



## **Neita Garvey Calls for Modernisation of Fire Services and Establishment of Fire Training Academy**

**Kingston, Jamaica. June 11, 2025:** Opposition Spokesperson on Local Government and Participatory Democracy, Natalie Neita Garvey, MP, has called for the urgent modernisation of Jamaica's Fire Services, including the establishment of a national training academy for firefighters and emergency responders.

Speaking during her Sectoral Debate contribution, earlier this week, Neita Garvey highlighted that despite Jamaica having a fire service for over 150 years, the country still lacks a proper training facility for new recruits. This gap, she argued, has weakened Jamaica's capacity to respond effectively to today's evolving risk profile, including climate-related threats like wildfires. "Our risk exposure is real and growing," she said. "And yet, there is no allocation in the 2025/26 budget for fire service training. That is unacceptable."

Neita Garvey announced that a future PNP administration will begin work within its first year to identify a location and begin the development of a Fire Response Training Academy. The facility will provide ongoing, modular training with on-the-job certification and clear pathways for promotion and improved compensation. "Our firefighters deserve modern training, international best practices, and proper tools to carry out their duties, not just in firefighting, but in rescue operations, emergency response, and disaster investigation," she stated.

In addition to training, she underscored the need for a comprehensive audit of fire hydrants across Jamaica and the development of a national hydrant maintenance programme. Many communities, she said, remain dangerously underserved, even those with running water.

The plan also includes upgrading existing fire stations, constructing new ones (including specialised response units), and ensuring all stations meet international safety standards. Neita Garvey affirmed that frontline personnel will no longer be neglected.



“The hard-working men and women in the fire service will finally have an advocate in government. Their Minister will deliver the gear, equipment, amenities, and stations they deserve, not treat them like distant relatives,” she said.

She also announced plans for a community-based emergency response programme. Volunteers will be recruited and certified at various levels, enhancing national preparedness by expanding trained personnel in every community.

“This is not just about fire. It’s about national development, risk mitigation, and respect for our emergency responders. The fire service must be equipped to meet the future, not be trapped in the past,” Neita Garvey concluded.

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