



Home Office

Country Policy and Information Note Jamaica: Fear of organised criminal groups

Version 3.0
August 2019

Preface

Purpose

This note provides country of origin information (COI) and analysis of COI for use by Home Office decision makers handling particular types of protection and human rights claims (as set out in [the basis of claim](#) section). It is not intended to be an exhaustive survey of a particular subject or theme.

It is split into two main sections: (1) analysis and assessment of COI and other evidence; and (2) COI. These are explained in more detail below.

Assessment

This section analyses the evidence relevant to this note – i.e. the COI section; refugee/human rights laws and policies; and applicable caselaw – by describing this and its inter-relationships, and provides an assessment on whether, **in general**:

- A person is reasonably likely to face a real risk of persecution or serious harm
- A person is able to obtain protection from the state (or quasi state bodies)
- A person is reasonably able to relocate within a country or territory
- Claims are likely to justify granting asylum, humanitarian protection or other form of leave, and
- If a claim is refused, it is likely or unlikely to be certifiable as ‘clearly unfounded’ under section 94 of the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002.

Decision makers **must**, however, still consider all claims on an individual basis, taking into account each case’s specific facts.

Country of origin information

The country information in this note has been carefully selected in accordance with the general principles of COI research as set out in the [Common EU \[European Union\] Guidelines for Processing Country of Origin Information \(COI\)](#), dated April 2008, and the Austrian Centre for Country of Origin and Asylum Research and Documentation’s (ACCORD), [Researching Country Origin Information – Training Manual, 2013](#). Namely, taking into account the COI’s relevance, reliability, accuracy, balance, currency, transparency and traceability.

The structure and content of the country information section follows a [terms of reference](#) which sets out the general and specific topics relevant to this note.

All information included in the note was published or made publicly available on or before the ‘cut-off’ date(s) in the country information section. Any event taking place or report/article published after these date(s) is not included.

All information is publicly accessible or can be made publicly available, and is from generally reliable sources. Sources and the information they provide are carefully considered before inclusion.

Factors relevant to the assessment of the reliability of sources and information include:

- the motivation, purpose, knowledge and experience of the source
- how the information was obtained, including specific methodologies used
- the currency and detail of information, and
- whether the COI is consistent with and/or corroborated by other sources.

Multiple sourcing is used to ensure that the information is accurate, balanced and corroborated, so that a comprehensive and up-to-date picture at the time of publication is provided of the issues relevant to this note.

Information is compared and contrasted, whenever possible, to provide a range of views and opinions. The inclusion of a source, however, is not an endorsement of it or any view(s) expressed.

Each piece of information is referenced in a brief footnote; full details of all sources cited and consulted in compiling the note are listed alphabetically in the [bibliography](#).

Feedback

Our goal is to continuously improve our material. Therefore, if you would like to comment on this note, please email the [Country Policy and Information Team](#).

Independent Advisory Group on Country Information

The [Independent Advisory Group on Country Information](#) (IAGCI) was set up in March 2009 by the Independent Chief Inspector of Borders and Immigration to support him in reviewing the efficiency, effectiveness and consistency of approach of COI produced by the Home Office.

The IAGCI welcomes feedback on the Home Office's COI material. It is not the function of the IAGCI to endorse any Home Office material, procedures or policy. The IAGCI may be contacted at:

Independent Advisory Group on Country Information

Independent Chief Inspector of Borders and Immigration

5th Floor

Globe House

89 Eccleston Square

London, SW1V 1PN

Email: chiefinspector@icinspector.gov.uk

Information about the IAGCI's work and a list of the documents which have been reviewed by the IAGCI can be found on the Independent Chief Inspector's pages of the [gov.uk website](#).

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Assessment

Updated: 1 July 2019

1. Introduction

1.1 Basis of claim

1.1.1 Fear of persecution or serious harm by organised criminal groups (OCG).

1.2 Points to note

1.2.1 The Crown Prosecution Service defines an OCG:

‘... as a group which has at its purpose, or one of its purposes, the carrying on of criminal activities and consists of three or more people who agree to act together to further that purpose.

‘It is not necessary for the individual participating in the group's criminal activities to know any of the group members.’¹

1.2.2 This definition will be used when referring to an OCG in this CPIN.

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2. Consideration of issues

2.1 Credibility

2.1.1 For information on assessing credibility, see the instruction on [Assessing Credibility and Refugee Status](#).

2.1.2 Decision makers must also check if there has been a previous application for a UK visa or another form of leave. Asylum applications matched to visas should be investigated prior to the asylum interview (see the [Asylum Instruction on Visa Matches, Asylum Claims from UK Visa Applicants](#)).

2.1.3 Decision makers should also consider the need to conduct language analysis testing (see the [Asylum Instruction on Language Analysis](#)).

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2.2 Exclusion

2.2.1 If there are serious reasons for considering that the person has been involved with OCGs then decision makers must consider whether one of the exclusion clauses is applicable. Each case must be considered on its individual facts and merits.

2.2.2 For further guidance on the exclusion clauses and restricted leave, see the [Asylum Instruction on Exclusion: Article 1F of the Refugee Convention](#) and the [Asylum Instruction on Restricted Leave](#).

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2.3 Refugee convention reason

2.3.1 Victims or potential victims of OCGs in Jamaica do not constitute a particular social group (PSG) within the meaning of the 1951 UN Refugee Convention. This is because they do not share an innate characteristic, or a common

¹ Crown Prosecution Service, ‘Organised Crime Group...’, undated, [url](#)

background that cannot be changed, or a characteristic or belief that is so fundamental to identity or conscience that a person should not be forced to renounce. Nor do they have a distinct identity within Jamaican society, as they are not perceived as being different.

- 2.3.2 In the absence of a link to one of the five Convention grounds necessary for a claim to amount to persecution under the Refugee Convention, decision makers must consider whether the person will face a real risk of serious harm sufficient to qualify for Humanitarian Protection.
- 2.3.3 For further guidance on convention reasons, including PSGs, see the [Asylum Instruction on Assessing Credibility and Refugee Status](#).
- 2.3.4 For guidance on HP, see the [Asylum Instruction on Humanitarian Protection](#).

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2.4 Risk

- 2.4.1 OCGs in Jamaica are involved in crimes including extortion, kidnapping, gun smuggling, drug trafficking, and large-scale fraud. Gang violence and shootings are common, particularly in and around certain areas of Kingston and Montego Bay (see [Nature of organised crime](#)).
- 2.4.2 There are over 200 Organised Criminal Gangs (OCGs) within Jamaica who are highly connected to national and international gangs (see [Organised gangs](#)).
- 2.4.3 At a local level, armed gangs with historic affiliations to political parties dominate working class neighbourhoods. They reportedly act as enforcers in 'garrison' communities and provide local leaders with a degree of political power, social legitimacy, and, even, moral authority (see [Organised crime and national politics](#)).
- 2.4.4 Although the murder rate in Jamaica is high, most murders are committed against those involved in gang-related activities. The risk of murder by an OCG for an ordinary person who is uninvolved in gang activities is significantly lower (see [Crime levels](#)).
- 2.4.5 In general, a person who is not involved in gang-related activity will not be at real risk of serious harm or persecution from an OCG. If a person is of interest or vulnerable to an OCG because of their particular circumstances, decision makers must establish that an OCG's behaviour and capabilities poses a real and serious threat to the person which amounts to serious harm. Each case will need to be considered on its facts, with the onus on the person to demonstrate that they are likely to be subject to serious harm.
- 2.4.6 For further guidance on assessing risk, see the instruction on [Assessing Credibility and Refugee Status](#).

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2.5 Protection

- 2.5.1 The criminal justice system is composed of the Jamaica Constabulary Force (JCF) which has primary responsibility for internal security although where a state of emergency is declared, the Jamaica Defense Force has authority to

make arrests and works alongside the JCF, and the judiciary (see [Government response](#)).

- 2.5.2 In the Country Guidance case of [AB \(Protection-criminal gangs-internal relocation\) Jamaica CG \[2007\] UKAIT 00018](#), heard on 19 December 2006 and promulgated on 22 February 2007, the Tribunal found that the authorities in Jamaica are in general willing and able to provide effective protection. However, unless reasonably likely to be admitted into the Witness Protection Programme (WPP), a person targeted by a criminal gang will not normally receive effective protection in their home area [headnote].
- 2.5.3 When referring to persons being ‘admitted’ into the WPP, the Tribunal did not consider that the test can be what the person's preferences are or whether there are hardships that will be involved (for example, having to live for at least some period of time in difficult circumstances). The test is simply whether, if they sought access to it, they would be admitted to it (para 163).
- 2.5.4 The Tribunal in [AB](#) also found that: ‘So far as the likely economic and social conditions faced by those within the Programme, whilst we do not rule out that unusual individual circumstances may make it unreasonable for them to be admitted into the programme, there is nothing to suggest that programme participants are generally exposed to destitution or unduly harsh living conditions’ (para 162).
- 2.5.5 Since [AB](#) was promulgated the government has introduced a number of legislative and policy measures to strengthen the rule of law and combat general and OCG-specific crime, including the ‘Anti-Gang Act’ 2014 which defines and criminalises OCGs. As of November 2018, there had been reportedly 448 cases of arrest under the act but only 2 convictions (see [Government response](#)).
- 2.5.6 For further information and an assessment of the availability of state protection generally in Jamaica, see the Country Policy and Information Note on [Jamaica: Actors of Protection](#).
- 2.5.7 For guidance on assessing the availability of state protection in general, see the [Asylum Instruction on Assessing Credibility and Refugee Status](#).

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2.6 Internal relocation

- 2.6.1 In the Country Guidance case of [AB](#), the Tribunal found that whether a person will be able to obtain protection by relocating will depend on his particular circumstances, but the evidence does not support the view that internal relocation is an unsafe or unreasonable option in Jamaica in general: it is a matter for determination on the facts of each individual case [headnote].
- 2.6.2 With regard to the position of a person who would not be admitted to the WPP, the Tribunal in [AB](#) held that the first question to be asked is whether it is reasonably likely the person will be traced and targeted in their new place of residence. The Tribunal found that, except in high profile cases, such persons would not face a real risk of being detected by criminal gangs based in inner-city urban areas. But each case will turn on its own facts (para 164).

