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ZOSOs Work – declares Minister Chang

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of National Security, the Hon. Dr. Horace Chang, says the Government is continuing its implementation of crime prevention and community safety measures to spur further improvement within the Zones of Special Operations.

He made the remarks in Parliament on Tuesday (June 20, 2023), while seeking a further sixty (60) days extension for the seven areas that are currently declared Zones of Special Operations (ZOSO).

These Zones, which are in the communities of Mount Salem, Denham Town, August Town, Greenwich Town, Norwood, Parade Gardens and Savanna-La-Mar, will expire on June 24, 2023.

The Minister reminded the Parliament that activities undertaken within the Zones are geared towards long-term transformational outcomes.

“We must continue to utilize the all-encompassing approach of the ZOSOs to disrupt the sphere of influence of violence producers within these communities,” said Minister Chang.

Minister Chang noted that Jamaica’s long history of criminal violence requires **“decisive, long-term investment, strategic and coordinated actions, and a dedicated, all-of-government approach to disrupt the killers and divert potential violence producers”**.

The Minister further stated that the extension of the Zones of Special Operations is critical to this mandate.

Citing police data provided by the Jamaica Constabulary Force, Minister Chang indicated that all seven (7) Zones of Special Operations continue to record reductions in all major crimes, including murder and shootings.

He said: **“I want to assure the people of Jamaica and particularly, those residing within the Zones of Special Operations, that the enhanced security measures are effective, and have successfully restored order within these communities. ZOSOs work”**.

The Police data shows that Mount Salem has experienced a 48 per cent decline in murders since the declaration of the ZOSO, while Denham Town has nine (9) per cent, Greenwich Town twenty-four (24) per cent, Norwood fifty-six (56) per cent, August Town sixty-six (66) per cent, Savanna-La-Mar eighty-three (83) per cent, while Parade Gardens shows a ninety-four (94) per cent decline in murders as of June 18, 2023.

Additionally, the Minister indicated that work on the Law Reform (Zones of Special Operations) (*Amendment*) “ZOSO” Bill is still ongoing, stating that he will be taking a personal interest in the matter, as the Amendment Bill remains a priority for the Government of Jamaica.

“I wish to assure the Members that the ZOSO amendment Bill is being given the required level of attention to ensure its timely finalization,” the Minister said.