

**1/1/2017**

# **ANNUAL REPORT**



Ensuring Standards in Politics

**JANUARY TO DECEMBER**

## OPENING STATEMENT

The year 2017 was an important year for Jamaica, following several major political events of the previous year. Jamaica completed two general elections in 2016, one for Parliamentarians on February 25, 2016 resulting in a change of administration and for Municipal Authorities on November 28, 2016. At the national level, a new Prime Minister from the Jamaica Labour Party (JLP), the Most Honourable Andrew Holness took office in 2016 and the fifth President of the People's National Party (PNP), Dr. Peter Phillips, took office, by acclamation, on March 25, 2017. Former Prime Minister, Most Honourable Portia Simpson Miller retired from Parliament in April of 2017.

The country exhibited optimism and exhilaration as well as disappointment and indifference. This saw the carryover of a number of issues of concern to the Office of the Political Ombudsman (OPO) including:

- The public expenditure in excess of \$600 million for the *Bushing Project* in the lead up to the Municipal elections of November 2016.
- Tone and content of interaction between Government and Opposition, their supporters and the media.
- Political Party registration
- Campaign Finance Reform
- Increasing powers of the OPO
- Cooperation of party leaders in handling breaches of the Political Ombudsman (Interim) Act and the Agreement and Declaration on Political Conduct.
- The court ruling on the status of Mr Dean Jones, the Councillor of the Yallahs division in St. Thomas.
- Public participation in elections
- Campaigning to include materials utilized by candidates and the removal of said materials.
- Irregular installation of street lighting during By-election campaign period.

2017 was marked by extreme tension and hostility in the lead up to the announcement of the by-election and during campaigning for the constituency of South East, St. Mary. The by-election was held on October 30, 2017.

## INTRODUCTION

An objective of the Political Ombudsman, is to contribute to the development of political and public service culture characterized by fairness, dedication, commitment, openness, accountability the promotion of Good Governance and the Rule of Law.

I extend appreciation to the Jamaica Constabulary Force (JCF), especially to the dedicated, committed and willing liaison officers across the respective police divisions. I further extend gratitude to the Jamaican electorate who keep us informed on activities that are of concern and may be breaches of the Agreement and Declaration on Political Conduct in their respective communities across the country.

Thanks also to the team of willing workers employed to the Office of the Political Ombudsman, who in spite of the many challenges, continue to perform efficiently and effectively. Special recognition is given to the Houses of Parliament for providing support services in matters of Finance, Accounts and Human Resource administration.

As Political Ombudsman I have recognized, through initiatives to promote awareness on the role and function of the Ombudsman, that many citizens are not aware of the existence of this neutral and autonomous office, not part of Government, but answerable to the Parliament. Many individuals and organizations have expressed their support for an office that holds political actors accountable to the people for their actions, which may harm persons of other political views and breach Jamaica's Standards for politics.

As Political Ombudsman, I am not an advocate for the complainant nor for political actors. I ascertain facts of each case, make an objective assessment on its merits and where appropriate, make recommendations and suggest adequate redress to rectify. I advise on actions to be taken to reduce grounds for complaints when systemic failures are identified. The right to complain is not a right if our citizens are unaware of its existence.

For this reporting period, a number of initiatives, to promote participation in state, international development partner programmes, private sector and NGO events, as well as the *Conversation with Young Jamaicans* initiative, were employed. All of which were geared at promoting improved knowledge of the Office of the Political Ombudsman (OPO), its role, function and process.

The OPO reiterates and reproduces below, the recommendations at page 22- 24 of the 2007 Annual Report.