- 2.6.3 Although [AB](#) was promulgated over ten years ago, there are not very strong grounds to justify departure from its findings about internal relocation. Whether the person would face a well-founded fear of persecution/serious harm in the proposed place of relocation, and whether such internal relocation is reasonable, will depend on the facts of the case, taking into account the person's individual circumstances and the motivation, capability and reach of the OCG from which they are fleeing.
- 2.6.4 If a person is a single woman with no children, decision makers must take into account the findings of the Upper Tribunal in the Country Guidance case of [SW \(lesbians – HJ and HT applied\) Jamaica CG \[2011\] UKUT 251 \(IAC\)](#), heard on 7 December 2009 and 30 November 2010 and promulgated on 24 June 2011. The Tribunal found that single women with no male partner or children risk being perceived as lesbian, whether or not that is the case, unless they present a heterosexual narrative and behave with discretion. The Tribunal also found that lesbianism (actual or perceived) brings a risk of violence, up to and including 'corrective' rape and murder (para 107(2) and (4)).
- 2.6.5 For further information and assessments of the reasonableness of internal relocation for women who face domestic violence and LGBT persons, see [Country policy and information notes on sexual orientation and gender identity and Women fearing domestic violence](#).
- 2.6.6 For further information on internal relocation in Jamaica, see the Country Policy and Information Note on [Jamaica: Internal Relocation](#).
- 2.6.7 For further guidance on considering internal relocation more generally and factors to be taken into account, see the [Asylum Instruction on Assessing Credibility and Refugee Status](#).

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2.7 Certification

- 2.7.1 Where a claim by a person uninvolved in organised criminal activity, is refused, it is likely to be certifiable as 'clearly unfounded' under section 94 of the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002. This is because, in general, effective state protection is likely to be available.
- 2.7.2 For further guidance on certification, see [Certification of Protection and Human Rights claims under section 94 of the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002 \(clearly unfounded claims\)](#).

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Country information

Section 3 updated: 01 July 2019

3. Crime and security

3.1 Overview

3.1.1 The Foreign and Commonwealth Office travel advice for British Citizens visiting Jamaica published in May 2019 stated, 'Crime levels are high, particularly in and around certain areas of Kingston and Montego Bay. Gang violence and shootings are common, although usually confined to inner city neighbourhoods'²

3.1.2 The US State Department's Overseas Security Advisory Council 2019 report on Jamaica aimed at US citizens noted:

'There is serious risk from crime in Kingston. Violent crime, including sexual assault, is a serious problem throughout Jamaica, particularly in Kingston and Montego Bay. Jamaica's police force is understaffed and has limited resources. Gated resorts are not immune to violent crime.

'...In 2018, Business Insider ranked Jamaica 10th among 20 of the most dangerous places in the world. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) recently cited crime as the number one impediment to economic growth. The Jamaican government concluded that corruption and the transnational crime it facilitates presents a grave threat to national security.'³

3.1.3 The Bertlesman Stiftung report for 2018 noted:

'... of public concern is the surviving nexus between leading political and economic actors, and organized crime. The costs associated with the effects of organized crime to the public health care system are substantial (2.44% of GDP) and undermines the efficient use of government resources. Consequently, organized crime severely restricts the government's ability to provide adequate social safety nets and promote economic growth. While fatal shootings by the police slightly increased between 2015 and 2016, most violent crime declined. The high incidence of violent crime, especially the rape of women and girls, and the high unemployment rate are widely perceived as Jamaica's most pressing problems.'⁴

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3.2 Rates of murder and other serious violent crime

3.2.1 The US State Department's Overseas Security Advisory Council 2019 report on Jamaica aimed at US citizens noted that 'In 2017, Jamaica's homicide rate was 56 per 100,000; in 2018, the homicide rate dropped to 47 per 100,000, but remains three times higher than the average for Latin America and the Caribbean. Forbes Magazine listed Jamaica as the third most dangerous place for women travelers in 2017.'⁵

² FCO, Foreign travel advice – safety and security, 9 May 2019, [url](#)

³ USSD, OASC – Jamaica, 30 May 2019, [url](#)

⁴ Bertlesmann Stiftung, BTI 2018 - Jamaica Country Report, undated, [url](#)

⁵ USSD, OASC – Jamaica, 30 May 2019, [url](#)

- 3.2.2 The Organisation of American States' Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) noted in their 2018 annual report - Overview of the Human Rights situation by country, 'Jamaica reports the third highest homicide rate in Latin America and the Caribbean' and that 'the State has declared a public emergency in certain areas'.⁶
- 3.2.3 The same report noted that 'Regarding citizen security, Jamaica had 1,287 murders in 2018, for a murder rate of 47 per 100,000 residents. This contrasts to the Jamaica Constabulary Forces figures from 2017, when it documented 1,616 violent homicides—that is, approximately 55.7 per 100,000 residents.'⁷
- 3.2.4 The Bertlesmann Stiftung 2018 report noted that 'Jamaica's crime crisis is long-standing and well-known, with a homicide rate of 50 per 100,000 population.'⁸
- 3.2.5 Amnesty International (AI) noted in its international report 2017/18 that 'Jamaica continued to have one of the highest homicide rates in the Americas. Between January and June [2017], homicides increased by 19% compared with the same period in 2016, according to police data.'⁹
- 3.2.6 The United Nations Office for drugs and crime listed data and statistics regarding intentional homicide victims in countries in 2016. The number of homicides in Jamaica came to 1,354 with a murder rate of 47.01 per 100,000 residents¹⁰.
- 3.2.7 Small Arms Survey stated in its 'Global violent deaths 2017' report that Jamaica's murder rate was over 50 per 100,000 residents¹¹.
- 3.2.8 Commenting on the Small arms survey report and the data and statistics of intentional homicide victims published by the UNODC, an April 2018 article, 'The crime statistics speak for themselves' by the Jamaica Observer, stated: 'Our paradise island ranked overall below Syria, Venezuela, El Salvador, Honduras, Afghanistan, and above Iraq, Libya, Somalia. But we were easily number one for slaughtering women, and remain so. Our 1,615 murders last year equals 59 per 100,000. The global average is about six. So we kill each other 10 times as often as the rest of the world.'¹²
- 3.2.9 The U.S State Department (USSD) Bureau of Diplomatic Security (OSAC) noted in its 2019 Crime and Safety Report that:
- 'In January 2018, due to rampant violence and murders, the Government of Jamaica (GoJ) declared States of Emergency (SOE) and Zones of Special Operations (ZOSOs) for several parishes including the Kingston Metropolitan Area (KMA) and the parish of St. James. The Embassy warned visitors to avoid some areas of Kingston, Montego Bay (St. James), and Spanish Town due to violent crime. Under SOE, security forces deployed to address

⁶ IACHR, 'Annual report 2018', (Chapter IV (A), para 299), 2018, [url](#)

⁷ IACHR, 'Annual report 2018', (Chapter IV (A), para 299), 2018, [url](#)

⁸ Bertlesmann Stiftung, BTI 2018 - Jamaica Country Report, (page 27), 2018, [url](#)

⁹ AI, 'AI International Report 2017/18 – Jamaica', (page 214), 22 February 2018, [url](#)

¹⁰ UNODC, 'Statistics and Data - Intentional homicide victims', 2016 [url](#)

¹¹ Small arms survey, 'Global violent deaths 2017', (page 25), December 2017, [url](#)

¹² Jamaica Observer, 'The crime statistics speak for themselves', (page 25), 15 April 2018, [url](#)

organized crime, including gang violence related to drug and gun trafficking and lottery scams. The Emergency Powers Act allows the security forces to detain and deport suspicious persons, to enter premises and seize property without a warrant, and declare curfews. The three SOEs and two ZOSOs lowered the murder rate by 22%, due largely to the steep decline in murders in St. James. However, the SOE lapsed the end of January 2019, after Jamaica's Parliament did not approve its extension.¹³

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3.3 Prevalence of organised crime

3.3.1 The USSD's 2018 Crime and Safety Report noted that 'Most criminal activity is gang-related. Organized crime elements are prevalent and extremely active.'¹⁴ The same report observed that:

'Police are unable to patrol and protect most neighborhoods adequately, so burglaries are quite common. Home break-ins occur in Kingston, even in gated and affluent neighborhoods. Past incidents have shown that when occupants neglected to use security features provided, criminals were afforded opportunities to gain entry into residences. Most wealthy residents hire private, armed guard forces to deter criminals. Burglars can commit rape, robbery, and assault if they are surprised in a home.'¹⁵

3.3.2 The Bertlesmann Stiftung 2018 Jamaica report stated:

'The state's monopoly on the use of force is established nationwide in principle, but it is challenged by organized gangs and networks involved in revenge killings, fraud, and drugs and gun smuggling in parts of the capital city, Kingston, two rural parishes in central Jamaica and two rural parishes in western Jamaica. There were targeted killings of police officers in summer 2015, the military has been deployed against drug gangs and murder rates are rising. Meanwhile, the security forces have been accused of human rights violations.'¹⁶

3.3.3 The report further added that:

'Jamaican violence has become endemic among poor black communities. Violence is often directed against other members of the same class not for ethnic, religious or political reasons but economic, turf or domestic conflict reasons.

'There are numerous violent incidents, reported by the police as occurring primarily between organized gangs, sometimes within a community or between different communities, mostly related to the trafficking of guns and drugs, and fraud.'¹⁷

3.3.4 Furthermore, the Bertlesmann Stiftung report noted that young men 'are vulnerable to recruitment by organized gangs and criminal networks'.¹⁸ It

¹³ USSD, (OSAC), Jamaica 2019 Crime and Safety Report, 30 May 2019, [url](#)

¹⁴ USSD, (OSAC), Jamaica 2018 Crime and Safety Report, 26 January 2018, [url](#)

¹⁵ USSD, (OSAC), Jamaica 2018 Crime and Safety Report, 26 January 2018, [url](#)

¹⁶ Bertlesmann Stiftung, BTI 2018 - Jamaica Country Report, (page 6), 2018, [url](#)

¹⁷ Bertlesmann Stiftung, BTI 2018 - Jamaica Country Report, (page 28), 2018, [url](#)

¹⁸ Bertlesmann Stiftung, BTI 2018 - Jamaica Country Report, (page 16), 2018, [url](#)

added that ‘Criminal networks and gangs are an attractive option, especially for young men, when between 120,000 and 140,000 Jamaicans aged 14 to 24 are not in education or employment.’¹⁹

- 3.3.5 Freedom House observed in its 2018 World report that ‘crime and violence remain deeply entrenched. As of mid-December [2017], there had been over 1,500 killings, according to police data.’²⁰
- 3.3.6 An article written in The Conversation, an Australian and UK based independent newsagency, noted the link between Jamaica’s increase in homicides with lotto scamming and rivalry lottery scam rings²¹. The article stated, ‘Estimates suggest that the fraud’s immense profits were behind approximately 50 per cent of the 335 murders that occurred in western Jamaica in 2017.’²²
- 3.3.7 The 2018 IACHR report noted that ‘...access to education and jobs are identified as decisive factors for promoting organized crime and preventing the reintegration of young people who were involved in these illicit activities.’²³
- 3.3.8 Based on information provided by the Jamaica Constabulary Force Statistics and Information Management Unit, the USSD’s 2019 Crime and Safety Report noted:

Crime	2018	2017
Murders	1287	1647
Shootings	1154	1485
Aggravated Assaults	369	423
Rapes	432	492
Robberies	1085	1276
Break-ins	1150	1197

