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Confronting the Don:
The Political Economy of
Gang Violence in Jamaica

By Glaister Leslie

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List of abbreviations

ATF	United States Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives
COMET	Community Empowerment and Transformation Project
CSI	Community Security Initiative
CSJP	Citizen Security and Justice Programme
DFID	UK Department for International Development
EC	European Commission
FLA	Firearm Licensing Authority
GOJ	Government of Jamaica
ICBSP	Inner City Basic Services for the Poor Project
JCF	Jamaica Constabulary Force
JDF	Jamaica Defence Force
JNCVS	Jamaican National Crime Victimization Survey
JSIF	Jamaica Social Investment Fund
KMR	Kingston Metropolitan Region
MNS	Ministry of National Security
NIB	National Intelligence Bureau
NGO	Non-governmental organization
OAS	Organization of American States
PMI	Peace Management Initiative
PoA	United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects
POCA	Proceeds of Crime Act
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UN-LiREC	United Nations Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
VPA	Violence Prevention Alliance
WHO	World Health Organization

Acknowledgements

Jamaica

Caribbean Sea

Port Antonio

Annotto Bay

Port Maria

St. Ann's Bay

Ocho Rios

Falmouth

Montego Bay

Lucea

Negril

Savanna-la-Mar

Black River

Mandeville

May Pen

Spanish Town

Portmore

Kingston

Port Royal

Yallahs

Morant Bay

ST. THOMAS

KINGSTON

ST. ANDREW

PORTLAND

Blue Mountains

2256 m

ST. MARY

ST. CATHERINE

CLARENDON

ST. ANN

MANCHESTER

ST. ELIZABETH

TRELAWNY

The Cockpit Country

Dry Harbour Mts

HANOVER

WESTMORELAND

Portland Bight

Caribbean Sea

0   km   100

Parish boundary
□ Capital city
○ Other town
Over 500 m

International boundary
Built-up area
Main road

Kingston Metropolitan Region

Seven Mile

Papine

Constant Spring

Barbican

Mary Browns Corner

Trench Town

Down Town

Kingston

Kingston Harbour

Portmore

Spanish Town

0   km   5

Gulf of Mexico

USA

Bahamas

Cuba

Mexico

Jamaica

CENTRAL AMERICA

Dominican Republic

Haiti

Caribbean Sea

ATLANTIC OCEAN

Barbados

Trinidad and Tobago

SOUTH AMERICA

0   km   100

N
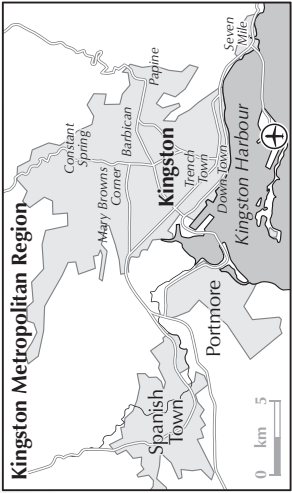
Introduction

In 2009, the US State Department requested that Jamaica extradite one Christopher 'Dudus' Coke on charges of drug and gun trafficking. Local officials had long accused Coke, alleged leader of one of Jamaica's most powerful gangs, of involvement in criminal activities. Yet the Jamaican government uncharacteristically delayed carrying out the request. Reflecting the country's legacy of political linkages to crime, however, most Jamaicans reacted with resignation when they recalled that Coke and his gang operated out of a political constituency with a long history of iron-fisted gangs, enforcing voter support for the ruling political party. Politicians, people quietly commented, would not bite the hand that feeds them.[1]

After a tumultuous nine months of speculation concerning political complicity in the protection of criminals, the secret hiring by the ruling political party of a US law firm to lobby US officials regarding the extradition request, and the subsequent vociferous demands by the nation for the resignation of the prime minister, the Jamaican government acquiesced (Spaulding, 2010a). In May 2010, Jamaican security forces launched an attack on Tivoli Gardens, the inner-city community in Kingston, the capital, where Coke resides, in an attempt to find and capture him. The bloody incursion saw state forces battling criminals with high-powered weapons, the entire city of Kingston grinding to a halt for much of a seemingly endless week, and inner-city residents threatening to lay their lives down for Coke. When it was over, more than 70 civilians lay dead, at least one police station was burnt to the ground, and control of Tivoli Gardens, for the first time in many years, was transferred from crime lords back to the state (*Jamaica Gleaner*, 2010f). Security forces, incidentally, would not find Coke until weeks later.

In addition to causing the loss of civilian life, the violent confrontation also claimed the lives of members of the security forces. Yet when civilians mention these killings, there is no sympathy in their tone. Accused of rampant corruption and characterized by one of the highest rates of police killings in

the Americas, few members of the security forces receive any support from the communities in which they serve (AI, 2008a). In February 2010, the recovery of more than 10,000 rounds of illegal ammunition from one inner-city community—more than recovered in any single year since 2004—and the discovery that the stash came entirely from the national police armoury—only served to bolster residents' claims of police corruption and complicity in Jamaica's spiralling murder rate (Hall, 2010a). At 62 per 100,000 in 2009, Jamaica continues to have one of the highest murder rates in the world.[2]

It is within this context of gangs, guns, and allegations of political and police corruption that this small island grapples with violent crime. Further, despite the government's and civil society's efforts to address this issue, murder rates continue to rise. Indeed, the government struggles to contain gangs that, along with their various allies, appear better armed, better resourced, and more effective. Remarkably, however, understanding of gang characteristics and dynamics remains comparatively limited.

A necessary step in designing and implementing effective violence prevention and reduction strategies is solid evidence and analysis. Specifically, information on the institutions, actors, and instruments of violence can shift policy debates beyond a narrow focus on repressive anti-gang policy and disarmament. This report provides a preliminary overview of key trends in relation to gang and interpersonal violence in Jamaica. Drawing on several months of field-based research, focus groups, and key informant interviews, the report considers the structure and motivations of gangs, including their transnational and gender dimensions. It also offers a typology of gang violence reduction programmes and initiatives, exploring their discourse, practice, and outcomes.

This report presents an overview of the history, prevalence, and distribution of gangs, focusing in particular on their involvement in international drug and arms trafficking and the possible influence of deportees from the United States. It finds that there is a dense social web connecting highly organized, transnational gangs to the loosely organized gangs whose activities are often indistinguishable from broader community and interpersonal violence. It finds that contemporary gangs in Jamaica have their roots in the organized political violence of the 1940s. Though the political facilitation of crime has declined since the country's bloodiest national elections in 1980, it remains an enduring—

though less overt—force. The persistent facilitation of gang activity by politicians continues to hinder targeted violence reduction efforts, despite the government's vociferous public condemnation of crime and violence and official support of both punitive and social approaches to violence reduction.

Additional findings include:

- Government intelligence suggests that there are 268 active gangs operating throughout the island, a five-fold increase in prevalence over estimates in 1998.
- Over the past decade, murders committed in Jamaica have almost doubled. More than 13,000 people have been murdered since 2000.
- Gangs are accused of being responsible for as much as 80 per cent of all major crimes in Jamaica.
- Over the last decade, gun-related murders have driven the increase in murder rates, accounting for 77 per cent of murders by 2009; variations in gun murders account for almost all fluctuations in total murder rates.
- Most firearms seized in Jamaica are traced back to three US counties—Orange, Dade, and Broward—in the state of Florida, all of which have large Jamaican populations.
- The discovery in early 2010 of large amounts of illegal ammunition and firearms—all originating from the police force's central armoury—has conclusively linked security forces to the distribution of ammunition and weapons to criminals.
- Reductions in Jamaica's violence will be short-lived unless the linkages between politicians, organized crime, and gangs are severely eroded.
- Efforts to prevent and reduce gang violence require a careful accounting of gang heterogeneity and complex motivations. Conflating gang types undermines the effectiveness of the state's response.
- A differentiated response is also needed for addressing the proliferation of small arms in the country. Most small arms used in crimes are believed to have entered the country illegally, but much of the ammunition appears to have entered the country legally before being transferred to illicit markets.
- Gangs are prevalent in Jamaican communities where the state appears to be absent. By providing social services in these areas, gangs earn community

support. As a priority in gang reduction efforts, the government must improve governance and assume this role of service provision.

- In crafting anti-gang legislation, especially recently proposed legislation criminalizing gang membership, the Jamaican government would do well to evaluate whether the potential to apprehend more influential gang leaders outweighs the risk of further delegitimizing the state in communities where gangs govern.

- In a departure from exclusively hard-fisted approaches to gangs, the government recently adopted social interventions as another means of mitigating violence—though the hard-fisted approach still predominates.

- Community policing may offer an important alternative to security forces' more repressive approaches to crime control. ◪

Background: violent crime in Jamaica

Rates of criminal violence in the Caribbean are among the highest in the world (Geneva Declaration Secretariat, 2008). Across the region homicide and robbery rates are 34 and 26 per cent higher, respectively, than in countries with comparable macroeconomic conditions (World Bank, 2007, p. v). Yet even in such an environment, Jamaica exhibits notably higher rates of violent crime than its neighbours, especially for intentional homicides (see Figure 1). In 2004, Jamaican police crime data indicated 55.5 intentional homicides per 100,000, three times the Caribbean average of 18 per 100,000 and seven times the 2004 global average of 7.6 per 100,000 (Geneva Declaration Secretariat, 2008, pp. 71, 73; UNODC, 2010). By 2009, Jamaica's intentional homicide rate had climbed to a near-record 62 per 100,000.[3] Over that period Jamaica also recorded

Figure 1 **Intentional homicide rates, per 100,000 population: Barbados, Jamaica, and Trinidad and Tobago, selected years, 1974–2002**

Rate per 100,000 population
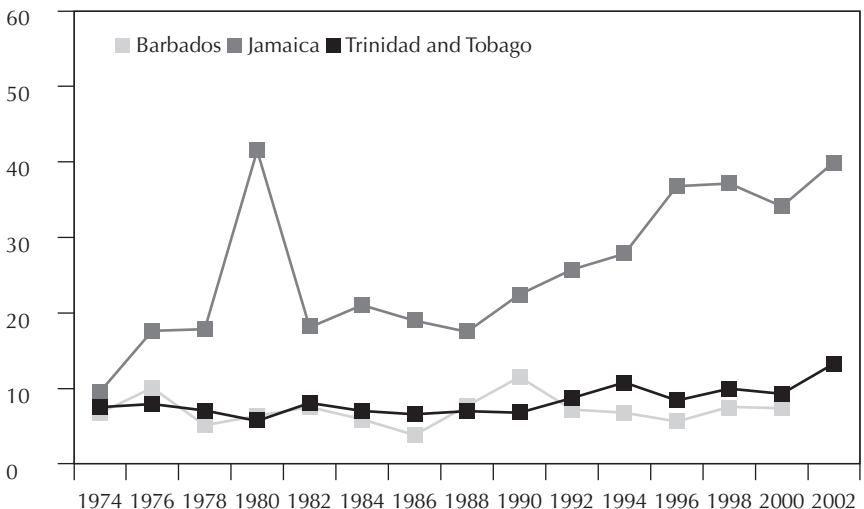
Source: Harriott (forthcoming)

a significant increase in reported major crimes, including robbery, breaking and entering, and larceny—increases of 43, 85, and 115 per cent, respectively (JCFSD, 2005; 2010).

As a category, violent crime in Jamaica has assumed a major role in overall crime rates over the past three decades. For example, in 1974, violent crime rates accounted for just 10 per cent of total crime rates. Two decades later—in 1996—with total reported crime rates remaining relatively stable, violent crime had quadrupled to 43 per cent of total crimes (Gayle, 2002, p. 65). Reported increases included murder (which stood at just 7 per 100,000 in the 1950s and 1960s) together with rape and felonious wounding (Moser and Holland, 1997, p. 1). A drop in recorded major crimes[4] since 1990 (led by sharp declines in property crimes) further highlighted the increasing intensity of violent crime. The number of reported major crimes in 2009 had fallen to 11,826 from 18,361 in 1990 (see Figure 2). The murder rate, however, exploded during the same period: in 1990 Jamaica recorded only 542 murders; in 2009, the island recorded 1,680 murders—a 210 per cent increase in the murder rate over the 20-year period. Worryingly,

Figure 2 **Total number of major crimes and murders recorded by the Jamaican government, 1990–2009**

Recorded major crimes　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　Recorded murders
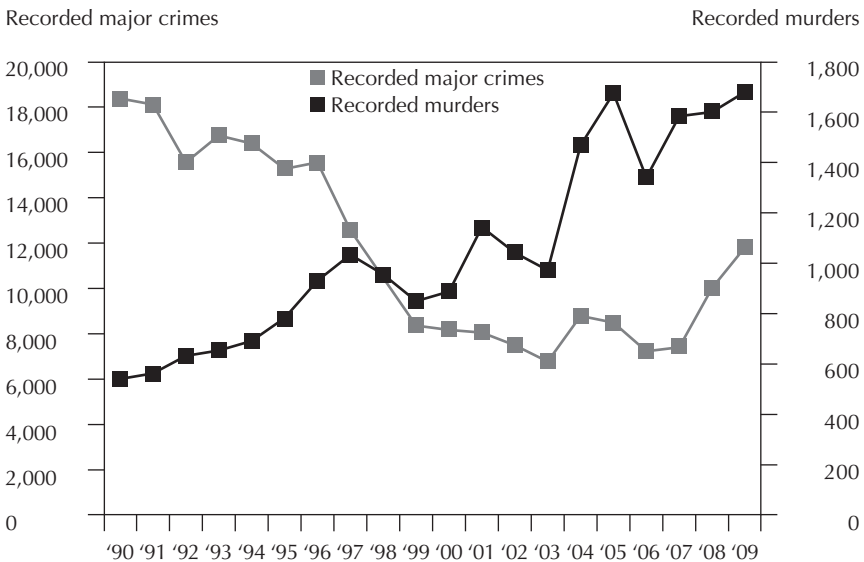
actual crime rates—both violent and non-violent—may be even higher than reported. Estimates are that only 20–30 per cent of crimes are reported to the police and that actual murder rates may be as much as 5 per cent higher than the reported rate (Harriott, 2009, pp. 20, 87; Wortley et al., 2006, p. 112).

The spatial distribution of violent crime in Jamaica indicates a concentration in urban areas. Between 1994 and 1997, more than 70 per cent of reported murders occurred in the Kingston Metropolitan Region (KMR). The KMR comprises Kingston,[5] Jamaica's capital, and two free-standing settlements: Spanish Town, a former capital, and Portmore, an overspill suburb of the capital located between the Kingston and Spanish Town (Chevannes, 2002, p. 59; Clarke, 2006). Although by 2008, this proportion had fallen to 58 per cent, there were corresponding increases in rates in the urban areas of parishes outside the KMR (JCFSD, 2009a).

Kingston has historically been the locus of Jamaica's highest violent crime rates. Murder rates of 62 per 100,000 were recorded from 1994, placing the city second only to Bogotá among the 40 large cities for which such data was available for that year (UNDP, 2000, p. 248). Since 1994, the murder rate has increased: in 2008, Kingston's was 96.2 per 100,000.[6] Even these figures, however, belie the high levels of intentional homicides in some Kingston communities, which can exceed 1,000 per 100,000, especially in the poorest areas (UNICEF, 2008, p. 6).

This last observation underscores the fact that violent crime is concentrated in *poor* urban areas (Bordenave and Davis, 2004; Harriott, 2009). West Kingston has traditionally been characterized by the highest concentration of violent crime; this area is also home to most of Kingston's marginalized inner-city communities (Chevannes, 2002). In 2001, 7.6 per cent of the population of Kingston lived below the poverty line, aggregate estimates that mask the depth of poverty in some places (Henry-Lee, 2005, p. 86).

Consistent with global trends, the perpetrators and victims of violent crimes in Jamaica tend to be young men. In 2001, 16–25-year-old boys and men accounted for 53 per cent of those arrested for major crimes (World Bank, 2004, p. 122). As of 2005, little had changed: men under 25 committed the majority of violent crimes, with persons in this category representing 43 per cent of murder suspects and 48 per cent of shooting suspects (Wilks et al., 2007, p. 6).

Likewise, between 1998 and 2002, most murder victims were men (89 per cent) and between 15 and 44 years of age (80 per cent). The murder rate for these 15–44-year-old men was 121 per 100,000—almost 10 times the rate of similarly aged women (Lemard and Hemenway, 2006, p. 15). Further, one-half of admissions to casualty departments and accident and emergency units for violence-related injuries were people under 30 years of age (Le Franc et al., 2008, p. 410).

Firearms, particularly handguns, are the weapons of choice for major crimes in Jamaica and the proportion of crimes committed with them is rising. In 1990, 50 per cent of all reported murders and 57 per cent of all robberies involved firearm use; in 2000, these proportions had increased to 61 per cent and 68 per cent, respectively (Harriott, 2002, p. 5). In 2009, though the proportion of robberies involving guns did not change significantly (66 per cent), gun murders represented 77 per cent of murders (JCFSD, 2010). Over the past

Figure 3 **Jamaican murders, 1999–2009, by implement used**

Number of murders
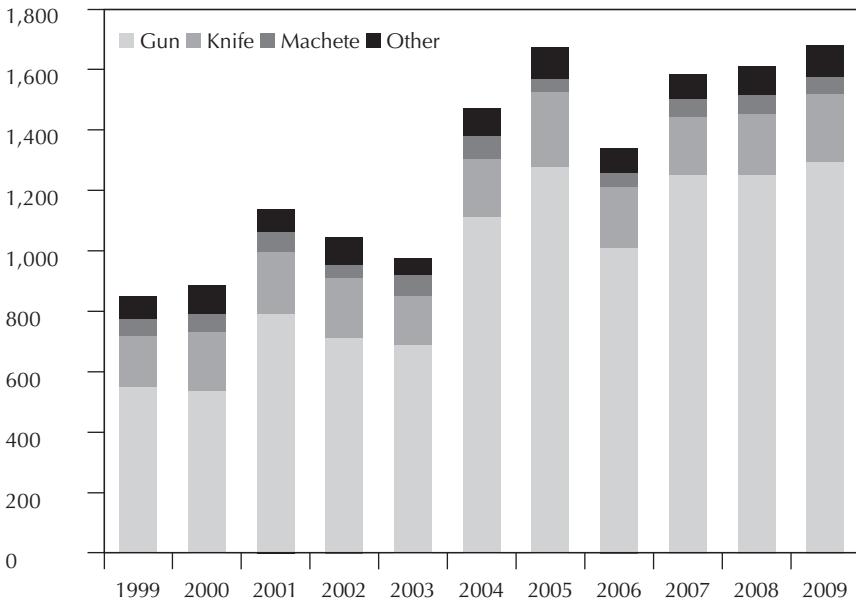
Source: JCFSD (2002; 2004; 2005; 2008; 2009b; 2010)

decade, variations in gun murders have accounted for almost all fluctuations in total murder rates (see Figure 3); 9 mm semi-automatic pistols are the weapons used most.[7]

Gangs, particularly armed ones, have increasingly contributed to violent crime rates in Jamaica. Official statistics suggest that gang-related murders increased from three per cent of murders in 1983 to 52 per cent in 2009 (Mogensen, 2005, p. 11; JCFSD, 2010). Notwithstanding these official statistics, the government maintains that an even higher proportion of murders in Jamaica is gang-related, with gangs allegedly responsible for approximately 80 per cent of all major crimes in Jamaica and 90 per cent of murders (Spaulding, 2009; *Jamaica Observer*, 2009a; MNS, 2008, p. 13). Officers within the Jamaica Constabulary Force (JCF) agree with these high estimates of gang involvement in violent crime, arguing that official figures underestimate gang activities, primarily due to an inability to prove their involvement, largely in response to the intimidation of witnesses and fear of reprisal (Wilks et al., 2007). Some academics also concur with these high estimates of gang involvement.[8]

The cost to Jamaica of violence-related injuries is enormous. An evaluation funded by the World Health Organization (WHO) in 2006 indicates that the cost of direct medical care for violence-related injuries at public hospitals islandwide was USD 29 million, approximately 12 per cent of Jamaica's total health budget. Further, productivity losses due to violence-related injuries are estimated to account for approximately USD 398 million, equivalent to four per cent of Jamaica's gross domestic product (Butchart et al., 2008; MoH and VPA, 2007, p. 8). The costs related to reduced mobility, weaker investor confidence, higher police costs, emigration of the educated middle class, reduced access to social services, and an overall climate of fear cannot be overstated.

