



**PRESS STATEMENT
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Friday, June 10, 2022

Criminal Records Office gets upgrade

One remedy to reducing wait time and curbing lengthy lines outside the Criminal Records Office (CRO) of the Jamaica Constabulary Force (JCF), most noticeably on Duke Street in Downtown Kingston, has been an upgrade to the Automated Palm and Fingerprint Identification System (APFIS). This according to Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of National Security, the Hon. Dr. Horace Chang, who examined the newly installed Multi-Biometric Identification System yesterday.

Dr. Chang pointed out that the upgrade which was implemented in February, has removed the need for paper based input and facilitates faster searches. It also lessens the workload for fingerprint experts, by enhancing investigative capacities and allowing for an integration of other systems within the JCF.

“We have upgraded the current APFIS, but we are also here to see what else can be done to improve efficiency and reduce the pressure on staff, while meeting the needs of those we serve”, Dr. Chang said during yesterday’s visit to Duke Street.

He noted that while the core of the upgrade amounts to more than \$800 million, in recent time, the demand for criminal records has increased almost exponentially. This is particularly so for those who seek an expungement of police record or are pursuing employment overseas. This is coupled with the growing demand among employers in Jamaica for these records.

“There is a huge crowd outside and we understand that members of the public who come here from as early as 5: 00 a.m. have been having a lot of problems on site. What this tells us is that there is a need for additional work to be done to remove a few steps that are old and slowing down the process”, said Dr. Chang.

While noting that the Government continues to work on improving service delivery, the Minister added that additional improvements to the Criminal Records facility will be taken into account in the Ministry’s budgetary plans for the next fiscal year, to modernise and improve operations and reduce overcrowding.

“There is much to be done, and you would have seen that there are still a lot of manual activities taking place here. There is also a huge number of physical files and there is not enough space in the building for storage and filing, and all this must be digitised and brought into the 21st century” Minister Chang emphasised.

Meanwhile, Donna Harris Jones, Deputy Superintendent of Police in charge of the CRO, explained that although there is a system in place for appointments, members of the public opt out of scheduling appointments by phone, which results in a build-up of crowd at the entrance.

“The lines are beyond our control. As you can see on the inside, there is no crowding, covid-19 protocols are still being observed and activities are being carried out in an orderly fashion. Nevertheless, in the future, we are expecting to provide a better service and as we speak, we are thinking of other ways to continue limiting the crowd on the outside” she said.

She pointed out that an online application system is being considered in lieu of physical forms which have to be completed manually. The online application system would reduce the wait time for people on the outside who are desirous of conducting business at the Office.

“An online application procedure is in the pipeline, but we are not there as yet. However, there are cases where police reports are needed urgently than the date that we set for appointments and in these cases, members of the public are facilitated once they indicate to us the urgency and provide the requisite documentation, they will be given the urgent attention”, said Harris Jones.

To schedule an appointment at the CRO, the public is being reminded to contact 876-224-1011.

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