



Remarks Hon Robert Montague MP Minister of National Security
At the
Passing out parade Jamaica Constabulary Force
Friday April 29, 2016

Salutations

Today's Passing Out Parade is a moment of pride for all of us gathered here, but especially for the more than 300 men and women who have successfully completed the rigorous training programme to qualify you to wear the uniform of the Jamaica Constabulary Force.

I congratulate you on behalf of the Government of Jamaica and in particular the Ministry of National Security, I also congratulate you on behalf of all the citizens of Jamaica who have invested in your training and are looking forward to seeing each of you making your special contribution to the building of a safer and more peaceful Jamaica.

Each of you has been selected from a larger pool of young Jamaicans who had offered themselves to serve in the JCF, you are the ones who made it through the demanding recruitment process; a process that is designed to provide the JCF with persons who have the academic qualifications, mental aptitude, physical conditioning and soundness of character to join this important organization.

An effective Police Force is essential to Jamaica's social and economic growth and we are grateful to the thousands of policemen and women who have sworn to protect, serve and reassure the people of Jamaica, often in challenging circumstances and at great personal cost.

We are mindful that there are a few persons in the JCF who are corrupt and whose conduct undermines the hard work of the majority, but they will not be allowed to get away with such practices. They will be found out and face the full consequences of their actions within the law.

The citizens of Jamaica must continue to have confidence and trust in the Police if they are to work as partners with the security forces in our shared mission of fighting crime wherever it is found in Jamaica.

I am therefore appealing to each of you who will today commence your probationary period as members of the force to strive for professional excellence.

Over the past six months you have been exposed to some of the best training in policing available in the Caribbean. You have been given the theoretical foundations and the practical skills to master the demands of policing in the twenty-first century. It is now up to you to apply yourselves with diligence and professionalism to serving the citizens of Jamaica.

Remember as young police personnel, you must understand that in this august body lies over 100 years of history and professionalism. I entreat you not to lose sight nor should you sacrifice this fact; it is on your shoulders and your awesome responsibility to ensure that while carrying out your duties, you treat people with respect; exercise the highest level of professionalism and inspire trust through civil relationships.

However you are not being sent to face the challenges of crime on your own; twenty-first century policing is not for 'lone rangers.' Take advantage of the expertise, experience and support of your colleagues in the Force, learn from your superiors and emulate the practices of those members of the JCF who are providing exemplary service.

You also have the support and resources of the Ministry of National Security, its departments and agencies. Billions of dollars have been spent equipping and upgrading our capacity to fight crime using the latest available technology and techniques in intelligence gathering and analysis, forensics, communication and general law enforcement.

The people of Jamaica have also made great sacrifice and have given up a lot of their rights and freedoms following the enactment of a number of laws to empower you to carry out your duties.

You can be assured, and the people of Jamaica can be assured that we are committed to mobilizing all the resources at our disposal to support you, and the rest of the security services, as we wage a relentless war against the criminal elements that are intent on destroying our country.

As part of the approach to tackling these lawless elements, the Ministry is committed to a strategy of preventing crime and creating community safety based on five key pillars. These are:

1. crime prevention through social development
2. situational prevention
3. effective policing
4. swift and sure justice processes, and,
5. reducing reoffending.

In emphasizing crime prevention through social development we will pursue along with the wider community and our colleague ministries agencies and departments those issues that are the root causes of crime, poor parenting, school drop outs, unemployment etc backed by measures that reduce opportunities for particular crime problems.

Along with our partners we will tackle the situational issues that contribute to crime such as limited street lighting and overgrown lots. We are already making good progress in these areas. Coming out of the series of parish town hall meetings I have been hosting, our partners in Local Government and the utilities have made commitments to deal with some of these issues, commitments which by and large are being kept

These first two pillars will be further buffered by having effective systems in place that increases the risk to criminals of getting caught, to bring more of them to justice and to deliver sure, swift and just punishment. It cannot be that persons feel comfortable to exact criminality but not expect to be severely punished. Persons who intend to break the law must know that punishment will be sure, swift, and just. In that regard, I have asked Senator Charles to consult with a number of agencies, including the Attorney General's Office to determine if there are any legal impediments for the resumption of hanging in Jamaica.

Important to our strategy of prevention is the fifth pillar which is based on the principle of redemption. While they are serving their time in prison we will institute measures to rehabilitate them.

We are now on a tour of these institutions; one of the objectives is to assess the quality of these rehabilitation programmes.

I must let you know we are already putting together a plan and a team led by Minister of State Parnell Charles Jnr. to significantly improve these programmes. Improved rehabilitation will enable inmates returning from incarceration to be better able to reintegrate into their communities and to become first class citizens making a valuable contribution to the development of themselves and their families.

To the family members, friends and colleagues who have joined us today to celebrate this important milestone in the lives of our new constables, I want to say thanks on their behalf, and to encourage you to give them your full support as they commit to this important area of public service.

It is our dream for a more prosperous Jamaica; a Jamaica where our citizens are free to pursue their legitimate ambitions without fear, a Jamaica where our children feel safe, and a Jamaica where the vulnerable feel protected. It is not an impossible dream, but it will require that all of us as citizens of Jamaica work together in partnership to make this dream our reality; and our reality our prosperity.
