

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL MEDIA BRIEFING

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Jamaica: Tivoli killings one year on – Facts and Figures

FACTS AND FIGURES

On 24 May 2010, Jamaican police and military initiated a joint operation in the West Kingston community of Tivoli Gardens, to arrest Christopher Coke, wanted in the USA for drug and arm-trafficking charges and re-establish order in the community after an outbreak of violence.

During the first two days of the operation, at least **74 people**, including a member of the Jamaica Defence Force, were **killed** and at least **54 people**, including 28 members of the security forces, **injured**.

More than 40 of those killed in Tivoli Gardens are alleged to have been the victims of **extra-judicial executions** by the security forces.

Under the state of emergency (which was in force between 23 May and 22 July 2010 in selected parishes), more than **4,000 people, including several children, were detained** without charge. The vast majority of those detained were **released without charge**.

Two people reportedly taken into custody remain unaccounted for and may have been victims of **enforced disappearance**.

In January 2011, the Jamaican Public Defender stated that his office had received **more than 1,000 complaints** related to the operation in Tivoli Gardens, including allegations of extrajudicial executions, malicious destruction of property, looting, arbitrary detention and assault (The Gleaner“31 January 2011).

Investigations are current underway into the killings but have yet to produce conclusive results.

Between 2000 and 2010, more than **2,220 fatal shootings** by police have been reported across Jamaica, yet only two police officers have been convicted for their involvement in killings (Sources: police statistics; Jamaicans for Justice).

Tivoli Gardens has previously been the theatre of other “confrontations” between the security forces and gangs. In **2001, 27 people, including two members of the security forces, were killed**. In 1997, three women and one child were killed. No-one has ever been held accountable for those killings.

TIMELINE

23 May – At 6.00 pm the Jamaican authorities declare a one-month state of emergency in the parishes of Kingston and St. Andrew as they try to restore order and capture Christopher Coke, wanted in the USA for drug-trafficking and firearms charges.

23 May – During the day, several police stations are attacked by gunmen; two are burned down. Two police officers are killed in the community of Mountain View during the night. Reports circulate that heavily armed men are manning roadblocks into the Tivoli Gardens community and positioned on the top of buildings in the area.

24 May – Jamaican police and the military initiate a joint operation in the West Kingston community of Tivoli Gardens to arrest Christopher Coke and re-establish order in the community. During the first two days of the operation, at least 74 people, including a member of the Jamaica Defence Force (JDF), were killed and at least 54 people, including 28 members of the security forces, were injured. Only six firearms were recovered during the operation.

27 May -- Journalists are allowed to enter Tivoli Gardens under military escort in a guided tour.

22 June – Christopher Coke is arrested.

22 June - The Jamaican Parliament votes to extend the state of emergency for a further month and to include the parish of St Catherine. The Prime Minister informs the Parliament that 87 firearms had been recovered in West Kingston.

25 June – Christopher Coke is extradited to the United States.

22 July -- The state of emergency ends after a government request for a further one-month extension was rejected by Parliament.

STORIES CASES

Sheldon Gary Davis

Sheldon Gary Davis, aged 29, was killed by the security forces on Sunday, 30 May 2010 in Denham Town, West Kingston, after he had been taken into custody to be “checked out”.

Talking to Amnesty International’s researcher in Jamaica, Sheldon’s mother, Paulette Wellington, said:

“It happened about a week after everything was finished in Tivoli. Sheldon and I were at home, when soldiers knocked our door. It was about 10 a.m. They said that they were just checking. They searched the house. When they saw Sheldon, they asked for his ID and questioned why he was walking with a limp. They said: ‘That limp may be from a gunshot wound’, but I explained them that he was unable to bend his foot since the age of six after a sickness and that he had been operated several times. They took him out. They said they wanted to check him out.

From the window I saw that the police forced him in a jeep. There were four police officers in that jeep, but they were not the same who had searched the house. Less than an hour after I heard some gunshots on the opposite side of the building.

In the afternoon, as Sheldon had still not come back, I started looking for him. I went to seven different police stations but nobody had seen him. On Monday, I went again. I took a photo of him with me, showing it to people, trying to find him. Nothing. On Tuesday, the same. Every day I started searching for him since the morning, as soon as I got up. I was unable to eat. I just wanted to know where he was.

On Wednesday, in Kingston Mall, a policewoman checked in a book and told me that he was dead. I was shocked and started crying. She told me to go to the Blood Bank because it was there that he had been killed.

I went there on Thursday morning. A police officer took long time to respond to me. Finally he told me that they killed him there because he was trying to take a soldier’s gun. When I went to identify the body at the morgue in Madden, I passed out. Then I went back to Denham Town police station. They gave me his passport back. I had been to that police station twice already and they never told me anything, although they had his passport!

A police officer who was sympathetic took me aside and told me that the way they had killed my son was a wicked act.

In those days, the police was using the Blood Bank to hold people. When I went there, some young men told me that they witnessed Sheldon's killing. The police put him under a mango tree and shot at him. A police officer said in a rude tone 'Young man, aren't you dead yet?'. He shot him again. These witnesses are too afraid to give statements. The autopsy was done about a month after. It showed that he had been shot twice, once in the foot and once in the abdomen.

I buried him on 4 July, on the day of my birthday. For long time after his death, my memory was gone. I cried every Sunday after church. Sheldon was helping me a lot. Now I am alone, in dire financial straits and I don't know how to pay for my daughter's school fees.

I would like to put the guilty behind bars and sue the government. Why would a young man try to take away a gun when there were many soldiers around? And even if he had really tried to take the gun, you are in the army, you know how to defeat somebody who is trying to disarm you! You should be able to kick away his feet and hold the gun upright, fire a shot in the air and handcuff him. Instead the person to whom he was trying to take the gun from shot him twice! No one is an idiot!"

Dwayne Edwards and Dale Anthony Davis

Dwayne Edwards and teenager Dale Anthony Davis were last seen in the custody of the security forces during the law enforcement operation in Tivoli Gardens in May 2010.

Dale Anthony Davis' mother reported to the press that he was taken by policemen and soldiers from his home in Tivoli Gardens on 25 May 2010. When his ailing grand-aunt, whom Dale helped to care for, asked where they were taking him, a policeman replied that he was going to the detention centre at the National Arena to be checked out.

On 8 October 2010, the BSI (a police unit), which was in charge of investigating the disappearance of the three boys, said "checks with the National Intelligence Bureau, the Inspectorate Branch and a review of the list of detainees who were held at the National Arena, in Kingston, have turned up no trace of the three". It also confirmed that they were not among the 73 people killed during the operation carried out in Tivoli Gardens.

The Independent Commission of Investigations (INDECOM) announced in January 2011 that it had assumed control of the investigation into the disappearance of Dale Anthony Davis.

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