Research methods

Despite a plethora of studies on violence and crime, there are comparatively few reliable, comprehensive, and generalizable studies of gangs in Jamaica.[9] As gangs account for a growing proportion of violent crimes in the country, however, policy-relevant research of this phenomenon—both criminological and ethnographic—is becoming increasingly valued.

The author conducted research in Kingston in June–September 2009 and February 2010.[10] The research was primarily qualitative in nature, comprising both field and desk research. Field research involved focus groups and interviews with police officers, other government officials, non-governmental organization (NGO) staff, academics, and representatives of international development agencies. Desk research involved sourcing and examining journal articles, reports of national and international agencies, books, conference presentations, archived newspaper articles, multimedia content, and statistical datasets.

Focus groups and interviews were semi-structured and consisted of 15–20 open-ended questions that, while varying by type of interviewee, centred primarily on gang characteristics, approaches adopted to reduce gang violence in Kingston, and the role that small arms play in local violence. The author also asked respondents to recommend additional persons who could provide helpful information.

The author searched bibliographic databases and reference lists for the period 1990 to October 2009 for studies that reported on crime, violence, and gangs in Jamaica. Databases used were Medline, Social Sciences Citation Index, PsycINFO, and Google Scholar, using the terms 'viol*', 'crim*', 'homicide', 'murder', 'Jamaica', 'Kingston', and 'gang'. References were then manually searched for other sources. The online archives of the *Jamaica Gleaner*, the island's leading newspaper, and the Jamaica Information Service, the government's public information portal, were also searched for articles related to gangs and firearms, as well as press releases from, and interviews of, government officials on crime, violence, gang activity, and government efforts to reduce them.

In addition, the author contacted international agencies and local NGOs to obtain their publications on violence in Jamaica. Approximately 22 books, 25 conference presentations, 48 journal articles, 110 newspaper articles, and 70 reports were identified as useful to accomplishing the research objectives. The Small Arms Survey also provided materials, including audio-visual content.

The author obtained quantitative data on crime, violence, and demographic characteristics from the websites of the JCF and the Statistical Institute of Jamaica. ▣

Gangs

The political economy of gang violence

The roots of organized violence in Jamaica trace back to the heated electoral disputes of the late 1940s between the founders of Jamaica's two political parties: Norman Manley (founder of the People's National Party) and Alexander Bustamante (founder of the Jamaica Labour Party). Division of inner-city neighbourhoods according to political allegiance started during this time, with party supporters choosing to live together in certain sections and rival party supporters violently forced out of others; this was the antecedent, by 20 years, of violent, politically controlled housing divisions that were labelled 'garrisons' (Harriott, 2004; Mogensen, 2005).[11]

What characterized a garrison community was that virtually the entire electorate—if not a padded electorate—voted for the same candidate and treated any opposition as a threat to the hegemony of the successful party. A combination of political favouritism in state housing allocation, partisan political violence, and gang rivalries harnessed to political party ends contributed to their careful construction (Clarke, 2006). Politicians reserved scarce resources such as jobs, contracts, houses, land, cash, and overseas agricultural employment applications for party supporters to ensure they remained faithful and to entice rival party supporters to switch their allegiance. Community supporters, most of whom were poor, would often employ violent means to ensure the success of their political benefactors, aware that the party in power usually had a greater advantage in the distribution of scarce benefits (Charles, 2004).

Beginning in the 1960s, politicians in densely populated inner-city areas of Kingston began arming groups with guns instead of the sticks and stones that had characterized earlier political violence (Chevannes, 2002; Levy, 2001a; Moser and Holland, 1997). They charged each group of men, or 'military crop', with the defence of its own area; these groups then answered to a single leader, called an 'enforcer' or 'don', who reported to the political directorate. Dons acted as enforcers of political will and ensured that citizens within their respective

constituencies voted in support of their preferred candidates (Wilks et al., 2007). Between 1960 and 1976, it is estimated that the illegal possession of guns in urban areas rose from 8 to 90 per 100,000 inhabitants and from 1 to 27 per 100,000 inhabitants in rural areas (Mogensen, 2005, p. 1).

During this time, and through the 1980s, many politicians and dons—almost entirely men—in Central and West Kingston were mutually dependent on one another. Dons ensured party loyalty in inner-city areas and politicians depended on them to deliver key votes. In return, dons depended on the politicians for patronage, such as jobs via public works programmes and public housing (Mogensen, 2005).[12] Further, political parties allowed these dons to operate with impunity in their locales, enabling them, in effect, to become the rule of law in some instances (Wilks et al., 2007). Consequently, the don exercised a firm discipline over his 'soldiers' in matters related not only to the conflict with a rival community, but also, as a natural consequence, to disputes and acts of indiscipline internal to his area (Mogensen, 2005, p. 3). This context of political patronage and violence helped form the contemporary gangs in Jamaica.

While political patronage towards certain gangs persists, the number of garrison communities has declined and most gang-related violence is no longer primarily political (Mogensen, 2005). Throughout the 1980s and 1990s, as neo-liberal structural adjustment was imposed and accepted by both the main parties, overt political violence declined (Levy, 2005, p. 2). Further, beginning in the 1980s, gangs increasingly became involved in more organized forms of crime, as the drug trade (see below) became a more frequent and lucrative source of income than political patronage (World Bank, 1997). A greater availability of guns also accompanied this reorientation of the gangs from politics to organized crime, especially to the drug trade (Clarke, 2006). Despite the reduction in political control of organized violence, however, a considerable residue remains. This is evident in the remaining territorial divisions armed with guns and ruled by a new generation of dons who are known for crimes and highly authoritarian relationships with followers; linkages of some dons to members of parliament in a number of prominent areas; and intolerance of divergent views, which is a fundamental feature of garrisons (Levy, 2005).

Typologizing the gang

The dearth of reliable and comprehensive Jamaican gang studies is partially due to the difficulty of collecting data on an acutely sensitive topic, and the lack of a definition of a 'gang' that adequately captures the various formal and informal networks and organizations of Jamaica's people. The definition used by the Research and Evaluation unit of the Ministry of National Security (MNS) is that:

> A gang is a formal or informal group, association or organization consisting of three or more persons who:
>
> 1. Have a primary objective or activity to individually or collectively commit criminal or delinquent acts which may create fear and/or intimidation or secure financial gain by criminal means
> 2. May have in common an identifying name, leader, de facto claim of territory/division or colour
> 3. May or may not be identified or linked by visible markings or mannerisms
> 4. May share or enjoy the proceeds of crime as well as conceal such proceeds (Edwards-Kerr and Wilks, 2010).[13]

Even when specific definitional criteria are imposed and met, however, gangs vary significantly by age and gender composition, level of organization, type or size of territory, and the level of involvement with crime and violence (MNS, 2008).

A review of the relevant literature reveals several typologies applied to Jamaican gangs, distinguishing them based on the average age and number of members, the motives for their activities, their organizational level, as well as their geographical extent. Each typology yields distinct insight into the problem of Jamaican gangs; yet, taken together, they generally complement each other. Above all, these typologies indicate that gangs fall on a spectrum— with loosely organized, smaller gangs on one end, and highly organized, large gangs on the other—more so than in mutually exclusive categories. After reviewing them, however, this report will employ one exclusively—not as an endorsement of that particular typology, but for ease of illustration.

A 1998 government-commissioned study categorizes gangs by levels of organization (Moncrieffe, 1998). While the typology does not acknowledge

the political relationships between gangs at different levels, each level corresponds to the degree of threat the gang posed to the community, the longevity of the gang, and its ability to proliferate internationally. An identifiable leadership, a formal hierarchy, assigned roles, specific territory, activities that increase cohesiveness, and formalized roles and rituals usually define a *highly organized gang*. *Loosely organized gangs* usually have no identifiable leadership or consistent leader. There is very little cohesive activity in these gangs, including criminal activity (gang members may work independent of the group to commit crimes); nor is there a clear hierarchical structure or specialized roles (oftentimes one member covers all aspects of the criminal operation). In between these two types is the *moderately organized gang*, which the study defines as having at least three characteristics of the highly organized gangs: high levels of cohesion (measured, for example, by the number of activities planned and undertaken together) and any two additional characteristics, such as leadership, territory, or assigned roles (Moncrieffe, 1998).

Another typology of Jamaican gangs separates large gangs that are heavily involved in international drug-trafficking—referred to as *organized crime groups*, *posses,* or *yardies*—from smaller, local, loosely organized groups called *youth gangs* (Rodgers, 1999; Laurent, 2007). These more notorious international drug-dealing posses and yardies, which generally have an adult membership, tend to overshadow Jamaican youth gangs, which are reported to have members between the ages of 12 and 15 (Moser and Holland, 1997; Rodgers, 1999). Unlike youth gangs, organized crime groups actively seek to corrupt local institutions, attempt to establish exclusive hegemony in communities in which they operate, and have an entrepreneurial intent—as distinguished from simply being concerned with intangibles such as turf and respect (Laurent, 2007). Newer data, however, suggest that 12–15-year-olds, while participating in gang-related activities, do not constitute most gang members (see below).

A third typology distinguishes *area gangs* from *corner gangs*. Area gangs dominate entire communities or neighbourhoods. Many are well established and rooted in the political patronage and political violence that characterized Jamaican electoral politics from the 1960s to the 1980s. Corner gangs are more informal gangs that may not be connected to politically motivated violence, may have youths and children involved in activities, and may exist in communities

dominated by area gangs (Mogensen, 2005). Though corner gang members may never have participated in the forms of political patronage seen in the 1970s and 1980s, as inner-city community residents they are likely to identify with and defend the party dominant in the community from which they emerge and in which they operate (Mogensen, 2005). Area gangs, unlike corner gangs, traditionally benefited from a relationship with local politicians regarding control of resources such as jobs and housing, though many are now in other criminal activities such as the drug trade, extortion, and protection rackets (Mogensen, 2005).

A fourth typology describes Jamaican gangs using three broad categories: *first-generation*, *second-generation,* and *third-generation* (Manwaring, 2007). First-generation gangs are traditional street gangs with a turf orientation. They are loosely structured, and when they engage in criminal enterprise, it is largely opportunistic and localized. Second-generation gangs are more entrepreneurial and focused on drug trafficking and transhipment. They may overtly challenge state security and sovereignty and dominate vulnerable community life within large areas of the nation-state to improve their market share and revenues.[14] Second-generation gangs usually associate with, and provide mercenary services to, transnational criminal organizations. Third-generation gangs are primarily mercenary in orientation, are transnational in the scope of their activities, and inevitably begin to control ungoverned territory within a nation-state or acquire political power in poorly governed space. It is suggested that Jamaican gangs fit into all three of these categories, with a significant distinction that second- and third-generation gangs dominate communities not only by force, but also through the social investments they make there that compensate for the inadequacies of the Jamaican 'welfare state' (Manwaring, 2007, p. 33).

A fifth and final typology highlights the fluid relationship that exists between gangs and other forms of organized violence in Jamaican communities and distinguishes between *criminal gangs* and *community gangs* (formerly referred to as *corner crews*[15]). When Jamaican communities argue over political loyalties (for example, during election periods) or disputes erupt over land allocation (referred to as 'turf war'), the community as a whole can be involved in the violence as either perpetrators or victims. At these times, some young men

who do not identify with a particular gang, and who claim not to participate in violence at other times, will resort to violence to defend their community from violent acts perpetrated by rival communities (Mogensen, 2005). One study of violence in Jamaica notes that research participants often used the terms 'community', 'organization', and 'local gang' interchangeably (Mogensen, 2005).

The rationale for the distinction between criminal and community gangs is that organized violence perpetrated primarily in defence of communities during inter-community disputes should be distinguished from that perpetrated primarily for economic gain (Levy, 2005). As such, criminal gangs participate in criminal activities for entrepreneurial ends, whereas community gangs, while also participating in criminal activities (including, say, drive-by shootings), do so in defence of the community during times of inter-community conflict. There are additional differences. Despite some overlap in members, the community gang, which may consist of young boys and men who loiter in specific areas, is principally social in nature, non-crime-oriented, and brought together by geography and the desire for company and solidarity (Levy, 2001b). Conversely, criminal gangs are predominantly predatory.

The distinction between community and criminal gangs is made, however, while acknowledging the potential for overlap in membership between them (Levy, 2005). There may be members of community gangs who participate in criminal activities, whether individually or as part of a larger criminal gang, while retaining an association to the community gang. The natural progression of such behaviour is often that the entire community gang becomes a criminal gang due to prolonged hardship and engagement in illegal activity. Furthermore, community gangs may evolve as they attempt to mimic the larger criminal gangs, with or without their consent. This development often takes place in an attempt to gain power, become increasingly feared, and secure the level of respect that these larger criminal gangs command.[16]

There are clearly synergies between the above typologies. For example, *first-generation gangs* closely resemble *community gangs* and *corner gangs*, which share common traits with *youth gangs* and *loosely organized gangs*. *Second-* and *third-generation gangs*—with entrepreneurial focuses on international drug trafficking, extortion, and community dominance—closely resemble *criminal gangs*, *organized crime groups*, *area gangs,* and *highly organized gangs*.

This report adopts the fifth typology—the spectrum of *community* and *criminal gangs*. It situates community gangs and criminal gangs at opposite ends of a continuum to fully capture Jamaican gang phenomena, while acknowledging the migration of characteristics between these ends.[17] Characteristics ascribed to community gangs and criminal gangs in the following sections are not necessarily mutually exclusive; some characteristics ascribed to community gangs may be present in some criminal gangs, and vice versa.

Whatever typology is applied, research shows that an intricate web, in which smaller gangs interact with larger gangs to acquire resources, connects all gangs. Larger gangs themselves are frequently involved with even larger entities that are often transnational in nature—and both of these entities may closely connect with the two major political parties in the country.[18] The above-mentioned spectrum therefore has directionality (or path dependence): a community gang, which begins as a group of socially alienated members looking for validation and company, may evolve and proliferate out of exposure to larger gangs, as well as the need to control turf, maintain a tough reputation, and commit petty theft to maintain group solidarity (Moncrieffe, 1998).

Structure and distribution

Intelligence suggests that there are 268 active gangs in Jamaica, a five-fold increase in prevalence compared to the 1998 estimate of 49 active gangs (Hall, 2010b; Moncrieffe, 1998).[19] There are approximately 12 organized crime groups on the island;[20] estimates in 1998 were that there were 7 highly organized gangs (Moncrieffe, 1998).[21] While there is no validated estimate of the overall number of gang members in Jamaica, some observers have claimed that gang membership could be as high as 20,000, with estimates for Kingston ranging from 6,000 to 10,000 (Manwaring, 2007, p. 35; Mogensen, 2005, p. 4). More recent studies yield more conservative figures, however. According to an unreleased gang threat assessment study completed by the MNS in 2009, there are approximately 3,900 gang members across the country—numbers still high enough to suggest highly differentiated forms of 'membership'.[22] These findings are similar to that of the 2006 Jamaican National Crime Victimization Survey (JNCVS), in which 0.1 per cent of respondents were current gang members,

and 1.1 per cent (1.9 per cent of men and 0.4 per cent of women) reported having been a member of a gang at some point in their lives (Wortley et al., 2006, p. 72). The percentage with current gang membership translates to approximately 2,700 people. Neither study, however, could determine the distribution of membership across different gang types. Though gang activity is primarily centred in urban areas, all parishes in Jamaica now have gangs, with more than 60 per cent of them operating in Kingston (Ellington, 2009; Gayle, 2009b).

Criminal gangs are more organized than community gangs. Criminal gangs have an all-powerful don or area leader at the apex of the organization, an upper echelon, a middle echelon, and 'workers' at the bottom of the social pyramid. The upper echelon coordinates overall drug, arms, and human trafficking efforts. The middle group manages daily operational activities. The lowest echelon performs street-level sales, purchases, protection, and acts of violence as assigned (Manwaring, 2007). Cohesion is central to the success of the organized crime structure and includes the formalization of rules and rituals that solidify the group. Without these practices, the strength and productivity of the gang would be dramatically reduced (Moncrieffe, 1998). Community gangs, despite their loose organization, are almost always connected to criminal gangs, which, through their access to the international drug economy, are able to provide members of smaller gangs with jobs or money (Gayle, 2009b; Williams, 2005).[23] Community gangs also have much shorter life spans than criminal gangs, due to death, incarceration, lack of ability to finance activities, and vulnerability to the suppression methods of state security forces (Moncrieffe, 1998).

Across gang types, members are mostly young men.[24] The age at which they enter gangs varies—some estimates place it at between 16 and 17; the average age of entry is certainly lower now than it was 20–30 years ago (Mogensen, 2005).[25] Though this age is low, the age range of gang members can be broad: community gang members are often as old as 45.[26] This broad age range is due in part to the flexibility of gang membership in many community gangs; some may join and leave the group multiple times over their lifetimes. The fluidity of gang membership is primarily due to the unclear distinction between gang violence and community violence, which often attracts participants during times of heightened inter-community conflict but allows

them to return to 'normal' life once tensions have abated.[27] Older members in their 40s may have established legitimate businesses in the community; they may thus be less involved in regular gang activities, though they still command respect. Members in their 20s are often the decision-makers, while those in their late teens and early 20s tend to be the main perpetrators of gang violence.[28]

Criminal gangs actively recruit new members. Young men, preferably those with at least a high school education, are targeted for criminal gang recruitment; they are first involved in activities such as transporting guns, manning observation posts during times of gang warfare, or drug dealing and collecting protection money (Harriott, 2000; Moser and Holland, 1997). Recruitment methods rarely include intimidation or physical coercion (Moncrieffe, 1998). Young men also often form associations with gang members in prison. Nearly all gangs have links to the prison system, often because their members spent time there at some stage. Once released, some persons may not return to their original communities, but formalize the relationships formed in prison in order to enter a different community.[29] An emerging trend is for criminal gangs to recruit young members from rural areas.[30]

In contrast, community gangs rarely recruit actively. Because of the nebulous line between community gangs and community violence, young men—by virtue of their residence in the community—may naturally become involved in inter-community warfare.[31] Despite an organic process of recruitment, types of initial involvement are often the same across gang types; these include acting as a 'gun-bag' (carrying guns for someone) and manning observation posts during times of community conflict.[32]

In contrast to gangs in South, Central, and North America, few Jamaican gangs have identifying signs such as tattoos, hand signs, or gang colours (Wilks, 2009). The loose structure of these gangs and unclear distinction between gang violence and larger community violence tend to weaken individual ties to gangs. Nonetheless, a culture of silence about gang activities—for fear of being tagged an 'informer' by other group members, for which the punishment is often death—does exist (Mogensen, 2005; Moser and Holland, 1997).[33]

Unlike community gangs, whose turf may be as small as one street, criminal gangs rarely localize their activities in one community. Instead, these gangs have satellites in multiple communities, which they control from their head-

quarters (Williams, 2005).[34] Although community gangs have a narrower impact than criminal gangs, their local communities may be significantly affected as a result of frequent territorial wars (Meeks Gardner, 2007; Moncrieffe, 1998).

