



**PRESS RELEASE
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Minister Chang calls for dignity for all Jamaicans in light of allegations of police breach

The Government of Jamaica firmly and unequivocally condemns all forms of ill-treatment to its citizens and will take strong, decisive action against anyone who infringes on their rights, declares Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of National Security, the Hon. Dr. Horace Chang.

He was updating the nation into ongoing investigations surrounding the circumstances that led to a police officer allegedly cutting off the locked hair of 19-year-old Nzinga King, while she was being held at the Four Paths Police Station in Clarendon for breaching the COVID-19 (Disaster Risk Management Act) protocols.

The Minister said the government’s position is clear – **“there is no place and absolutely no acceptance of discriminatory actions towards Rastafarians. Everyone must be treated with dignity by the members of the Jamaica Constabulary Force”**.

Minister Chang revealed that a comprehensive investigation into the matter has been undertaken and that from the onset a team of experienced investigators from the Inspectorate and Professional Standards Oversight Bureau (IPROB) were tasked with carrying out the investigation to include the requisite forensic analyses into the allegations.

“While we await the outcome of these investigations, there are two fundamental principles that we must never lose sight of as a people. The first is captured in Jamaica’s Charter of Fundamental Rights and Freedoms, which underscores that ‘whereas the state has an obligation to promote universal respect for, and observance of, human rights and freedoms [...] any person deprived of his liberty shall be treated humanely and with respect for the inherent dignity of the person.’”

“These fundamental principles form the bases of the on-going modernization and aggressive reorganization of the Jamaica Constabulary Force. There is an absolute rejection by this government, and the police high command of any instance or form of infringement on the rights of Jamaicans at the hands of any member of the Constabulary Force. Strong, deliberate, corrective action will be taken in such instances and even so, we must reserve judgement and action, until the investigations into allegations are finalized,” Minister Chang said.

He further said that as a people, we must recognize and respect our cultural heritage as it is only by anchoring ourselves onto that legacy that we will develop the roots we need for true national development. The Rastafarian movement has been, and remains, a cornerstone of Jamaica’s cultural heritage. Any attempts to disrespect the Rastafarian culture is an indictment on all Jamaicans, and must never be condoned.

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