*1. The Agreement and Declaration on Political Conduct (the Code) should be extended beyond that of a gentleman's agreement to one in which sanctions are applicable to those found in breach. If a billboard, for example is destroyed, investigations should be carried out and based on findings, if the opponent is held to be guilty or supportive of the destruction, fines should be applied to the political party to which the individual(s) belong. The financial cost necessary for repairing or replacing that billboard should be undertaken by the candidate deemed to be guilty or supportive of the act.*

*Political parties and candidates should also be fined for erection of flags, painting of graffiti and use of political paraphernalia disallowed by the Code. In addition, such paraphernalia should be removed from the community within 24 hours.*

*The Political Ombudsman should therefore be given the power to:*

- i. Levy a fine on candidates and the party they represent for such breaches;*
- ii. Refer offenders of the Code to the Director of Public Prosecution;*
- iii. Recommend to the Parliament the removal of candidates found to be unfit for office and the responsibility of public political representation.*

*2. Content of political advertisements should no longer be the artwork of technological experts who misrepresent or distort the truth in proclaiming political messages. Technology is also used to send messages from our shores to the global community. It must therefore be noted that this form of miscommunication presents an unflattering report of Jamaica's political leaders and candidates to viewers worldwide.*

*3. Allegations which are false should not be reported to the Office of the Political Ombudsman or any other office of authority in political matters. Such false accusations should be included in the Agreement and Declaration on Political Conduct as a breach of the agreement and as such, the offender should receive relevant sanctions for inappropriate conduct.*

*4. Political funding of each party should be made public to provide transparency and accountability. Public trust of politicians may increase as a result of open and honest communication about party financing.*

*5. Educational programmes should be designed and implemented to reach all strata of society. The curriculum should be aimed at practical conflict resolution, not merely in the political arena, but throughout all aspects of Jamaican life. Excessive aggression and violence must be reduced and ideally eradicated from our culture. It cannot continue to be a legacy we pass on from generation to generation. This kind of aggression has been proven to hinder rather than help the development of a people and a nation.*

*6. Politicians who verbally or physically attack each other must be disciplined. The September 2007 Elections must be the last in which attacks can be made on the character and family members of political opponents. Verbal attacks or any form of utterances deemed derogatory should be sufficient for recall of the offending candidate (and for a fine).*

*7. The issue of inner city enclaves (garrisons) must be positively addressed. These psychological blockages and social barriers must be demolished in the name of true growth of the Jamaican people and development of the nation.*

*8. Registration of political parties (**this has been done**), party funding and transparency should become features of Jamaica's political reform.*

*9. The staffing of the OPO should be expanded to include at least two (2) full time investigators.*

*After six years of the office existence, a meeting of the Commission which oversees the operations of the office, requested by the Political Ombudsman has not yet materialized. Financial status of the office, including and not limited to budget approvals and financial statements are not readily available for the OPO and inclusion in the Annual Report.*

It is worthy of note that prior to the tabling of this report, the Commission met in July, 2018.

## THE OFFICE OF THE POLITICAL OMBUDSMAN (OPO)

This Commission of Parliament is a successor of the Parliamentary Ombudsman which was established in 1978 and later replaced by the Public Defender in 2000.

The Political Ombudsman, pursuant to section 3 of the Political Ombudsman (Interim) Act, 2002, *shall continue in force until provision is made in the Constitution for the establishment of a Political Ombudsman in terms which preclude the alteration of that provision otherwise than in accordance with the procedures prescribed by or in relation to section 49 (2) of the Constitution and shall then expire.*

Section 12 (1), (2) set out the mandate as follows:

*(1).....the Political Ombudsman shall investigate any action taken by a political party, its members or supporters, where he is of the opinion that such action:-*

*(a) Constitutes or is likely to constitute a breach of any agreement, code or arrangement for the time being in force between political parties in Jamaica; or*

*(b) is likely to prejudice good relations between the supporters of various political parties.*

*(2) The Political Ombudsman shall not be precluded from conducting an investigation in respect of any matter by reason only that is open to the complainant to apply to a court for redress under section 25 of the Constitution.*

The Jamaican public, media and officials of political parties are important partners in this mandate. We are mindful of the aspiration at the core of this section and of the architecture Jamaica's democracy provides by establishing a Commission with such investigative responsibilities.

