

REMARKS
The Hon. Dr. Horace Chang
on the occasion of the
Declaration of a Zone of Special Operations in Central Kingston
January 10, 2022

Ladies and gentlemen,

1) The level of criminal violence in Central Kingston has been a major concern. Not only is this area home to hundreds of hardworking, law-abiding Jamaicans, it hosts several schools and churches; it is the primary business district in the corporate area; and it is home to the court district and the Seat of Government. Central Kingston is part of the Southern crescent of the corporate area – the corridor that spans from Bull Bay in the East to Ferry in the West and where over 40% of murders across Jamaica are committed.

2) In response to the gang related violence within Central Kingston, specifically over the last 12 months, the police

intensified and expanded their operations. Cordon and search, curfews, intelligence activities, intelligence guided operations, and the assignment of additional special ops teams, have taken place on a most intensive basis in Central Kingston, over the last 12 months. As a result of this intensified action, several gang leaders have been taken into custody, or migrated overseas, where some have been killed in the on-going gang conflict overseas.

3) The brazenness of the criminals reflected in the cowardly attack that took the life of 10-year old Jezariah Tyrell, a 96-hour curfew was implemented in Central Kingston. As soon as the 96-hour curfew ended there was a fatal shooting incident in the area.

4) Intelligence suggest that in spite of the degrading of gangs as a result of intense police actions there is need for further action within Central Kingston. The situation in Central Kingston demands special security measures. The “clear-hold-build” strategy creates the framework for the ZONE and ensures that the development component of the interventions are carried out in a secure environment. The suite of developmental interventions that are made available under the Zone of Special Operations (ZOSOs) will bring about the desired social transformation within the space and bring an end to the killings.

5) A Zone of Special Operation is merely one of the tools being utilized to restore law and order in Central Kingston. The government has been clear that we are

not relying on any one tool to secure Jamaica. We will utilize all available tools to restore order, public safety and to remove the violence producers. Communities must be assessed based on their peculiarities in order to determine the best security intervention for that space. As a result, the government will not dilute the ZOSO strategy in order to accommodate those who are against the use of States of Public Emergencies.

6) Central Kingston is, and has been, receiving intensive policing activities. Intelligence-driven police operations were intensified within Central Kingston prior to today's declaration. The level of criminal violence in Central Kingston is challenging to normal policing activities. I am confident that the police high command will continue to make the necessary adjustments to increase police effectiveness and restore a sense of normalcy to the

area. Having this Zone of Special Operations within Central Kingston will further add to the work of the police in the area and restore a safe environment for the continued rehabilitation of downtown Kingston.

Hon. Dr. Horace Chang, CD, MP
Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of National Security