²⁴

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Section 4 updated: 31 May 2019

4. Nature of organised crime

4.1 Drug-related crime

- 4.1.1 The USSD Bureau of Diplomatic Security (OSAC) observed in their 2019 Crime and Safety Report:

‘Jamaica is a transit point for South American cocaine destined to the United States, Canada, and Europe. It is also the largest Caribbean producer and exporter of cannabis (marijuana), adding to the vibrant drugs-for-guns trade with Haiti. The Government of Jamaica has a National Drug Control Strategy in place that covers supply and demand reduction. The Government has intensified and focused its law enforcement efforts on more effectively

¹⁹ Bertlesmann Stiftung, BTI 2018 - Jamaica Country Report, (page 27), 2018, [url](#)

²⁰ Freedom House, ‘Freedom in the World 2018 – Jamaica’, (F3), 27 August 2018, [url](#)

²¹ The Conversation, ‘How lotto scammers ... fuel gang wars in Jamaica’, 1 February 2018, [url](#)

²² The Conversation, ‘How lotto scammers defraud elderly Americans...’, 1 February 2018, [url](#)

²³ IACHR, ‘Annual report 2018’, (Chapter IV (A), para 313), 2018, [url](#)

²⁴ USSD, (OSAC), Jamaica 2019 Crime and Safety Report, 30, May 2019, [url](#)

disrupting the trans-shipment of large amounts of cocaine. It also has fully cooperated in several major international narcotics law enforcement initiatives. It is ready and willing to extradite to the United States those responsible for the manufacture, trans-shipment, and distribution of vast amounts of cocaine throughout the central Caribbean region.’²⁵

4.1.2 Freedom House reported that ‘Jamaica is a transit point for cocaine shipped from Colombia to U.S. markets, and much of the island’s violence is the result of warfare between drug gangs.’²⁶

4.1.3 The US Department of State (USSD) 2019 International Narcotics Control Strategy Report noted:

‘Jamaica remains the largest Caribbean source country of marijuana and a significant transit point for cocaine trafficked from South America to North America and other international markets. Traffickers also export Jamaican-grown marijuana to other Caribbean countries in return for illicit firearms and other contraband...

‘Jamaica’s drug control efforts face significant challenges from corruption, organized crime, gang activity, resource constraints, and an inefficient criminal justice system.’²⁷

4.1.4 The report added ‘‘Jamaica’s Caribbean Regional Drug Law Enforcement Training Centre, housed at the JCF’s police college, provides counterdrug training to several regional partners.’²⁸

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4.2 Other criminal activity

4.2.1 According to the OSAC, in the Jamaica 2019 Crime & Safety Report, ‘Gangs are a major security issue across the country and are the source of the majority of violent crime nationwide.’²⁹

4.2.2 Regarding kidnapping, the OSAC 2019 Crime and Safety Report stated:

‘Kidnappings can happen in any part of Jamaica; a wide range of criminals with varying levels of professionalism and differing motives can execute kidnappings. At one end of the spectrum are high-end kidnapping gangs that target high-profile/high-net-worth individuals. Such groups employ teams of operatives who carry out specialized tasks (e.g. collecting intelligence, conducting surveillance, snatching the target, negotiating with the victim’s family, and establishing/guarding safe houses). On the other end of the spectrum are gangs that roam the streets and randomly kidnap targets of opportunity. These gangs are generally less professional, and often will hold a victim for a short period, just long enough to use the victim’s ATM card to drain his/her accounts or to receive a small ransom. Sometimes express

²⁵ USSD, (OSAC), Jamaica 2019 Crime and Safety Report, 30 May 2019, [url](#)

²⁶ Freedom House, ‘Freedom in the World 2018 – Jamaica’, (F3), 27 August 2018, [url](#)

²⁷ USSD, Bureau for International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs, ‘2019 International Narcotics Control Strategy Report’, (page 195), 28 March 2019, [url](#)

²⁸ USSD, Bureau for International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs, ‘2019 International Narcotics Control Strategy Report’, (page 195), 28 March 2019, [url](#)

²⁹ OSAC, ‘Jamaica 2019 Crime & Safety Report’, 30 May 2019, [url](#)

kidnappers hold victims for a couple of days if the victim has a large amount in a checking account and a small daily ATM withdrawal limit...'³⁰

4.2.3 The FCO further added that 'Public order incidents and demonstrations can occur across Jamaica, and may cause significant disruption to traffic and public transportation. You should avoid all demonstrations; they have the potential to turn violent and are often used by criminals as cover for robbery and theft... Criminals are known to use techniques which distract drivers to gain access to vehicles to steal handbags and other items of value.'³¹

4.2.4 The 2018 IACHR country report details noted:

'Skimming is a hi-tech method by which thieves use an electronic device to capture personal or account information from credit cards, ATM cards, driver's licenses, or even passports. A card is swiped through the skimmer, and the information in the magnetic strip is stored on the device to be downloaded later. Skimming is predominantly a tactic used to perpetuate credit card fraud, but it is also gaining in popularity amongst identity thieves. As the use of smart card technology grows, as evident with its integration with driver's licenses and passports, it is likely that skimming will continue to grow as a popular tactic of identity thieves. As skimming devices are easy to hide, it is not difficult for victims to be unaware of the crime. Many skimming rings have been known to employ restaurant serving staff, or store clerks skimming a credit card for a purchase. In both scenarios, a card is scanned twice, once for the transaction and another with the skimming device. There have been reports of clerks skimming driver's licenses when they are offered as identity verification. Personal information can be used to order products and services online, sometimes several weeks before the unsuspecting victim becomes aware. Once personal information is captured, it can be used to make duplicates, which are very valuable to perpetuate credit card fraud or identity theft.'³²

4.2.5 An article written in The Conversation, an Australian and UK based independent newsagency, mentioned a link between lottery scams and homicides in Jamaica. The article stated that:

'In this illegal scheme, Jamaicans pose as lotto officials to convince vulnerable foreigners that they've won a big payout. To retrieve their winnings, the caller says, all they have to do is pay a modest "processing fee."...

'Fraudulent callers assure the victims of a large lottery prize, but then inform them that a processing fee is needed to access those funds. Using Western Union, MoneyGram or a Green Dot prepaid card, they manipulate their victims into sending them anywhere from \$750 to \$2,500 in a week.

'Scammers may also menace victims who are reluctant to pay. Using Google Earth, they describe the victim's home and say they're waiting "out front" , threatening them with bodily harm.

³⁰ OSAC, 'Jamaica 2019 Crime & Safety Report', 30 May 2019, [url](#)

³¹ FCO, Foreign travel advice – safety and security, 9 May 2019, [url](#)

³² OSAC, Bureau of Diplomatic Security, Jamaica – Content report details, 26 January 2018, [url](#)

'Over time, Jamaica's lotto scammers have accrued huge fortunes, earning up to \$100,000 a week. This criminal enterprise thrives in the Montego Bay area, the heart of the Jamaican tourism industry. There, it is estimated that thousands of illicit entrepreneurs have gotten rich doing lotto scams since 2007...

'Montego Bay also has a long-standing history of gang disputes in poor neighborhoods. So lotto scammers, who generally come from those same violent areas, often use their dirty money to secure protection. They pay criminal organizations to defend their homes and families and bribe police.

'Rich, protected and powerful, many lotto fraudsters eventually use their illegal earnings to purchase weapons and manpower, forming criminal gangs of their own and fighting for control over turf in Montego Bay.'³³

- 4.2.6 Freedom House noted in its 2018 report that, 'Residents of neighborhoods where criminal groups are influential are at a heightened risk of becoming victims of human traffickers.'³⁴
- 4.2.7 A 2016 article by Insight Crime, a foundation that investigates and reports organised crime in Latin America and the Caribbean, noted that in regards to lotto scamming:
'Authorities have attributed Jamaica's dramatic increase in homicides in 2015 to clashes between rival lottery scam rings on the Caribbean island nation...
In Jamaica, rival scam rings are reportedly competing for control of money and "lead lists," which contain the contact details of thousands of potential targets, mainly in the United States.'³⁵
- 4.2.8 Various sources have noted a link between dancehall music in Jamaica with gang violence and crime. The Jamaica Observer noted in 2016 that the police 'had lobbied for a provision that would address this concern'. The police commissioner stated: 'We did make connections between some people who were deeply involved in crime and the kind of lyrics that they espoused or listened to, and we made the argument successfully for an inclusion of a clause in the law,' he stated.'³⁶
- 4.2.9 Whilst MP Lisa Hanna called to ban the dancehall artist Vybz Kartel, Prime Minister Andrew Holness disagreed to the censorship and stated that education is the 'solution to combat the negative side of dancehall' and 'censoring the arts would complete[ly] destroy creativity.'³⁷
- 4.2.10 Vybz Kartel, a well known dancehall musician, was found guilty of murder and sentenced to 50 years of prison in September 2011³⁸. Although behind

³³ The Conversation, 'How lotto scammers ... fuel gang wars in Jamaica', 1 February 2018, [url](#)

³⁴ Freedom House, 'Freedom in the World 2018 – Jamaica', (G4), 27 August 2018, [url](#)

³⁵ InsightCrime, 'Jamaica homicide spike fuelled by lottery scam', 8 January 2016, [url](#)

³⁶ Jamaica Observer, 'Police want study on effects of dancehall music on crime', 23 April 2016, [url](#)

³⁷ Urban Islandz, 'No censorship for Vybz Kartel and dancehall music ...', 27 February 2017, [url](#)

³⁸ The Economist, 'Bad Vybz', 17 March 2014, [url](#)

bars, he still produces music and is the most relevant dj in dancehall, winning five awards in 2016³⁹.

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5. Organised gangs

5.1 Number of gangs

- 5.1.1 A report by the Jamaica Observer newspaper, published in July 2017, stated that a Jamaican pastor named 190 operating gangs on the island⁴⁰. In an article published in February 2018 by the Jamaican newspaper The Gleaner, a British-based criminologist stated that there are over 200 gangs operating in Jamaica⁴¹.
- 5.1.2 The Jamaica Observer stated in a 2017 report that there were 258 criminal gangs operating in Jamaica in 2017, situated in St Catherine North and South, St James, Clarendon, Kingston West, St Andrew South and Westmoreland⁴².