Section 15(2), 16 (1) & (3) of the Act, sets out the power to develop procedures and procure information: 15(2) *The Political Ombudsman may adopt whatever procedure he considers appropriate to the circumstances of a particular case and, subject to the provisions of this Act, may obtain information from such persons and in such manner, and make such enquires as he thinks fit.*

*16(1) Subject to subsection (5), the Political Ombudsman may at any time require any officer, member or supporter of a political party or any person who, in his opinion, is able to give any assistance in relation to the investigation of any matter, to furnish such information and produce any document or thing in connection with such matter, which may be in the possession or under the control of that officer, member, supporter or person.*

*16(3) For the purposes of an investigation under this Act, the Political Ombudsman shall have powers as a Judge of the Supreme Court in respect of the attendance and examination of witnesses and the production of documents.*

During the year, the Political Ombudsman visited several Parishes, wrote to several political actors and met with other officials and members of the public to obtain information in furtherance of a number of investigations.

These investigations included:

- allegations of failure to remove campaign paraphernalia
- defacing public installations
- public utterances
- use of weapons
- illegal installation of street lights
- allegations of improper use of public funds
- breaches of the law and the Agreement and Declaration on Political Conduct.

*The actions to be taken on completion of an investigation by the OPO, places a strong burden on the leaders of the political parties to support and assist the OPO in improving the political climate, minimizing conflict between the parties and preventing maladministration.*

*It is to be noted, that the Commission was established as an investigative body. Sanctions are to be applied by the political parties or Parliament, section 15(8)..... Where the Political Ombudsman has made a recommendation under section (7) and within the time specified or a reasonable time thereafter, he is of the opinion that no adequate remedial action has been taken, he shall lay before Parliament, a special report on the case.*

This office, since November 2015, has struggled in too many cases to get timely acknowledgement of correspondence and for action upon recommendations. Mediated outcomes with the facilitation of the General Secretaries of the Jamaica Labour Party (JLP) and the People's National Party (PNP) have borne fruit, as their participation with that of the aggressor or offending officials have cauterized and resolved many issues, consequently improving the political space in question.

The OPO is concerned about Good Governance and tries to conduct its work within the context of Sustainable Development Goal #16: "Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels". Indeed, according to former UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan, "*Good Governance is ensuring respect for human rights and the rule of law; strengthening democracy; promoting transparency and capacity in public administration*". To implement this, the UN goals follows eight principles:

- *Participation-people should be able to voice their own opinions through legitimate immediate organizations or representatives.*
- *Rule of Law-legal framework should be enforced impartially, especially on human rights.*
- *Consensus Oriented-mediates differing interests to meet the broad consensus on the best interests of a community.*
- *Equity and Inclusiveness- people should have opportunities to improve or maintain their well-being.*
- *Effectiveness and Efficiency-processes and institutions should be able to produce results that meet the needs of their community, while making the best of their resources.*

- *Accountability-governmental institutions, private sectors and civil society organizations should be held accountable to the public and institutional stakeholders.*
- *Transparency-information should be accessible to the public and should be understandable and monitored.*
- *Responsiveness-institutions and processes should serve all stakeholders.*



## ***Obey the law, political ombudsman tells parties***

*Thursday, January 05, 2017*

*Jamaica Observer*



*PARCHMENT BROWN... we are hoping to encourage the general secretaries to implore their members to obey the law.*

***Political Ombudsman Donna Parchment Brown says her office remains concerned about the number of political flags, posters and other campaign paraphernalia that still remain on display in some divisions, particularly in the Corporate Area.***

*Parchment Brown told the Jamaica Observer on Wednesday that she had just penned letters to the general secretaries of the ruling Jamaica Labour Party and the Opposition People's National Party on the matter and would be moving to have it addressed urgently.*

*"Many are still up and many have been removed. I'm hoping to encourage the general secretaries to implore their members to obey the law. The parish councillors are the ones who will be enforcing regulation for signage, so you would expect that they would at least set an example," she stated.*

*Promotional paraphernalia, such as flags and posters, are still highly visible in sections of some constituencies such as St Andrew South Eastern, and Kingston Eastern and Port Royal, which were among the areas where the battle for parish council elections were most intense.*

*Parchment Brown also indicated that there are outstanding matters from the local government elections in November, but said she would not make those public until an appropriate time after she has had discussions with the general secretaries.*

*Under the Towns and Communities Act, candidates have two weeks to remove signs and other items related to their party's campaign.*

*Parchment Brown had said that if there was no compliance within the specified time frame, she would partner with parish managers and town clerks to use their powers to remove the items.*