Gangs of all types appear to thrive in communities that lack proper governance. Communities often offer gangs of all types large levels of support, including financing, intelligence, and protection. They support community gangs primarily because of their defence of the community during times of conflict. Criminal gangs, on the other hand, receive the support of the community because they are community benefactors, making social investments that compensate for the inadequacies of the Jamaican government (Williams, 2005).[35] The gangs' provision of welfare and social services (including security) to socially excluded communities where the government has not provided such services aids in legitimizing them and their leaders—the dons—the subject of the next section.

The don and the community

Dons—male civilians who exercise control over a gang or a community—are central figures in Jamaican organized violence. A don is often known as the 'community leader' or 'area leader', though not all community leaders are dons; the distinction is at times nebulous (Mogensen, 2005). Dons tend to be linked to politics, drugs, or both (Clarke, 2006). The don enjoys power, influence, and support in part because of the various services he can provide for residents, especially in communities that lack official governance structures. As a major benefactor in many communities, the don usurps the role of government in providing welfare services, including tuition, food, and employment, as well as, paradoxically, criminal justice. The don's influence is evident even in prison; dons' promises of rewards to correctional services staff often allow them access to mobile phones with which they are still able to direct operations outside.[36] The government acknowledges that the emergence of dons as holders of power in these communities has partially resulted from the failure of the community and politicians to provide basic necessities (GOJ, 2007).

The don, as community or gang leader, often assumes the role of local arbiter and is ultimately responsible for enforcing discipline within his gang as

well as the community. Residents turn to the don or gang for justice; they often have little faith in the justice system and speak freely of community justice or 'kangaroo court'[37] justice. When crimes are carried out within the community, dons enforce discipline, including beatings or executions, to an extent considered commensurate with the level of the crime (Mogensen, 2005). In so-called 'garrison communities' especially, the quality of life of the residents depends on the quality of their relationship with the don, which often means their level of loyalty and obedience to him. Residents receive protection from the don, which means that they will not be victims of crime. Some households receive school fees, food, and payments for medical bills from the don. Housing, though usually of poor quality, can be secured with the don's blessing (Henry-Lee, 2005). In communities that gangs control, a don figure also often becomes a substitute parent for young men, and parents often leave the socialization of young boys to the don, who takes young boys 'in training' (Williams, 2001).

Many residents see gang violence as inversely linked to the existence of a 'strong leader' in the community; a powerful don can reduce factional fighting and maintain cohesiveness. In one study, stability in a local community between 1981 and 1986 reflected the iron-fisted rule of a notorious don in the area over that period. Violence perpetration rates exploded after his arrest, however, as individuals fought among themselves to fill the power vacuum (Moser and Holland, 1997). Despite the government's insistence that dons do not serve a positive social function in the communities in which they operate, the 2006 JNCVS finds that 43 per cent of respondents who live in communities with area dons claimed that dons had done 'positive things' for their communities. Only 26 per cent said dons had done 'negative things' (GOJ, 2007, p. 12; Wortley et al., 2006, pp. 42, 43). This generally positive evaluation of the dons applies especially to their disciplinary activity and control of petty criminals (Harriott, 2009).

Motivations for gang membership

The motivations for youths to join gangs vary widely. Youths feel the need to be associated with a protective group because of the violence of inner-city

communities. Regardless of whether a youth is a gang member, warring gangs may kill him because they identify him as a member of a rival community. Political conflict plays an implicit role here: the experience of growing up in politically polarized communities ultimately pulls many youths into community defence and its main agent, the community gangs (Levy, 2009). In some communities, boys are socialized from before the age of ten to hate members of the opposite party (Gayle, 2009a). Regardless of whether immediate gang warfare is politically based, experiencing violent political polarization for a lifetime engenders this approach to addressing conflict. In this context, gang membership offers support and access to a weapon for defence, in the case of conflict. Further, this protection is not solely from gangs, but also from police, who do not enjoy the trust of everyone in the community. The relationship police have with some communities is based solely on violent raids, and accusations of human rights violations are frequent (Gayle, 2009b; Moncrieffe, 1998). Certain researchers also believe that almost all small gangs align themselves with larger ones, which, in turn, align themselves with larger organized crime groups. Membership at the local level can thus provide illegal jobs or funds from larger gangs that have resources from the international drug trade (Gayle, 2009b).

Another recurrent motivation is the desire for respect—from male peers as well as from women. The idea of 'getting respect' serves as a major motivation for most youths who join gangs in Jamaica, but also globally. In inner-city communities guns, which can be obtained through gang membership, are symbols of protection, status, and money and are used to attract women and gain the respect of men (Chevannes, 2002; Gayle, 2009b; Moser and Holland, 1997). This is an especially significant motivation for gang members who are in their teenage years or early 20s.[38] Experiences in prisons also bolster this desire for respect. Some incarcerated youths meet gang members and their dons in prison, and see the level of respect the dons command, even while in prison. This compelling demonstration of power often leads youths towards gang activities.[39]

Other studies observe that the drifting together of socially alienated youths to find a sense of belonging is the genesis of gang involvement. Initial motivations for gang membership revolve around identity, belonging, and participation

in a range of group activities that at times include gang activities (Moncrieffe, 1998). Other risk factors include poverty, widespread unemployment, and the absence of educational opportunities, the lack of community support and counselling, popular culture (music, film, and television) that glorifies violence, and early and persistent exposure to environments with prevalent gang activity (Mogensen, 2005). In addition to these, the absence of a legal opportunity structure may be accompanied by the presence of an *alternative* opportunity structure, alternative socialization, and alternative validation of behaviour: a subculture of violence (Harriott, 2009).

Activities and resources

The financial and human resources that gangs have can be quite extensive. Criminal gangs—many of which are transnational in scope—enjoy the bulk of these financial and human resources, and power. They are believed to have aircraft, watercraft, and crews for receipt and delivery of contraband, as well as their own personnel to run legitimate businesses and conduct money-laundering tasks (Manwaring, 2007). These gangs are also able to employ expert legal counsel to meet their various needs. In addition, they often dominate informal economic sectors; they establish small businesses and use violence, coercion, and the co-option of government authorities to compete unfairly with legitimate businesses and further their criminal ends (Ellington, 2009; MNS, 2008). Gangs often bribe or intimidate customs officials, for example, into allowing certain shipments to pass inspection; some officers who have not succumbed to this pressure have been murdered (*Jamaica Observer*, 2009c). Conversely, community gangs are usually resource-deprived (Williams, 2005).[40]

Police intelligence suggests that approximately 60 per cent of Jamaican gangs are actively engaged in shootings, murders, and other serious crimes such as car-jacking, theft, robberies, extortion, contract killings, and drug and gun smuggling (MNS, 2008). Gangs derive their primary income from drug trafficking, the extortion of local merchants, and remittances from overseas-based members and supporters (GOJ, 2007; Harriott, 2009). Gangs are not reported to commonly engage in human trafficking, prostitution, and kidnapping (Wilks, 2009). Criminal gangs are the primary participants in international drug traf-

ficking. Many are transnational in scope and have operations in the rest of the Caribbean, the United States, Canada, and Europe.[41] In addition to international arms trafficking, these gangs are also heavily involved in local extortion.

Community gangs rely primarily on remittances from abroad and petty theft for income. Benefactors in major cities such as New York, London, and Toronto are the primary sources of remittances, which local gang members then share. These benefactors are inclined to give for various reasons: some may be former members of poor and embattled local communities who emigrated to the United States and the United Kingdom, but commiserate with the difficulties their former communities face when defending territories and losing loved ones.[42] Others may have been directly involved in gangs locally and so, now that they have emigrated, remit funds to maintain respect and power in their former communities.[43] While some of these benefactors still participate in illegal activities in their new countries, others work legitimately. From these activities, gangs obtain large sums of money, which are shared among gang members; sharing in 'spoils' is the primary means of compensation of gang members (Mogensen, 2005).

The wealth and power that some gangs are capable of attaining makes them especially formidable. Criminal gangs, which amass the most of both, are able to use their resources to corrupt key institutions of the country, including the police force, elements in the state administration, and the political parties (Harriott, 2009). For example, Jamaica's police has a long history of protecting gang members (especially in garrison communities), originally under direction from politicians. With the decline in political patronage, the police have been increasingly involved in one-on-one relationships with these gang members. The trade-off is one involving police offers of protection from the law and gangs paying (or offering a share in drug profits) in exchange for it (Clarke, 2006). Similarly, in communities where political patronage still exists, powerful gangs guarantee politicians that they will enforce voter support for them in their communities, in exchange for preference in the distribution of government contracts, housing, and protection from the law. With the existence of these agreements, these communities continue to be safe havens for organized crime and safe seats for political parties, a state of affairs mirrored in Trinidad and Tobago (Harriott, 2009; Townsend, 2009).[44]

Gangs also establish connections with other gangs, both locally and nationally. For criminal gangs in particular, domination of their turf in Jamaica's confined area makes constant cooperation and negotiation with each other and the state necessary conditions for generating the degree of stability needed to conduct profitable business (Manwaring, 2007). Another bond that unites gang members in different communities, though loosely, is their political identity—that is, their support for one of the two political parties in the country. Indeed, most gangs are embedded in garrison communities or squatter settlements and maintain allegiance to specific political parties, especially during periods of heightened political activity (Ellington, 2009). After committing serious crimes, gang members can evade arrest by finding temporary sanctuary in other communities controlled by gangs that share their political allegiance.[45] Further, in situations of conflict, gangs often summon support from each other (Charles, 2004). This mutual support also cuts across gang types; community gangs can summon support from criminal gangs and vice versa.[46]

The drug trade

Jamaican gang involvement in the international drug trade dates as far back as the late 1970s. With the introduction of cocaine into Kingston during this time, gangs that were politically active in Kingston communities slowly became involved in trafficking the drug from South America to the United States (Gunst, 1996; Sives, 2002).

Central to the development of international drug trafficking in Jamaica were the country's bloodiest elections, in 1980, in which more than 800 persons were murdered.[47] After those elections, many Jamaican gangsters emigrated to the United States and the United Kingdom, where they became heavily involved in the drug trade. They were then able to use their newly acquired wealth to recruit new members, purchase influence and weapons, and establish drug trafficking routes between their adopted countries and Jamaica. In both the United States and the United Kingdom, clones of the Jamaican gangs were created, but with an emphasis on eliminating enemies and protecting turf. In the United States, gangs such as the Shower Posse emerged with direct links to their counterparts in Jamaica, whereas in the United Kingdom the Yardies

took shape. Gangsters abroad maintained control of gangs back home by sending them guns and ammunition, cash, and instructions (Laurent, 2007).

The transition in Jamaican gang activity, from partisan–political violence and patronage to drug trafficking, was a natural one for several reasons. First, alternative sources of income and security were available through involvement in drug trafficking and dealing. Second, the drug money gangs acquired was regularly available and substantial. Third, drug trafficking afforded gang members an opportunity to go abroad as many of the expatriate gang leaders maintained connections with their home communities. Fourth, this opportunity became available at a time when state resources were contracting (Sives, 2002).

In the 1980s and early 1990s, Kingston therefore became central to the drug trade, serving as a convenient coastal conduit through which drug cartels transported marijuana and cocaine to the United States. Local farmers cultivated the marijuana[48] whereas the cocaine was imported primarily from Columbia and Venezuela (UNODC, 2002). During this period the drug economy supplanted politics as the driving force behind the violence between rival communities (Duncan-Waite and Woolcock, 2008).

Cocaine accounts for 85 per cent of the drug market in the Caribbean region. Ninety per cent of this cocaine (or 240 metric tons) continues its passage in the direction of other consuming markets (Harriott, 2002, p. 6). At the beginning of the present decade, the illegal drug market in the Caribbean generated an estimated income of USD 3.3 billion, representing 3.1 per cent of the registered gross domestic product in the region (Harriott, 2002, p. 6). Further, it is estimated that about ten tons of cocaine transited through Jamaica in 2005 (World Bank, 2007, p. v). The major participants in international drug trafficking presently are criminal gangs; few community gangs are directly involved in this trade. Community gang members might sell small quantities of marijuana locally, but this rarely forms part of a larger system of marijuana sale and distribution that the gang itself coordinates (Moncrieffe, 1998).[49]

Some research suggests that the period of rapid acceleration in the murder rate corresponds with the period of greatest expansion (and competitiveness) in the cocaine and cocaine derivatives business, their transhipment through the region, and the mushrooming of organized crime (Harriott, 2002). Further, studies of gangs by local researchers have indicated that drug trafficking is the primary source of funding for weaponry that local feuding parties use,

surpassing the role of merchants and politicians who are also involved in arming youths (Gayle, 2009b).

Deportees

The role of Jamaican deportees in crime and violence remains unclear and controversial. Contrary to claims by local security forces, the most robust studies of the phenomenon suggest that criminal deportation in general has played a small role in Jamaica's murder rate (Headley, 2005; Madjd-Sadjadi and Alleyne, 2008).

Between 1996 and 2007, approximately 40,000 Jamaicans who lived in the United Kingdom, Canada, and the United States were deported for criminal offences ranging from drug- and immigration-related issues to assault and murder, making Jamaica the country with the highest ratio of deportees to overall population in the world. Most deportees are from the United States (Headley, 2008).[50]

Suggestions of their contribution to Jamaica's crime have been numerous. In 2003, the Jamaican police estimated that deportees were the backbone of approximately one-third of the gangs operating across the island, including at least 30 in the Kingston Metropolitan Region (KMR) (Sinclair and Mills, 2003). This followed an investigation by the Associated Press, which concluded that the large number of deportees from the United States could have been directly responsible for a large portion of Jamaica's surging homicide rate in the preceding five years (Sinclair and Mills, 2003; *Jamaica Gleaner*, 2004a). Further, a 2001 preliminary study by the MNS showed that at least 20 per cent of Jamaican deportees without family ties sought refuge in inner-city gangs upon their return (*Jamaica Gleaner*, 2006).

Other studies contradict these findings. Some data indicates that most criminal deportees were guilty of *non-violent* crimes—mostly non-serious drug offences. It is therefore unlikely, researchers suggest, that deportees represent a large portion of perpetrators of violent crime on their return to Jamaica (Anderson, 2004; Headley, 2008). Further, a study commissioned by the US government in 2004 concludes that a minimal proportion of murders in Jamaica can be attributed to deportees (Headley, 2005; *Jamaica Gleaner*, 2006). The most recent

study on the role that deportees from the United States played in local homicide rates concludes that criminal deportation was likely to be responsible for, at most, four per cent of the total number of murders committed in Jamaica each year (Madjd-Sadjadi and Alleyne, 2008, p. 45).

Some government officials believe that a small, yet powerful, number of deportees are contributing to violent crime, contesting their colleagues' claims that deportees play a more substantial role (Anderson, 2004; Headley, 2007; *Jamaica Observer*, 2005b). Local academics, however, caution that while it is possible that a minority of deportees are involved in criminal activity, their numbers and proportions have not been determined (Headley, 2008; World Bank, 2007). Neither, they claim, has it been determined whether an unrepresentative few deportees may be in positions of dominance over violent criminal gangs (Headley, 2008).

Instigators of warfare

The gravest consequence of gang activity in Jamaica is the high number of murders. Most are the result of inter-gang warfare, but some are also due to intra-gang warfare among splintering gangs and, to a lesser extent, conflict between gangs and police officers (Mogensen, 2005; *Jamaica Gleaner*, 2007; World Bank, 1997). As noted above, gang violence in Jamaica has always been tied to disputes over territory and resources. Historically, political party allegiance was a key factor in gaining access to resources, such as jobs and housing, leading to clashes between gangs that supported opposing political parties. Increasingly, however, gangs are also in conflict over control of resources that come from other criminal activities, primarily the drug trade, extortion, and exclusive control of communities (Mogensen, 2005).

Despite the decline of overt political conflict, a significant number of inter-community conflicts continue to be similarly motivated, though police may not describe them as such (Henry-Lee, 2005). A gain in criminal territory, for example, may become a gain in political territory for some gangs. During general election campaigns, gangs often operate as members of informal party militias under the control of dons to secure political victory for their party using violence, hence the advantages of securing as much criminal/political

territory as possible. The gangster identity is salient between elections while the political identity takes the lead during election campaigns (Charles, 2004). When elections come, some inter-gang rivalries are even set aside, and gangs unite to fight traditional political rivals (Sives, 2002).

Turf wars also include disputes over territory for ostensibly non-political reasons. Members of criminal gangs fight with each other over the control of territory in order to expand their criminal activities; many turf wars that were once political have become drug-related (Charles, 2004; Wilks et al., 2007). Community gangs, however, may have disputes over territory with perceived social services or employment opportunities that can be of aid to their local communities.

Gang reprisals, which are fuelled by a thirst for instant revenge—coupled with an inability to resolve conflicts—contribute greatly to murder rates. Reprisal killings constitute the majority of gang-related murders in some communities.[51] When gang members are unsuccessful in pursuing their adversaries, they will often target friends, relatives, acquaintances, or anyone from the adversary's community instead (*Jamaica Gleaner*, 2008b).[52] In a departure from historical precedent, victims of this sort of retribution now include women, children, and the elderly (Luton, 2008c). The genesis of the cycle of reprisals may be perceived offences of one community against another, including through rape, robbery, and theft; sometimes, the initial cause of the reprisals can no longer be recalled (Mogensen, 2005).[53] Paradoxically, community gangs also carry out assassinations in order to maintain peace. If criminals who enter a community are perceived as threatening a fragile local peace in the absence of effective policing, gangs may kill the new actors.[54]

Intra-gang conflicts are also partially responsible for the violent crime rates. These conflicts, which usually stem from a disagreement over spoils, often lead to gang splintering and deadly struggles over turf. Sometimes this turf has some underlying economic value, such as the control of labour (*Jamaica Gleaner*, 2007). The increased availability of weapons to gang members formerly dependent on gang leaders to access guns also facilitates splintering. Easier access has decreased the incentive, especially for youths, to remain subservient to the gang leader.[55] Further, members of organized gangs have opportunities to act independently of orders due to distanced supervision, increased gang hierarchy, and increasing access to their own weaponry. The

cohesion-building activities (including the formalization of rules and rituals that solidify the group) and strong deterrence of internal discipline are not effective if monitoring powers, individual moral boundaries, and greed are more powerful motivators (Moncrieffe, 1998).

One significant motivation for community gang warfare is that remittances from abroad and opportunities to commit petty theft increase during times of heightened community conflict.[56] During such conflict, many benefactors abroad will remit funds to local community members. These benefactors sometimes feel compelled to send funds due to a desire to contribute to their community's ability to defend itself. These funds may be used to purchase weapons and ammunition or may be used, for example, to provide those engaged in the conflict with a meal. Community gangs may be the face of the battle, but the entire community engages in, and supports, the violence—and stands to benefit from remittances.[57]

Regardless of the motivations for the warfare, the resulting violence has left many communities crippled. Among the worst outcomes of warfare are the invisible lines of demarcation that are drawn between—and within—communities. Gangs often use streets as a means of dividing neighbourhoods; members of one community cross a particular street at their peril—they may be killed for so foolish a choice (Reid, 2010). During times of heightened violence, when these lines are strictly enforced, even children cannot cross them to go to school. Jamaica's bloody borderline culture, like so much of its organized violence, is historically rooted in political conflict.