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5.2 'Dons'

- 5.2.1 Amnesty International, in 2011, reported: 'Known as "dons", gang leaders "collect taxes" from local businesses (through extortion); allocate jobs (both in the legal sector and in criminal activities); distribute food, school books and "scholarships"; and mete out punishment to those who transgress gang rules'.⁴³
- 5.2.2 Insight Crime reported in September 2018 that, 'The don and his men are the powerful in the [garrison] community, not just because they are armed, but also because they control labour contracts and have direct access to the Member of Parliament. They run the place!'⁴⁴
- 5.2.3 InsightCrime noted that area leaders or strongmen emerged as 'dons' in the 1970s in urban ghettos, especially in Kingston.⁴⁵
- 5.2.4 The same source stated 'The Coke episode... has also showed Jamaican criminal groups how the high profile of an area "don" has disadvantages. As a Manhattan Federal Court in 2012 sentenced Coke to 23 years in prison, traffickers could see how Coke's personality cult had put him on the radar of U.S authorities. In reaction, many traffickers in Jamaica are now operating in smaller networks, more independent of "dons" and trying to maintain a low profile.'⁴⁶

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³⁹ Urban Islandz, 'No censorship for Vybz Kartel and dancehall music ...', 27 February 2017, [url](#)

⁴⁰ Jamaica Observer, 'Pastor names 190 gangs operating across Jamaica', 31 July 2017, [url](#)

⁴¹ The Gleaner, 'Wrong on gangs ...', 11 February 2018, [url](#)

⁴² Jamaica Observer, 'Gangs still responsible for most murders in 2016', 2 January 2017, [url](#)

⁴³ Amnesty International, 'Jamaica – a long road to justice?', (page 8), May 2011, [url](#)

⁴⁴ Insight Crime, 'Zoso could be the beginning of the end of garrison rule', 30 September 2018, [url](#)

⁴⁵ InsightCrime, 'Jamaica's organised crime after the fall of Dudas Coke', 21 January 2014, [url](#)

⁴⁶ InsightCrime, 'Jamaica's organised crime after the fall of Dudas Coke', 21 January 2014, [url](#)

5.3 'Shower Posse'

- 5.3.1 The Shower Posse was a gang formed in New York around 1980 by traffickers from Tivoli Gardens and some allied garrisons. Their name apparently derived from their reputation for 'showering their enemies with gunfire'.⁴⁷
- 5.3.2 The Shower Posse's U.S. operations were headed by Vivian Blake and spread across the United States, from a stronghold in Miami to cities including Los Angeles, Kansas City and Chicago, trading in crack cocaine. In the 1980s and early 1990s, the Posse was blamed for more than 1,000 murders in the United States. In Jamaica the Posse's operations were controlled by Lester Lloyd Coke (aka Jim Brown), the 'don' of Trivoli Gardens. He was succeeded as 'don' and head of the Posse by his son, Christopher 'Dudus' Coke. InsightCrime described 'Dudus' Coke as 'Jamaica's most infamous criminal kingpin' and that 'an entire generation of drug traffickers and paid assassins grew up under Coke'.⁴⁸

5.3.3 Furthermore, Insight Crime noted:

'Recent killings have taken place in Tivoli and nearby garrisons by gangsters fighting to establish themselves as the new area leader. Since Coke was detained, no single figure has become the new "don" in his place, and there are at least four groups fighting for power in Tivoli. Some residents reminisce the days of a single strongman and hope another will take Coke's place. "Dudus may have done some bad things but he kept order," said market trader Romino Wilkins. "Now you don't know who these bad men on the street are and they are out of control."

'Following the "Dudus affair," Jamaican traffickers have splintered into smaller groups to avoid detection and conspiracy charges. These groups have been effective at smuggling, and the Caribbean has become more important as a corridor for cocaine heading to the United States. The loss of Coke, however, has left a power vacuum in certain Jamaican ghettos. A new strongman may arise to fill this space unless the fundamental causes of crime and violence in these areas are resolved.

'The unrest in Jamaica around the arrest of Coke also showed how criminal gunmen can unleash violence that surpasses public security to become a national security issue, threatening the state itself as it has in other countries including Mexico. Jamaican politicians appear to have learned from this confrontation and backed away from their historic links to criminal gangs in the last three years. Nevertheless, these links have deep roots, and it remains to be seen whether Jamaican politicians will avoid turning back to gang leaders to deliver them votes in the future.'⁴⁹

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⁴⁷ InsightCrime, 'Jamaica's organised crime after the fall of Dudas Coke', 21 January 2014, [url](#)

⁴⁸ InsightCrime, 'Jamaica's organised crime after the fall of Dudas Coke', 21 January 2014, [url](#)

⁴⁹ InsightCrime, 'Jamaica's organised crime after the fall of Dudas Coke', 21 January 2014, [url](#)

5.4 Inter-gang rivalry

5.4.1 InsightCrime observed in its 2014 article that ‘Dons from JLP garrisons fought their rivals from PNP garrisons, unleashing intense political violence...’⁵⁰

5.4.2 Dr Enrique Desmond Arias, in a 2013 report on organised crime, stated; ‘In some cases the simplest criminal gangs compete for territorial control over very small pieces of turf and, as a result, also fight over how to spend local political patronage monies’ and that ‘international contacts can have disruptive impacts on small-scale criminal organisations since foreign contacts may return to live in Jamaica, creating significant tensions as newly deported criminals seek to establish a place for themselves in the local underworld. Generally speaking, these local organisations have little control over international criminal activities.’⁵¹

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5.5 International links

5.5.1 Dr Enrique Arias, in a 2013 paper on organised crime, noted that ‘smaller organisations’ ‘may have contacts with Jamaicans engaged in illegal activities abroad. Transnational networks support small-scale smuggling operations with Jamaicans sending drugs to the United States, Canada, and the United Kingdom, and importing arms mostly from the United States and Haiti’.⁵²

5.5.2 The source also noted: ‘A shaky political settlement among the political elite, leading to periods of intense political violence has... allowed criminal groups to develop strong connections...with organised criminal networks abroad’.⁵³

5.5.3 An InsightCrime report dated January 2014, stated: ‘While this political violence raged in Jamaica, many of the country’s criminals went to the United States, building networks to traffic marijuana and cocaine for Americans and guns back to their homeland’.⁵⁴

5.5.4 The report stated that the Shower Posse ‘had connections as far afield as London’ and the United States⁵⁵.

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6. Organised crime and national politics

6.1 Corruption

6.1.1 The USSD 2018 report stated:

‘The law provides criminal penalties for corruption by officials, but the government generally did not implement the law effectively. Officials sometimes engaged in corrupt practices with impunity. There were numerous reports of government corruption during [2018] and it remained a

⁵⁰ InsightCrime, ‘Jamaica’s organised crime after the fall of Dudas Coke’, 21 January 2014, [url](#)

⁵¹ Dr. Enrique Desmond Arias, ‘Getting Smart and Scaling Up ...’, June 2013, [url](#)

⁵² Dr. Enrique Desmond Arias, ‘Getting Smart and Scaling Up...’, June 2013, [url](#)

⁵³ Dr. Enrique Desmond Arias, ‘Getting Smart and Scaling Up...’, June 2013, [url](#)

⁵⁴ InsightCrime, ‘Jamaica’s organised crime after the fall of Dudas Coke’, 21 January 2014, [url](#)

⁵⁵ InsightCrime, ‘Jamaica’s organised crime after the fall of Dudas Coke’, 21 January 2014, [url](#)

significant problem of public concern. Media and civil society organisations continued to criticize the government for being slow and at times reluctant to prosecute corruption cases.⁵⁶

6.1.2 Freedom House reported in its Freedom in the World 2018 report that ‘corruption remains a serious problem’.⁵⁷ The report observed that, ‘powerful criminal gangs, as well as corruption in politics, can affect democratic policymaking.’⁵⁸

6.1.3 Furthermore, the report added that, ‘Judicial independence is guaranteed by the constitution, though corruption is a problem in some lower courts... There were several high-profile convictions during 2017, including in July of a policeman for his involvement in shooting and killing a teenager in 2007. According to a May 2017 report published by the Office of the Contractor General, 68 percent of respondents believed judges had integrity.’⁵⁹

6.1.4 Regarding killings by the police, Freedom House reported:

‘Killings by police remain a serious problem in Jamaica. According to the Independent Commission of Investigations (INDECOM), 168 individuals were killed by security personnel in 2017.

‘A Commission of Inquiry in 2016 submitted a report on the state of emergency declared in 2010 in response to violence in the Tivoli Gardens neighborhood of Kingston, in which more than 70 civilians were killed in an operation aimed at arresting an alleged drug trafficker [Christopher Coke]. The report found that security forces had acted disproportionately, and recommended that the government apologize for the event and provide victims with compensation and counseling services; the government issued an apology and provided some compensation to relatives of those killed in December 2017. However, the JCF in August 2017 issued its own report on the raid, which cleared members of wrongdoing and questioned the integrity of the earlier report.’⁶⁰

6.1.5 The Organisation of American States’ Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) noted in their 2018 report noted:

‘Although a large portion of the violence is attributable to criminal gang activity, a percentage of the annual deaths is attributable to the police. There is evidence of the disproportionate use of force—including lethal force—by the police, as well as extrajudicial executions as an “alternative to detention and long criminal processes.” As of September 1, 100 deaths had been documented, most of them linked to the actions of the JCF. This year, civil society called on the authorities to end impunity in deaths of individuals at the hands of the police. They also called on authorities to guarantee the relatives of the victims access to justice, free from intimidation and threats. In its response to a request for information sent by the IACHR on the state of the public emergency in St. James Parish, the State said the measures had been implemented with full respect for human rights, as evidenced by the

⁵⁶ USSD, ‘Jamaica 2018 Human Rightst Report’, (section 4), 13 March 2019, [url](#)

⁵⁷ Freedom House, ‘Freedom in the World 2018 – Jamaica’, (overview), 27 August 2018, [url](#)

⁵⁸ Freedom House, ‘Freedom in the World 2018 – Jamaica’, (Para C1), 27 August 2018, [url](#)

⁵⁹ Freedom House, ‘Freedom in the World 2018 – Jamaica’, (Para C1), 27 August 2018, [url](#)

⁶⁰ Freedom House, ‘Freedom in the World 2018 – Jamaica’, (Para F3), 27 August 2018, [url](#)

fact that no reports or complaints in this regard had been received. It said the police forces were trained to follow the directives of the decree and respect human rights, and that measures had been adopted to restore public order, mainly with regard to the murder rate and shootings. It indicated that 912 people had been detained and 37 remained in State custody, none of which were younger than the age of 18.⁶¹

6.1.6 Furthermore, the same report noted that:

‘...in a hearing before the IACHR, INDECOM and the Special Coroners Court were denounced for delays in their work on reparations for the violent Tivoli Gardens incidents in 2010 due to a lack of collaboration by justice officials, including an alleged bias in favor of the police by the Director of Public Prosecutions. As of September 2017, INDECOM had secured a total of nine convictions of State agents. It should be emphasized that in December 2017, the Prime Minister of Jamaica issued a public apology and announced approval of 200 million Jamaican dollars in reparations for the victims. The apologies were criticized for being vague and bland, especially as regarding the attribution of responsibility to State agents. In July 2018, the Supreme Court allowed INDECOM to execute a search warrant on the JDF on finding it was not an “unreasonable exercise of power.” The order was issued as part of the investigations into the use of mortars in the military operations conducted in Tivoli Gardens. Nevertheless, it has not been possible to execute the order.’⁶²

