



**STATEMENT  
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Tuesday, June 16, 2026**

**Statement by the Minister of National Security and Peace on the Jamaica - United States Third Country Nationals (TCN) Arrangement**

As the Minister responsible for Jamaica's national security interests, I want to assure the public that the safety and security of our citizens and all people in Jamaica as well as our obligations under international law have guided every step of the discussions on this Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between Jamaica and the United States of America concerning Third Country Nationals (TCNs).

I want to first clarify that the individuals who may be transferred under this framework are not being brought to Jamaica as permanent migrants. These are nationals of other countries other than Jamaica who are being facilitated through a structured process to transit through Jamaica to a third territory, including return to their home countries. Jamaica is not opening its borders for an uncontrolled migration programme.

This MOU is the outcome of negotiations between two sovereign partners. It was not an automatic acceptance of any proposal. Jamaica's technical teams engaged in detailed discussions with their United States counterparts to ensure that the framework included the necessary safeguards and protections for Jamaica.

At no point did Jamaica compromise its sovereignty or ignore its duty to the Jamaican people. We were clear about our national interests and relied on our experience over many years in managing international migration matters to inform our position throughout the negotiations.

This is an MOU and not a binding agreement and does not come into effect until the completion of agreed pre-implementation requirements, including the finalisation of operational guidelines and procedures. It also does not create an automatic obligation for Jamaica to accept any individual, and either country retains the ability to terminate the arrangement.

Importantly, there will be no transfers until both countries have agreed on the required operational procedures for orderly implementation.

Those procedures will establish the safeguards for implementation, including screening, verification, oversight mechanisms, and provisions for suspension where necessary. Jamaica will retain the authority to reject any individual proposed for transfer on any flight. Prior health screening, identity verification, and criminal record checks, and clearance from the National Intelligence Bureau (NIB), will be key requirements before any individual is considered for acceptance.



Individuals with criminal antecedents will not be accepted under this arrangement as Jamaica's security considerations remain paramount.

It is important to address recent public reporting which referenced a figure of 10,000 individuals. That number does not represent an agreed quota or commitment under this MOU. The process will be controlled and phased. While the understanding contemplates transfers of up to 25 individuals every two weeks, this is subject to an important operational safeguard. Where the number of individuals pending transfer or remaining in Jamaica exceeds a threshold of 10 persons, the process will be paused until conditions are reviewed and normalised. This is to ensure that there is no more than 10 TCNs remaining in Jamaica within any 30-day window.

The final numbers under this arrangement therefore remain contingent on that flow and it is designed to establish parameters appropriate and manageable for Jamaica. The Government of Jamaica has also insisted that all actions under this arrangement comply with the domestic laws of both countries and applicable international obligations. The Government has also been guided by international best practice and cooperation frameworks, including principles promoted by the International Organization for Migration (IOM), particularly in relation to humane, orderly, and rights-based migration management. Respect for human rights remains a central principle.

The United States has indicated that it will support all costs associated with the transfer process and related arrangements.

Jamaica has a longstanding record of cooperation with international partners on security and migration matters. The risks were carefully considered and balanced against the responsibility to protect Jamaica's interests.

Lessons were taken from, similar arrangements entered into by countries including Belize, Costa Rica, Paraguay, Panama, Antigua and Barbuda, Dominica, and St. Kitts and Nevis, where terms were tailored based on individual national circumstances, laws, and security considerations.

This process has been approached carefully and deliberately, with Jamaica's national interest at the centre. The Government will continue to provide updates as appropriate as implementation discussions progress.

