

National Security Ministry tackling root causes of crime

Tuesday, July 21, 2015

KINGSTON, Jamaica (JIS) – Minister of National Security Peter Bunting, says the ministry is putting resources into tackling the root causes of crime in the country.

Among the areas of focus is improving parenting, including addressing the problem of absent fathers.



Ministry of National Security Peter Bunting (File photo)



1/1



“We are doing a lot of work on this issue. We’re running parenting campaigns in the media, we’re supporting the Parenting Commission (and) the National Association for the Family,” Minister Bunting said at the Partnership for Jamaica Retreat, held recently at the Terra Nova All-Suite Hotel in Kingston.

He said research shows that boys, who grow up without a father in the home, are more likely to be involved in criminal activities.

“(They are) five times more likely to be involved in a violent incident, nine times more likely to join a gang, five or six times more likely to have mental health issues,” he pointed out.

The ministry is also engaging young people in crime and violence prevention initiatives.

“We had a national forum on youth violence prevention... (with) about 1,000 persons participating. We solicited 450 volunteers from that who are going to be mentoring youth and parents (and) work with the juveniles in the correctional system to divert them from re-offending,” Bunting informed.

Another strategy, he said, is the training of persons by the Peace Management Initiative (PMI), in order to reduce violence in communities, noting that “more resources have been channeled into this area than ever before.”

Minister Bunting noted that the measures being put in place will not bring immediate results but “this is something that is going to give us a result in the next generation. It’s the right thing to do and we’re putting resources into that.”

The minister in the meantime, noted that while Jamaica has experienced a spike in murders for the first half of the year, a 2014 Latin American Public Opinion Project (LAPOP) study shows that the country is ranked among the lowest in the region in crime victimisation.

Crime, he pointed out, is a community problem as most incidents occur at home or within the neighbourhood. This supports the claim by the local Violence Prevention Alliance that 85 per cent of crimes are committed by persons who are known to the victims.