criminal offence and police apprehension. Of note, the police had taken suspects into custody within 24 hours of the shooting on Sunday, and had apprehended suspect in the St. James hip strip shooting within 7 minutes, Phoenix avenue was less than 10 minutes."**

He said the collective action of Parliamentarians must be to support the efforts of the police; to support the measures that give additional powers to the work of the police; to approve bold and innovative laws, policies and regulations for improved security; and make the investment necessary for national security to overcome decades of neglect.

"I invite my colleague Parliamentarians from the Opposition to join the government in implementing this comprehensive, coordinated, and integrative approach to fighting crime, which is Plan Secure Jamaica. No longer can we afford to politicize crime fighting. The people of Jamaica deserve better," Minister Chang said.

