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Jamaica: Delays in Tivoli investigations are unacceptable

Continued delays in the investigation into the killing of 73 people in May 2010 during an operation by security forces in West Kingston could be letting people get away with murder, said Amnesty International today.

In a letter sent to Michael Peart, Speaker of the House of Representatives in Jamaica, the organization questioned ongoing delays in the development of the report that the Office of the Public Defender was due to submit to the parliament on 15 January after missing previous deadlines.

“It is outrageous that nearly three years since the Tivoli Gardens killings the Jamaican authorities are far from being able to answer the many questions that remain,” said Javier Zúñiga, Special Advisor at Amnesty International.

“By failing to ensure that those responsible for the killings, disappearances and arbitrary arrests that took place in Tivoli in 2010, the Jamaican authorities are simply sending the message that human rights abuses are permitted and won’t be punished.”

In July 2012, questioned about the delays of the Office of the Public Defender in completing the report, the Minister of National Security said that the Office of the Public Defender was understaffed to undertake that scale of investigation.

“If the problem is a lack of resources available to the Office of the Public Defender, the authorities should have addressed this issue long ago”, said Zúñiga.

Supporting a call from Jamaican civil society organizations, Amnesty International also urged the Jamaican authorities to ensure a parliamentary hearing is held to investigate the delays in the investigations.

According to information received by Amnesty International, it is alleged that Jamaican security forces are responsible for unlawful killings, arbitrary arrests and enforced disappearances that took place during an operation by the security forces in Tivoli Gardens during the state of emergency in May 2010. The law enforcement operation was aimed at arresting suspected gang leader Christopher Coke.

The Office of Public Defender is a commission of the Jamaican Parliament, and is mandated to protect and enforce the rights of citizens.

For more information, see Amnesty International’s report: [“Jamaica: A long road to justice? Human rights violations under the state of emergency”](#)