



**PRESS RELEASE
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Wednesday, June 12, 2024



Deputy Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of National Security, the Hon. Dr. Horace Chang, along with Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of National Security, Ambassador Alison Stone Roofe, JN Foundation Chairman, Parris Lyew –Ayee (left) and Conrad Wiggan of the National Helmet Wearing Coalition, admire one of the 2,000 biker helmets donated by the Ministry to the Coalition at a handover ceremony in Kingston earlier today.

Minister Chang wants greater access to affordable, quality helmets for bikers

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of National Security, the Hon Dr Horace Chang, says his Ministry is making sure that helmets are made more accessible to aid in the government’s thrust to reduce motorcycle-related fatalities and permanent disablement.

He was speaking at the handing over of 2,000 helmets valued at J\$28 million to the National Helmet Wearing Coalition, at a ceremony at the JN Fund Managers Building on Oxford Road, Kingston on Wednesday, June 12.

The Minister noted that the donation is valuable, in that it intends to make helmets more accessible which will go a far way towards enhancing road safety in Jamaica.

He stated that the government is looking at additional ways to assist the National Road Safety Council to get more bikers to wear helmets and other safety gear.



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Said Minister Chang: **“Helmets are not the only safety support the riders should have. Bike leggings and elbow protection are also valuable pieces of safety wear, which are expensive to import but necessary to protect lives”.**

He suggested that local craftsmen could also get involved by acquiring the necessary skills to manufacture leather protective gears needed to offset the expense of having to import.

“There is a particular cohort of bike riders, primarily out in western Jamaica who do so without proper riding gear. They drive their motorbikes twice as fast as the sports riders. These pose a serious challenge and the police cannot apprehend them all the time. These are the ones we need to get the message to, that safety should be first and that wearing a helmet goes a far way to secure them,” said Minister Chang.

“Helmets are of particular value because when a rider gets a head injury, many die, but when they live, they do so with permanent disablement,” he noted.

Data from the National Road Safety Council indicates that since 2012, over six hundred (600) motorcyclists have been killed on Jamaican roads.

Furthermore, nearly all motorcycle fatalities involve young men aged 19-29, according to the 2023 road fatality report from the Island Traffic Authority.

The report further indicates that in total, some 135 motorcyclists lost their lives in collisions, while eighteen (18) pillion passengers were killed during the same year, bringing the total to 153 deaths related to motorcycle collisions in 2023.

The Ministry in 2018 acquired a motorbike simulator, which is housed in Westmoreland, home to one of the largest number of motorbike owners and operators in the country, and one of the hotspots for motorcycle-related deaths.

