



PLEASE CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

Remarks Hon Robert Montague MP, Minister of National Security

At the

Handover Ceremony for Bullettrax System (Bullet Imaging Solution)

Tuesday March 14, 2017

Institute of Forensic Science and Legal medicine

Salutations

The Ministry of National Security welcomes the handing over to the Institute of Forensic Science and Legal medicine of a much needed Bullettrax System. This is an important part of the Government's ongoing efforts to combat the illicit trafficking in firearms and ammunition that is contributing to the unacceptable levels of crime and murders that we have been experiencing in Jamaica.

Jamaica does not have an arms manufacturing industry, we do not produce guns and the legal importation and ownership of guns in the country is tightly regulated. Yet over seventy percent (70%) of the murders committed in Jamaica involve the use of firearms the majority being guns illegally brought into the island.

But in targeting guns we also must target the illicit importation and distribution of firearms as well. It is in order to attack the problem from the source that the Government has been working very closely with our international partners to stop the flow of illicit firearms and ammunition into the country.

We are working very hard to 'dry-up' the supply of illicit firearms and ammunition in the country. In this regard the initiative by the Police

in their 'Get the Guns' campaign has resulted in over 700 illegal guns being taken off the streets and 8721 rounds of ammunition seized in 2016. Since the 1st of January to the 11th of March, 2017 we have taken up 163 illegal firearms compared to 118 in 2016. In terms of ammunition, we have seized 1684 rounds over the same time period compared to 1592 last year.

We have undertaken a review of the Firearms Licensing Authority and tightened up its operations to ensure that legal gun owners are properly vetted, appropriately trained in the handling and keeping of firearms, and are held accountable. Legal gun owners cannot enable criminal access to guns and ammunition through negligence or irresponsible actions. Every firearm and every round of ammunition in the country should be properly accounted for.

We cannot stamp out the scourge of crime and murders in Jamaica unless we overcome our 'gun problem.' That is why we have been on a serious mission to tackle the problem comprehensively and from various fronts.

A big part of the effort is in building our forensic and ballistics capabilities. We are in the technology age and Jamaica is committed to the strategic use of science and technology in this fight to create a safer and more prosperous Jamaica. Our restructured and expanded Institute of Forensic and Legal Medicine is on the frontline of this fight.

It now boasts some of the most advanced ballistics equipment in the Caribbean and its Integrated Ballistics Identification System (IBIS) is already having a positive impact on the investigation and handling of gun crimes.

The use of technology is playing a vital role in citizen safety. No better example is there than the Forensic Institute. I express

gratitude to the people and staff of the Forensic Institute sometimes working under very trying conditions. This government has invested heavily in the Forensic Institute. They got the second largest share from our Capital A budget in the supplementary, right after the army.

The Forensics Institute is very important; new machines, new personnel and new equipment. I have also been informed that the PS is about to sign off on US\$146,000 to purchase equipment and do training so that we can establish our DNA registry. The equipment should be here in four to six weeks and by that time, parliament should have passed the DNA regulation so that we can begin populating the DNA registry.

The addition of this Bullettrax System will complement the IBIS system and enhance the Institute's capabilities. I have been advised that the Bullettrax System will:

- Capture digital images of the surface of bullets
- Match the images in a database
- Suggest potential matches with other bullets and
- Bolster the Institute's capacity in collecting information from ammunition.

This addition to our crime fighting capabilities is a part of a two-year Technical Assistance Package, facilitated by the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean (UNLIREC).

The Package also includes expert support for the development of written Standard Operating Procedures, training for firearm examiners, competency testing for firearm examiners, and the provision of equipment to support investigations involving the use of firearms.

I want, on behalf of the Government and People of Jamaica, to thank the United Nations, the Government of Canada and our other

international partners, for your continued support of our efforts to fight crime, and to create a safer and more prosperous Jamaica.

I again warn the criminals, and those contemplating criminal actions, that they will not be allowed to destroy the lives and livelihoods of the citizens of this country. Their time is up!

We the law-abiding citizens of Jamaica, are resolute in our commitment, to rid this country of the scourge of crime and violence, we know that good will always conquer evil.