The distribution of gang violence by gang type remains unclear. The 1998 study by the MNS concludes that the level of violence used by a gang—especially the number of homicides in which a gang is implicated—does not correlate with the gang's level of organization; violence levels varied by individual gangs and could not be generalized (Moncrieffe, 1998). Further, the number of murder victims in a community did not appear to correlate with the number, or organizational level, of gangs in that community. Officials in recent times, however, have suggested that as few as 12 (criminal) gangs are responsible for most serious crimes in the country (MNS, 2008). Conversely, other local stakeholders believe that there are lower numbers of homicides in areas of Kingston under the control of larger gangs; the dons of these criminal gangs limit the fatalities caused by smaller gangs.[58]

Indeed, some local experts argue that gangs that are heavily involved in international drug trafficking require low levels of violence; rather than competing, they cooperate internationally among large criminal networks. The street-level drug runners of their operations, however, become violent because of social problems, such as social exclusion (Gayle, 2009b). Other experts maintain that community and criminal gangs are responsible for equal portions of gang-related murders.[59] Criminal gangs do not necessarily commit higher numbers of murders per member or more serious types of violent crime; however, because of their longevity, support networks, and their usually high memberships, they may account for numerous crimes (Moncrieffe, 1998).

Gangs in schools

There is a significant gang presence in public secondary schools. Though police officials claim that most gangs across the country have offshoots composed entirely of youths, the extent to which they are present in schools is uncertain (*Jamaica Gleaner*, 2008a). School gangs are differentiated from other groups of students in their propensity to carry out extortion, intimidation, rape, and other criminal acts, in their understanding that such activities are part of their plans (rather than occasional, opportunistic events), and in their acquiring a reputation for carrying out these activities (Meeks Gardner, 2007).

Official surveillance supports this finding. In the 2007 National School Gang Survey, 70 per cent of students indicated that gangs were present in their schools, as did 44 per cent of principals. Interestingly, these results did not differ for schools in rural or urban areas. Further, 66 per cent of the students and 30 per cent of the principals reported that the school gangs were related to criminal gangs outside of the school (Meeks Gardner, 2007). Officials posit that schools are gang-recruitment centres for the vulnerable, particularly young boys who suffer from low self-esteem and dysfunctional home environments (*Jamaica Gleaner*, 2008a). While getting involved in fights appears to be the common activity of these gangs, theft, sexual harassment, and drug use occur as well, with other activities such as extortion, the sale of drugs, gambling, smoking, and intimidation happening to a lesser extent (Meeks Gardner, 2007). 📖

Firearms

The need to protect drug production, trafficking, and local distribution operations has given impetus to illegal gun acquisition. Firearms are used to protect contraband goods, intimidate drug users and competitors, protect turf, coerce recruits into gangs, maintain discipline within these gangs, and execute those who threaten to disrupt the trade (CMC, 2009; Frankson, 2007). Indeed, gangs disproportionately use firearms when committing violent crimes; data from 1998 to 2002 shows that at a time when only 70 per cent of murders involved guns, 94 per cent of gang- and drug-related murders involved them (Lemard and Hemenway, 2006, p. 15).

Politicians are generally denounced for making illegal guns widely available, particularly in and around 1980, the year of Jamaica's bloodiest government election (Mogensen, 2005).[60] Since then, dependence on politicians for guns has largely declined, with the established channels for trafficking drugs used to traffic other contraband, including illegal firearms. When politicians were the primary providers of illegal arms, only gang leaders in these communities managed them (Frankson, 2007). Currently, because of the wide availability of weapons, children as young as 14 years of age have been observed with them and every gang member has access to a gun at will (Clarke, 2006; Mogensen, 2005; Moser and Holland, 1997). Despite the decline in the provision of guns by politicians, however, the practice still appears to continue (Luton, 2008a). Further, local experts in the field believe that access to guns has been increasing since 1990 (Wilks et al., 2007).

Weapons available

Firearms that are available in Jamaica include revolvers, pistols, sub-machine guns, assault rifles, and homemade guns; models include AK-47s, M16s, and Brownings and manufacturers include Taurus and Glock (Frankson, 2007; Mogensen, 2005; Laurent, 2007). Semi-automatic pistols are now replacing

revolvers as the weapon of choice among the civilian population and criminals.[61] Weapons such as these, while not openly carried in inner-city communities, are readily available when needed (Mogensen, 2005). The street value of an illegal 9 mm semi-automatic pistol is estimated at JMD 100,000–120,000 (USD 1,100–1,400), with estimates for illegal assault rifles—such as AK-47s— ranging from JMD 250,000 to JMD 300,000 (USD 2,900–3,400).[62]

No estimates are available for the number of illegal guns entering the country annually, but fewer than 700 guns are confiscated each year, with most coming from the streets, and a few found at ports of entry (*Jamaica Observer*, 2009c). Between 1999 and 2009, security forces seized more than 155,000 rounds of ammunition and approximately 6,200 illegal firearms (Ellington, 2009). Owing to a dearth of data on illegal gun possession, however, it is difficult to determine whether this is a significant portion of available illegal weapons.

Pistols and revolvers, in that order, are the most prevalent weapons used in crimes, if recovered firearms are any indicator (see Table 1). From 2000 to 2009, the proportion of recovered pistols increased from approximately 41 per cent to about 51 per cent. A sizeable portion of recovered guns—between 15 and 20 per cent—are homemade (see Table 1). Officials say that pistols play an even greater role than the statistics suggest, however, pointing to the fact that the casings recovered from most crime scenes are for 9 mm semi-automatic pistols, as are the overwhelming majority of annual findings of illegal ammunition.[63]

Table 1 **Firearms seized in 2000–09, by type**

Firearm type	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Pistols	218	266	237	244	284	338	314	323	326	288
Revolvers	134	118	112	123	132	130	123	161	124	124
Homemade	88	112	89	96	121	108	165	93	92	87
Rifles	15	26	19	24	30	55	36	44	27	31
Shotguns	12	9	13	11	28	33	18	19	20	19
Sub-machine guns	19	15	11	19	25	29	19	13	17	20
Total	**486**	**546**	**481**	**517**	**620**	**693**	**675**	**653**	**606**	**569**

Sources: JCFSD (2002; 2004; 2005; 2008; 2009b; 2010)

Table 2 **Firearms reported stolen in 2000–2009, by type**

Firearms reported stolen	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Pistols	28	30	39	44	45	43	48	56	45	79
Revolvers	51	59	46	40	41	55	47	32	27	24
Homemade	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Rifles	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	2	0
Shotguns	6	9	7	6	12	6	5	9	2	6
Sub-machine guns	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
Total	**86**	**98**	**93**	**91**	**98**	**105**	**100**	**97**	**76**	**109**

Sources: JCFSD (2002; 2004; 2005; 2008; 2009b; 2010)

Pistols are also the types of weapon thieves are most likely to steal, especially as demonstrated in the 76 per cent increase in pistols reported stolen in 2009 over 2008 (see Table 2).

The next section provides an overview of the legislative framework governing the use of these firearms.

Firearm legislation

Jamaica is a signatory to the Organization of American States (OAS) Inter-American Convention against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Ammunition, Explosives, and Other Related Materials, which addresses the control of illicit trade in firearms at the regional level. In addition, the country is a signatory to the Protocol against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Their Parts and Components and Ammunition, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, adopted in 2001 by the General Assembly (GOJ, 2005). Further, the Government of Jamaica has committed itself to implementing the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects (PoA) adopted by the United Nations in 2001 (GOJ, 2005).

At the national level, Jamaica's firearms legislation is relatively rigorous. The Firearms Act, enacted in 1967, regulates all matters pertaining to arms and ammunition (GOJ, 1967). The Gunpowder and Explosives Act governs the importation and transit of explosives and other dangerous cargo on the island (GOJ, 2005).

Under the Firearms Act, a company or a person of 17 years of age or over is required to have a licence to possess or acquire arms. The application for such a licence requires information to be submitted on the make, type, calibre, and identification number of the firearm and the purpose of the purchase. In addition, the applicant must declare that authorities have not refused a previous licence request, revoked an existing one, or convicted the applicant for a related offence within the past five years.

As part of the licensing application process, the authority granting the licence must be assured that the applicant has good reason for acquiring a firearm; can be permitted to possess a firearm without posing a threat to public safety or to the peace; is fit to be entrusted with a firearm; does not have a criminal record;[64] and is not mentally ill or disabled. Once granted, the licence is valid for five years, with a required annual fee paid only after the chief of police of the relevant police division has inspected the firearm. Violations of the licence carry penalties of up to JMD 500,000 (USD 6,000) in fines or life imprisonment.[65] Prohibited weapons under the Firearms Act include artillery and automatic firearms, as well as grenade bombs and other missiles.

Firearm oversight

The JCF was traditionally responsible for issuing firearm licences, but there had long been allegations that the process was riddled with corruption, allowing for the granting of licences to persons with criminal convictions or suspected of involvement in criminal activities (Bellafante, 2004; *Jamaica Gleaner*, 2002).

In 2005, the government amended the Firearms Act to allow for an independent authority to monitor the issuing and renewal of gun licences, fulfilling the government's commitment to stripping the constabulary of the function (*Jamaica Observer*, 2005a). In 2006, the government formed the independent Firearms

Licensing Authority (FLA) (JIS, 2006a). The FLA audits ranges and gun clubs, but specialized units within the JCF and the Jamaica Defence Force (JDF) conduct their own internal audits.[66] The MNS monitors the activities of the FLA in the issuance of licences and has overall monitoring and oversight responsibility for ensuring compliance with all weapons-related laws and regulations (GOJ, 2008a).

One of the mandates of the FLA is the development and maintenance of a ballistic database of all licensed firearms. To that end, applicants for gun licences are required to visit the office of the Authority along with their firearm(s). The Authority, on receipt of the firearm, test-fires it and collects the bullet and spent casing; the firearm's 'ballistic signature' is scanned into its database for future identification reference, if required (FLA, 2006).

According to the FLA, there are approximately 32,600 legal guns in the country and about 25,100 licensed firearm holders.[67]

Weapons storage, management, and destruction by security forces

The policies in place for weapons storage, management, and destruction by security forces are—more in theory than in practice—rigorous. The MNS is required routinely to audit the inventory of weapons issued to the police as well as firearms recovered during police operations or other activities. JCF policy requires that police properly document all firearms and ammunition issued to them as well as those they recover. The commanding officer in charge of each branch, area, and division is accountable for this procedure (JIS, 2007b).

It is the responsibility of the JCF to place all firearms issued to the police and its auxiliaries on an inventory at the central armoury before distributing them. The administration and crime officers, members of the Performance Auditing and Monitoring Branch, station supervisors, inspectors, sergeants and corporals, headquarters officers, and internal auditors of the MNS must audit the inventory routinely. Officials send these audits to the office of the commissioner of police, deputy commissioner of police administration, and support services. The JCF takes disciplinary action against members who fail to properly

account for weapons and ammunition in their possession, whether issued or recovered (JIS, 2007b).

In addition, the armoury divisions of both the police and the military maintain their own lists of serial numbers of all weapons in the possession of their respective officers as well as the names and serial numbers of residents within these communities who are licensed firearm holders (GOJ, 2008a).

Recovered weapons are also subject to rigorous procedures. When police recover, or take custody of, firearms and ammunition, they must check, label, and record them before sending them to the government's forensic laboratory for testing. They place ammunition in separate plastic bags. When they retrieve firearms and ammunition from ballistics, they are to hand them over to the station exhibit keeper for safekeeping pending a court trial; they remain secure in the exhibit store until the case is concluded. The police officer assigned to the case retrieves the weapon from the store and signs the exhibit register both on receipt of the weapon and on its return (JIS, 2007b).

The JCF, until recently, had no formal process for periodically disposing of seized illegal weapons, weapons left by residents for safe-keeping that were never recollected, or defective security force weaponry.[68] The destruction of weapons was therefore an infrequent process. Since 2009, a dedicated firearm destruction team has been in charge of this, however, and between 2009 and the first quarter of 2010 the JCF destroyed more than 6,000 weapons.[69] In addition, the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean (UN-LiREC) has embarked on a new project to support a number of Caribbean countries (including Jamaica) in stockpile management and destruction.[70]

As part of the weapons destruction process, a government team collates all stored weapons in each of the 19 divisional headquarters across the island, as well as in the smaller police stations. Officials then collect these weapons on the day of their destruction and bring them to a gun-crunching machine, which cuts each weapon into small pieces. A local company then melts down these pieces.[71]

The JCF also disposes of ammunition that it has seized, in an undisclosed process.[72]

Legal weapon imports and exports

Jamaica is not a manufacturer of small arms and light weapons and therefore purchases them from overseas brokers or agents, mostly from the United States, as illustrated in Table 3[73] (GOJ, 2008a).[74]

Jamaica has three main firearm dealers that are also importers. The exportation of firearms is usually associated with participation at sporting events or firearms repair. There is no legislation regulating brokers or carriers (UN-LiREC, 2007). As reported to UN Comtrade, pistols and revolvers are the weapons

Table 3 **Value (USD) of weapons imported to Jamaica, by country of origin, 1992–2007**

Year	United States	Brazil	United Kingdom	Italy	Belgium	Poland	Other	Total value (USD)
1992	240,036	87,612	0	0	0	0	25,976	353,624
1993	624,975	31,974	3,799	0	0	0	13,699	674,447
1994	377,703	58,020	0	0	0	0	29,026	464,749
1995	400,685	21,074	17,943	0	0	0	9,926	449,628
1996	668,464	76,005	246,821	0	0	0	24,450	1,015,740
1997	466,254	18,806	27,963	0	0	0	22,830	535,853
1998	878,599	17,490	185,914	2,967	0	0	29,235	1,114,205
1999	683,166	36,462	59,012	6,872	0	0	32,248	817,760
2000	1,179,499	92,063	10,570	5,761	17,655	0	153,001	1,458,549
2001	1,218,241	47,252	92,136	93,578	83,574	0	175,185	1,709,966
2002	2,415,216	110,349	52,018	173,677	0	0	149,309	2,900,569
2003	1,265,667	190,323	79,131	95,048	183,815	0	48,071	1,862,055
2004	1,234,426	0	82,580	246,685	158,025	0	207,400	1,929,116
2005	973,545	0	168,606	488,811	494,938	0	173,638	2,299,538
2006	1,324,203	0	76,048	75,135	0	3,249,804	36,706	4,761,896
2007	395,061	226,421	22,634	63,842	402	17,343	91,016	816,719

Source: Data provided to the author by the Norwegian Initiative on Small Arms Transfers Project at the International Peace Research Institute, Oslo, February 2010; figures not adjusted for inflation

Table 4 **The three most prevalent categories of weapon imports to Jamaica, 2002–08**

Year	Military firearms	Revolvers and pistols	Shotguns and rifles for sport and hunting
2002	600	2,786	239
2003	600	1,673	238
2004	1,860	1,475	254
2005	n/a	4,038	645
2006	3,848	1,956	1,644
2007	15	612	235
2008	n/a	646	66

Source: Data provided to the author by the Norwegian Initiative on Small Arms Transfers Project at the International Peace Research Institute, Oslo, February 2010[75]

Jamaica imports the most, though the importation of all weapons fell significantly after 2006, the year of the FLA's creation (see Table 4). The country imports more pistols than revolvers. According to the FLA, the ratio of pistols to revolvers imported since its formation is 13 to 1; 82 per cent of all imported weapons have been pistols.[76]

All shipping companies and agents must obtain prior permission from the MNS for the import, export, transit, and transhipment of all arms, ammunition, and dangerous cargo entering via the island's ports, in keeping with the OAS Model Regulations for the Control of the International Movement of Firearms, Their Parts and Components and Ammunition (GOJ, 2008a). Under the current regulations, the commissioner of police signs the requisite import and export permit application forms for arms and ammunition, which the minister of national security then counter-signs. This process allows individuals to obtain the relevant permit from the trade board to import weapons and ammunition (GOJ, 2005).

This process is applicable to all people wishing to import a weapon, regardless of whether they are private firearm holders, dealers, security firms, or public entities such as the JCF or the JDF. The Customs authorities will not release a weapon or ammunition without the requisite permit (GOJ, 2005). Moreover, customs authorities, along with the FLA, retain a listing of the serial numbers

of all small arms and light weapons entering the country at the ports of entry (GOJ, 2008a).

Illegal weapons

While robust legislation and measures exist to regulate the flow of legal weapons into Jamaica, and to manage them once they have arrived, officials point out that unlicensed firearms are responsible for most of Jamaica's gun-related crimes.[77]

The majority of weapons seized by security forces are submitted to the US Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) for tracing (*Jamaica Observer*, 2009c). The National Intelligence Bureau (NIB), established in 2003 to coordinate all intelligence activities of the JCF, is the authority with responsibility for maintaining international links with overseas law enforcement counterparts to trace the origin of all weapons entering the island, legally or illegally (JIS, 2003; GOJ, 2008a). Most seized weapons are traced back to three US counties—Orange, Dade, and Broward—in the state of Florida, all of which have large Jamaican populations (*Jamaica Observer*, 2009c).

Other countries from which guns enter the country include Colombia, Haiti, Honduras, and Venezuela, though officials believe many of these guns originated in the United States as well (CMC, 2009).[78] Criminals popularly smuggle weapons such as AK-47s and M16s in from South and Central America. Intelligence reports suggest that some of these weapons were probably used in armed conflicts that took place in Nicaragua and El Salvador in previous decades (GOJ, 2005).

Illegal imports

The established channels, systems, and income the drug trade provides also facilitate the trafficking and purchase of firearms (Harriott, 2002). Florida gun laws make it relatively easy to buy a legal firearm and, according to local officials, family and friends do much of the smuggling (*Jamaica Observer*, 2009c).

Criminals traffic both drugs and guns at controlled and uncontrolled ports of entry into the country. At controlled ports, such as shipping wharves, guns are sometimes creatively concealed in container loads of blue plastic and card-

board barrels, the kind Jamaicans use to send household goods to their families on the island (*Jamaica Observer*, 2009c). Officials believe that the larger seizures of 10–15 weapons at a time are usually destined for gangs.[79]

At uncontrolled ports, such as fishing piers and illegal airstrips, trafficking occurs via go-fast boats, light aircraft, and even the fishing boats local fishermen use to meet drug and gun dealers out at sea (GOJ, 2005). Fishermen purchasing pistols, revolvers, and sub-machine guns from Haiti in exchange for marijuana has been an emerging practice over the past five years (Frankson, 2007; *Jamaica Observer*, 2009c; Laurent, 2007). In this context, criminals obtain boats to shuttle drugs to Haiti. A typical trip might involve the shuttling of some 700–900 kg of marijuana. These operations may involve—by virtue of the volume of drugs—multiple persons, some of whom exchange the contraband for money, and some of whom do so for weapons.[80]

In the past, criminal gangs were responsible for smuggling larger, more powerful weapons through the controlled ports. At least some of these gangs were also central to the distribution of these guns to smaller gangs in the KMR.[81] With the rise in the guns-for-drugs trade, however, many criminal entrepreneurs (not just gang members) can get these weapons via Haiti.[82] Honduras and other Central American countries are also trading partners with these fishermen (Laurent, 2007).

Most of the guns from Haiti still originate in the United States, however. Indeed, officials find it difficult to distinguish the weapons seized from Haiti–Jamaica gunrunners from those confiscated at the controlled ports that originated in the United States.[83] There is no verifiable estimate of what percentage of illegal weapons enter the country via uncontrolled vs. controlled ports. Officials believe, though, that they find no more than ten per cent of the weapons that pass through controlled ports.[84]

The smuggling of arms is not restricted to whole weapons; parts of weapons and ammunition also find their way onto Jamaican soil (GOJ, 2005). Further, the extent to which guns smuggled into Jamaica are then smuggled to other countries remains unclear, though the pattern of a single gun being implicated in crimes in more than one Caribbean territory is not unusual (CMC, 2009).