6.1.7 The USSD Bureau of Diplomatic Security observed in its 2019 Crime and Safety Report that ‘Despite the creation of the Independent Commission of Investigations in 2010, an entity that investigates police misconduct, police corruption and involvement in criminal activity still occur. Additionally, the majority of crime victims do not report crimes due to fear the report will get back to criminals, or the feeling that nothing would come from such reports.’⁶³

6.1.8 The Bertlesmann Stiftung’s 2018 report on Jamaica, which covers the period from 1 February 2015 to 31 January 2017, stated that ‘a large proportion of people state that corruption and violent crime are the main reasons for the country’s prolonged economic hardships.’⁶⁴ The report noted that the government’s failure of tackling corruption has caused ‘a massive loss of financials resources and high levels of violent crime.’⁶⁵

6.1.9 The same report noted that: ‘Reports of corruption within the police force are widespread, though there has been stricter use of internal investigation procedures, resulting in the arrest and redundancy or incarceration of more police officers in recent times.’⁶⁶

6.1.10 Furthermore, the report added:

⁶¹ IACHR, ‘Annual report 2018’, (Chapter IV (A), para 304), 2018, [url](#)

⁶² IACHR, ‘Annual report 2018’, (Chapter IV (A), para 308), 2018, [url](#)

⁶³ USSD, (OSAC), Jamaica 2019 Crime and Safety Report, 30 May 2019, [url](#)

⁶⁴ Bertlesmann Stiftung, BTI 2018 - Jamaica Country Report, (page 3), 2018, [url](#)

⁶⁵ Bertlesmann Stiftung, BTI 2018 - Jamaica Country Report, (page 36), 2018, [url](#)

⁶⁶ Bertlesmann Stiftung, BTI 2018 - Jamaica Country Report, (page 7), 2018, [url](#)

'The judiciary is independent and free both from unconstitutional intervention by other institutions and from corruption. It is institutionally differentiated, and there are mechanisms for judicial review of legislative or executive acts. There are unsubstantiated reports and attempts to link the disappearance of case files and inordinately long-waiting periods for cases to be heard to acts of corruption. It is well established that there are too few courts, not enough judges and old-fashioned reporting practices, which have all contributed to huge back-log and waiting time for cases to be heard. The judicial system is not adequate for the number of cases, especially criminal cases related to the very high levels of violent crimes and murders in Jamaica.

'Ongoing legal education is provided and required, for both judges and attorneys, and channels of appeal do exist. In recent times, various reforms of court administration have been undertaken, including the opening of night courts, the referral of certain non-criminal cases for mediation, and the introduction of technology for the taking of notes and preparation of judges' findings. In addition, there is a certain class bias and lower-class people show less confidence in the justice system.

'Office holders who break the law and engage in corruption are not adequately prosecuted, but occasionally attract adverse publicity. During the period under review, the mayor of a rural parish was accused of using her authority to wrongfully award contracts worth millions of Jamaican dollars to various members of her family. The Office of the Contractor General (OCG) initiated an investigation, the matter was referred to the police and the case is currently in the courts. Despite interventions and investigations by the OCG in other cases, politicians and senior public officials are rarely convicted of corruption.'⁶⁷

- 6.1.11 Regarding police brutality and corruption, Amnesty International (AI) reported in its International report 2017/18: The state of the world's human rights: 'Unlawful killings – some of which may amount to extrajudicial executions – continued to be carried out by the police with impunity.'⁶⁸
- 6.1.12 Furthermore, the same report noted that 'Between January and March [2017], the police oversight mechanism, the Independent Commission of Investigations (INDECOM) received 73 new complaints of assault and documented 42 killings by law enforcement officials. During the year, 168 people were killed by law enforcement officials, compared with 111 people in 2016.'⁶⁹
- 6.1.13 The 2019 USSD International Narcotics Control Strategy report stated:
'As a matter of policy, the Jamaican government does not encourage or facilitate illegal activity associated with drug trafficking or the laundering of proceeds from illicit drug transactions. Jamaican law penalizes corruption, but in practice, corruption remains entrenched and widespread, and the judicial system has a poor record of prosecuting corruption cases against law enforcement and government officials. The last time a Member of Parliament or similarly high-ranking official was tried or convicted on

⁶⁷ Bertlesmann Stiftung, BTI 2018 - Jamaica Country Report, (page 9, 10), 2018, [url](#)

⁶⁸ AI, 'Amnesty International Report 2017/18 – Jamaica', (page 214), 22 February 2018, [url](#)

⁶⁹ AI, 'AI Report 2017/18 – Jamaica', (page 214, 215), 22 February 2018, [url](#)

corruption charges was in 1990, when a former minister of labor was convicted for diverting money from a farm worker program for personal gain. Corruption at Jamaica's airports and seaports allegedly facilitates the movement of drug shipments across borders, and organized crime leaders have historically had ties to government officials, creating a permissive environment for drug trafficking.⁷⁰

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6.2 Relationship between gangs and political leaders

- 6.2.1 The Freedom in the World 2018 report noted that, 'long-standing relationships between officials and organized crime figures are thought to persist.'⁷¹ The report stated that, 'Powerful criminal gangs can influence voters who live in areas under their control. Such groups have used intimidation or other tactics to ensure high voter turnout for particular candidates or parties in exchange for political favors.'⁷²
- 6.2.2 The Bertlesmann Stiftung's 2018 report on Jamaica mentioned a connection between political and economic leaders and organised crime⁷³. The report further noted that 'Increased efforts by the security forces to break the nexus between organized crime, big business and political actors has weakened the threat posed by organized crime to the democratic process.'⁷⁴
- 6.2.3 The 2018 Bertlesmann Stiftung's report noted that organised criminal networks:
- '...have access to impressive human and financial resources through global and hemispheric connections. These networks could become anti-democratic and influence political actors at local community levels in the absence of state support and provision of essential resources. Collaboration with civil society, the private sector and faith-based groups at community and national levels has, to date, successfully contained any anti-democratic interests.'⁷⁵
- 6.2.4 The Jamaica Observer stated in an April 2018 article:
- 'Former Education Minister Ronald Thwaites told us that, "The PNP has presided over the greatest transfer of wealth from the poor to the rich since slavery." The citizens of Brown Burke's constituency, and several others like it, have been under a state of judgement organised and controlled by criminals for several decades. These criminals maintain control via chronic and slave-like dependencies. As a consequence, many of the citizens in these constituencies are made into economic and political hostages.'⁷⁶
- 6.2.5 Insight Crime mentioned in an April 2018 article:
- 'For decades, corruption within Jamaica's two main political parties has given criminals free reign in "garrison communities" — neighborhoods

⁷⁰ USSD, 2019 International Narcotics Control Strategy Report', (page 197), 28 March 2019, [url](#)

⁷¹ Freedom House, 'Freedom in the World 2018 – Jamaica', (overview), 27 August 2019, [url](#)

⁷² Freedom House, 'Freedom in the World 2018 – Jamaica', (para B3), 27 August 2019, [url](#)

⁷³ Bertlesmann Stiftung, BTI 2018 - Jamaica Country Report, (page 4), 2018, [url](#)

⁷⁴ Bertlesmann Stiftung, BTI 2018 - Jamaica Country Report, (page 3,4), 2018, [url](#)

⁷⁵ Bertlesmann Stiftung, BTI 2018 - Jamaica Country Report, (page 34), 2018, [url](#)

⁷⁶ Jamaica Observer, 'What really is the [...] PNP fighting to achieve?', 22 April 2018, [url](#)

controlled by gangs known as “posses” that support the election of friendly politicians to ensure their criminal activities go undeterred. However, in recent years, as some politicians have sought to distance themselves from the gangs, and security operations have taken down top bosses, the ensuing chaos has fueled violent clashes for control over lucrative criminal activities.

‘These dynamics may be behind the recent wave of murders in Dunham Town. According to the Jamaica Gleaner, local residents believe the killings are linked to a gang feud between rival factions from Denham Town and neighboring Tivoli Gardens, which has recently forged an alliance with gang members from Golden Heights.

‘While elevated fears among Dunham Town residents have led some to welcome the return of police and soldiers, others believe the security occupation will do little to quell crime unless remaining ties between crime groups and politicians are addressed.

“This is bigger than police and soldiers. They can’t stop this. Only politicians can stop this because here is a garrison,” one resident told the Jamaica Gleaner.’⁷⁷

- 6.2.6 A September 2018 report by Insight Crime noted that ‘dons’ ‘have direct access to the Member of Parliament.’⁷⁸

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6.3 ‘Garrisons’

- 6.3.1 Insight Crime noted in 2018:

‘The cold war and Jamaica’s 1970s experience introduced garrison-styled, gang-controlled communities in a way that somewhat mirrors the Brazilian favelas.

These garrisons have gone through changes, but other than Tivoli Gardens, which was forcibly crushed, they remain under the control of gangsters.

Communities such as Denham Town Arnett Gardens, Wilton Gardens (also known as Rema) and Tawes Pen, to name a few, have been under a form of armed occupation since the 1970s. Children have been born, raised and are now middle-aged in these communities and know no other rule of law than that which is imposed by the ‘don’ of the day. Culture has been formed around this reality...

‘Yes, there are police operations that shift the power for a few days or weeks, but then the police leave and the don is in charge again. The people see the power in the form of guns in the gangsters’ hands.’⁷⁹

- 6.3.2 Freedom House 2018 reported ‘Gang and vigilante violence remains a common occurrence. Kingston’s insular “garrison” communities remain the epicenter of most violence and serve as safe havens for gangs.’⁸⁰

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⁷⁷ Insight Crime, ‘Jamaica brings back security force occupation as violence rises’, 24 April 2018, [url](#)

⁷⁸ Insight Crime, ‘ZOSO could be the beginning of the end of garrison rule’, 30 September 2018, [url](#)

⁷⁹ Insight Crime, ‘ZOSO could be the beginning of the end of garrison rule’, 30 September 2018, [url](#)

⁸⁰ Freedom House, ‘Freedom in the World 2018 – Jamaica’, (F3), 27 August 2019, [url](#)

7. Government response

7.1 'Anti-Gang' act

7.1.1 The government passed the Criminal Justice (Suppression of Criminal Organisations) Act, also known as the 'Anti-Gang' Act in April 2014. This Act:

- defines a criminal organisation as 'any gang, group, alliance, network, combination or other arrangement among three or more persons';
- criminalises, among other things:
 - the leadership, management or direction of a criminal organisation;
 - the provision of a benefit or obtaining of a benefit from a criminal organisation;
 - aiding or abetting a criminal organisation;
 - the recruitment of persons to be part of a criminal gang in an effort to dismantle organisations of the state; and
 - the recruitment of children (defined as those under 18) to participate in a criminal organisation.⁸¹

7.1.2 A November 2018 report by The Gleaner observed:

'...according to the ministry, only two convictions have resulted from the 448 cases in which someone was arrested and charged for breaches of the [Anti-Gang] act...

