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JamaicaEye Not Infringing On Privacy Rights

The Ministry of National Security is assuring citizens that its national closed-circuit television (CCTV) surveillance programme – Jamaica Eye – is not infringing on their right to privacy.

Speaking at a recent JIS Think, Legal Officer, Ministry of National Security, Tonelle Beecher, noted that the programme is voluntary **“and not something placed on you mandatorily”**.

“What we are really asking for is access to public-facing camera feed, as the Government has a responsibility to protect persons and to monitor those areas,” she said.

“We continue to operate within the law, and we have no intention of breaching the law as it relates to implementing the programme,” she added.

Clause 34 of the Data Protection Act (DPA) provides exemption for the purposes of using data in the prevention and detection of crime, as well as the apprehension and prosecution of offenders.

Senior Director of Modernisation and Strategic Projects in the Ministry, Arvel Grant, told JIS News that **“as we roll out the programme, we continue to review (our procedures) and to ensure that we are not breaching the law in establishing the programme”**.

He noted that the feeds are being monitored at the Joint Information and Operations Centre at the Jamaica Defence Force (JDF), with request for footage being accommodated through an established security protocol.

He explained that private citizens will not be able to make requests for the footage from JamaicaEye.

However, persons making police reports may indicate if they saw a CCTV in the vicinity of an incident, whether it is an accident or crime. Based on this, the police can request footage.

Implemented in March 2018, JamaicaEye is a public-private partnership designed to network CCTV cameras owned by the Ministry and accommodate feed from privately owned cameras.

It is geared at improving public safety and emergency response, by providing useful footage in relation to criminal activity, accidents, natural disasters and other incidents.