In addition to 'guns-for-ganja'[85] deals and illegal smuggling via freights, some guns are stolen or purchased from corrupt police officers, a point explored in the next section (*Jamaica Observer*, 2009c).

Illegal ammunition

While there is evidence that guns are being smuggled into the country illegally, there is less such evidence for ammunition. In fact, some officials agree that ammunition is smuggled into the country less than guns, owing in part to the ease with which those who obtain them legally can pass them on to criminals with little detection or accountability.[86] According to data collected by the FLA since its formation in mid-2006, Jamaica imported approximately 2.4 million rounds of ammunition for civilian use between the FLA's formation and early 2010, of which about 1.2 million were 9 mm and 900,000 were 12 GA (see Table 5).

A significant source of this illegal ammunition, and to a lesser extent weapons, is the local police forces, a finding similar to that of other countries around the world. In February 2010, the country was rocked by the revelation that approximately 11,000 rounds of assorted ammunition, police vests, and 19 guns (M16 rifles, shotguns, Uzi sub-machine guns, pistols, and revolvers) recovered

Table 5 **Ammunition imported for civilian purposes, mid-2006 to early 2010**[87]

Calibre/gauge	Quantity
.22	45,000
.357	1,000
.38	104,000
.380	9,000
.38 Super	7,960
.40	93,500
.45	1,000
12 GA	868,950
20 GA	125,250
28 GA	3,250
9 mm	1,174,156
Total	**2,433,066**

Source: Data provided to the author by the FLA, 2010

by police from an illegal 'gun shop' in Kingston were all from the JCF's central armoury (Hall, 2010a; *Jamaica Gleaner*, 2010a). It is in this armoury that the JCF keeps guns and ammunition purchased for the entire force before distribution, temporarily stores illegal guns and ammunition before destroying them, and repairs defective guns owned by the force. This ammunition finding, almost twice as much as police have seized annually for many years (see Figure 4), was the most decisive evidence of corruption in a force that the public long accused of selling and renting guns and ammunition to criminals.

Interestingly, police seizures in 2001 (see Figure 4) of a record 41,000 rounds of ammunition, 14 firearms, and 90 kg of compressed marijuana led to the arrest of six people, including a district constable assigned to a police station in Kingston (*Jamaica Gleaner*, 2001b). Despite the involvement of a member of the security forces, the general public had still assumed that both weapons and ammunition were illegally imported (*Jamaica Gleaner*, 2001a).

The breach of the armoury in 2010, acknowledged the head of the JCF, could not have happened without the involvement of dishonest officers (*Jamaica Gleaner*, 2010a). Investigators arrested and charged four people, including a

Figure 4 **Ammunition recovered by security forces, 2000–09**

Rounds of ammunition (thousands)
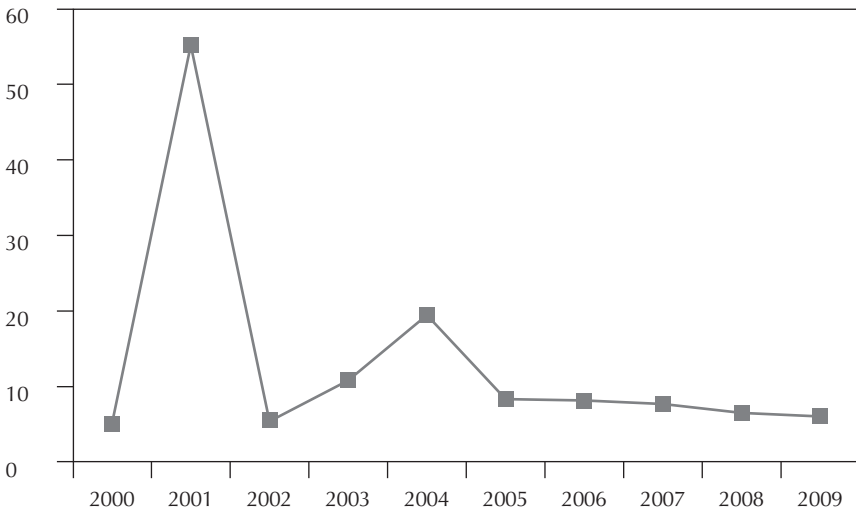
Sources: JCFSD (2002; 2004; 2005; 2008; 2009b; 2010)

police sergeant, in connection with the incident. The head of the JCF immediately closed the armoury and the minister of national security ordered an island-wide weapons audit following the incident (*Jamaica Gleaner*, 2010b; *Jamaica Observer*, 2010b). There were previous incidents of police being implicated in the disappearance of weapons from police stations, but no member of the force had as yet been arrested or charged in connection with selling guns and ammunition (Radio Jamaica, 2009; Hall, 2010c). Allegations were then levelled that ballistics tests had shown that several gun murders had been committed with weapons registered to the police armoury and stores, suggesting that unscrupulous cops had for a while been illegally selling or renting weapons from the constabulary's armoury (Walker, 2010).

The type of ammunition used in violent crimes and by the police force helps to explain the discovered link between criminals and the JCF. Among the weapons that JCF members use regularly are a variety of 9 mm pistols and the MP5 sub-machine gun.[88] The JCF, in an effort to replace the more deadly M16s and reduce the possibility of collateral damage, had introduced the smaller-calibre MP5s across the force in 2008, then restricting the M16 to specialized groups within the force (Edwards and Beckford, 2008).[89] These MP5s use 9 mm calibres for ammunition; this is the same ammunition whose casings are most frequently found at crime scenes. In addition, it is the ammunition used in semi-automatic pistols—the weapon most seized or reported stolen in the country.[90] The JCF has the potential to be a rich source of ammunition for criminals' preferred firearm: the semi-automatic pistol.

Another potential source of illegal ammunition from the licit trade was the transfer of ammunition from licensed firearms holders to others. Before the creation of the FLA, divisional police superintendents were able to approve an unlimited number of ammunition requests by firearms holders, with little justification. Despite an official restriction of 50 rounds of ammunition annually to each licensee, the superintendent could easily approve applications for additional rounds, with very few enforced regulations. This, investigations suggested, was being exploited and used as a cover by some civilians to pass on more rounds to persons who did not have that permit (*Jamaica Gleaner*, 2004b). Since the FLA's establishment in 2006, which removed those powers of approval from the JCF, the Agency has made this process more efficient.[91]

In addition, there was concern that ammunition was being lost via gun clubs and security firms (which have mushroomed in the current climate of insecurity), but there has not been enough evidence to conclusively confirm or deny these claims.[92]

The extent to which Jamaica's army plays a major role in providing ammunition and weapons has not yet been ascertained, though there is some relevant evidence (*Jamaica Observer*, 2005c).

The multiplier effect: gun rentals

The number of people with *access* to guns is larger than the actual number of guns that are available. The practice of individuals renting guns from gangs is common in many inner-city communities. Consequently, many youths can obtain a gun simply by renting it, to pursue their personal objectives.[93] Boys as young as 10 years of age save their lunch money to rent guns and buy ammunition (UN-LiREC, 2007).

In many communities, illegal guns and ammunition are stored in armouries and are rented or distributed to various persons for specific periods. Gangs count ammunition and log the number of arms rented; failure to return these weapons or reimburse gangs for ammunition may result in the death of the renter or the death of a family member or friend.[94]

Next legislative steps

The Government of Jamaica recognizes that the 1967 Firearms Act is outdated and has committed itself to developing a new small arms policy and using this as a basis to repeal and replace the Act. The government expects that amendments will include increased sentences and penalties regarding the import, export, and distribution of arms and ammunition. The Act currently does not address areas including (i) the classification of empty shells as ammunition and (ii) the trafficking of weapons and intent to distribute them.[95] Legislators are expected to consider relevant aspects of the PoA for inclusion in any amendments made to the Act, particularly for issues related to the marking and tracing of weapons. The Gunpowder and Explosives Act will also be amended to

increase the restrictions on the importation of dangerous goods and cargo (GOJ, 2005). The Jamaica Violence Prevention, Peace and Sustainable Development Programme, an initiative of the UN Development Programme (UNDP), was supporting the development of the new firearms policy in 2010.[96] ◾

Gang violence reduction efforts

Strategies by the state to reduce crime and violence in Jamaica can be broadly classified as either crime control-oriented or social justice-oriented (Harriott, 2009). Crime control strategies are largely disciplinary and compliance-oriented in nature, emphasizing punitive measures as a means of deterring crime. Social justice approaches emphasize social interventions as a means of tackling the perceived root causes of crime and violence.

Crime control

Crime control in Jamaica has taken the form of punitive 'get tough' policies since the country's independence, a stance adopted by many countries around the world, particularly those in Central America (Harriott, 2009; Jütersonke, Muggah, and Rodgers, 2009). These policies have informed legislative responses to crime, sentencing practices, and modes of policing. At the time of writing, the government was crafting its first official comprehensive gang violence reduction strategy (JIS, 2009a);[97] the JCF's attempts to combat gang activity in the past have already involved:

- denying access to guns and bullets.
- denying access to financial resources and the proceeds of crime.
- denying access to civil and political support by reducing corruption in the public and private sectors.
- naming and shaming suspected gang members to erode their support and legitimacy in communities.
- disrupting enterprise crimes such as drug dealing, extortion, and car thefts.
- utilizing electronic surveillance, plea-bargaining, witness protection, fast trials, and exemplary sentencing.
- applying military combat strategies to law enforcement efforts in order to overwhelm criminals with resilient force (MNS, 2008, p. 15).

In recent years, the government has also dedicated considerable energy to modernizing security forces to aid in this effort, including obtaining an automated fingerprint identification system and an integrated ballistic identification system for the JCF (INL, 2005; JIS, 2006b). Moreover, the JCF recruited foreign police officers into its senior ranks to oversee aspects such as homicide investigations, anti-corruption investigations, weapons management, and community policing as part of efforts to enhance the capabilities of local law enforcement (JIS, 2005a; 2006c; Sheil, 2006). The government, however, traditionally pursued the above-mentioned anti-gang attempts using two primary methods: aggressive policing and punitive legislation.

Policing methods

Entities within the security forces actively target gangs and their activities. These include the Organized Crime Investigation Division and the Counter Gang Task Force of the JCF, and the Organized Crime and Defence Division and the Financial Investigations Division of the MNS (Nelson, 2009). The two JCF sections are actively involved in apprehending criminals, while the MNS divisions are primarily engaged in intelligence gathering and investigations. The Policy Directorate, in which the Organized Crime and Defence Division is placed, was formed in 2008 to coordinate all formulation, monitoring, evaluation, and reappraisal of security policy within the MNS (GOJ, 2008b).

The Counter Narcotics and Major Crimes Task Force, branded Operation Kingfish, is the primary anti-gang initiative that the national security forces operate. Born out of a 2001 anti-narcotics campaign involving Jamaica, South American states, the United States, Canada, and the UK, Operation Kingfish began in October 2004 with a mandate to undermine drug trafficking and criminal organizations, and to stem the rising rates of crime and gang violence on the island. The difference between Kingfish and previous crime-control initiatives is its focus on pre-emptive strikes on criminal gangs rather than on containment. Using specially vetted persons in the intelligence community, the JCF, the Military Intelligence Unit, and international partners, Operation Kingfish focuses on cutting off the income streams of these gangs, which primarily came from extortion, drug trafficking, and arms trafficking. To that end, the operation has seized vessels that were suspected of being used to convey

drugs and disabled illegal airstrips to prevent (drug) planes from landing (JCF, 2009a; Williams, 2005). Within Operation Kingfish is a firearm-specific focus group, Operation Musketeer, whose remit is to stem the flow of illegal weapons into the country. Operation Musketeer also has cross-cutting relationships with fisheries, the JDF coastguard, the border protection unit, and the ATF.[98]

In 2008, the police force, in its continued efforts against gangs, launched a series of targeted operations on gang leaders, their premises, and assets. This operation involved at least 680 counter-gang operations with 26 of the more prominent gangs being affected as part of a joint police–military anti-gang effort (*Jamaica Gleaner*, 2008b).[99] In 2009, the focus remained on seizing the assets of gangs (*Jamaica Observer*, 2009a). In 2008, Operation Kingfish also launched a European Union-funded media campaign—'Get the Guns'—as part of its initiative to recover illegal guns from the streets (European Commission, 2008). The campaign encourages residents to call in to report the presence of illegal weapons.

The Border Control Strategy of the JCF is another effort by the Jamaican government to curb gang-related activities, with assistance from the US State Department, by stemming the flow of illegal firearms and narcotics into the country (Luz i Álvarez, 2007, pp. 71, 76). This strategy involves collaborating with various arms of the security forces and neighbouring countries and has seen some success, although Jamaica's porous coastline continues to pose a major challenge. Government officials admit that, although Jamaica has signed all relevant treaties, limited resources to police the coastline and the numerous illegal airstrips nationwide have made smuggling contraband into the country relatively easy (UNICEF, 2008).

The local policing methods that accompany anti-crime efforts have historically been muscular and paramilitary. Police officers frequently face armed criminals, and at times feel that they have no alternative but to use lethal force to defend themselves and the safety of the public. Allegations of police killings of unarmed civilians abound, however. The rate of police killings of civilians in 2007 was 10.2 per 100,000, double the 2004 rate (see Table 6). Furthermore, some special squads that were formed within the JCF to perform general policing functions, such as the Crime Management Unit, were eventually disbanded after being implicated in extra-judicial killings of criminal suspects (AI, 2001; Harriott, 2009).

Table 6 **Police killings of civilians, 1978–2007**

Year	Number	Rate per 100,000
1978	167	8.0
1980	234	10.9
1982	236	10.9
1984	355	15.6
1986	179	7.7
1988	181	7.7
1990	135	5.6
1992	145	5.9
1994	100	4.0
1996	148	5.9
1998	145	5.7
2000	149	5.8
2002	154	5.9
2004	131	5.0
2006	229	8.6
2007	272	10.2

Source: Harriott (2009, p. 47)

Legislation

Numerous laws have been enacted to destabilize gang-related activities. Laws designed to reduce major crimes include the Dangerous Drugs Act (1974), which stipulated harsher penalties for narcotics offences, and the Gun Court Act (1974), which removed the right to trial by jury for most gun-related offences (except murder) and introduced possible life imprisonment for firearm offences. Other legislation includes the Juveniles Act (1974), which subjected gun use offenders as young as 14 to criminal justice processes similar to those faced by adults, and the Suppression of Crimes Act (1974), which provided the legal setting that emboldened the police to search without warrants, arrest without reason, and detain without charge. The government eventually repealed this

latter act in 1993 (Harriott, 2009). Some more recent bills that have been passed—such as the Proceeds of Crime Act, or POCA (2007), the Corruption Prevention Act (2005), and the Money Laundering Act (1996)—were designed to control drug trafficking as well (Harriott, 2009).

POCA is the most recent law to combat organized crime. Enacted in 2007, POCA aims to deprive offenders of the profits received from crime and remove illicit proceeds from use in future criminal enterprise. To that end, the primary targets of this Act are the proceeds of crime, the instrumentalities of crime (including property used in connection with criminal conduct), the funding that supports crimes (such as civil recovery of cash intended for use in crime), and money-laundering activities (Ali, 2009). Since this statute's enactment, the government's Financial Investigations Division has seized or made forfeit approximately JMD 450 million (USD 5.4 million) from criminal hands (Reid, 2009).

Although a 1998 MNS study concludes that gang suppression legislation might not be a viable solution, government officials recently expressed interest in introducing legislation criminalizing gang membership (Moncrieffe, 1998). In 2008 then minister of national security, Col. Trevor MacMillan, indicated that he was considering such a proposal, citing countries such as Canada, the Cayman Islands, El Salvador, and Honduras, where similar laws had worked to curtail gang activity (MNS, 2008; *Jamaica Gleaner*, 2008b).[100] This position was supported by various police officials, who argued that such a law would enable police to pursue criminals based on their gang-related behaviour rather than specific offences and would increase the number of prosecutions (Sheil, 2008).

An alternative legislative approach that the government is considering, however, would not penalize gang membership itself. Instead, if the courts convicted an individual of a criminal offence, they would be able to take documented evidence of gang involvement into consideration when determining the penalty. Even though an individual would not face punitive measures for gang involvement alone, this approach could exacerbate conditions if prosecutors convicted a suspect of a criminal offence.[101] This essentially means lengthening prison sentences for gang members. Additional approaches that state officials are considering include improving sentencing guidelines for crimes, which prosecutors could then use in association with enhanced plea-bargaining opportunities, to encourage gang members to confess to gang activities.[102] Laws

such as these, in addition to the already enacted POCA, may significantly hamper gang activities. Anti-gang legislative efforts are still in their embryonic stages, however, and it is difficult to know what legislation the government will eventually enact. Jamaica's 'get tough' approach to combating gangs, however, continues to play a central role in government officials' public discourse, fuelling speculation that the government will criminalize gang membership after all (*Jamaica Observer*, 2010a).

Government officials have already attempted to introduce legislation increasing prison sentences, or delaying bail for certain crimes (*Jamaica Gleaner*, 2008c; Campbell, 2008). At the time of writing, however, these proposals had not been successful (Campbell, 2009; Spaulding, 2010b).

Other methods

State–civil society initiatives aimed at crime control include Crime Stop and the Neighbourhood Watch Programme. Crime Stop is a collaboration between the MNS and the Private Sector Organisation of Jamaica, which allows residents to call a hotline anonymously to report crimes.[103] Crime Stop's primary target is illegal guns, the issue to which the majority of calls relate (Crime Stop, 2008; Harriott, 2009). The Neighbourhood Watch Programme is a partnership between the JCF and various neighbourhoods that encourages residents to report suspicious activities in their neighbourhood to the police. There were more than 500 neighbourhood watch groups across the island in 2000 (Bloom et al., 2001).

Social justice

The social justice model of crime prevention associates criminality and crime with unjust social arrangements and systems. Gang violence reduction efforts in this category operate on the belief that socioeconomic change may prevent and even 'solve' crime. Efforts against crime thus involve attending to the 'root' or primary causes and reordering society (Harriott, 2009). The belief is that if communities fail to address the root causes of social disorder, interventions designed to address social issues such as crime and violence will fail. Violence reduction is therefore one among a number of positive social outcomes

expected from broader efforts focused on underlying structural risk factors, such as poverty, inequality, and unemployment.

Myriad social interventions in Jamaica target ascribed root causes of violence, such as the widespread lack of educational, economic, and social opportunities and the easy availability of firearms. Many of these interventions are the result of state–civil society partnerships in which civil society actors, such as NGOs, implement interventions and other entities, such as private foundations, join the state in providing funding, coordination, and guidance.

The government's primary vehicles for channelling resources to social interventions aimed at reducing violence are the Peace Management Initiative (PMI), the Community Security Initiative (CSI), the Citizen Security and Justice Programme (CSJP), and the Jamaica Social Investment Fund (JSIF). Though the remit of each varies, the programmes all aim to improve social and economic conditions in deprived communities as well as build the capacity of local governance structures (JIS, 2009b; PIJ, 2010).

The PMI is the only government-funded intervention that interacts directly with gang members and is one of few that target community violence. Established in 2002, its remit is to head off and defuse community violence, most of which is perpetrated by community gangs. PMI staff members directly engage members of warring community gangs and try to mediate peace between them; they do not work with criminal gangs (Hutchinson and Levy, 2009). It was the first time that the government specifically targeted community conflicts and advanced an explicitly non-violent approach, and members of civil society were robustly involved (Levy, 2009). The state's presence in the PMI is limited to financial support; some oversight by the MNS; and the presence of political representatives—several of them ministers in the government—on the PMI board. Civil society is present in the board membership of ministers of religion, University of the West Indies faculty, and directors of local NGOs, as well as in the actual work the field staff carry out on the ground (Levy, 2009). The PMI currently works in more than 50 communities in the KMR; a second, autonomous PMI exists in Jamaica's second city, Montego Bay.

