



**PRESS RELEASE
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Minister Chang Calls on State Agencies to Address Social Issues
Contributing to Crime**

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of National Security, the Hon. Dr. Horace Chang, has called on a number of government agencies to help in addressing social issues that contribute to Jamaica's high crime rate.

The Minister this morning met with high level representatives from the Ministries of Local Government and Rural Development; Education, Youth and Information; Housing, Urban Renewal, Environment and Climate Change; Economic Growth and Job Creation; Labour and Social Security as well as officials from Heart Trust NSTA, the Jamaica Defence Force, the Jamaica Constabulary Force (JCF) and the Jamaica Social Investment Fund.

"The purpose of this meeting", Minister Chang said, "is to discuss issues with stakeholders, particularly those in West Kingston, and to garner updates that will inform how we proceed in implementing real and systematic activities to address crime".

While noting the need for greater publicity surrounding the nation's crime plan, Minister Chang pointed out that a number of troubled communities have **"the worst public services and housing stock"**. He said an all of government approach is needed, which requires greater emphasis on housing, economic development, healthcare, education and more technical training opportunities, which will inevitably contribute to a reduction in major crimes.

"Disrupting gangs in all of these communities will require all agents present to transform livelihoods by addressing issues relating to poor health services, overcrowding, unemployment and illiteracy", Minister Chang told the gathering.

"The security plan will not work unless other sectors take on a more targeted and collaborative approach in addressing the issues that fuel crime", he continued. While a State of Public Emergency could cut the existing crime rate by almost 50 per cent, Dr. Chang said, more social intervention related activities are needed.

"We have and will continue to equip the security forces with the necessary tools needed to maintain safety and order in our communities. The operations of the Agencies of government are designed in such way to build communities, improve social services and bolster sustainable changes", Minister Chang explained.

He noted that although the state of affairs in Mount Salem still needs repair, the construction of a new police station, renovation to schools, removal of zinc fences and the provision of birth certificates, are all factors that have contributed to fewer criminal activities in the area.

Dr. Chang commended members of the JCF Quick Response Team in Montego Bay, who have been helping with the distribution of assignments to students in and around St. James, who do not have access to electronic devices and in some cases, the internet.

“This entire approach to Mount Salem has worked. There is a marked improvement in the relationship between the police and the community and so we need to create a coordinated impact to see the same outcome in West Kingston”, Dr. Chang concluded.

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