



**PRESS RELEASE
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Wednesday, June 05, 2020

SPECIALIZED OPS BRANCH SIGNALS A NEW ERA OF POLICING – MINISTER CHANG

Minister of National Security, the Hon. Dr. Horace Chang says the changeover of the mobile reserve to a Specialized Operations Branch signals the dawn of a new era of policing in Jamaica.

“We are creating the conditions for strategic transformation of the police force - the force for good so that Jamaicans can experience meaningful and sustained reduction in crimes. We are re-equipping the JCF and providing the men and women of the Force with the tools they need to engage the criminals effectively, and within the law,” said Minister Chang during his remarks at a tour of the Joint Information Operations and Command Centre (JIOCC) and other facilities at the Specialized Operations Branch yesterday.

He further noted that Government has invested approximately 500 million dollars to bolster the capacity and technological capability of the Jamaica Constabulary Force (JCF) at Harman Barracks.

The investment includes renovation to the Barracks valued at approximately 100 million dollars. The Barracks will accommodate up to 150 police officers and were renovated in partnership with the National Housing Trust (NHT). An additional 400 million dollars was spent on the procurement of vehicles, general maintenance, electrical upgrades, a special operations room and system upgrades to enhance integrated surveillance monitoring.

Minister Chang highlighted that the renovation and establishment of the Special Operations Branch was a part of a comprehensive restructuring of the JCF.

Commissioner of Police Major General Antony Anderson said the Specialized Operations Branch is one of six JCF formations that have been reformed so far. He pointed out that the initiative was not **‘just a relabelling’** of units but tangible and operational adjustments to fit the current crime situation.

“It has been just shy of a year since the Special Operations Branch has been in place and there has been a lot of development. This includes investment in human resource and technology, which have propelled the branch to do well,” he said.

Major Anderson further thanked the team at the branch, who he said possessed the capabilities to move the force in the right direction.

The disbanding of the Mobile Reserve was one of several major changes announced by Minister Chang last year. The police unit was replaced by the Specialized Operations Branch, which has yielded many impactful results, including the seizure of a number of high powered weapons by the police in recent months.

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