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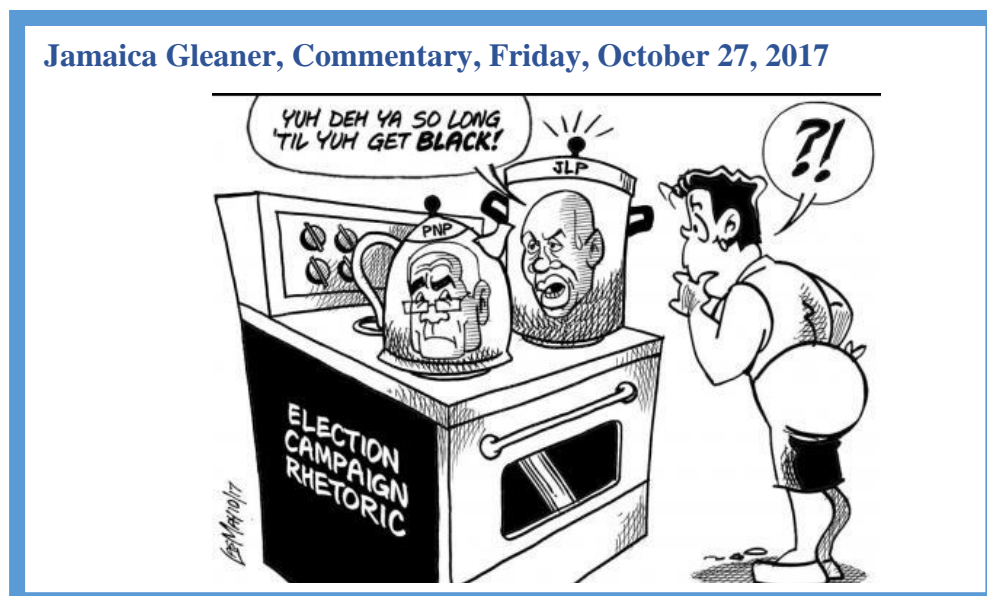
## THE POLITICAL CULTURE

The Latin American Public Opinion Project (LAPOP) survey, entitled *The Political Culture of Democracy in Jamaica and in the Americas, 2016/17*, is instructive as we seek to promote and enforce standards in politics. In 2004, LAPOP established the Americas Barometer as a multi-country, regularly conducted survey of democratic values and behaviours in the Americas, organized by a consortium of academic and think-tank partners in the hemisphere. The Americas Barometer is the most expansive regional survey project in the Western Hemisphere. The data are used by academic researchers, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) in its efforts to promote Latin American democracy, the World Bank in its Governance Indicators series, the Inter-American Development Bank in its numerous research projects, the United Nations Development Programme and the Organization of American States in their democracy programs, and perhaps most significantly, by the governments of several Latin American countries as a source of independent information with which to assess public opinion and shape policy.

The 2016/17 study raised some worrying matters for action in Jamaica with research results as follows:

- Only 31.8% of Jamaicans are reported as **Trusting Elections**
- Only 22.5% of Jamaicans are reported as **Trusting Political Parties**
- 41% of Jamaicans are reported as being identified with a political party (**Partisanship**)
- 97% of Jamaicans believe **Politicians are Corrupt**
- 75% of Jamaicans believe **More Than Half of Politicians are Corrupt**
- 26% of Jamaicans have a **Tolerance for Corruption**

Maladministration defined as the making of an official decision in a manner which is contrary to law, arbitrary, unreasonable, without proper justification, lacking in procedural fairness, or made without due consideration of the merits of the matter, or made corruptly, is therefore an on-going concern of the OPO.



## **BY- ELECTIONS 2017**

Four By-elections were conducted in 2017 in the constituencies of Greater Portmore North, St Mary South Eastern, St Andrew Southern and St. Andrew South Western.

The Greater Portmore North seat became vacant following the death of Councillor Michael Edwards on January 6, 2017. The contestants for the seat were Gary Nicholson of the People's National Party (PNP) and Ann Marie Lewis of the Jamaica Labour Party (JLP).

