



## **PNP Calls Out Lack of Clear Crime Strategy Amidst Minister Chang's Contradictory Statements**

**Kingston, Jamaica. January 16, 2025:** The People's National Party (PNP) is deeply concerned about the absence of a coherent and effective crime strategy from the Jamaica Labour Party (JLP) administration, as evidenced by the recent statements made by Minister of National Security, Dr. Horace Chang, in Parliament. The Minister's remarks reveal a troubling pattern of contradictions, arbitrary use of data, and semantic distractions rather than substantive solutions to Jamaica's crime crisis.

Minister Chang claimed that the security forces are tracking over *150 unresolved conflicts* and *300 high-risk individuals*, yet this figure has been repeatedly used in previous years. On past occasions, the same number—300—has been cited to represent either the number of criminal gangs or the number of violence producers. Despite previous claims of dismantling gangs and reducing violence producers through arrests and incarceration, fatalities from confrontations with the police, absconding the country, or rehabilitation, this figure remains inexplicably static. This raises questions about the credibility of the government's data and the effectiveness of its efforts.

Furthermore, while the Minister celebrated a 19% reduction in murders in 2024, reporting 1,141 murders, he failed to acknowledge that approximately 100 deaths are still classified as *undetermined* by the Jamaica Constabulary Force (JCF). This deliberate omission undermines transparency and casts doubt on the accuracy of the statistics being presented to the Jamaican public.

The PNP takes issue with Minister Chang's contradictory approach to crime-fighting strategies. He now claims to be pursuing a so-called "Focused Deterrence" strategy—essentially a repackaged version of the *Public Health Approach* spearheaded by the PNP, which he previously dismissed. Similarly, after years of rubbishing the value of social intervention programmes, the Minister now advocates for "social support programmes," using different terminology while continuing to evade the core issues of systemic violence and socio-economic inequality that fuel crime in Jamaica.

It is disheartening to note the Minister's vague reference to "unresolved conflicts" without any clarity on what these conflicts entail or how the government intends to address them



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effectively. This is reminiscent of Prime Minister Andrew Holness' use of the phrase "multiple victim violent incidents" to sidestep the reality of the wave of mass shootings and murders that continue to plague our communities. The reliance on semantics only highlights the administration's inability to confront the real and pressing crime challenges facing the nation.

The PNP acknowledges the reduction in murders but emphasizes that without a comprehensive and sustainable crime plan, these gains are fragile and temporary. The public deserves a clear roadmap for reducing violence, addressing the root causes of crime, and ensuring lasting peace and safety. We call on the government to end their reliance on arbitrary figures, recycled terminology, and superficial narratives. Instead, they must demonstrate genuine leadership by implementing evidence-based solutions and fostering collaboration with all stakeholders, including civil society and opposition voices, to tackle this national crisis.

The PNP remains committed to advocating for a holistic approach to crime management—one that prioritizes social interventions, robust policing, judicial reform, and investment in underserved communities. The time for empty rhetoric is over; Jamaicans are demanding – and deserve – meaningful action.

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