

**Jamaica's National Security Progress Report  
on the government's first one hundred days in office,  
from the Honourable Mr. Peter Bunting MP, Minister of National Security**



**Presented on April 18, 2012  
at the Ministry of National Security, St. Andrew**

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Since my swearing-in as Minister of National Security on January 6th, 2012, I've directed the work of the Ministry, its departments and agencies, on two very deliberately chosen tracks. The first track has been to develop an effective short-term response to the spike in violent crime that started in the first week of January. The second has been to develop a set of integrated policies and coherent strategies to ensure long-term sustained success in the fight against crime and corruption.

It is important to put this task in context. Jamaica's development has been crippled by violence, crime and corruption and, largely as a result, the economy has stagnated for four decades, with low growth and declining productivity, while other countries have transformed their productive potential, economic growth rates and development prospects. Our economy is now, at best, one-third of the size it should have been, and it may have shriveled to just 10% of the size that it should have been.

Our goal is to transform Jamaica's prospects by decisively breaking the grip that crime and corruption have on this nation. This means dismantling the gangs, arresting their leaders and the people who have facilitated their operations, seizing their assets and putting them out of business.

This is why we declared the audacious goal of reducing the murder rate (and the crime rate generally) to First World levels (i.e. 12 per 100,000) by the end of this political term of office. It was essential to make everyone understand that tinkering, modest reforms, or incrementalism cannot possibly achieve such an aggressive goal. It requires a new paradigm, with new priorities and strategies, and the mobilization of the entire society against the criminals who have done so much damage to this nation.

## **SHORT-TERM RESPONSE**

A number of initiatives commenced between mid-January and early March in response to the spike in violence at the very beginning of the year, including:

- 1) Increased deployment of mobile reserve and JDF personnel in St. Catherine North. As a result, this Division has seen a substantial decline in murders.

- 2) A heightened focus on the Lotto scammers in St. James and Hanover. This has resulted in dozens of arrests, and the seizure of assets valued at millions of dollars. We intend to do a lot more of this in future. An analysis of the downward trend in murders in St. James has shown that it is partly due to the increased police operations against lotto scammers.

3) For the last six weeks or so, the Ministry has been running an anti-gang media communications campaign that aims to de-legitimize the gangs within the communities. Every member of the community must understand that the gangs are parasites, not protectors.

These initiatives are all now starting to have a positive impact. Some of the key indicators are as follows:

- The daily average number of murders has been falling steadily since the end of January.
- In the year so far (to April 14th), the average murder rate was 2.9 per day, slightly below the average of 3.1 per day during 2011.
- However, since March 1st, the daily average has been reduced further, to 2.1 per day. This is now significantly below the average for 2011.
- In March, we had the lowest number of murders in any single month for over nine years, and the first two weeks in April is showing further improvement.

This outcome reflects the hard work and strategic planning of a very committed leadership of the JCF and JDF, as well as the efforts of the dedicated and brave personnel on the front line.

The administration is convinced that sustained success in the fight against crime must rest on a foundation of trust and respect between the police and citizenry. Therefore, the High Command has been tasked to fully review the JCF's Use of Force Policy as well as its operational approaches. The aim of the review is to ensure that there is a reduction in the number of police fatal shootings commensurate with the reduction in murders. Internal accountability mechanisms are also being developed around this target. The importance of external oversight of the security forces - whether by INDECOM, the Public Defender, human rights groups, or the media - is also acknowledged.

### **STRATEGIC POLICY RESPONSE**

On the strategic track, a great deal of work has been done on developing the long-term policies and approaches for achieving our crime targets, including:

**National Security Policy** - With the assistance of Prof. Anthony Clayton, a new National Security Policy (NSP) is being developed. This sets out the new priorities, policies and strategies, and will cover the period 2012 to 2017.

The first and most urgent section of the new NSP – the identification and analysis of the Tier 1 threats (i.e. the clear & present dangers) to national security - is now complete. We are now working to

produce a summary version of this report for general publication by the end of April.

It should be noted that the last time a National Security Policy was developed was during the previous PNP administration in 2007.

The new NSP sets out the following strategic imperatives:

- Make far more aggressive use of the Proceeds of Crime Act (POCA) to seize assets from criminals – not just the direct proceeds of their known crimes, but all the assets that they cannot prove to be clean. This is the model now followed in the US, UK, Italy, and every other country that is making effective use of POCA to break the power of organized crime.
- Focus on the key players, and also their facilitators – the people who help them launder and conceal their profits.
- Fix the dysfunctional elements of our judicial system.
- Accelerate the reforms in the police force. The goal is to make the JCF a fully modern police service, and one of the most respected, trusted institutions in Jamaica.
- Adopt a strong, coherent anti-gang strategy, based on the ‘clear, hold and build’ approach.
- Fix the at-risk communities, by making all community regeneration and employment creation programs in Jamaica part of the ‘build’ phase in the at-risk areas.