The results from the Greater Portmore North by-election on March 27, 2017 saw PNP candidate, Gary Nicholson winning the election, with a total of **2,105** votes. The candidate for the JLP, Ann Marie Lewis, polled **993** votes. The overall voter turnout was **29%**. Polling took place across 38 polling stations in seven locations in the division.

The St Mary South Eastern seat became vacant following the death of Dr. Winston Green on August 14, 2017. The seat was contested by Dr. Norman Dunn of the JLP and Dr. Shane Alexis of the PNP.

The total number of votes (including rejected ballots of 94) was **15,509** or **61.42%** of the **25,251** electors of the official voters list. The JLP's Dr Norman Dunn polled **8,176** votes to the **7,239**, received by the PNP's, Dr Shane Alexis.

For the constituency of St Andrew Southern, **7,085** votes were cast and of that number, **6,203** went to the PNP's candidate, Mark Golding while the other **774** went to the JLP's Dane Dennis. There were 108 rejected ballots and a **30.11 %** voter turnout in that constituency. The seat became vacant following the retirement of Member of Parliament Dr. Omar Davies.

For the St Andrew South Western constituency, of the **6,659** votes that were cast, the PNP's Dr Angela Brown Burke, got a total of **6,324**, while Mr Victor Hyde of the JLP got **223** votes. Of the total number of votes cast, **112** were rejected of a **25.94 %** voter turnout. The seat became vacant following the retirement of Member of Parliament, PNP President and former Prime Minister, Portia Simpson Miller.

The Political Ombudsman was co-chair of the Election centre again in 2017 for By-elections and shared that duty with the Director of Elections supported by representatives of the Jamaica Defence Force (JDF), the Jamaica Constabulary Force (JCF), the Jamaica Umbrella Group of Churches (JUGC), the Broadcasting Commission, Citizens Action for Free & Fair Elections (CAFFE), National Integrity Action (NIA) the JLP and PNP. This collaboration further demonstrated our national commitment to good campaigning within the law and Code and for free and fair elections, with key stakeholders accepting their duty to contribute to a good process in both the governance and the political aspects.

The members of the JCF assigned as liaison officers to the OPO, were of great assistance, in particular those assigned to the hotly contested By-elections in St. Catherine and St. Mary.

# Crucial By-Election On Today For Greater Portmore North

*The Gleaner, Published: Monday | March 27, 2017 | 12:00 AM [Ruddy Mathison](#)*

PORTMORE, St Catherine:

A crucial by-election for the Greater Portmore North Division of the St Catherine Municipal Corporation, which is being contested by the Jamaica Labour Party's (JLP) Ann Marie Lewis and the People's National Party's (PNP) Gary Nicholson, will be held today.

With the corporation having a one-seat majority in favour of the PNP before the death of councillor Michael Edwards, a win today by the JLP would give it the chairmanship and mayoral positions along with the deputies and the reins on the largest municipal corporation in the island.

Both candidates, assisted by senior party functionaries, have been on the ground since their nomination, establishing their presence and courting voters house to house.

## **KNOW CONCERNS OF THE PEOPLE**

Lewis, a teacher who obtained 921 votes to Edwards's 1,623 in the recent local government elections, is taking a second crack at the division, which has eluded the JLP's grasp. Edwards won the division three time for the PNP before his death in January.

"I live in the division and I know the concerns of the people. It is very difficult for someone who does not live in the division to effectively represent the people," she said.

"I am not making anything up. The division needs help. I am the one to help the people," Lewis said, at the same time highlighting how critical it is for the JLP to win the division and reverse the PNP hold on the municipal corporation.

Nicholson, an accountant, while expressing optimism about carrying on the PNP tradition in the division, was measured in his remarks.

"I am not taking anything for granted; however, I think I will add to the winning majority. The fact that I was the constituency chairman, I have always been in touch with the people. I will continue to be accessible to them," he said.

A spokesman at the electoral office told **The Gleaner** that all systems were in place for a smooth day's operation and no major concerns were evident.

*The polls are expected to be opened at 8 a.m.*

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# Candidates Say Only \$23m Spent In St Mary By-Election

*The Gleaner, Published: Tuesday | January 9, 2018 | 12:00 AM*

The two candidates who contested the October 30, 2017 by-election in St Mary South Eastern have reported spending a combined total of just under \$23 million despite reports of numerous meetings, election paraphernalia and gifts that were given out during the 28-day campaign period.

