



Office of the Director, Public Affairs &
Communication
Email: ministryofnationalecurity@mns.gov.jm
Phone: (876) 754-0030 | (876) 564-0071

Ministry of National Security
NCB North Tower,
2 Oxford Road
Kingston 5, Jamaica

**PRESS RELEASE
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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Minister Chang to fast-track legislation for advanced Check-In system at airports

Arrangements around legislation pertaining to a new Passenger Name Record (PNR) system at airports across Jamaica as a solution to long waiting times are to be expedited according to Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of National Security, the Hon. Dr. Horace Chang.

The disclosure was made during a meeting chaired by the Minister at the MBJ Airport on Thursday (April 6, 2023) to address and implement fixes to long lines and crowding in the arrivals area.

Minister Chang said he is hoping to have the legislative work completed by November 2023.

“We are striving to have this piece of legislation completed somewhere around November later this year. It is known that this system will aid in a very important way to alleviate the sort of congestion we now have in the arrival hall here at the MBJ,” he said.

Passenger Name Record is a digital certificate allowing passengers to do online check-in or manage their bookings in a shorter time.

In other jurisdictions, the PNR facilitates the exchange of booking information between airlines and has become an important component of the travel industry. Jamaica, being a prime tourist destination would benefit tremendously from the paperless system.

The PNR also acts as booking confirmation, a repository of valuable commercial information and can be a useful weapon against global terrorism.

In the meantime, the Passport, Immigration and Citizenship Agency (PICA) will be moving aggressively to encourage the usage of the www.enterjamaica.com portal. Currently, just about seven per cent of incoming travellers utilize that particular portal.

PICA is to coordinate with the Jamaica Tourist Board, the Airports Authority of Jamaica (AAJ) and other relevant stakeholders including driving tour operators, travel agents, as well as airlines, to have travellers use the portal.

There are presently 36 immigration desks/stations and 45 Kiosks at the MBJ, totaling 81 immigration contact points. This, according to the PICA Chief Executive Officer, Mr. Andrew Wynter, is likely to be increased. He indicated that 120 contact points are needed to enhance efficiency at the MBJ.

He stated that 15 additional Kiosks will be brought into MBJ before the end of April 2023 and that the AAJ and PICA are working to add approximately 18 more by July 2023.

Mr. Wynter noted that an additional ten (10) PICA officers will be added to the staff complement at the MBJ, which has seen an extraordinary increase in wait time for processing.