



**PRESS RELEASE
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Ministry of National Security Reviewing Designs for Modern Correctional Facility

Minister of National Security, the Hon. Dr. Horace Chang says the Ministry is currently reviewing architecture designs for a new correctional facility with improved psychiatric care quarters for inmates.

He made the announcement during a sitting of the House of Parliament on Tuesday, June 16, where he outlined preliminary findings from an investigation undertaken by the Department of Correctional Services into the death of Noel Chambers, an 80-year-old mentally-ill patient.

“I take this opportunity to express my heartfelt condolences on behalf of the Government of Jamaica to the family of Mr. Chambers,” said Minister Chang.

A comprehensive audit of the department’s correctional facilities will further examine the procedures involved in the treatment of inmates who are deemed unfit to plead. **“It goes without saying that we cannot and must not accept the death of Mr. Chambers as merely the consequence of a flawed system,”** said Minister Chang.

Meanwhile, Commissioner of Corrections, Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Gary Rowe said the DCS is prioritizing the review of vulnerabilities within correctional facilities in order to implement the best measures for transformation.

“The law indicates that persons unfit to plead should be assessed monthly and a report submitted to the requisite court. It is our determined intention that our mentally challenged and the most vulnerable within the care of the DCS are provided with the necessary opportunities for successful reintegration,” assured Commissioner Rowe.

As part of the way forward, the DCS has identified persons who have been in its custody for over 30 years and are being held at the Court or Governor General’s pleasure. The inmates identified underwent internal psychiatric assessment and were deemed low risk violence producers.

Minister Chang noted that a letter will be sent to Chief Justice, the Hon. Justice Bryan Sykes, seeking the Court’s consideration of granting clemency. He added, **“this administration is committed to doing what is required to ensure that justice is served while safeguarding the rights, dignity, and general sense of humanity of Jamaicans within correctional facilities.”**

The Ministry of National Security will be engaging the Ministry of Health and Wellness in an attempt to ensure the mental health needs of these persons while fulfilling our responsibility to national security. Consultations are also on-going with the Jamaica Psychiatric Association to acquire the professional competence of five psychiatrists to facilitate the timely assessment of persons identified as having mental health conditions.

Click [here](#) to read Minister Chang’s full statement.

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