The Jamaica Labour Party's (JLP) Dr Norman Dunn, who emerged victorious, reported spending approximately \$12.9 million, with all of the money coming out of his pockets, while the People's National Party's (PNP) Dr Shane Alexis said he spent \$9 million with the lion's share of that, \$8 million, being from donations.

Both candidates were well within the \$15 million candidates are allowed to spend in general election campaigns, but far above the amounts reportedly spent by the four candidates who also contested by-elections on that day.



## Golding Spent \$4m

In St Andrew Southern, the PNP's Mark Golding said he spent \$4 million of his money, with the majority believed to have gone to finance the massive billboards he erected in the constituency that he won easily. His opponent, the JLP's Dale Dennis, said he spent just \$300,000 which he received in donations.



Over in St Andrew South Western, the JLP's Victor Hyde said generous donors provided him with \$3.4 million which he spent to contest a seat which the party has not won in a contested election since 1976.

In contrast, the PNP's Dr Angela Brown Burke, who won the contest, said she spent just \$1.6 million despite a bitter contest for the right to represent the party in the constituency which left several Comrades angry and determined not to vote.

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# Not You, Madam! - I Am Answerable To The Contractor General, Prime Minister Tells Political Ombudsman

*The Gleaner, Published: Friday | September 22, 2017 | 12:29 AM Edmond Campbell*



File

**Political Ombudsman Donna Parchment Brown**

Following a stern warning from Political Ombudsman Donna Parchment Brown against the abuse of state resources in St Mary South East in order to gain political mileage in a pending by-election, Prime Minister Andrew Holness says he only answers to the contractor general and the National Contracts Commission on government spending on contracts, indicating that he does not answer to Parchment Brown. Holness said that the contractor general is the constituted authority to oversee the contracting process, in addition to the National Contracts Commission, which has a statutory role in ensuring that the contract process is above board.

"I respond to them in these matters," said Holness, while responding to a question from Radio Jamaica's Dionne Jackson Miller at his second quarterly press conference at Jamaica House.

But Parchment Brown said in response that the prime minister, "and anyone else in that position, is answerable to the people of Jamaica".

She contends that Jamaicans may approach the prime minister through different organs of the State.

Accountability is not restricted to select organisations, said Parchment Brown, adding that the mandate of the ombudsman "requires me to pursue this matter, not because I am saying any wrongful act has been done, but to assist him, his party, and the opposition party to resist any escalation of words or actions, which may be related to a notion that there are some wrongful acts being committed and to reassure the public, who I serve."

The political ombudsman reasoned that good governance, the rule of law, and adherence to the Political Code of Conduct were matters with which she had a common interest with the prime minister in seeing those things observed.

Holness insisted that there was no basis for anyone to lodge complaints about political abuse of public resources to carry out work in the St Mary South East constituency.

Julian Robinson, general secretary of the People's National Party (PNP), had asked the political ombudsman and the contractor general to monitor the \$600 million road works in St Mary to ensure that public funds are not used in a corrupt manner.

Yesterday, Holness said: "The Government is not using state resources for partisan benefit."

He contended that the concerns raised about the multimillion-dollar road project were not valid. However, he conceded that "there is a general concern about how public resources are spent, particularly closer to an election, for partisan benefit. We are always prepared to engage in a conversation to have oversight of that. In fact, that will be a part of our bipartisan talks to see how we can mitigate that".

Parchment Brown visited St Mary South East earlier this month as the political temperature started to rise in a constituency where the People's National Party (PNP) won only by five votes in the 2016 general election.

"I am warning against any abuse of public resources in support of a political agenda," Parchment Brown had cautioned.

Yesterday, she revealed that she had not written to Holness specifically about the Junction Road project.

However, she claimed that she had already written to the prime minister, saying, "Let's try to make sure that nothing is implemented that had not already been settled before August 14 the date of the death of the Member of Parliament.

"I am not alleging impropriety. I am raising the concern that there are still unanswered questions relating to a large public-works programme of similar cost conducted during an election period, which raised many negative comments across the political spectrum in relation to Jamaica and good governance."