The PMI plays major roles in mediation, for example in brokering peace treaties between gangs (on at least two occasions). It also provides basic outreach services such as counselling, including retreats and field trips for young men—

many of whom are gang members—that address conflict resolution, problem solving, and leadership training. In addition, it fosters social development through training opportunities, sports programmes, and income-generating assistance; it also facilitates the entrance of NGOs and other organizations into communities to implement other social programmes (MNS, 2008; UNICEF, 2008; PIJ, 2010). Central to the PMI's work with gangs is being able to work independently of security forces and not being required to store or pass on sensitive information. This sensitivity to the mistrust between inner-city communities and government forces has been key to their work (UNICEF, 2008).

The CSI, launched in 2005 from a 200 million JMD grant from the UK Department for International Development (DFID), was designed as a coordinating mechanism for reintroducing state services into volatile communities after the removal of a don by the police force (JIS, 2005b; Smith, 2007). Since then, it has taken on the responsibility of implementing programmes as well. These range from vocational training and job placement to increasing community members' access to education and health services. The CSI works in communities that were formerly under the control of dons and where no formal governance structures existed. CSI therefore also attempts to reintroduce governance through the establishment of a network of citizens in targeted communities, called Community Development Councils, to work in partnership with the local police and civic groups. At its launch, the CSI programme targeted eight communities—all in the KMR.

The CSJP, like the CSI, falls under the Crime Prevention and Community Safety Programme of the MNS. Established in 2001 with a USD 20.6 million loan from the Inter-American Development Bank, the CSJP has three main objectives: to help prevent and reduce violence in local communities, to strengthen national crime management capabilities, and to improve the delivery of judicial services (JIS, 2008). The CSJP provides a range of violence prevention services to 15 communities across Kingston and 11 other areas outside Kingston. This is achieved primarily through refurbishing and equipping multi-purpose centres, where services by a number of NGOs and other service organizations can be delivered, including skills training, educational services, parenting education, life skills, and capacity building as means of deterring residents from deviant behaviour (JIS, 2007a). It is traditionally the biggest of the gov-

ernment's community security programmes—both in terms of the number of communities and the range of social interventions.

Initially, the JSIF's primary purpose was to channel resources to small-scale community-based projects as a component of the government's national poverty alleviation strategy. Yet it implements a major project called Inner City Basic Services for the Poor (ICBSP), which has public safety as one of its goals. In an effort to diminish the conditions in which criminality is believed to thrive, the ICBSP focuses on infrastructure development. Project aims include improving the quality of water, sanitation, solid waste collection systems, electricity, roads, drainage, and related community infrastructure for more than 60,000 residents of poor urban informal settlements through capital investments and innovative arrangements for operations and maintenance (World Bank, 2006). The five-year project (through 2011) is financed through a USD 29.3 million loan from the World Bank with counterpart funding from the Government of Jamaica of USD 3.5 million (JSIF, 2010).

In recent times, the JCF has emphasized the need to include residents as active participants in the fight against crime and, to this end, has implemented a number of community-based initiatives, such as relaunching community policing. The community policing programme began in earnest in mid-2008 and involves police officers spending time in communities and developing relationships with the residents.[104] Though long integrated into the policing methods of many other countries, this approach is in contrast to the traditional paramilitary and reactive style of policing that has long characterized the JCF. Rather than simply solving individual incidents of crime, the community policing philosophy emphasizes the need for long-term solutions and the eradication of criminal activity, and is dedicated to the overall improvement of the quality of life in the community. In community policing, the officer uses a wide range of resources and discretion, and is assisted by community members and organizations to resolve root causes of local problems. This stands in contrast to traditional policing, in which the officer receives limited community collaboration and is generally confined to responding to the 'manifestations' (that is, disorder and crime) of community problems (JCF, 2008).

The primary aim of community policing is to build police–resident trust; historically, members of many inner-city communities have seen police officers only when they come in on raids or to arrest alleged suspects, leading to a

Table 7 **Summary of major recent initiatives by the Jamaican government to tackle gang activities and crime in general**

Typology	Approach	Description
Crime control	Operational	**Operation Kingfish** (est. 2004). Involving special persons from the JCF, JDF, and international partners, this operation is characterized by pre-emptive strikes on criminal gangs, rather than containment (Williams, 2005). Involves forfeiture of assets; seizure of guns, drugs, and ammunition; utilization of improved surveillance technologies; and media campaigns (JCF, 2009a; GOJ, 2005).
		Intelligence gathering/policy formation. Includes research consultations with experts in criminology and programme evaluation; the formation of the NIB (est. 2003) to coordinate all intelligence activities of the JCF; and formation of the Policy Directorate (est. 2008) to coordinate all formulation, monitoring, evaluation, and reappraisal of security policy within the MNS (PIJ, 2010; JIS, 2003; GOJ, 2008b).
		Recruitment of foreign police officers to JCF senior ranks. Recruitment of five officers from the UK (beginning in 2005) to senior JCF positions overseeing areas including homicide and serious crime investigation; professional standards and anti-corruption investigation; operations and firearms; and community policing and crime disorder partnerships (JIS, 2005a; 2006c; Sheil, 2006; Beckford, 2007).
		Attempts to increase the JCF size. The government announced plans (in 2006) to increase the size of the JCF by about 40 per cent, to 12,000, by 2008. Though no substantial increases were realized during that period, in 2010 the government announced plans to increase the size of the JCF by 10 per cent by year's end (JIS, 2006d; 2010d; Saunders, 2007).
	Legislative	**New legislation.** The Proceeds of Crime Act (est. 2005) seeks to deprive offenders of the profits received from crime and remove illicit proceeds from use in future criminal enterprise. Targets are the proceeds of crime; the instrumentalities of crime (including property used in connection with criminal conduct); the funding that supports crimes (such as civil recovery of cash intended for use in crime); and money-laundering activities (Ali, 2009).
		Proposed amendments to existing legislation. Attempts to amend existing legislation to increase prison sentences or impose greater bail restrictions for certain crimes (*Jamaica Gleaner*, 2008c; Campbell, 2008).

Typology	Approach	Description
Social justice	Social interventions	**Citizen Security and Justice Programme** (est. 2001). Traditionally the largest government-run social intervention. Provides a range of violence prevention services in literacy, conflict resolution, income-generation; it also improves infrastructure for the reintroduction of social services (JIS, 2007a).
		Peace Management Initiative (est. 2002). Unique state–civil society partnership involving direct interaction with members of community gangs to achieve cease-fires, thus enabling other social agencies access to volatile areas (Levy, 2009).
		Community Security Initiative (est. 2005). Designed as a coordinating mechanism for reintroducing state services into volatile communities after the police force's removal of a don. Currently implements social programmes as well (Smith, 2007).
		Inner City Basic Services for the Poor Project (est. 2007). Administered by the JSIF, the project tries to diminish the conditions in which criminality is believed to thrive by focusing on infrastructure development. Project aims include improving the quality of water, sanitation, solid waste collection systems, electricity, roads, drainage, and related community infrastructure (JSIF, 2010).
	Police reform	**Disbanding special squads.** Crime management unit disbanded (in 2003) after being implicated in extra-judicial killings (Harriott, 2009).
		Community-based policing (re-launched 2008). Characterized by police officers spending time in communities, developing relationships with residents, and building trust. Programme was established in an initial 38 communities with officers given specific related responsibilities (JCF, 2009b).
		Anti-corruption campaign. Involved the formation of a Police Civilian Oversight Authority (est. 2006), via appropriate legislative measures, to ensure account-ability, adherence to policy guidelines, and observance of proper policing standards by the force; formation of the FLA (est. 2006) as an independent body to monitor the issuing and renewal of gun licences instead of the JCF; formation of an Anti-corruption Branch (est. 2007) within the JCF to replace the Professional Standards Bureau and the subsequent investigation, retirement, or dismissal of officers for corruption charges; formation of an Independent Commission of Investigations (for Senate approval in 2010) to replace the Police Public Complaint Authority and the Bureau of Special Investigations as an independent body to investigate abuses by members of the security forces (GOJ, 2008b; JIS, 2006a; *Jamaica Gleaner*, 2010c).

decline in trust, if not active distrust, of police.[105] Some officials of the force now advocate this approach to policing, emphasizing that trusting relationships between community members and the police are vital to core law enforcement work such as intelligence gathering, response policing, and criminal investigation (MNS, 2008). While the JCF previously had not implemented community policing across the entire force, in 2010 it commenced a programme of training every member in this form of policing.[106]

Table 7 summarizes the major recent initiatives by the government to tackle gang activities and crime in general.

To target school violence, including that perpetrated by gangs, the Ministries of Education, Health, and National Security partnered to launch Safe Schools in 2004. Initiated in response to increasing reports of violence in schools, the programme deploys specially trained police officers, called school resource officers, to certain schools to reduce violence by implementing activities such as students mentoring students and dispute mediation. These officers also work with the school administration to identify and monitor areas on the school compound that pose potential dangers to students, search for weapons, and monitor the operation of gang-related activities. In addition to the various government ministries, several NGOs are involved, with support from the European Commission directly as well as through the CSJP (Meeks Gardner, 2007). As of 2007, school resource officers were operating in 127 schools across the country (*Jamaica Observer*, 2009b).

As mentioned above, non-state actors, especially NGOs, shoulder the responsibility for implementing many of the gang violence reduction programmes. Much of the work of the larger state-funded programmes is sub-contracted to these NGOs for implementation. NGOs, some of which have received international recognition for 'best practices' in the field of violence prevention, also receive funding from the private sector, including corporations and private foundations.

International agencies

International agencies have played a significant role in local gang violence reduction efforts. Specifically, they provide funding for many government social

crime prevention programmes in chronically violent communities (Harriott, 2009). The European Commission (EC), the US Agency for International Development (USAID), the Canadian International Development Agency, and DFID are key donors for the security and justice sectors in Jamaica. Organizations such as UNICEF, UNDP, and WHO have also worked with the government to implement programmes aimed at addressing gang violence. Other international entities important to Jamaica's security efforts include the Inter-American Development Bank, the Caribbean Development Bank, and the World Bank. Many of these agencies emphasize social interventions, while some attempt to buttress Jamaica's security forces.

Specifically, USAID, through its Community Empowerment and Transformation (COMET) project, is working on a comprehensive gang reduction strategy with the MNS and has co-sponsored gang violence reduction and gang investigation methods workshops with law enforcement officials and various non-state actors. USAID assists the government in developing tools to collect, manage, and share intelligence on gangs and their activities, and legislation that empowers law enforcement and local actors.[107] This is part of USAID's broader work of regional gang violence reduction with the Dominican Republic, Haiti, Jamaica, and the US state of Florida. COMET's primary focus is on improving governance through citizen security and participation. To that end, the project also focuses on improving effective policing, supporting governmental anti-corruption efforts, building capacity for sustainable community transformation, and strengthening micro-enterprise productivity (USAID–Jamaica, 2009).

The EC is the largest benefactor of Jamaica's security efforts. Its focus is on equipment and infrastructure for the MNS and the Ministry of Justice. Recently, the EC was instrumental in providing the services of the deputy prosecutor of Italy's Anti-Mafia Bureau for a two-day symposium on reducing gangs and organized crime in Jamaica. Meanwhile, DFID is more involved in operational tasks to combat crime, especially through the involvement of Scotland Yard in training activities for Jamaican personnel. They work on promoting accountability in the police force to reduce corrupt practices—by applying international standards—and improving accountability in the police budget (Luz i Álvarez, 2007, p. 76). The British High Commission is also working on a reintegration programme for deportees to the island.[108]

While they are not benefactors of government security efforts, multi-lateral organizations such as the United Nations and WHO play an important role in local violence prevention efforts, though neither focuses on gang violence specifically. The UN, through UNDP, is implementing a Violence Prevention, Peace and Sustainable Development Programme in the country, whose objectives include designing armed violence prevention policies and programmes, increasing the capacity of institutions to prevent armed violence and increase community safety, and enhancing the effectiveness and coherence of international support to armed violence prevention policies and programmes (UNDP Jamaica, 2008). Though its remit does not emphasize gang violence, its policies and programmes will affect this area. In addition, UNDP and UN-LiREC have provided assistance in enabling national implementation of the UN's PoA. This assistance has included training seminars for law enforcement personnel in areas relating to firearms and ammunition import, export, and intransit operations; human rights and law enforcement; and compliance with the PoA, as well as workshops in collaboration with UNICEF (GOJ, 2008a).

WHO is primarily engaged through the Violence Prevention Alliance (VPA). In 2004, the Jamaica chapter of WHO's VPA was formed with the aim of facilitating information sharing and strengthening policies related to violence. VPA members include representatives from the Jamaican Ministries of National Security, Education, and Health; international agencies, including UNDP and UNICEF; local NGOs such as the PMI; university faculty, and members of the private sector, including the entertainment industry. The wide cross-section of membership bolsters the VPA's ability to play a major coordinating role in local violence prevention. Its mandate is to facilitate the work of organizations that share its vision of violence prevention and provide a forum for them to collaborate in influencing policies (Luz i Álvarez, 2007, p. 73). It has also moved beyond coordination to implement programmes such as peace campaigns, which use popular music targeting at-risk youth, and also numeracy and literacy programmes. Key to the success of these programmes is the partnership with various VPA members, both state and civil society.[109]

Challenges to gang violence reduction

Local stakeholders indicate that sustained and coordinated action targeting gang violence prevention is required in several primary areas: social and educational development; grassroots economic opportunity; law enforcement; strengthening resident participation; and advocacy and lobbying (Laurent, 2007). Arguably, both government and non-state actors have done much in each of these primary areas in an effort to address the problem. Despite these numerous efforts, however, violent crime rates up until mid-2010 show no signs of abating. A 20 per cent fall in murders in 2006 after then-record levels in 2005 was encouraging. As had happened over the past 15 years, however, the decrease was merely a harbinger of a new record number of murders in 2009 (see Figure 2), despite an increase in muscular police operations that year, including a 27 per cent increase in raids (JIS, 2010b). Indeed, intelligence officials admit that fluctuations in instigators of gang violence, more so than efforts of security forces, are responsible for reductions in murder rates.[110] Since the election of a new government in 2007, three different people have occupied the seat of minister of national security, instability widely viewed as being indicative of the tremendous pressure the government has felt to adjust its strategy constantly to the unmitigated threat of crime and violence (Spaulding, 2009).

Crime control

Government-led initiatives that focus on crime control have been largely ineffective for a variety of reasons: non-cooperation between residents and police; police resorting to illegal means that compromise the authority and legitimacy of the system; and corruption among politicians and police personnel (Harriott, 2009).

The 2006 JNCVS illustrates residents' widespread lack of trust and confidence in the security forces. The survey results show that fewer than one-third of victims reported crime to the police. Further, 24 per cent of those who did not

report a crime said they were so inclined because they did not expect that the police force could do anything, and another 14 per cent reported that they did not think the police would care. Similarly, among those who witnessed a murder but did not report it to the police (an overwhelming 80 per cent), 15.7 per cent said they were afraid of the offenders; 13.8 per cent said they did not think the police could provide adequate protection from the offenders or their associates; 10.3 per cent reported that they did not trust the police; and 3.2 per cent said they feared the police. In addition, 70 per cent of respondents said they believed that corruption involving the local police is a big problem, though a similar portion (68 per cent) said police did a good or average job enforcing the law (Wortley et al., 2006).

Residents rarely cooperate with security forces, for additional reasons. The police find it extremely difficult to solve murders and other crimes committed in inner-city communities because of the tight communal organization and solidarity residents maintain, a carryover from partisan political mobilization and the unwritten but seriously enforced community rule that police inform-ers should be killed (Charles, 2004; Reynolds, 2009). Further, residents are often more fearful that corrupt police officers will inform gang leaders of their betrayal than they are that members of their community may find out.[111] Security forces, while successfully apprehending some high-profile gang lead-ers, have expressed frustration at the lack of support, cooperation, and trust from residents, insufficient legislation to support their crime control efforts, and their inability to match the resources of gangs, especially their weaponry (Williams, 2005).

Residents' lack of confidence also extends to the wider criminal justice sys-tem, and such feelings appear justified. In 2007 the arrest rate for murder, for example, had declined to 34 per cent and the conviction rate stood at less than 10 per cent.[112] Most of these unsolved cases, police claim, are gang-related (Harriott, 2009). The results of the 2006 JNCVS reflect this lack of confidence. Of the respondents, 50.0 per cent said that the criminal courts were doing a poor job of providing justice swiftly; 45.0 per cent said that the courts were doing a poor job helping crime victims; and 38.3 per cent reported that the courts were doing a poor job ensuring fair trials for people charged with a crime (Wortley et al., 2006). The JCF also highlights challenges in the justice

system, pointing out that many of the gang leaders they arrest are quickly released on bail (*Jamaica Gleaner*, 2008b).

Police officers' abusive and excessively forceful behaviour has compromised the authority and legitimacy of the system and hampered efforts to build respect for law and order, something the government acknowledges remains a challenge. Residents, for example, have cited numerous instances of human rights abuses and the high rate of civilian deaths at the hands of police officers. Inner-city communities regularly complain of police officers arbitrarily taking into custody youths who loiter in public spaces, often without charging them for any crimes. Because of the high unemployment rates among young inner-city men, many of them can be seen in public spaces at various times during the day and many are accosted by the police.[113] Such treatment has embittered many of the young men towards police officers and, in some cases, has led young men to shoot indiscriminately at them.[114] Various human rights groups have extensively documented the human rights violations perpetrated by Jamaican security forces (AI, 2001; 2003; 2008a; 2008b; Jamaicans for Justice, 2005; ECOSOC, 2003).[115] Notably, the failing human-rights grade Jamaica has received on the international stage has made it extremely difficult for the government to purchase arms for the security forces because of the unwillingness of some arms-producing countries to sell to them (Reid, 2008).

In addition to the MNS, three formal bodies are concerned with the external accountability and oversight of the JCF: the Police Service Commission, the Police Civilian Oversight Authority, and the Police Public Complaints Authority. A 2008 evaluation of these bodies, however, concluded that, while they are responsible for different aspects of JCF accountability, none held the JCF effectively to account (GOJ, 2008b). In addition, the JCF has a body responsible for investigating police killings, the Bureau of Special Investigations. Despite the arrest of 231 police officers since its inception in 1999 and the subsequent charging of 92 with murder, it is difficult to ascertain the extent to which these actions have affected the number of extra-judicial killings (JIS, 2010a). The recent illegal ammunition find linked to the police armoury, however, bolstered calls for an Independent Commission of Investigations. This commission would replace the Police Public Complaints Authority and the Bureau of Special Investigations with an independent body to investigate abuses by

members of the security forces, including the JCF, the JDF, the correctional department, and the customs authority (JIS, 2010c). The Independent Commission of Investigations Act was passed by lawmakers in March 2010 and was to go to the Senate for amendments before being sent to the Governor General for his assent (*Jamaica Gleaner*, 2010c).

In addition to discriminatory actions towards some community members, evidence bolsters claims of disproportionate arresting practices on the part of the police. For example, in 2005, 8,461 major crimes were reported; yet, in the same year, according to police data, there were 15,746 arrests in Jamaica. There were, therefore, nearly twice as many arrests as reported major crimes, leading some researchers to suggest that the Jamaican police are using arrest powers to deal with many minor offences (Foglesong and Stone, 2007, p. 24). Further, evidence suggests that the use of arrest powers is not strategically targeted on high crime areas: 72 per cent of all arrests took place outside the KMR, though 57 per cent of all major crimes were reported inside this region (Foglesong and Stone, 2007, p. 24).

