

# AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL PRESS RELEASE

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## **Jamaica/United Kingdom: Human rights must be at heart of crime-fighting initiatives**

Recent comments by the Head of the Crime Management Unit in Jamaica that constitutional provisions guaranteeing the presumption of innocence are "mere semantics" are a stark reminder of the need for human rights to be at the heart of any agreement on fighting crime between the United Kingdom and Jamaican authorities, Amnesty International said today.

"The visit to Jamaica by the UK Metropolitan Police Commissioner and Chairperson of the Metropolitan Police Authority offers a unique opportunity to explore how both countries can contribute to ensure full respect for human rights on the part of Jamaican law enforcement officials," the organization added.

"As long as the Jamaican police continues to operate without the respect and trust of all its citizens, the fight against crime will be ineffective," Amnesty International warned, recalling the recent killing of Dean Duncan as an example of brutal police practices which alienate public support for the force. He was shot in the head by police officers on 29 June as he was carrying his baby in his arms.

"It is clear that bringing about improved respect and accountability for human rights practices within the Jamaica Constabulary Force would result in a reduction of crime," Amnesty International said.

The organization is urging the UK and Jamaican authorities to:

Publicly state that human rights violations by police officers will not be tolerated under any circumstances and that the need to investigate crime or deal with public disorder can never be used as a justification for human rights violations;

Publicly promote the need for policing to be conducted lawfully and in keeping with human rights standards;

Ensure that torture and cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment are defined as crimes in Jamaican law and that laws, regulations and practice on the use of force and firearms conform to international human rights standards;

Ensure that strict guidelines govern the use of firearms and other security equipment and that the use of such equipment is carefully monitored;

Provide meaningful information to the public about the human rights content of the training and assistance that is being given to the police, including monitoring procedures to prevent firearms and other potentially lethal equipment from being given to police officers who are likely to commit unlawful killings or cause unwarranted injuries. Training should be practical, relevant to police work and based on international and regional human rights standards;

Ensure that international donor assistance such as that from the UK should aim promotes these principles.

"The governments of both the United Kingdom and Jamaica have a duty to protect people within their jurisdictions from criminal acts. But these efforts must be consistent with reforms and accountability mechanisms to ensure that all law enforcement officials respect human rights," Amnesty International said.

### **Background**

The United Kingdom is the main provider of external assistance to the Jamaica Constabulary Force.

Amnesty International has monitored human rights violations, including extrajudicial killings, torture and ill-treatment, committed by members of the Jamaica Constabulary Force for over two decades. In April 2001, the organization published *JAMAICA – Killings and Violence by Police: How many more victims?* (available on the web at: <http://web.amnesty.org/ai.nsf/recent/AMR380032000>). This report made detailed recommendations for reform of the Jamaica Constabulary Force, Jamaica Defence Force, and related investigative mechanisms.

Members of the Crime Management Unit, an elite crime-fighting unit within the Jamaica Constabulary Force have been responsible for a number of unlawful killings. Speaking on radio show The Breakfast Club, on 4 July 2002, the head of this unit, Senior Superintendent Reneto Adams accused Amnesty International, the United Nations and national human rights organizations or influencing, attracting and protecting criminals, stating that: "Criminals have been able to infiltrate the civil rights groups... The best protected people now anywhere in Jamaica, anywhere almost in the world are the criminals... "

Amnesty International has also highlighted deaths in police custody and concerns about the use of force and firearms by UK police officers. Please see the following reports:

- UNITED KINGDOM: Deaths in police custody: lack of police accountability, <http://web.amnesty.org/ai.nsf/recent/EUR450422000>
- UNITED KINGDOM: Summary of concerns raised with the Human Rights Committee, <http://web.amnesty.org/ai.nsf/Index/EUR450242001>
- UNITED KINGDOM: Patrick Finuncane's killing: Official Collusion and cover-up, <http://web.amnesty.org/ai.nsf/recent/EUR450262000>

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