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April 16, 2018

## **Ministry of National Security Reassures Public on Enhanced Security Measures**

Minister of National Security, Hon. Dr. Horace Chang has reiterated that the policy of the Government is to take decisive action to confront criminality in all its forms. This, he says, is why the Enhanced Security Measures were put in place.

He was speaking against the context of the recent article published in today's (Monday, April 16) Gleaner, in which alleged claims were made about the treatment of detainees during the Enhanced Security Operations.

The Minister pointed out that, *“This Administration’s aim is to reduce criminal activity, especially in areas where it has reached intolerable levels. If we look at the significant reduction in crime in areas where these measures have been put in place, we can see where based on statistics, we have already saved over 70 lives. These lives are invaluable especially when we compare this to the emotional turmoil that crime causes families and the physical cost of funerals, not to mention the impact on GDP.”*

Statistics from the Jamaica Constabulary Force indicate that there has been over 60% decrease in incidents of murders and over 40% decrease in shooting incidents in St. James when compared to the same period last year.

The Minister further noted that citizens continue to give their support to members of the Security Forces and there have been no incident of human rights violations reported thus far.

Minister Chang stated, ***“There have been no complaints from citizens. Public support is still high, especially in areas of the enhanced security measures.”***

He further stated that the Government is fully committed to ensuring that all citizens are treated properly as evidenced by the provision of training in human rights to security personnel who are deployed in support of the Enhanced Security Measures.

The Enhanced Security Operations form part of the Government’s approach to tackle crime using various measures including targeted social interventions. ***“The situation could not have been allowed to continue; we have to find new approaches to dealing with crime. While there may be some displacement, the fact is we are already reaping the positive results,”*** he said.

***“I am prepared to meet with the leadership of the Church and other groups to outline our policies and programmes,”*** Minister Chang said.