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**PRESS STATEMENT
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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Make full use of the amnesty, turn in all illegal guns and ammunition – Minister Chang

Anyone apprehended and charged by the police for any of the identified criminal breaches under the **Firearms (Prohibition, Restriction and Regulation), Act, 2022**, may be subject to a new range of penalties ranging from 15 years to life.

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of National Security, the Hon. Dr Horace Chang made the pronouncements on (Tuesday, November 1, 2022) in Parliament when he tabled the Firearms (Prohibition, Restriction and Regulation) Firearms Amnesty Order, 2022, triggering a 14-day gun amnesty.

The Amnesty will begin on November 5 and end at midnight on November 19.

"When I tabled the Firearms Bill for debate in September, I signalled my intention to declare a firearms amnesty as soon as the Act was brought into operation. This amnesty would allow persons who may be in possession of illegal firearms or ammunition or those for which no licence nor authorisation exists, the opportunity to surrender these firearms or ammunition to the State without the fear of prosecution", said Minister Chang.

Under the rules of the amnesty, any person who voluntarily surrenders or discloses the location of any firearm or ammunition during the amnesty period shall not be charged with any offence relating to illegal possession, custody, or control of that firearm or ammunition.

"This means that once the amnesty expires we can expect the full force of the law to be applied to anyone found in possession of illegal firearm or ammunition," Minister Chang said.

Further, the amnesty is intended to provide an opportunity for licence holders who have expired authorizations to surrender their weapons to the Firearms Licencing Authority. The conditions for the surrender of firearms or ammunition are outlined in the Order. Firearms or ammunition may be surrendered to any sub-officer or senior sub-officer on duty at any police station; any designated officer at any FLA location or to an Attorney-at-Law on behalf of an individual seeking an amnesty for the Attorney to deliver the firearm or ammunition to the nearest police station.

Minister Chang stated that amnesties such as this one are not unique to Jamaica as they have been used successfully around the world as an operational tool to reduce the high levels of armed violence resulting from the proliferation of firearms and ammunition.

The Minister noted that for the last 25 years, Jamaica recorded on average 1,270 murders annually, the vast majority being committed with illegal firearms, which is the weapon of choice for murders and other acts of crime and armed violence in Jamaica.

He said: **“The proliferation of illegal firearms continues to hinder national growth and advancement, and has become the biggest threat to citizens’ peace and security.”**

Since 2018, the security forces have taken more than 3,200 illegal firearms from the streets and over 53,000 rounds of ammunition. Each year, they have seized upwards of 625 firearms. As of October 31, 2022, a total of 652 firearms have been seized, representing an 11 per cent increase over the 585 recorded for a similar period in 2021.

“I am urging those in possession of illegal firearms or ammunition to make full use of the amnesty, because when it expires on November 19, 2022, those who refuse to surrender their firearms and ammunition, once convicted, will face the stiffest penalties yet,” Minister Chang said.

The full Firearm and Amnesty Resolution and Order can be read [here](#).

