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### JAM101670.E

Jamaica: Government efforts to strengthen the Jamaican Constabulary Force (JCF); resources, recruitment and programming; accountability and oversight mechanisms (January - September 2006)  
Research Directorate, Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, Ottawa

The Jamaican Constabulary Force (JCF) is the principal law enforcement body responsible for internal security in Jamaica (US 8 Mar. 2006, Sec. 1.d). The JCF is commanded by a commissioner of police, who reports to the Jamaican Minister of National Security (*ibid.*; Jamaica 12 Dec. 2005b). According to its Web site, the JCF is mandated with the "maintenance of law and order, protection of life and property, prevention and detection of crime," and the "preservation of peace" (*ibid.* 12 Dec. 2005a).

In May 2006, Jamaica's Special Task Force on Crime, led by leader of the opposition, Bruce Golding, published its report entitled *Road Map to a Safe and Secure Jamaica* (*ibid.* 1 May 2006). The task force points out that, based on 2005 statistics, Jamaica has one of the highest rates of murder per capita worldwide (*ibid.*, 1; US 7 Apr. 2006). The report notes that Jamaica is experiencing a "deep crisis of public safety," and that there is a crisis of confidence in the policing and justice systems (Jamaica 1 May 2006).

The United States *International Narcotics Control Strategy Report 2005* indicates that the JCF dedicated considerable energy to reforming and modernizing the police force in 2005 (US Mar. 2006).

### Resources, recruitment, and programming

In his February 2006 follow-up report on recommendations made to Jamaica in 2003, the United Nations (UN) Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions notes that several of Jamaica's communities are run by gangs whose equipment and arms often surpass those of the police (UN 27 Mar. 2006, Para. 46; US 8 Mar. 2006, Sec. 1.a). Jamaica's Special Task Force on Crime is of the opinion that Jamaica lacks the resources to upgrade the police force as a whole (Jamaica 1 May 2006, 23; see also US 7 Apr. 2006). Accordingly, it recommends that resources be concentrated on those services critical to tackling Jamaica's principal problems of organized crime and murder (*ibid.*).

The Minister for National Security indicates that in the year preceding June 2006, the government invested just short of 1.3 billion Jamaican dollars (JAM)

[or approximately CAD 22,282,000 (Canada 7 Dec. 2006a)] in new equipment for the JCF (Jamaica 2 June 2006b). This equipment included an automated fingerprint identification system, an integrated ballistic identification system, and a radio network that enables police to communicate throughout the island (ibid.). The Minister also promised additional investments in forensic and mapping analysis capacities (ibid.). A new ion scan machine installed at Norman Manley International Airport, located in Kingston, assists the JCF in intercepting passengers who are drug couriers (US Mar. 2006, Sec. III). Budget allocations for internal security for the year 2006-2007 are set at JMD 1.6 billion [or approximately CAD 27,424,000 (Canada 7 Dec. 2006b)] (Jamaica 17 Apr. 2006). Britain announced in October 2005 that it would provide a total of 3.15 million pounds sterling (GBP) in assistance [or approximately CAD 7,113,330 (Canada 7 Dec. 2006c)] to the JCF over three years to help communities and police respond to a significant increase in violent crime (BBC 1 Oct. 2005).

In a June 2006 speech, Leon Rose, Chairperson of the Jamaican Police Officers' Association, described current government contracts for resources, training and development as falling short of the force's needs (*Jamaica Gleaner* 16 June 2006). Rose warned that as a result, the police would not be able to achieve their goals (ibid.).

The Special Task Force on Crime notes that the government has followed through on only the more superficial recommendations made by the National Committee on Crime and Violence in 2001 to improve the JCF (Jamaica 1 May 2006, 5). In particular, the Task Force reproached the government for implementing recommendations to improve work conditions and procure equipment, while ignoring those pertaining to the force's structure and policies (ibid.).

The Jamaica Information Service (JIS) reported in February 2006 that the JCF intends to increase the number of its personnel from its current 8,500 to 12,000 by the year 2008 (Jamaica 27 Feb. 2006). In June 2006, the *Jamaica Gleaner* indicated that the JCF would change its public image to attract better quality recruits (2 June 2006). A few days later, the newspaper reported that poor remuneration and working conditions, as well as a lack of advancement opportunities and housing, are inhibiting recruitment efforts (9 June 2006). In the same month Leon Rose of the police officer's association, said that the JCF is "ill-prepared and undermanned" to face Jamaica's organized crime network (*Jamaica Gleaner* 16 June 2006). He also indicated that the terms of employment for Jamaica's police are far below those of their international counterparts (ibid.).

The *Jamaica Gleaner* and the JIS reported in June 2006 that recruits intending to become police officers will be required to undergo a lie detection test as well as psychological testing (*Jamaica Gleaner* 9 June 2006; Jamaica 1 June 2006), to assist in determining whether recruits are "predisposed to the excessive use of force" (ibid.). Current members of the force will benefit from an improved training curriculum that the government put in place to heighten the force's professionalism (ibid. 5 Jan. 2006).

