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**PRESS RELEASE
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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Government determined to crush gun violence- Minister Chang

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of National Security, the Hon. Dr. Horace Chang, says the act of a few evil-minded men will not deter the steely resolve of the police to effectively combat armed violence in the country.

He was responding to the brutal gun attack on Sunday (September 18, 2022), which left three people dead and six others injured at a football game in Spring Village, Old Harbour in St. Catherine, and the recent attack in Spanish Town that left a mother listening to the dying cries of her infant child.

The Minister is assuring the country that the government will continue to provide the police with the tools and training to apprehend and bring to justice those who planned and executed this brazen attack.

According to Dr. Chang, **“the government is fully aware of the depth of crassness and cruelty that has invaded our nation. It is for this reason that we are pursuing strong legislation, strong effective policing to quell gun violence in our country.”**

Minister Chang further underscored that the new Firearms Act, while not a panacea, when passed into law, is expected to greatly aid the security forces in the fight against hardened, gun-toting criminals, acting as a deterrent to bring about success in the fight against crime and violence.

“The barbaric nature of mass shootings makes it even more urgent that we pass into law the Firearms (Prohibition, Restriction and Regulation) Act 2022. Every legal measure to disrupt gangs and annihilate their ability to spread terror and death must be pursued vigorously. That is the priority and commitment of this government,” Minister Chang said.

The new Firearms Act will provide a strong deterrent to persons who are involved in trafficking, diversion, manufacture, stockpiling and the movement of firearms, their parts, components and ammunition.

The Act includes stiffer penalties for persons found guilty in a court of law, including life sentence for anyone found guilty of illegal possession of a firearm or a minimum 15 years before being eligible for parole.

“We are signaling through this piece of legislation the intent of the government and the expressed will of all good citizens of Jamaica, the need to fight back firmly within the ambit of the law,” stated Minister Chang.