The government has acknowledged that balancing and respecting the constitutional rights of citizens with anti-crime initiatives remains a challenge. Further, identifying gang members to arrest is difficult because local gangs are not easily identified as are their Latin American counterparts, who wear tattoos and specific colours (MNS, 2008). Difficulties notwithstanding, the government's actions have contributed to a growing sense of alienation among some individuals who feel that society has denied them justice.[116] As a result, parallel systems of 'justice' have evolved with the assent of the dons and informal area leaders, as well as vigilante justice and arbitrary community enforcement (GOJ, 2007).

Corruption within the JCF has always been a bone of contention for the Jamaican public. Gang members themselves have acknowledged the role that crooked police play in freeing colleagues from jail, helping them avoid raids, not reporting found illegal guns, and killing enemies (Luton, 2008a). Even before the large ammunition find of early 2010, a special task force on crime had concluded in 2006 that corruption was endemic and institutionalized in the JCF. These corrupt practices included the sale of gun licences, the sale of ammunition, advising criminals of planned police interdiction, providing body-

guard services for dons and other suspicious individuals, providing escorts for illegal drugs, and contract killing or 'murder for hire' (STFC, 2006). In 2009, Transparency International ranked Jamaica 99th out of 180 countries on its Corruption Perceptions Index, an indicator of the perceived level of public-sector corruption in a country or territory (Transparency International, 2009).

Over the past few years, however, the JCF has attempted to reduce corruption. In 2007, it created an Anti-corruption Branch[117] within the unit and published its first anti-corruption plan.[118] Since then, investigators have arrested and charged more than 100 police officers with corruption. In addition, the JCF has retired some members 'in the public's interest' and dismissed others due to corruption.[119] Paradoxically, the ammunition seizure of February 2010 may indicate a slow but steady improvement in the integrity of the force. The JCF officers on routine patrol who chose to investigate the sergeant who was ultimately charged with the ammunition find were all below his rank (*Jamaica Gleaner*, 2010d). In a force where challenging senior officers, especially over criminality, is a rare occurence, this may signala change in a positive direction.

Community policing appears to have considerable potential as a means of rebuilding trust between civilians and security forces. As simple as the change may be, having officers work *with* community members to address the *source* of criminal activities rather than just dealing with isolated incidents, enforcing laws, and responding to emergencies, especially in the traditionally paramilitary and aggressive way, may go a long way towards reducing crime. Civilians in areas where the JCF has implemented community policing indicate a preference for this type of policing and appear to be developing positive relationships with the officers (PIJ, 2010).

The marginalization of community policing within the JCF's broader policing strategy, however, diminished its impact; certain officers were responsible for community policing, but the JCF had not yet adopted this approach across the force. Further, many members of the police force considered community policing to be a 'soft' approach to policing and not an effective means of addressing crime and violence. Consequently, numerous cases are cited of police officers spending months building relationships with community members, only for those relationships to be destroyed when other members of the force, especially special squads, entered the community to raid and arrest various members.[120]

Therefore, there appeared to be insufficient coordination between community policing and the activities of the rest of the police force. In 2010, however, the JCF began to train every member in community-based policing, a move that may improve the effectiveness of the JCF in the long term.

Finally, some argue that a major challenge to security forces' efforts is that the country suffers from insufficient numbers of police personnel; the ratio is one police officer to every 274 residents. The government claims this is the lowest ratio in the Caribbean and one of the lowest in the world, and that success in challenging crime lies in part in increasing the force's numerical strength (*Jamaica Observer*, 2009a). Over the last five years, the government had thus announced its intentions to increase substantially the size of the JCF, in some cases by as much as 40 per cent (JIS, 2006d; Saunders, 2007). Though no significant increase in JCF numbers has been realized since the announcements, the intention still remains to increase the JCF force from approximately 8,500 members to 12,000, with the plan being to recruit some 800 new officers in 2010 (JIS, 2010d). Researchers point out, however, that no clear inverse relationships are apparent between the numerical force of the police force and crime rates in many countries across the Caribbean (Harriott, 2009).

The government remains committed to crafting anti-gang legislation but continues to send mixed signals to local stakeholders about how punitive the measures will be. Some government officials insist, however, that they would not make the same mistakes as their Central American counterparts by criminalizing gang membership.[121] El Salvador, for example, had introduced repressive approaches to gang control, advocating the immediate imprisonment (for up to five years) of youths as young as 12 who displayed gang-related tattoos or flashed gang signs in public. Between July 2003 and August 2004, roughly 20,000 youths were arrested. Eventually, approximately 95 per cent of them were released without charge after such legislation was declared unconstitutional by the Salvadoran Supreme Court for violating the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (Jütersonke, Muggah, and Rodgers, 2009, p. 382). Other repressive approaches by Central American states, such as lengthening prison sentences for gang members, allowing minors to be treated as adults, and—in more extreme cases—supporting the existence of paramilitary death squads that deliberately targeted gang members, have had

a temporary and tenuous effect. Gangs instead became more organized and had a greater predisposition to acts of excessive brutality and new forms of adaptation to avoid capture (Jütersonke, Muggah, and Rodgers, 2009).

Despite repeated assurances by some government representatives that no similar episode would be recorded in Jamaica's history, other officials—no doubt in response to a frightened and frustrated public demanding swifter, harsher solutions to the country's crime woes—continue to use threatening rhetoric when addressing gangs (Barrett, 2010). Notably, the residents of the marginalized communities who are already withstanding the worst of aggressive state forces do not demand measures that are more punitive. Such legislation, according to some officials, would lead to the arrest of all gang members (*Jamaica Observer*, 2010a). Security officials acknowledge that they face challenges identifying gang members in an environment where few, if any, gangs exhibit unique signs, symbols, or colours, and one in which there is a very fluid relationship between community gangs and broader community violence. The indiscriminate arrests and detainment of community members, especially young men, already breeds much distrust between community members and police forces; legislation of this nature will only exacerbate tensions.[122] Government officials who make aggressive pronouncements are likely to alienate themselves from the local NGO actors, who fear for the people they serve.

Social interventions

Anecdotal evidence suggests that many social interventions have had an impact in the local areas in which state and non-state actors implemented them. This reflects, in part, the large number of NGOs in Jamaica that are capable of designing and implementing meaningful programmes; the large number of skilled and concerned residents who can facilitate these programmes; and the significant body of experience from which many lessons can be drawn (Laurent, 2007). Owing to a lack of coordination among programmes and with the police force, insufficient monitoring and evaluation, the difficulty experienced engaging young men, and the ascendancy of the don in the informal governance structures that permeate poor urban communities, however, these efforts have not translated into a national impact.

While there is clearly much activity, the absence of a national strategy for community safety and security has significantly hampered the efforts of government-funded social interventions. Failing a common vision around which programmes can coalesce, proper coordination has been difficult. Despite distinct official remits for each government-funded programme—that is, the PMI, CSI, CSJP, and JSIF—the actual social interventions each programme offers have grown organically and opportunistically in response to the availability of resources and the immediate needs faced in communities, rather than in line with a clear overarching vision (PIJ, 2010). Without coordination, individual interventions generally do not benefit from knowledge gained elsewhere, tend to impact only their narrow spectrum of intended beneficiaries, and diminish the systemic impact necessary to make long-term changes (Laurent, 2007). In late 2009 and early 2010, the government began remedying this problem by commencing national consultations for its first-ever national community safety and security strategy. This ambitious plan seeks to create an inter-ministerial and inter-agency framework in which the various interventions can work effectively (GOJ, 2010).

Monitoring and evaluation continue to be major challenges, with few programmes possessing the mechanisms necessary to evaluate properly the efficacy of each intervention they implement. Many programmes use superficial methods of evaluation, such as the number of persons who participated in a specific intervention (for example, workshops on conflict resolution) instead of assessing whether levels of violence dropped in that community as a result of that intervention; emphasis is being placed on measuring the outputs of community interventions and not the outcomes (PIJ, 2010). UNDP has attempted to improve coordination with the introduction of a 'Community of Practice', which aims to provide a systematic approach to help stakeholders connect on a continuous basis, harness existing knowledge and experience, share best practices, and identify lessons learned.[123] The Jamaica chapter of WHO's Violence Prevention Alliance (VPA), founded in 2004, has also attempted to meet this need.

Another major challenge many social interventions face is that, though some are aimed at young men—the group most at risk of becoming gang members and entering into violent activity—few are successful in reaching them or doing so sustainably. Women are primarily the beneficiaries of the various social

programmes related to skills training, education, and conflict resolution. A recent government-commissioned study indicates that activities centred on sports, music, and actual income-generating activities appear to be the most appealing to young men, but few programmes heavily utilize sports and music (PIJ, 2010).

The lack of legal governance in inner-city communities increases the obstacle that dons pose to social programmes. The state is often absent in many of these communities: police enter only to conduct raids; garbage disposal services are infrequent; infrastructure development is non-existent; and members of parliament to whom the people can voice concerns respond only in the run-up to elections. The don, who can provide many of these social services, thus replaces the state. Social interventions are largely dependent on the engagement of comparatively robust and credible local public authorities and civil society organizations that may have been weakened by prolonged periods of chronic violence (Rodgers, Muggah, and Stevenson, 2009).

In the absence of legal governance structures three approaches, though tacitly adopted, have generally been utilized for implementing programmes in these communities: *co-existence*, in which the don is informed of the plans and his informal support is requested; *co-option*, in which dons are engaged to participate in activities; and *competition*, in which the role of the don is undermined by increasing the provision of social services and strengthening legitimate governance structures in the community. There is little direction from the government, however, on how best to address this obstacle (PIJ, 2010).

Political corruption and interference continue to be the greatest obstacles to reducing gang violence in Jamaica. A major source of corruption and complicity between criminal gangs and the state lies in the awarding of state contracts. Researchers have pointed to corruption in the construction industry as a main issue in global policy discourse on corruption, and demonstrate that Jamaica is not exempt from this characterization (Waller and Harriott, 2008). The provision of contracts to criminal entrepreneurs also ensures a level of security for the politicians overseeing the awarding process, as well as the political parties with which they associate. This is done in many different ways, ranging from securing votes from the citizens who are controlled by the dons; protecting the interests of the politician in their constituency or parts of their

constituency and, by extension, the politician's party to securing finances for the politician's political campaign (Waller and Harriott, 2008). Pressure is also merely placed on government officials to award construction contracts to dons who operate these 'construction companies'. The consequences of not awarding such contracts to these groups can be the intimidation of workers, obstructing the transportation of building materials into the community, and the theft of construction materials upon arrival (Waller and Harriott, 2008). Other politicians have direct and indirect links to drug and firearms trafficking and therefore have a stake in protecting the gangs that oversee the activities.[124]

Consequently, many social interventions aimed at increasing a community's capacity to resist gang involvement often fail if the member of parliament for that area thinks the interventions will challenge his or her ascendancy.[125] In situations in which they believe that the introduction of new programmes may result in a reduction of electoral support for them, some politicians may make progress very difficult.[126] In contexts in which politicians support community security programmes, or at least do not feel the programmes are a threat to them, progress is possible; interventions have the most chance of success if the politician directly cooperates or adopts a *laissez-faire* attitude (Levy, 2009).

In 2009, USAID–COMET sponsored the creation and operation of a National Integrity Action Forum. The Forum brings together, regularly, public officials and other key players in the country's integrity system to identify and remove obstacles in the fight against corruption. Participants include the prime minister along with other high-ranking government officials and representatives from the various government ministries, the media, human rights organizations, advocacy groups, the private sector, the criminal justice system, the JCF High Command, and institutions of higher learning (USAID–Jamaica, 2009). It is too early, however, to assess the impact that such an entity is making.

The government's initiative to reduce violence and gang activity in schools, the Safe Schools programme, appears to be generating mixed results. Evaluations in 2007 indicated that more students agreed than disagreed that school resource officers were effectively changing the behaviour of students in gangs within the schools, though many remained undecided (Meeks Gardner, 2007). The evaluations obtained similar mixed responses about the increase or decrease of the gang presence in schools.

Conclusion

Jamaica's gangs have seemingly overwhelmed police and legal systems and strained the state's capacity due to the sheer volume of their violent activities. Further, their influence has only increased as they have acted as surrogate or alternate governments in so-called ungoverned areas and have challenged the legitimacy of the state in these communities. With the government aiming to reduce murder rates from 59 per 100,000 in 2007 to 10 per 100,000 by 2030, addressing the issues of gang violence must play a central role (PIJ, 2009, p. 129).

Key to reducing gang violence, and violence in general, is reconfiguring the political economy of crime in Jamaica. Some actions that have been recommended include increasing welfare services and making its delivery impartial, thus reducing citizen dependence on the favour of their member of parliament, and reducing the pool of recruitment by educating young men (Gayle, 2009b; MNS, 2008). Without the removal of the political facilitation of organized crime, few other changes will have any significant national impact on crime and violence. The government does acknowledge that the threat gangs present could be minimized if the country significantly reduced the political, economic, and social tolerance of criminal dons, the facilitation of garrison community-based politics, and the coercive control of communities with a power base rooted in large financial resources (GOJ, 2007). Translating this rhetoric into action, however, has been slow.

A careful assessment needs to be made of proposed anti-gang legislation, especially if it involves criminalizing gang membership. While Jamaican legislation must be enhanced to equip security forces better to combat crime, increasing the legislative tools that police can employ without the necessary checks and balances to control police brutality will only lead to a greater delegitimization of the state in many inner-city communities. Many of these communities already view security forces as larger gangs providing additional powers to a force that residents already regard as abusive will only exacerbate tensions (Kemp, 2008). Further, because of Jamaica's porous coastline and the

difficulty of controlling the flow of arms into the country, it is likely that increased power for government forces will only further fuel the demand for more powerful illegal weapons in inner-city communities; the arms race that is already taking place may thus accelerate.

If, however, community policing is adopted as an effective law enforcement method and local governance continues to be strengthened in these communities, sustainable gains in community security may be achieved, as was the conclusion of a recent government-commissioned assessment of its community security and transformation programmes (PIJ, 2010). As the country pushes forward anti-gang legislation, the world waits to see if the government will make the same mistakes as its Central American counterparts by criminalizing gang membership or if it will make a decision driven by evidence, and not the vociferous demands of an impatient and frightened middle and upper class.

Dialogue must continue between government, academics, and other stakeholders about the estimated number of gangs and gang members in the country. The recently produced estimate of 268 gangs has been received with alarm by community workers and scepticism by many academics. Those working with communities worry that such estimates are alarmist and will only justify the introduction of harmful legislation leading to the arrest and abuse of delinquent—though not criminally involved—groups of youths. Some academics argue that, given the complex web connecting the criminal gangs to the community gangs, many groups of people considered gangs may in fact be units, or arms, of the larger criminal gangs, and not separate gangs themselves. Unfortunately, the government's threats of aggressive action against all gang members risk eroding the trust necessary for dialogue between government and civil-society stakeholders.

Crime control approaches must include defining gangs by crime trend, activity levels, and structural organization in order to provide more opportunities to target different gang types with the appropriate intervention method, as was recommended more than a decade ago (Moncrieffe, 1998). Arguably, a more differentiated response from the government is needed, with criminal gangs the focus of crime control responses based on law enforcement cooperation, and community gangs requiring a greater emphasis on social interventions. Currently, the JCF's approach to gangs does not appear to take into account

their heterogeneity; the JCF uses available anti-gang initiatives to disband all gangs similarly. Many local stakeholders insist that many community gang members, unlike criminal gang members, would prefer not to be involved in warfare; the majority want peace and they, not criminal gangs, are the ones who come forward to sign public peace accords. Many of these community gang members, if given the opportunity, will take a job instead of participating in illegal activities. Local stakeholders highlight the positive changes that take place in violent communities, such as when programmes introduce even small amounts of funding for social interventions.[127]

Similarly, a differentiated response must also be adopted in addressing the proliferation of arms and ammunition. While the majority of weapons implicated in crimes are believed to have entered the country illegally, much of the ammunition used is believed to have entered the country via legal markets before being transferred to illicit ones. Crafting a response must take into consideration the different channels through which arms and ammunition are being supplied.

Methods such as those of the PMI—which directly engage gang members and try to circumvent tense situations that may escalate into violence—hold promise. Large numbers of gang-related murders, for example, are reprisal killings planned during times of emotional duress, especially in emergency rooms as the victims are being treated or dying and at funerals as loved ones grieve.[128] Shifting resources to discourage rash decisions at points during which grief is expressed most forcefully may have far-reaching effects.[129] If government and development partners give social interventions the resources to target at-risk youth in a sustainable way, the result may be significant reductions in violence.

Currently, there is a lack of focus on small arms control in national violence prevention efforts and this gap is evident in the work of most stakeholders (Luz i Álvarez, 2007). The government, however, has acknowledged the importance of developing a national small arms prevention strategy and efforts are now underway to create one (GOJ, 2007; *Jamaica Observer*, 2009a). This strategy, if coordinated with its gang violence reduction strategy—and a community safety and security strategy—may be effective, especially if coupled with increased political will and transparency. Social interventions such as the PMI

have strategies to demobilize and, to a lesser extent, reintegrate members of warring factions (most of whom are gang members), but do not address disarmament (PIJ, 2010).

Stakeholders must also increase their investigations of the role that the upper and middle class play in the provision of illegal guns. The large illegal ammunition find of February 2010 at a gun shop located in a middle-class community in Kingston support this call. Further, the findings only echo what Jamaican academics have long argued, namely that wealthy Jamaicans have assisted criminals in obtaining weapons (Beckford and Reynolds, 2008).

As is the case in many other countries, data on gangs in Jamaica are sparse or are not readily available; much still remains to be understood about Jamaica's gang phenomenon. While the lack of data is understandable given the sensitive nature of the subject and the inherent risk involved in collecting it, Caribbean states must increase their efforts to collect more information to inform better policy. Drug trafficking, for example, which many blame for the high levels of violence, does not sufficiently explain the phenomenon, especially in the absence of such a strong correlation between drug trafficking and murder rates in other high-transhipment countries (UNICEF, 2008). Similarly, differences between gang violence and broader community violence have not informed the government's anti-gang efforts due to the under-investigation of the subject. In addition, policy-makers have not fully explored the role that prisons play in facilitating—or terminating—gang involvement.

Within one month of launching a manhunt for Christopher Coke, Jamaican security forces succeeded in capturing him. They intercepted him on 22 June 2010, when he was reportedly on his way to surrender secretly to US officials on the island in an attempt to bypass the local authorities (*Jamaica Gleaner*, 2010g). Quickly waiving his right to a local extradition hearing, Coke was extradited to the US four hours later (*Jamaica Gleaner*, 2010h). It was a seemingly anticlimactic end to the reign of one of Jamaica's most powerful crime lords, leaving many residents of this small island wondering what happens next. The series of events that led up to Coke's arrest remain largely obscure, as do the implications for Jamaica's future. What seems patently clear, however, are the dynamics of a political economy that nurtures organized crime and the ways in which the easy availability of firearms has made violent crime in the country more deadly.

Endnotes

1   See INL (2010) for further details. With reference to the Government of Jamaica (GOJ), this US Department of State report comments, 'The GOJ's unusual handling of the August request for the extradition of a high profile Jamaican crime lord with reported ties to the ruling Jamaica Labor Party, which currently holds a majority in parliament, on alleged drug and firearms trafficking charges marked a dramatic change in GOJ's previous cooperation on extradition [. . .] and raises serious questions about the GOJ's commitment to combating transnational crime' (INL, 2010, p. 377).

