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**PRESS RELEASE
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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Photo Caption: Prime Minister, the Most. Hon. Andrew Holness (center), Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of National Security, the Hon. Dr. Horace Chang (left) and Commission of Police, Major General Antony Anderson (right) engage in a light discussion at the Jamaica Constabulary Force's Passing Out Parade Ceremony. Over 300 new Police Constables successfully matriculated into the Force. The Ceremony was held at the National Police College of Jamaica on Wednesday, September 14.

New Firearms Act to Further Boost Capacity of the Security Forces

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of National Security, the Hon. Dr. Horace Chang says the nation's capacity to respond to armed violence will be strengthened following the Senate's approval of the new Firearms (Prohibition, Restriction and Regulation) Act 2022.

“The Government’s objective is to criminalise all aspects dealing with illegal firearms and prohibited weapons, their parts and ammunition, which in the near term, contributes to not only reducing homicide but bolster the work of the police,” explained the Security Minister at yesterday's (Wednesday, September 14) Passing Out Parade Ceremony for the Jamaica Constabulary Force (JCF) in Twickenham Park, St. Catherine.

The proposed amendments to the Act are targeted at providing more prohibition, restriction and regulation (as may be appropriate) of firearms, their parts, components and ammunition, and for connected matters.

Dr. Chang added that with the significant investments being made to improve the technology capacity of the JCF, working conditions and vehicle fleet, the officers who dedicate their lives to National Security will be fully equipped to break the backs of crime.

“Officers have been well trained and we have provided them with the required tools to go on policing operations. We have also procured a number of equipment to ensure both public order and the officers’ own personal safety,” the Minister said.

Meanwhile, in his address to the graduates, Prime Minister, the Most Hon. Andrew Holness warned that **“there is no just reason to have an illegal firearm in this country. I have stated my case very clearly and the law will be executed to its fullest.”**

“Every Jamaican beware; the penalties have increased significantly”, he continued.

The Prime Minister also noted that a Gun Amnesty period is on the horizon. Gun Amnesty is a period in which people are allowed to hand over unwanted or illegal firearms to the security forces without fear of being arrested or charged.

Over 300 new officers of Batches 137, 138 and 140 are now added to the Jamaica Constabulary Force.