



## RESPONSES TO INFORMATION REQUESTS (RIRs)

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4 January 2006

### JAM100744.E

Jamaica: Violence between supporters of the Jamaica Labour Party and those of the People's National Party; availability of police protection; neighbourhoods or regions not defined by a particular political allegiance (2003 - 2005)  
Research Directorate, Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, Ottawa

There is a long history of political violence in Jamaica, as gangs were widely used "for partisan gain" (*Jamaica Gleaner* 6 Nov. 2005b) in the 1970s and 1980s by the two main political parties, the Jamaica Labour Party (JLP) and the People's National Party (PNP) (AP 17 Apr. 2005). A 2004 upsurge in gang violence was said to be reminiscent of the gang violence used by political parties in these times; 500 people died in the violence leading up to the 1980 elections (AP 4 Feb. 2004). However, more recently, the *Miami Herald* has reported that "the drug trafficker [has] replac[ed] the party as patron" (7 July 2005).

According to the *Jamaica Gleaner*, the situation has changed and if the criminal gangs declare their association with a party or another, it does not mean that the parties are behind the violence; "the structured relationships in which the politician is the boss has long since disappeared" (2005b). The criminal gangs use political strongholds as a cover for their drug operations (ibid.). Other sources confirmed that the primary activities of gangs are drug-related (AP 17 Apr. 2005; AP 4 Feb. 2004).

AP reported that both parties "deny having links to gangs" (AP 14 Apr. 2005). However, the newly elected leader of the JLP, Bruce Golding, acknowledged links between criminal gangs and political parties (*Jamaica Gleaner* 6 Nov. 2005b) and called on the prime minister to work with him to end what he calls "political tribalism" (BBC 21 Feb. 2005).

The prime minister of Jamaica, P.J. Patterson, declared that gang violence is not politically motivated (AP 4 Feb. 2004). According to him, some gangs might have "political preferences" (ibid.).

Business owners in Kingston shut down their shops for one day in May 2005 asking political parties to sever their links with criminal gangs (AP 26 May 2005; *The Miami Herald* 7 July 2005). Two gangs known as "One Order" and "Clansman" are said to be respectively aligned with the PNP and the JLP (*Jamaica Gleaner* 6 Nov. 2005a). *The Miami Herald* indicated that Kingston gangs run parts of the town like "fiefdoms" (7 July 2005).

*Country Reports 2004* added that:

in recent elections, voters living in "garrison communities" in inner-city areas dominated by one of the two major political parties often faced substantial influence and pressure from politically connected gangs and young men hired by political parties, which impeded the free exercise of their right to vote (28 Feb. 2005).

### **Violence between party supporters**

Bruce Golding, leader of the JLP, represents the riding of West Kingston (AP 17 Apr. 2005). Despite police indications of an incident-free poll, the opponent of Golding in the April 2005 by-election, PNP member Joseph Witter, alleged that his supporters were intimidated "by JLP thugs" as they headed to the polls in this district "reputed for political violence" (AP 14 Apr. 2005).

According to Bruce Golding, two young men from Bayshore Park, East Kingston, were killed, and their bodies burned in the Rose Lane area of West Kingston in April 2005, because they had changed their allegiance from the PNP to the JLP (AP 17 Apr. 2005). Associated Press indicated that "residents of Rose Lane are traditional supporters of the PNP" (ibid.).

Three days apart, three people were murdered in Bayshore Park, East Kingston possibly in relation with the parliamentary by-election held a week before, according to the police (AP 17 Apr. 2005). The assailants were "believed to be from West Kingston" (ibid.).

In March 2005, four teenagers were shot to death in the community of August Town (*Jamaica Gleaner* 8 March 2005). The violent attack was allegedly perpetrated by men from the Jungle 12 community for control of the area and political reasons; an unidentified witness stated that Jungle 12 men are PNP supporters (ibid.).

Reuters reported that four people were killed due to partisan violence in the Mountain View community of East Kingston (8 Sept. 2005). Sections of the community have been divided amongst supporters of the PNP and the JLP (Reuters 8 Sept. 2005). The events took place after a protest organized by the JLP against rising oil prices; according to police forces, four houses were burned down and bombs were thrown in other houses (ibid.).

The JLP has claimed that the PNP used gun violence to destabilize Spanish Town, an impoverished area (AP 4 Feb. 2004) whose elected representative is JLP member Olivia Grange (AP 7 Oct. 2005).

Olivia Grange was involved in an incident in July 2004, when it was revealed that she had co-signed the loan on the car of a gang leader from Spanish Town and that police were investigating (*Country Reports* 2004 28 Feb. 2005).

In October 2005, Grange's convoy was attacked, as she was moving from Spanish Town to Center Kingston after a meeting on gang violence with a PNP delegate (AP 7 Oct. 2005). A motorcyclist of her convoy was killed during the attack (ibid.).

### **Police protection**

Information addressing specific measures aimed at controlling political violence is scarce among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate. However, general information on measures taken by the police to address general gang violence follows.

After the June 2003 election, violence erupted and 27 people were killed (including two police officers) during police operations in West Kingston and 16 died during gun battles in Eastern Kingston (Freedom House 11 Aug. 2005).

In 2005, the Jamaican police hired a detective from England to help "professionalize its criminal investigations" (*The Miami Herald* 7 July 2005). In May 2003 the police announced the hiring of 1 000 more officers (Freedom House 11 Aug. 2005). Measures were taken beforehand to implement a national crime plan including training for police officers (ibid.).

As well, authorities contemplated the possibility of restricting bail for "known gang members" (AP 4 Feb. 2004). However, no information about the restriction of bail being implemented for gang members could be found.

For more information on police protection from criminality, please consult JAM100736.E of 4 January 2006.

### **Allegiance-free neighbourhoods**

Information other than the indications given above on which neighbourhoods are of which political allegiance or controlled by a given criminal gang was not available in the sources consulted by the Research Directorate.

This Response was prepared after researching publicly accessible information currently available to the Research Directorate within time constraints. This Response is not, and does not purport to be, conclusive as to the merit of any particular claim for refugee protection. Please find below the list of additional sources consulted in researching this Information Request.

### References

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*The Miami Herald*. 7 July 2005. Joe Monzingo. "Jamaicans are Living in Fear as Homicide Skyrockets; Jamaica is Struggling to Cope with Drug Crime and One of the Highest Homicide Rates in the World." (Factiva)

Reuters. 8 September 2005. "Four Killed in Partisan Violence in Jamaica." (Factiva)

#### Additional Sources Consulted

**Oral sources:** The Ministry of National Security of Jamaica did not provide information within the time constraints of this Response.

**Internet sites, including:** Amnesty International, Country Reports 2004, Electoral Office of Jamaica, Human Rights Watch (HRW), Latin American Caribbean & Central America Report, Jamaica Information Service, *The Jamaica Observer*, People's National Party, United Kingdom Home Office, United States Department of State.

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