'Rohan Richards, chief technical director in the Ministry of National Security, said a 2014 study commissioned by the Government found, among other things, that judges, prosecutors and investigators "differ considerably" on their interpretation of the legislation, including what exactly constitutes a criminal organisation.

'Further, he said the study found that the act does not allow for the interception of communication.'⁸²

7.1.3 Regarding concerns over the Anti-Gang Act, a May 2018 report by The Gleaner noted:

'The nation's top prosecutor has raised concerns that there is no "expressed provision" in the anti-gang legislation that allows law enforcement authorities to obtain a search warrant for accountants and other "silent partners" who are helping gangsters finance their criminal lifestyle...

'... Paula Llewellyn, director of public prosecutions (DPP), in an interview with The Gleaner yesterday, said that unlike the Dangerous Drug Act, or the Firearms Act, which allows investigators to get a warrant to enter and search premises, the anti-gang legislation makes no such provision...

'... Llewellyn acknowledged that investigators could go through a "convoluted" process under the Proceeds of Crime Act or other related legislation. But she argued that allowing them to get a search warrant would

⁸¹ IACHR, Annual Report 2014, Chapter V, paras 26 - 31, 7 May 2015, [url](#)

⁸² The Gleaner, 'Anti-Gang legislation to protect witnesses', 15 November 2018, [url](#)

be far easier. "It [the legislation] restricts them in gathering evidence to catch all the players," she insisted.

'Llewellyn, during an address on Tuesday at the annual general meeting and conference of the Association of Caribbean Commissioners of Police, being held in Montego Bay, said that this was one of the challenges to prosecute cases under the anti-gang legislation. Another issue, she said, was that police investigators are not "sufficiently intimate" with the four-year old legislation. "This leads to matters being poorly investigated," she reasoned.

'Further, Llewellyn said that there is reluctance within the Jamaica Constabulary Force to take a "task force approach" to investigations involving criminal gangs. "Instead, it appears as if individuals are seeking to take the credit," she said. "As police officers, you cannot work in silos, but must cooperate and share with each other as the criminals are aware of this and are acting in joint enterprise," Llewellyn said.'⁸³

7.1.4 Furthermore, Nationwide Radio Jamaica, a Jamaican radio station located in St Andrew which focuses mostly on news, information, sports and current affairs, reported in October 2018 'In May [2018], Ms. Llewellyn raised concerns that the law lacks the expressed provision that allows law enforcement authorities to obtain a warrant to enter and search premises. She said that made it difficult for investigators to target accountants and others professionals who may be collaborating with gangsters'.⁸⁴

7.1.5 In October 2018, The Gleaner reported that the Prime Minister Andrew Holness said the act was to be reviewed and amended⁸⁵.

7.1.6 In November 2018, The Gleaner reported:

'Immunity from civil liability and the use of false names by witnesses are among a raft of measures that have been proposed by the Ministry of National Security to strengthen Jamaica's anti-gang legislation.

'Further, the national security ministry wants the law targeting criminal gangs to include new provisions that would allow law-enforcement authorities to obtain a warrant for search and seizure and the automatic application of a forfeiture order for persons convicted of gang-related crimes.

'...Richards [chief technical director in the Ministry of National Security], in a presentation before the joint select committee of both Houses of Parliament on Tuesday, suggested that the use of pseudo names would provide a greater incentive for witnesses who are gang members to give evidence against other in their criminal enterprise.'⁸⁶

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7.2 'Ganja Law'

7.2.1 The Dangerous Drugs (Amendment) Act 2015 (the 'Ganja Law') came into force on 15 April 2015. The law:

⁸³ The Gleaner 'Anti-Gang Flaw ...', 4 May 2018, [url](#)

⁸⁴ Nationwideradiojamaica, 'Parliament to begin review of Anti-Gang legislation', 25 October 2018, [url](#)

⁸⁵ The Gleaner, 'Anti-Gang law to be reviewed', 17 October 2018, [url](#)

⁸⁶ The Gleaner 'Anti-Gang legislation to protect witnesses', 15 November 2018, [url](#)

- makes the possession of small quantities of ganja a non-arrestable offence, instead making it a ticketable infraction that does not result in a criminal record;
- permits the use of ganja for religious, medical, scientific and therapeutic purposes; and
- provides for the granting of licences for the development of a lawful industry for medical ganja and industrial hemp.⁸⁷

7.2.2 According to the Jamaican Ministry of Justice, the legislation is expected to:

- strengthen respect for the rule of law;
- reduce the burden on the courts;
- acknowledge the constitutional rights of the Rastafari community (who use ganja as a sacrament); and
- facilitate the emergence of a lawful, regulated marijuana industry that may have economic and medical benefits.⁸⁸

7.2.3 In August 2018, the Rolling Stone magazine wrote in an article:

‘Until 2015 when Jamaica decriminalized possession up to two ounces as a now ticketable infraction, marijuana offenders risked prison for life, locked up for “crimes” as simple as holding a spliff. Young men in less affluent areas would often come into contact with police over marijuana, smearing their records and compromising their employment prospects, educational opportunities, or ability to visit certain countries.

‘In recent years, however, with the current of state-by-state legalization in America, Golding and his colleagues took cues from Jamaica’s northern neighbor to push ahead with cannabis law and criminal justice reform. Under Jamaica’s current program, cannabis for medical, scientific or therapeutic uses is legal for licensed businesses or for patients with a doctor’s note. Foreigners in Jamaica can swiftly obtain approval from a local physician, or else use a valid medical marijuana recommendation from their home state or country to buy cannabis from a legal business.’⁸⁹

7.2.4 The Economist wrote in an April 2019 article, ‘Jamaica’s cannabis gamble’, that ‘Before 2015, a conviction for possession could result in a sentence of up to five years in jail. Thousands of young men were locked up.’⁹⁰

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7.3 Anti-corruption measures

7.3.1 The Bertlesmann Stiftung’s 2018 report stated:

‘After years, attempts to create one, powerful anti-corruption agency which would include the OCG and other state agencies culminated with the

⁸⁷ Jamaica Information Service (Government of Jamaica), ‘Ganja Bill Will Reduce Crime, Free Up Police Resources’, 26 February 2015, [url](#)

⁸⁸ Jamaica Information Service (Government of Jamaica), ‘Ganja Bill Will Reduce Crime, Free Up Police Resources’, 26 February 2015, [url](#)

⁸⁹ Rolling Stone, ‘Now decriminalised, could Jamaica become destination for legal weed?’, 20 August 2018, [url](#)

⁹⁰ The Economist, ‘Jamaica’s cannabis gamble’, 17 April 2019, [url](#)

passage of the Integrity Commission Act on 31 January 2017, supported unanimously by both sides of parliament. This will enable the establishment of a single anti-corruption body to investigate, detect, prevent and prosecute acts of corruption in Jamaica, in the public sector and among politicians. Previously, three different state agencies would be involved in this process, none of which had enough legal power, to overcome political, legal or procedural loopholes, and ensure that both public servants and politicians would be held accountable for breaking the law and engaging in corrupt practices. Public contempt is however, increasingly widespread. Conflicts of interest and ethical misconduct are addressed under a legal provision which allows a politician or senior public official to simply declare their role or involvement in any company which may be providing services or goods to a government agency.⁹¹

7.3.2 Freedom House reported that, ‘Government bodies continue to pursue corruption investigations, and cases frequently end in convictions. However, the public prosecutor has faced criticism in the media and from nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) for a reluctance to pursue some cases. Government whistleblowers are not well protected.’⁹²

7.3.3 The Prime Minister of Jamaica, Mr. Holness, stated that Jamaica was committed to tackling corruption⁹³. The Jamaica Information Service stated in an October 2018 article that:

‘...Speaking at the eighth Summit of the Americas underway in Lima Peru, Mr. Holness said Jamaica will also continue to partner with international stakeholders to battle corruption.

“Jamaica remains committed to cooperating with international bodies and other Member States to combat corruption in the forms of bribery, international graft, and organized crime. Organized crime affects us all and Jamaica is currently engaged at the domestic and international levels to find meaningful solutions to these issues,” said Prime Minister Holness.

...In the meantime, Jamaica adopted the Lima Commitment on Democratic Governance against Corruption which reaffirmed a commitment to anti-corruption treaties such as the United Nations Convention Against Corruption (UNCAC) and the Inter-American Convention Against Corruption.⁹⁴

7.3.4 In February 2017, the Government announced a new legislative agenda for 2017-18, which included the establishment of the Major Organised Crime and Anti-Corruption Agency as an independent national law enforcement agency⁹⁵.

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7.4 Crime-fighting initiatives

7.4.1 The USSD report for 2018 noted

⁹¹ Bertlesmann Stiftung, BTI 2018 - Jamaica Country Report, (page 10), 2018, [url](#)

⁹² Freedom House, ‘Freedom in the World 2018 – Jamaica’, (C2), 27 August 2019, [url](#)

⁹³ JIS, ‘Jamaica committed to cooperating with International Partners ...’, 16 April 2018, [url](#)

⁹⁴ JIS, ‘Jamaica committed to cooperating with International Partners ...’, 16 April 2018, [url](#)

⁹⁵ JIS, ‘Crime Reduction a Priority’, 10 February 2017, [url](#)

'The [Jamaica Constabulary Force] JCF, with units for community policing, special response, intelligence gathering, and internal affairs, has primary responsibility for internal security... When the prime minister and parliament declare a state of emergency, the [Jamaica Defense Force] JDF has arrest authority and operational partnership alongside the JCF... Civilian authorities maintained effective control over security forces. The government had mechanisms to investigate and punish police abuse, but they were not always employed.