There are a number of new structures being developed to implement these new imperatives, including:

**Major Organized Crime & Anti-Corruption (MOCA) Task Force** – MOCA is a multi-agency task force that will focus on taking the profit out of crime. It will target the criminal kingpins, as well as their facilitators and accommodators, including corrupt public officials. It will draw on personnel, resources, and information from the Police, the military, the Financial Investigation Division, the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions, etc. as well as support from our international partners. The team is currently being recruited and vetted. May 2012 is targeted for the operational launch.

**Inter-Ministerial Committee on Crime Prevention and Community Safety** – This committee is being established in order to coordinate the various community regeneration and employment creation programmes to support the build component of the anti-gang strategy.

**Strategic Communications Programme** – The other major strategic initiative that has been commenced is a strategic communications programme designed to:

1. Sensitize the entire society to the profound damage caused by crime, and engage civil society organizations and community members as allies for the security forces in the fight against criminals.
2. Confront the sub-culture of violence by de-legitimizing criminals, criminal gangs, and the criminal lifestyle.
3. Promote intolerance for crime and violence, and changing some of the dysfunctional norms in our culture such as the "Informer fi dead" idea that has served criminals so well.

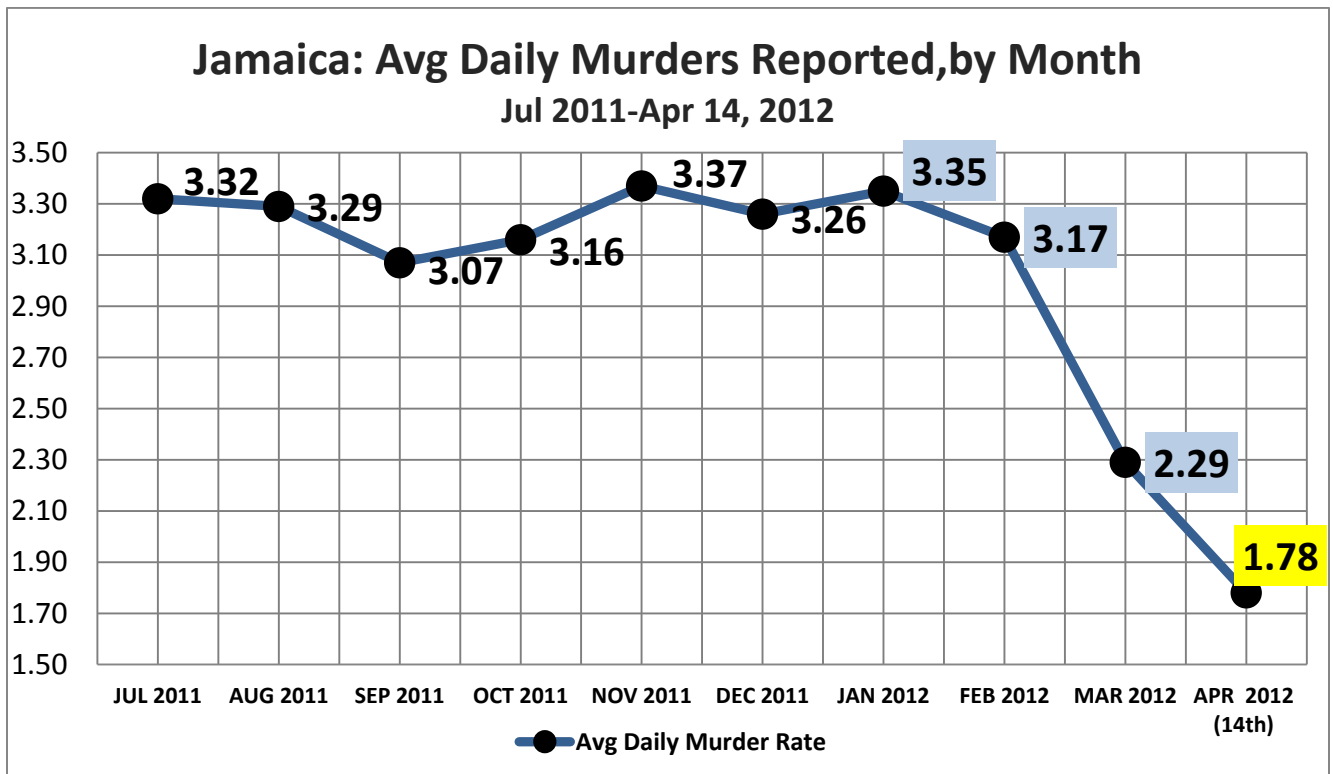
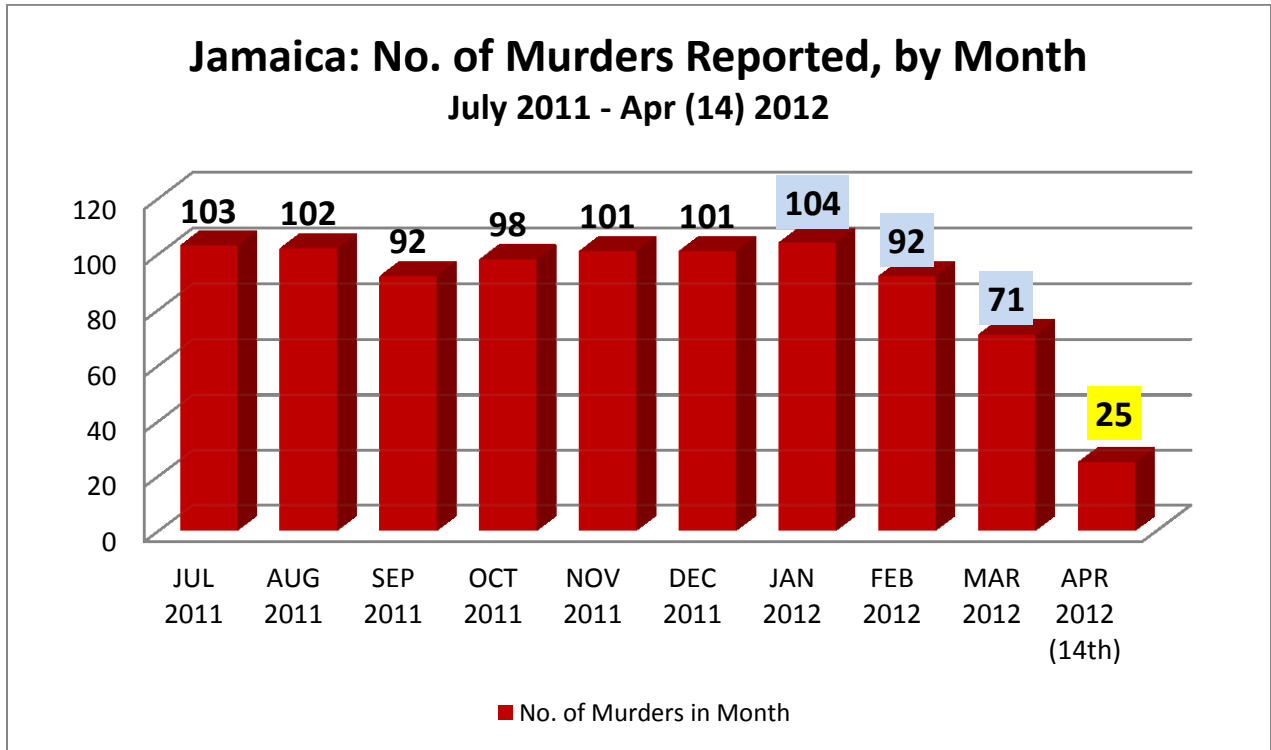
The Communications Programme will use media campaigns, such as the one currently running - "*A Gang is a Dead End*" - and also has a face-to-face component where the Ministry and officials from the Police Force will go into various communities and engage the citizens in the search for solutions to crime and violence in their areas. Already I have met with groups in St. Thomas, in Manchester, and in the Metro area (Kingston, St. Andrew, and St. Catherine).

## **CONCLUSION**

This administration has made an agile but very strategic start to its term in office. We have responded to events, but we have not been driven by events. We have developed an approach that is informed by careful policy analysis; and by a strategic partnership with all stakeholders. We have the political will and the courage to follow the new strategies. We will be relentless in pursuing our goal of dramatically reducing the murder rate.

Organized crime, violence and corruption are the foremost threats to the national security of Jamaica, to the integrity of the state, and to the lives of the people. The Government will not rest until the nation has been rescued from this oppression."

CHARTS



(Derived from official Jamaica Constabulary Force Statistics)