The JCF launched and continued to implement several social intervention programs designed to assist communities in rebuilding (Jamaica 2 June 2006a). One such program is the Safe School Programme, launched in 2004, the purpose of which is to reduce violence in schools through police mediation (ibid.).

## **Accountability and oversight**

A March 2006 *Jamaica Observer* article explains that the JCF's year-old Professional Standards Branch is divided into six departments (21 Mar. 2006; Jamaica Dec. 2005). These departments are the Internal Affairs Anti-corruption Division, the Performance Auditing and Monitoring Bureau, Internal Affairs Complaints, Internal Affairs Bureau of Special Investigation, Legal Affairs, and Corporate Planning, Research and Development Division (*ibid.*). The Corporate Planning, Research and Development Division has responsibility for the JCF's modernization and reform program (*ibid.*).

Jamaica's Special Task Force on Crime indicates that corruption has become "endemic" within Jamaica's police force (Jamaica 1 May 2006, 9) and that the level of public distrust in the force, as well as the degree of police ineffectiveness, "are unacceptable" (*ibid.*, 22). This opinion was reinforced by the United States *International Narcotics Control Strategy Report*, which indicates that corruption within Jamaican law-enforcement bodies is an obstacle to combating crime (US Mar. 2006, Sec. 3). The *Jamaica Observer* reported in March 2006 that since the establishment of the Anti-corruption Division in June 2005, 33 members of the JCF have been arrested on charges of corruption or criminality (21 Mar. 2006).

Amnesty International (AI) reports that in October 2005, Jamaica's legislature passed a law creating the police Civilian Oversight Authority (AI 23 May 2006). AI points out that the Authority's mandate is concerned with resource allocation within the force, and does not extend to the investigation of extrajudicial killing by police officers, which it found to be a concern (*ibid.*).

### **Reduction of murder committed by civilians and police**

In January 2006, the Commissioner of Police announced an eight-point murder reduction plan (Jamaica 27 Apr. 2006), the goal of which is to reduce the number of murders committed by civilians in Jamaica by five percent by the end of 2006 (*ibid.* 2 Feb. 2006). By April 2006, Deputy Commissioner of Police Mark Shields announced that, compared to the same period in 2005, there had been a 25 percent reduction in the number of murders over the first four months of the year (Jamaica 27 April 2006).

According to AI, the number of killings perpetrated by police in Jamaica is among the highest in the world (3 Nov. 2004). In its report on events in Jamaica in 2005, AI indicates that police officers allegedly killed 168 people over the course of the year (23 May 2006; see also US 8 Mar. 2006, Sec. 1.a); and the UN Special Rapporteur confirmed that the number of killings perpetrated by police in 2005 was the highest it had been since 1991 (UN 27 Mar. 2006, para. 46). From 1999 to 2004, between 650 and 700 individuals were killed by police officers on duty (*ibid.*, para. 47; AI 3 Nov. 2004).

In May 2004, a British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) article reported that at the request of the Jamaican government, Scotland Yard investigated a number of deaths caused by the JCF (14 May 2004). According to the article, Scotland Yard found that many of the police-attributable deaths were the result of a "'shoot-to-kill policy'" (*ibid.*). The article quoted the Chairperson of a Jamaican advocacy group, Families Against Terrorism (FAST), as saying that police actions are feeding a culture that undervalued life (*ibid.*).

In his follow-up report, the UN Special Rapporteur outlines the accountability mechanisms designed to respond to police-attributable deaths:

There are two institutions in charge of investigating police shootings. Within the Jamaican Constabulary Force (JCF), the Bureau of Special Investigations (BSI) is responsible for investigating all police shooting incidents, both fatal and non-fatal. The BSI reports to the Commissioner of Police. The Police Public Complaints Authority (PPCA) is an external independent civilian body that investigates complaints against the police. It can also initiate its own investigations. Both BSI and PPCA draw up reports to the Director of Public Prosecution (DPP), who then decides whether to pursue criminal or disciplinary proceedings, or to send the matter to the Coroner's court. (UN 27 Mar. 2006, para. 48)

According to both AI and the UN Special Rapporteur, no police officer was convicted of murder between October 1999 and February 2006 (AI 23 May 2006; UN 27 Mar. 2006, para. 47). In his March 2006 report, the Special Rapporteur describes police killings in Jamaica as occurring with "nearly complete impunity," and concludes that "it would be difficult to devise a system more conducive to ensuring impunity for ... extrajudicial executions" (ibid., para. 75).

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.

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**Internet sites, including:** Independent Jamaica Council for Human Rights; Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, International Criminal Police Organization (ICPO), Jamaicans for Justice, Project on Extrajudicial Executions, SOS Jamaica.

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