'There were hundreds of abuse and wrongful harm complaints regarding the security forces. INDECOM investigated actions by members of the security forces and other agents of the state that resulted in death, injury, or the abuse of civil rights. When appropriate, INDECOM forwarded cases to the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions for agents to make an arrest. INDECOM remained one of the few external and independent oversight commissions that monitored security forces, but it was unable to investigate each case thoroughly. As of October 23, INDECOM reported 122 security force-related fatalities.'⁹⁶

- 7.4.2 The Bertlesmann Stiftung report mentioned that, 'The present JLP administration is listening more to civil society, and is seemingly incorporating environmental and violence control advice.'⁹⁷ Regarding violence against women and girls, the report stated that: 'There are early indications that ... the current prime minister is interested in learning about women's rights demands, which may or may not have an impact on policy formulation.'⁹⁸
- 7.4.3 The same report observed that 'Initiatives that have begun to reduce the influence of organized crime on political and business decisions, and rates of violent crimes have to be strengthened by the early establishment of one strong anti-corruption agency.'⁹⁹
- 7.4.4 Other Government initiatives included new strategic policies to address the homicide rate, to cut the flow of weapons to the island, limit the movement and activities of gangs and intercept criminals in the act. The Prime Minister, in January 2017, also announced the creation of a new national security architecture to 'better integrate all the crime fighting resources which are not all in the Ministry of National Security'.¹⁰⁰
- 7.4.5 In January 2017, the National Security Adviser, Robert Montague, announced strategies to improve the effectiveness of the JCF, more vehicles and training, the expansion of CCTV and changes to the Bail, Firearms and Fingerprints Act¹⁰¹.
- 7.4.6 The FCO noted in May 2019 that:

⁹⁶ USSD, Human Rights Report 2018, section 1c, February 2019, [url](#)

⁹⁷ Bertlesmann Stiftung, BTI 2018 - Jamaica Country Report, (page 31), 2018, [url](#)

⁹⁸ Bertlesmann Stiftung, BTI 2018 - Jamaica Country Report, (page 35), 2018, [url](#)

⁹⁹ Bertlesmann Stiftung, BTI 2018 - Jamaica Country Report, (page 37), 2018, [url](#)

¹⁰⁰ Jamaica Information Service, 'Government to Roll Out Policies to Address the Country's Crime Rate', 30 January 2017, [url](#)

¹⁰¹ JIS, 'Security Minister Announces Measures to Combat Crime and Violence', 4 January 2017, [url](#)

‘As part of security enhancement measures, the Government of Jamaica is taking action in areas of concern. A State of Emergency is in place in the Parish of St James, including Montego Bay, and has been extended until 31 January 2019.

‘The Jamaican government has also extended Zones of Special Operations (ZOSOs) in certain neighbourhoods in Kingston (Denham town and other areas in West Kingston).

‘These measures allow the military to support the police in joint security operations in response to recent violence and shooting incidents.

‘Security operations are ongoing and further activity including curfews could occur with little or no notice.’¹⁰²

7.4.7 The FCO further observed that ‘The Jamaican police may impose curfews at short notice for specific towns or areas.’¹⁰³ Freedom House also reported that ‘curfews are sometimes imposed as a result of gang activity’.¹⁰⁴

7.4.8 Insight Crime noted in a September 2018 article that ‘ZOSO is not a typical police curfew in a ghetto. It is a true attempt at a newly thought-out programme that is heavily focused on respect for and harmony with the occupied community. Thirdly, that cultural change doesn't take weeks — it takes years.’¹⁰⁵

7.4.9 The Organisation of American States’ Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) noted in their 2018 report:

‘The measures adopted to address the violence tend to prioritize repressive actions and declarations of states of emergency in some of the country’s parishes, with repeated extensions. The 2017 legal reform that allows certain areas to be declared Zones of Special Operations and the deployment of joint operations by the JCF and the Jamaica Defense Force have led to numerous arrests. Relatives of detainees said they had not been informed of the whereabouts of their relatives. The legal reform establishes an emergency powers review tribunal and protects security forces from any legal action brought against them for actions taken "in good faith" in the exercise of their duties during the period of emergency. The measures have led to a reduction in homicides in the target areas, but not in the rest of the country, as the gangs have moved to other less violent areas.’¹⁰⁶

7.4.10 Freedom House noted in its 2018 World report ‘A range of initiatives have been taken by successive governments, but crime and violence remain deeply entrenched.’¹⁰⁷

7.4.11 Amnesty International also mentioned that ‘In June [2017], legislation was passed to create “zones of special operations” as part of a crime prevention plan.’¹⁰⁸

¹⁰² FCO, Foreign travel advice – safety and security, 9 May 2019, [url](#)

¹⁰³ FCO, Foreign travel advice – safety and security, 9 May 2019, [url](#)

¹⁰⁴ Freedom House, ‘Freedom in the World 2018 – Jamaica’, (G1), 27 August 2019, [url](#)

¹⁰⁵ Insight Crime, ZOSO could be the beginning of the end of garrison rule’, 30 September 2018, [url](#)

¹⁰⁶ IACHR, ‘Annual report 2018’, (Chapter IV (A), para 303), 2018, [url](#)

¹⁰⁷ Freedom House, ‘Freedom in the World 2018 – Jamaica’, (F2), 27 August 2019, [url](#)

¹⁰⁸ AI, ‘AI Report 2017/18 – Jamaica’, (page 215), 22 February 2018, [url](#)

- 7.4.12 The 2019 International Narcotics Control Strategy report observed:
 ‘In October 2018, the Jamaican government passed a bill to make MOCA (Major Organised Crime and Anti-Corruption Agency), which investigates organized crime and official corruption, fully independent of the police. MOCA was previously a task force within the JCF; the new legislation makes it a free-standing entity with its own dedicated resources, potentially increasing its freedom to investigate corruption cases throughout the government.’¹⁰⁹
- 7.4.13 The JIS stated in an August 2018 article that by the year 2021, ‘Jamaica Constabulary Force (JCF) personnel will be using more technological solutions in their daily operations in a bid to reduce incidents of crime and their likely occurrence.’¹¹⁰ The article added that the technology-based software being developed ‘are designed to support the National Security Ministry’s focus on situational prevention under the comprehensive five-pillar crime prevention and reduction strategy.’¹¹¹
- 7.4.14 The same article noted that the technology will include a ‘geographic information system (GIS) map of Jamaica’ which will be ‘designed to capture, store, analyse, manage, and present spatial or geographic data’.¹¹²
- 7.4.15 The article also noted that, according to the Ministry’s Senior Director, Modernization Initiatives and Strategic Projects, Arvel Grant, the technology “...will also be a performance management system, so that they can zoom in on the crime and other relevant details, not just in a police division, but (at the) street and community levels and do comparisons over the years. That is one of the main (aspects) of the e-policing system,” he outlines.¹¹³
- 7.4.16 In August 2018, The Jamaica Observer also reported that by the year 2021, there will be a use of technology within the JCF to tackle crime¹¹⁴.
- 7.4.17 The JIS reported in March 2018:
 ‘Mr. Shaw said projects to be undertaken in the new fiscal year include construction of new facilities for the Jamaica Defence Force (JDF) and Jamaica Constabulary Force (JCF); expansion of crime-fighting training facilities; building and improvement of several correctional facilities; procurement of motor vehicles and other specialised equipment to respond to both physical threats and cyberattacks; and continuation of social-intervention initiatives.’¹¹⁵
- 7.4.18 In February 2017, the Government announced a five-pillar strategy to combat crime, which consisted of:
- effective policing;
 - rehabilitation, redemption and redirection of inmates;

¹⁰⁹ USSD, ‘2019 International Narcotics Control Strategy Report’, (page 197, 198), 28 March 2019, [url](#)

¹¹⁰ JIS, ‘Police increasing use of technology to arrest crime’, 6 August 2018, [url](#)

¹¹¹ JIS, ‘Police increasing use of technology to arrest crime’, 6 August 2018, [url](#)

¹¹² JIS, ‘Police increasing use of technology to arrest crime’, 6 August 2018, [url](#)

¹¹³ JIS, ‘Police increasing use of technology to arrest crime’, 6 August 2018, [url](#)

¹¹⁴ Jamaica Observer, ‘JCF increasing use of technology in crime fight’, 4 August 2018, [url](#)

¹¹⁵ JIS, ‘Gov’t increases allocation for crime-fighting’, 8 March 2018, [url](#)

- social development interventions;
- situational prevention of crime; and
- swift and secure justice¹¹⁶

7.4.19 Measures to support the achievement of this strategy included:

- the modernization of the JCF;
- increasing the number of security personnel;
- strengthening the mobility of forces by increasing the fleet of vehicles and improving fleet management; and
- a new legislative agenda for 2017-18, including a new Police Service Act¹¹⁷

7.4.20 In his 2019/2020 Sectoral debate in April 2019, Jamaica's National Security Minister, Dr Horace Chang, discussed a new police headquarters to be built in downtown Kingston. The Ministry of National Security Jamaica's website stated:

'...the facility, which will accommodate over 2,500 police officers, is to be built on 40 acres of land in an area referred to as 'No Man's Land'...

"It will be home to all the non-geographic formations of the specialised units, such as Narcotics, National Intelligence Bureau (NIB) and Counter-Terrorism and Organised Crime Investigation Branch (C-TOC), among others. This multifaceted headquarters will have customer-friendly reception areas (and) green spaces to ensure a strong community interface. This will represent the transformative approach the Government is taking to build the new Jamaica,"...

"The Government undertakes these significant projects as an investment to secure the peace and safety of future generations. We will get rid of the gangs, dons and their facilitators that continue to wreak havoc in the communities and our public spaces," he underscored.¹¹⁸

7.4.21 In addition, the Ministry of National Security has a Citizen Security and Justice Programme (CSJP). On its website, the Ministry stated that the CSJP 'is a multi-faceted crime- and violence-prevention programme jointly funded through a loan from the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) and a grant from the United Kingdom's Department for International Development (DFID). The programme was established to enhance citizen security and justice in Jamaica.'¹¹⁹

7.4.22 The Ministry noted that the programme's main objectives are to:

- 'Prevent and reduce crime and violence
- Strengthen crime management capabilities

¹¹⁶ JIS, 'Crime Reduction a Priority', 10 February 2017, [url](#)

¹¹⁷ JIS, 'Crime Reduction a Priority', 10 February 2017, [url](#)

¹¹⁸ The Ministry of National Security Jamaica, 'New police headquarters to be built in downtown Kingston', undated, [url](#)

¹¹⁹ The Ministry of National Security Jamaica, 'Citizen Security and Justice Programme', undated, [url](#)

- Improve the delivery of judicial services¹²⁰

7.4.23 Furthermore, the website mentioned:

‘The programme focuses on building community safety and security, and providing violence-prevention services to vulnerable and volatile communities. It also includes specific training activities in various areas and seeks to contribute to holistic development of participants. Some of the activities that have been undertaken as a part of the programme are

- Providing training in conflict resolution, healthy parenting and gang interruption techniques to community members, including school children
- Setting up Community Action Committees to implement safety plans
- Promoting positive citizen-police relations and ensuring government services are better coordinated at the local level
- Making job skills and entrepreneurship training more accessible for vulnerable groups, particularly at-risk youth and women
- Increasing access to justice for people, especially women, by providing victim support services, dispute resolution, and public education on justice-related rights and services
- Diverting children from the courts and incarceration by channeling them into reintegration programmes.¹²¹

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7.5 Judiciary

7.5.1 The 2018 USSD report¹²², the Bertelsmann Stiftung 2018 Jamaica country report¹²³ and the Freedom in the World 2018 report by Freedom House¹²⁴, all noted that the judiciary is independent.

7.5.2 For more information on the Judiciary and it’s effectiveness, see the Country Policy and Information Note on [Jamaica: Actors of Protection](#).