2   In 2008, the UN Office on Drugs and Crime ranked Jamaica second in the world only to Honduras (60.9) in intentional homicide rates, having a rate of 59.5 per 100,000 (UNODC, 2010). In 2009, Jamaica recorded 1,680 murders (JCFSD, 2010). Using 2008 end-of-year population estimates—the most recent available—from the Statistical Institute of Jamaica (SIJ, n.d.) of 2,692,400, the murder rate calculates to 62.4 per 100,000 in 2009.

3   Jamaica's overall homicide rate is much higher than the intentional homicide rate. In 2009, the total number of homicides stood at 1,957, including fatal shootings not considered murder (JCFSD, 2010). The Statistical Institute of Jamaica estimates that the end-of-year population for 2008—the most recent available—was 2,692,400 (SIJ, n.d.); the overall homicide rate thus calculates to 72.7 per 100,000. The difference between the overall homicide rate and the intentional homicide rate is mostly due to police killings of civilians, which is discussed below (JCFSD, 2010).

4   Major crimes are defined by the Jamaica Constabulary Force as murder, shooting, rape, carnal abuse, robbery, breaking, and larceny (JCFSD, 2009a).

5   Jamaica is divided into 14 administrative units called parishes. The capital comprises the two parishes of Kingston and St Andrew. In this report, the name 'Kingston' is used to refer to the urban area spanning across these two parishes.

6   JCFSD (2009b) provides the numbers of homicides per parish while SIJ (n.d.) lists population data by parish. In recent years, the parish of St James, in which Jamaica's second city—Montego Bay—lies, has surpassed the KMR in homicide rates. The homicide rate for the parish in 2008 was an estimated 116 per 100,000. Police officials blame this dramatic upsurge in homicide rates on lottery frauds, which Jamaicans organize to swindle North Americans but which often go awry due to infighting (Thompson, 2009). Police also believe that scammers contract gangs to carry out some of these killings (Bailey, 2009).

7   Author interview with an official, National Intelligence Bureau, Kingston, February 2010.

8   Author interview with a social anthropologist, Kingston, September 2009.

9   The Ministry of National Security (MNS) is responsible for the two most comprehensive national studies on gangs: 'Gang Study: The Jamaican Crime Scene' (Moncrieffe, 1998) and 'The Jamaica Gang Threat Assessment Study' (Wilks, 2009), which was not yet publicly released at the time of writing. Another study focuses on organized crime across the country (Harriott, 2008); two additional studies explore gangs in the KMR alone (Mogensen, 2005; Levy, 2009).

In addition, insightful anthropological studies of life in the inner city of the KMR describe gangs and their activities (Gunst, 1996; Gayle, 2009b).

10   Unless otherwise noted, all author interviews cited in this report were conducted in Kingston.

11   The National Committee on Political Tribalism reports: 'At one level, a garrison community can be described as one in which anyone who seeks to oppose, raise opposition to or organize against the dominant party would definitely be in danger of suffering serious damage to their possessions or person thus making continued residence in the area extremely difficult if not impossible. A garrison, as the name suggests, is a political stronghold, a veritable fortress completely controlled by a party. Any significant social, political, economic or cultural development within the garrison can only take place with the tacit approval of the leadership (whether local or national) of the dominant party' (NCPT, 2007).

12   See Townsend (2009) for a description of similar circumstances in present-day Trinidad.

13   Jamaica's National Intelligence Bureau (NIB) defines gangs as 'groups of persons who operate together for a common goal to make gains from involvement in illegal activities' (Ellington, 2009). Local academics propose another definition: 'A gang is defined as any group of 3 or more persons operating together with some degree of permanence (at least 3 months of activity), involved in criminal activities and competing violently with a similar group' (Gayle, 2009b).

14   The government does not consider Jamaican gangs insurgents in the traditional sense, though they are formidable threats to the legitimacy of state governance in some communities. The government claimed in 2007, however, that there was evidence of efforts to form a paramilitary force from a coalition of small gangs (GOJ, 2007, p. 17).

15   The proponent of this typology, Horace Levy of the University of the West Indies, changed the term *corner crew* to *community gang* because these groups of people identified not just with a street corner in a community, but also with the entire community surrounding the corner. Though they do not necessarily represent the entire community, every community gang has a community that serves as its reference point. This is not necessarily the case with *criminal gangs* (author communication with Horace Levy, August 2009).

16   Author interview with staff and board member of an inner-city NGO, August 2009.

17   This typology, like any other, has its challenges. For example, by characterizing gangs as either 'criminal' or 'community', it inadvertently suggests that 'community gangs' do not participate in criminal activities and that 'criminal gangs' do not have a community base. This was not the intent of the creator of the typology (author interview with Horace Levy, August 2009).

18   Author interview with Dr Herbert Gayle, social anthropologist, University of the West Indies, September 2009. Gayle describes gangs as inter-connected because of Jamaica's *segmentary factional political system.* This theoretical construct is defined as an underlying 'segmentary' structure in which political allegiances are based on forms of client–patron relations, to the effect that loyalty to a political party or community supersedes that to the state (Gayle, 2009b). An academic exploration of this concept, however, is beyond the scope of this paper.

19   Officials acknowledge, however, the challenges of producing estimates of gang membership, especially because of the protean nature of criminal—and non-criminal—associations; they are aware of the need to constantly revisit and revise this number. In addition, some local stakeholders disagree with these estimates, arguing that due to definitional issues, they are inflated (Spaulding, 2010b).

20   Some academics, however, estimate that there are about 20 organized crime groups (Harriott, 2009, p. 16).

21 Author interview with the head of the government's organized crime task force, October 2009.

22 Author interview with an official in the MNS Research and Evaluation Unit, February 2010.

23 Author interview with a staff and a board member of an inner-city NGO, August 2009.

24 The role that women play in gang violence is often indirect, but nonetheless significant. Most gang members are men, but there are isolated cases of women being gang members and even gang leaders (Mogensen, 2005). Women are generally believed to aid gang members by helping to transport guns for men, shielding them from law enforcement officers, and washing any blood-stained clothes (Chevannes, 2002; Frankson, 2007). Increasingly, however, local stakeholders are pointing out the role that women also play as the actual perpetrators of violence in communities. Women have been known not only to commit acts of crime, but also to delegate responsibility for committing these acts to others and to oversee their execution (*Jamaica Gleaner*, 2010e). A 2007 survey of gangs in public secondary schools by the government of Jamaica revealed that school-aged girls might be involved in gangs as well. Between 30 per cent and 42 per cent of respondents said that girls were members of these gangs, though their level of involvement remained unclear (Meeks Gardner, 2007).

25 Author interview with a staff and a board member of an inner-city NGO, August 2009.

26 Author interview with a staff and a board member of an inner-city NGO, August 2009.

27 Author interview with a staff and a board member of an inner-city NGO, August 2009.

28 Author interview with a staff and a board member of an inner-city NGO, August 2009.

29 Author interview with an acting assistant commissioner of police, February 2010.

30 Author interview with the executive officer of an inner-city NGO, August 2009.

31 Author interview with a staff and a board member of an inner-city NGO, August 2009.

32 Author interview with a staff and a board member of an inner-city NGO, August 2009.

33 Author interview with a staff and a board member of an inner-city NGO, August 2009.

34 Author interview with a staff and a board member of an inner-city NGO, August 2009.

35 Author interview with a staff and a board member of an inner-city NGO, August 2009.

36 Author interview with an acting assistant commissioner of police, February 2010.

37 'Kangaroo court' in this context refers to the unauthorized arbitration of legal matters that official courts should address. It involves judicial proceedings that deny due process rights in the name of expediency. The arbiter is the local don.

38 Author interview with a staff and a board member of an inner-city NGO, August 2009.

39 Author interview with an acting assistant commissioner of police, February 2010.

40 Author interview with a staff and a board member of an inner-city NGO, August 2009.

41 Author interview with a social anthropologist, September 2009.

42 Author interview with a staff and a board member of an inner-city NGO, August 2009.

43 Author interview with representatives of the US Agency for International Development's Community Empowerment and Transformation Project (USAID–COMET), August 2009.

44 Relationships between gangs and some wealthy Jamaican merchants also exist; corrupt merchants provide assistance to gangs in obtaining illegal weapons or carrying out other illegal activities (Beckford and Reynolds, 2008). Little is known about this relationship, however.

45 Some gangs that share political allegiances enjoy mutually beneficial partnerships with each other. This ranges from accessing weapons and ammunition to bolstering forces in specific gang wars. These partnerships offer safety from arrest among many other mutual benefits (author interview with the head of the government's organized crime task force, October 2009). The mechanisms of this relationship, including whether it is codified, are not fully understood.

46   Author interview with a board member of an inner-city NGO, September 2009.

47   In 1980, there were 889 recorded murders, up from 351 in 1979. After a decisive victory by the challenging political party over the incumbent government, violence largely died down. By 1982, the number of murders had fallen to 405 (Harriott, forthcoming).

48   Marijuana is the only natural drug that the Caribbean produces. In the 1980s, the region's share of global production of marijuana was approximately 18 per cent. Since then marijuana production has fallen significantly. By the year 2000, the region's share of global production of marijuana had fallen to 4.2 per cent. That year, total traffic of illegal derivatives of hemp in the Caribbean amounted to 375 metric tons, with locally cultivated marijuana totalling 330 metric tons. The rest of the marijuana flow in the region was attributable to imports of Colombian marijuana to the region for internal consumption or for transshipment outside the Caribbean (UNODC, 2002, p. 2).

49   Author interview with the executive director of an inner-city NGO, September 2009; author interview with a board member of an inner-city NGO, September 2009.

50   Central to the debate about deportees and violent crimes in Jamaica is whether these deportees were criminalized while in foreign countries or before they left Jamaica. Jamaican officials have long claimed that the massive deportation of Jamaicans back to the country, especially from the United States, was inappropriate on the grounds that deportees had been criminalized while in the United States. Some local researchers challenge this assertion, however (Anderson, 2004; Headley, 2005). Further, even if most deportees were criminalized in the United States, some police officials still believe that the deportees who pose the greatest threat are those who were criminal before leaving Jamaica (Headley, 2007).

51   Author interview with the executive director of an inner-city NGO, September 2009.

52   Author interview with the executive director of an inner-city NGO, September 2009.

53   Author interview with a staff and a board member of an inner-city NGO, August 2009.

54   Author interview with a staff and a board member of an inner-city NGO, August 2009.

55   Author interview with a staff and a board member of an inner-city NGO, August 2009.

56   Author interview with a staff and a board member of an inner-city NGO, August 2009.

57   Author interview with a staff and a board member of an inner-city NGO, August 2009.

58   Author interview with a group of NGO representatives, August 2009.

59   Author interview with a staff and a board member of inner-city NGO, August 2009.

60   After the elections, officials did not charge any politicians for illegal distribution of weapons, nor did they pass specific legislation to prevent what was still primarily based on allegations from happening again.

61   Author interview with the assistant commissioner of police in charge of weapons management and destruction, February 2010.

62   Author interview with an official, National Intelligence Bureau, February 2010.

63   Author interview with the assistant commissioner of police in charge of weapons management and destruction, February 2010; author interview with the assistant commissioner of police in charge of criminal investigations, February 2010.

64   Someone with a 'criminal record' is deemed by law to be a 'habitual criminal' or has been sentenced to a term of more than three months within the last five years.

65   This depends on the type of court the case is brought before, whether the weapon is considered *restricted* or *prohibited,* and whether the person is considered *restricted. Prohibited* weapons under the Firearms Act include artillery and automatic firearms as well as grenades, bombs,

and other similar missiles. *Restricted* weapon means any weapon of whatever description or design that is adapted for the discharge of any noxious liquid, gas, or other thing. *Restricted* person means any person who:

(a)   is a habitual criminal within the meaning of Jamaica's Criminal Justice (Administration) Act; or

(b)   has at any time within five years before the event in relation to which the term is used:

    (i)   been declared by a court to be a restricted person; or

    (ii)   been convicted of an offence involving violence and sentenced to a term of imprisonment, whether with or without hard labour, exceeding three months (GOJ, 1967, s. 2(1)).

66   Author interview with an official in the MNS Policy Directorate, February 2010.

67   Data provided to the author by the FLA, February 2010.

68   Author interview with the assistant commissioner of police in charge of weapons management and destruction, February 2010. In addition to those of its own members, the JCF disposes of the defective weapons of members of the Department of Correctional Services; the JCF does not dispose of weapons for the Jamaica Defence Force.

69   Author interview with the assistant commissioner of police in charge of weapons management and destruction, February 2010.

70   Correspondence with a senior advisor on violence prevention at the United Nations Development Programme–Jamaica, January 2010.

71   Author interview with the assistant commissioner of police in charge of weapons management and destruction, February 2010.

72   Author interview with the assistant commissioner of police in charge of weapons management and destruction, February 2010.

73   The obvious exception to this was in 2006, when Jamaica imported most of its weapons from Poland. This relatively large import was of military weapons (see Table 4); the Jamaica Constabulary Force was replacing the M16 rifles that officers carried with the smaller-calibre MP5 semi-automatic rifle. See Edwards and Beckford (2008).

74   According to data provided to the author by the FLA in February 2010, the FLA database records 27 different gauges and calibres of guns registered to licensed holders (where 'GA' stands for 'gauge'). These were listed as follows: '.177; .20; .22; .223; .25; .25/6MM; .303; .32; .357; .38; .380; .38SUPER; .40; 410; .45; .50; 12GA; 16GA; 20GA; 28GA; 30-30; 356MM; 4.10GA; 6.35MM; 7.62; 9MM; .44'.

75   For more information on the methodology employed to estimate firearm imports, see Marsh (2005).

76   Data provided to the author by the FLA, February 2010.

77   Author interview with an NIB official, February 2010. It is difficult to verify this, however, because in most cases the JCF does not recover the firearm(s) used in a particular violent crime. Officials believe the vast majority of *seized* weapons are unlicensed (though at the time of writing, the JCF lacked the data-capturing capacity to quantify this), possibly explaining the deduction. Officials are therefore unable to quantify the contribution of unlicensed firearms to violent crimes.

78   Author interview with the head of the anti-crime initiative Operation Kingfish, October 2009.

79   Author interview with an NIB official, February 2010.

80 Author interview with an NIB official, February 2010.

81 Author interview with an official in the MNS Policy Directorate, February 2010.

82 Author interview with an official in the MNS Policy Directorate, February 2010.

83 Author interview with an NIB official, February 2010.

84 Author interview with an official in the MNS Policy Directorate, February 2010. The 10 per cent estimate is based on other estimates that only 20 per cent of drugs that pass through ports are found; the tracing of weapons is assumed to be more challenging because they have no scent.

85 In Jamaican parlance, the term 'ganja' refers to marijuana.

86 Author interview with an official in the MNS Policy Directorate, February 2010.

87 The FLA began operating in 2006 and provided data it had collected from its inception until the time the author requested the data—mid-February 2010. The FLA does not regulate ammunition imported by the state; therefore, provided data reflects ammunition imported into the country by all sources except the state (personal correspondence with the FLA chief executive officer, April 2010).

88 Author interview with the assistant commissioner of police in charge of weapons management and destruction, February 2010.

89 The only police formation meant to retain some M16s at the end of the replacement exercise was the Mobile Reserve. The JCF had initially introduced M16s to its ranks after the 1980 national elections—Jamaica's bloodiest—in response to the superior firepower of gangs at that time; see Luton (2008b). Over time, the M16 assault rifle was routinely given to police personnel. The Jamaica Defence Force is now the only one to use primarily M16s (author interview with the assistant commissioner of police in charge of weapons management and destruction, February 2010).

90 Author interview with the assistant commissioner of police in charge of weapons management and destruction, February 2010.

91 Author interview with an official in the MNS Policy Directorate, February 2010.

92 Author interview with an official in the MNS Policy Directorate, February 2010.

93 Author interview with a board member of an inner-city NGO, September 2009.

94 Author interview with a board member of an inner-city NGO, September 2009.

95 Author interview with a board member of an inner-city NGO, September 2009.

96 Correspondence with UNDP–Jamaica senior adviser on violence prevention, January 2010.

97 Author interview with an MNS official, January 2010.

98 Author interview with an official, Operation Musketeer, February 2010.

99 The military alliance for these operations was necessary, according to the police, because of the police divisions' inability to challenge many of the gangs alone (*Jamaica Gleaner,* 2008b).

100 See Jütersonke, Muggah, and Rodgers (2009) for a review and discussion of such legislation enacted in Central America.

101 Author interview with the head of Operation Kingfish, October 2009.

102 Author interview with a director in the MNS Policy Directorate, February 2010.

103 This is similar to, but separate from, the aforementioned 'Get the Guns' campaign operated by the JCF's Operaton Kingfish.

104 The JCF informally tested the practice of community-based policing in a few select communities as early as 1993. This embryonic version of community-based policing was neither formally evaluated nor properly documented, but it laid the foundation for its current implementation. See 'A Brief Chronology of Community Policing in Jamaica' in JCF (2009b).

105   Author interview with the assistant commissioner of police in charge of community safety and security, August 2009.

106   Author interview with the assistant commissioner of police in charge of community safety and security, August 2009.

107   Author interview with USAID–COMET representatives, August 2009.

108   Author interview with the deputy director of an inner-city NGO, September 2009.

109   Author interview with the chair of the board of directors, Violence Prevention Alliance–Jamaica chapter, November 2009.

110   Remarks made by Owen Ellington, a JCF official, during his presentation at a seminar on organized crime in Jamaica, October 2009. See also, Ellington (2009).

111   Author interview with the deputy director of an inner-city NGO, September 2009.

112   Experts even believe the conviction rate may be as low as five per cent (Harriott, 2009, p. 86).

113   Author interview with the executive director of an inner-city NGO, September 2009.

114   Author interview with a staff and a board member of an inner-city NGO, August 2009.

115   The most infamous example of this in the last decade was the 'West Kingston Massacre'. In a three-day battle, 25 civilians were allegedly murdered by security forces and as many as 75 injured in a joint JCF–JDF operation to seize illegal weapons in the western section of Jamaica's capital in July 2001. Immediately following the incident, there were calls for a public inquiry. These calls were prompted by public concern over the use of deadly force by the security forces as well as the sheer scale of the incident. Amnesty International later accused the government of allowing impunity for state killings after the commission concluded that the security forces were justified in their actions (AI, 2003).

116   One common manifestation of this feeling of alienation in Jamaica is the blocking of public roads by residents in protest against various social conditions, such as poor garbage disposal services or roads. The blocking of roads is also accompanied by open displays of disrespect and distrust in the constituted authority (GOJ, 2007).

117   The drive to formally tackle corruption in the JCF began in March 1994 with the establishment of the Office of Professional Responsibility. The Anti-corruption Branch is the most recent stage of the evolution of that office. It is notable for producing the JCF's first official anti-corruption plan, and for the hiring of an international veteran police officer to be its head (GOJ, 2008b).

118   Author interview with an official within the JCF's Anti-corruption Branch, February 2010.

119   Author interview with an official within the JCF's Anti-corruption Branch, February 2010.

120   Author interview with zone officers of an inner-city NGO, October 2009; author interview with the executive director of an inner-city NGO, September 2009.

121   Author interview with a director in the MNS Policy Directorate, February 2010.

122   Author interview with a staff and a board member of an inner-city NGO, August 2009.

123   Author interview with UNDP Community of Practice facilitator, September 2009.

124   Author interview with a social anthropologist, September 2009.

125   Author interview with a board member of an inner-city NGO, September 2009.

126   Author interview with a zone officer of an inner-city NGO, October 2009.

127   Author interview with a staff and a board member of an inner-city NGO, August 2009.

128   Author interview with a major inner-city dance hall music entrepreneur, September 2009.

129   Author interview with the chair of the board of directors, Violence Prevention Alliance–Jamaica chapter, November 2009.

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