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7.6 Impact on crime

7.6.1 Freedom House reported, ‘A large backlog of cases and a shortage of court staff at all levels continues to undermine the justice system. Trials are often delayed for years, and at times cases are dismissed due to systematic failures, including antiquated rules regarding evidence.’¹²⁵

7.6.2 The JIS observed in an August 2018 report;

‘Police Commissioner, Major General Antony Anderson, says the reduction in murders and major crimes can be largely attributed to smart policing by the security forces.

¹²⁰ The Ministry of National Security Jamaica, ‘Citizen Security and Justice Programme’, undated, [url](#)

¹²¹ The Ministry of National Security Jamaica, ‘Citizen Security and Justice Programme’, undated, [url](#)

¹²² USSD, ‘Jamaica 2018 human rights report’, (section 1e), 13 March 2019, [url](#)

¹²³ Bertelsmann Stiftung, ‘BTI 2019 country report – Jamaica’, (section 3), 2018, [url](#)

¹²⁴ Freedom House, ‘Freedom in the World 2018’, (section F1), 27 August 2018, [url](#)

¹²⁵ Freedom House, ‘Freedom in the World 2018 – Jamaica’, (F2), 27 August 2019, [url](#)

'He noted that a number of policing strategies implemented have been effective in significantly reducing the figures.

'Statistics from the Jamaica Constabulary Force (JCF) show that since August 11, there has been a 16.8 per cent decrease in murders, 15.4 per cent decline in shootings, 9.4 per cent fall in robberies, and 7.2 per cent drop in break-ins.

"We have implemented some particular strategies and they seem to be working, and we will continue doing that towards the end of the year," the Commissioner said...

'Major General Anderson also acknowledged that the Zones of Special Operations, and States of Public Emergency, now in effect, have been particularly pivotal in underpinning and fuelling the security forces' hard work and success.

'...The JCF's overall statistics for 2018 show that 797 murders were recorded between January 1 and August 11, compared to nearly 1,000 for the corresponding period last year.'¹²⁶

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7.7 Arrests and convictions for murders

- 7.7.1 The USSD's 2018 crime and safety report on Jamaica observed, 'The police are only able to make arrests in 44% of homicides annually, and they only convict perpetrators in 29% of homicide cases. This leads the public and police to doubt the effectiveness of the criminal justice system, leading to vigilantism, which exacerbates the cycle of violence.'¹²⁷

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7.8 Ability to protect people from crime

- 7.8.1 The USSD's 2019 crime and safety report on Jamaica observed:

'Insufficient funding and resources hinder Jamaica's Constabulary Force (JCF). Government officials have very low salaries...the majority of crime victims do not report crimes due to fear the report will get back to criminals, or the feeling that nothing would come from such reports.

'Most civilians fear that the authorities cannot protect them from organized criminal elements because they suspect authorities are colluding with criminals, leading them to avoid giving evidence or witness testimony. Those in some marginalized communities are often indifferent to police authority, adding to a perceived sense of lawlessness. Reporting crime can seem archaic and confusing, and can be a lengthy process that some see as frustratingly bureaucratic.

'Despite these setbacks, Jamaican police officers have received extensive training from the United States and other international trainers, including the United Kingdom, Russia, China, Canada, and South Korea.'¹²⁸

¹²⁶ JIS, 'Reduction in crime attributed to effective policing strategies', 18 Auguts 2018, [url](#)

¹²⁷ USSD, (OSAC), Jamaica 2018 Crime and Safety Report - details, 26 January 2018, [url](#)

¹²⁸ OSAC, 'Jamaica 2019 crime and safety report', 30 May 2019, [url](#)

7.8.2 The USSD 2018 Jamaica Human Rights Report noted that:

‘...An extreme backlog of criminal cases...led to a denial of fair public trial for thousands of citizens. The Ministry of Justice estimated that more than 400,000 criminal cases were awaiting trial. This delay occurred from numerous causes. Defense attorneys often requested committal proceedings, which are lengthy and resource intensive. Additionally, the legal infrastructure in terms of buildings, judges, courts, and other facilities remained virtually the same despite the huge backlog. Finally, the courts were hesitant to implement technological improvements such as teleconferencing witness testimony or admitting videos recorded from a telephone. Consequently, criminal proceedings could extend for years. The government’s statistical office reported the legal system failed to convict in more than 90 percent of murder cases. During the year courts made significant efforts to address the backlog by closely monitoring and reporting case throughput to the Ministry of Justice.’¹²⁹

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8. Witness protection programme

8.1.1 The Jamaica Ministry of National Security stated on its website ‘The Justice Protection Unit is a covert operation managed by the Ministry of National Security. Its main objective is to enlist legitimate witnesses of major crimes whose safety and security is at risk. The Programme seeks to offer protection for these witnesses and provide support for the functioning of the wider criminal justice system’.¹³⁰

8.1.2 The Gleaner reported in an August 2018 article that:

‘Citizens who sign up for the witness protection programme must follow the rules set down by the experts in order to have their safety guaranteed, attorney Peter Champagnie has said.

"All in all, it is a good programme, and it ought to be encouraged. The witness-protection programme in Jamaica is one where a threatened witness, who can be harmed makes an application for protection. That protection comes under the auspices of the Ministry of National Security, and it is very safe, except for one or two instances in the past where witnesses leave the programme and were harmed afterwards...’¹³¹

8.1.3 The Jamaica Observer reported in an April 2018 article, that a witness who testified against a murder committed by his nephew was ‘supposedly’ kicked out of the programme for not complying with the programme’s rules, which prohibited him from visiting Kingston. The witness stated that the programme did not provide enough money for him and his family and therefore needed to take a job driving into Kingston. He described the programme as ‘bad’ and ‘horrible’.¹³²

¹²⁹ USSD, ‘Jamaica 2018 Human Rights Report’, (page 6, 7), 13 March 2019, [url](#)

¹³⁰ Jamaica Ministry of National Security, Justice Protection Unit, Undated, [url](#)

¹³¹ The Gleaner, ‘Abide by Witness Protection Rules, Attorney warns’, 24 August 2018, [url](#)

¹³² Jamaica Observer, ‘Kicked out’, 15 April 2018, [url](#)

- 8.1.4 A report by a Jamaican news website, The Star, stated in December 2017 that a woman and child were evicted and removed from the Witness Prevention Programme as soon as the case she testified in concluded¹³³.
- 8.1.5 The USSD Jamaica 2017 Human Rights report observed:
 ‘There is a witness protection program, but many eligible witnesses either refused protection or violated the conditions of the program. While the JCF reported that no participant in the witness protection program was ever killed, the program suffered from a number of problems. The government allocated approximately \$1 million in additional funds for the program in February.’¹³⁴
- 8.1.6 The Gleaner observed in an article published in February 2017, that 12 million dollars was planned to be invested in the Witness Protection Programme for the upcoming financial year. This was expected to strengthen the programme in order to improve the prosecution of crimes and organised criminal networks¹³⁵.
- 8.1.7 There is no information on the witness protection programme in the USSD 2018 Human Rights report for Jamaica¹³⁶.
- 8.1.8 Regarding witness protection, The Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions (DPP) in Jamaica sets out mentioned that there are ‘several ways to protect witnesses’, which include:
- Criminal proceedings can be taken against the intimidators who could then face jail; and
 - In extreme circumstances witnesses can be relocated.’¹³⁷
- 8.1.9 The same source stated:
 ‘The principle of open justice can sometimes act as a bar to successful prosecutions, particularly in homicides, organised crime and gun crime. Witnesses may fear that if their identity is revealed to the defendant, his associates or the public generally then they or their friends and family will be at risk of serious harm.
 ‘In most cases the police will establish whether a witness is in fear and should inform the prosecutor. Ideally, a discussion about the type of ‘protection’ that should be applied for will take place between the police and the prosecutor at the pre charge stage. Occasionally information about a witness being in fear may come from another source.
 ‘When informed that a witness is fearful of giving evidence, prosecutors must liaise closely with the Justice Support Unit and the Justice Protection Unit to consider the range of options available to them both at common law and by virtue of statute. Prosecutors should seek to ensure that, wherever possible,

¹³³ The Star, ‘Desperate to find a home – Woman, child evicted after being taken off witness protection programme’, 8 December 2017, [url](#)

¹³⁴ USSD 2017 Human Rights report – Jamaica, (para de), 20 April 2018, [url](#)

¹³⁵ The Gleaner, ‘Government to pump \$12m into witness protection programme, JFJ welcomes move’, 20 February 2017, [url](#)

¹³⁶ USSD 2018 Human Rights report – Jamaica, 13 March 2019, [url](#)

¹³⁷ DPP, ‘Witness intimidation’, undated, [url](#)

the witness's fear is allayed and that they are given the requisite protection. Prosecutors must also ensure that the witness's rights under the ECHR are acknowledged and protected.¹³⁸

8.1.10 Furthermore, the DPP mentioned:

‘There are certain situations where proceedings can be heard in camera, i.e. in private, when the public are excluded and the doors of the court-room are closed. Thus in cases of sexual offences or cases where a gun is used, those matters are dealt with in camera...

‘The question for the court to decide is whether a sitting in private is necessary for the administration of justice, for example if there is a possibility of disorder. A decision to sit in camera is not justified merely on the ground that a witness would find it embarrassing to testify.’¹³⁹

8.1.11 For further information please see [The Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions \(DPP\)](#).

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¹³⁸ DPP, ‘Witness intimidation’, undated, [url](#)

¹³⁹ DPP, ‘Witness intimidation’, undated, [url](#)

Terms of Reference

A 'Terms of Reference' (ToR) is a broad outline of what the CPIN seeks to cover. They form the basis for the [country information section](#). The Home Office's Country Policy and Information Team uses some standardised ToRs, depending on the subject, and these are then adapted depending on the country concerned.

For this particular CPIN, the following topics were identified prior to drafting as relevant and on which research was undertaken:

- Crime levels
 - Rates of murder and other serious violent crime
 - Prevalence of organised crime
- Nature of organised crime
 - Drug-related crime
 - Gender-based violence
 - Social/civic activity
 - Other criminal activity
- Organised gangs
 - Number of gangs
 - 'Dons'
 - 'Shower Posse'
 - Inter-gang rivalry
 - International links
- Organised crime and national politics
 - Corruption
 - Relationship between gangs and political leaders
 - 'Garrisons'
- Government response
 - 'Anti-Gang Act'
 - 'Ganja Law'
 - Anti-corruption measures
 - Crime-fighting initiatives
 - Impact on crime rates
 - Arrests and convictions for murders
 - Ability to protect people from gang violence
- Witness Protection Programme

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Version control

Clearance

Below is information on when this note was cleared:

- version **3.0**
- valid from **8 August 2019**

Changes from last version of this note

Update of COI and Assessment following review of IAGCI.

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