The political machinery of the PNP and the governing Jamaica Labour Party is at full throttle in St Mary South East as party officials weave through the nooks and crannies of the constituency to win the support of eligible voters.

Yesterday, the prime minister assured journalists that the by-elections to fill the three vacant seats in Parliament would be announced "shortly".

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# Parchment Brown Sounds By-Election Warning

Published: Thursday | September 7, 2017 | 12:00 AM



Karl Anthony Anderson

Donna Parchment Brown

*With a by-election anticipated in St Mary South East and political aspirants already campaigning for the vacant seat in Gordon House, Political Ombudsman Donna Parchment Brown has sounded a warning against the abuse of public resources to gain an advantage in the pending poll.*

*"I am warning against any abuse of public resources in support of a political agenda," Parchment Brown declared after visiting the constituency on Tuesday.*

*She said concerns were raised about the use of state funds in the constituency.*

## **Signs Damaged**

*In addition, Parchment Brown condemned the damaging of campaign material, following reports earlier this week that supporters of the opposing political parties - the Jamaica Labour Party (JLP) and the People's National Party (PNP) - were damaging signs of rival candidates.*

*She encouraged political parties, law enforcement, and the constituents to set the tone for the safe and fair conduct of the upcoming by-election in St Mary South Eastern, ahead of a date being set.*

*The political ombudsman engaged the residents of St Mary South East and listened to their concerns while sharing information on the mandate of her office.*

*"These informal meetings were insightful and overwhelmingly positive," she said. Parchment Brown also visited the JLP and PNP constituency offices in Annotto Bay in effort to pre-empt issues between the two major parties. On her constituency visit, the political ombudsman also met with police personnel in Castleton and Annotto Bay. She urged the police to enforce the rule of law with zero tolerance.*

*She wants members of the public to report any incident that would impede a safe and just electoral process. "We are working proactively to prevent problems," Parchment Brown said.*

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# ***Ombudsman To Visit SE St Mary Today Amid Tension***

*Published: Tuesday | October 24, 2017 | 12:00 AM Edmond Campbell*



File

***Donna Parchment Brown, Political Ombudsman.***

*With allegations of ongoing political violence and tension running high in St Mary South East ahead of the October 30 by-elections, Political Ombudsman Donna Parchment-Brown, along with the Peace Management Initiative and the police, will today make a crucial visit to the constituency to survey campaigning and other activities on the ground.*

*The visit comes amid a bruising battle between the Jamaica Labour Party's Dr Norman Dunn and the People's National Party's (PNP) Dr Shane Alexis to secure a seat in Gordon House, which became vacant following the sudden passing of the constituency's Member of Parliament Dr Winston Green.*

*Parchment-Brown said today's trip to the constituency would determine whether she meets with stakeholders at the election centre to discuss any developments that should be communicated to the commissioner of police in relation to campaigning.*

*However, she made it clear that no decision has been made at this point regarding any considerations for campaigns to be halted.*

*She said there have been allegations of political violence in the Belfield and Annotto Bay divisions of St Mary South East.*

*The PNP has reported that two of its supporters were shot and injured in the constituency - an incident for which the police are yet to determine a motive.*

*Parchment-Brown said that freedom to campaign was very important and that there were thousands of persons who have been campaigning appropriately.*

*"The fact that we are concerned about the minority is not a statement about not valuing or disrespecting the majority," she said...*



# Residents Blame Outsiders For Violence In SE St Mary

Published: Wednesday | October 25, 2017 | 12:00 AM Edmond Campbell



Karl Anthony Anderson

Political Ombudsman Donna Parchment Brown

Political Ombudsman Donna Parchment Brown has said that despite lingering concerns from residents in St Mary South East regarding the large influx of persons from outside the constituency, who they blame for the flare-ups, she expects the remaining days of campaigning before the October 30 by-election to be peaceful.

Yesterday, she toured sections of the constituency with Assistant Commissioner of Police Norman Heywood and members of the Peace Management Initiative to engage residents and political representatives from both the People's National Party (PNP) and the Jamaica Labour Party (JLP), amid reports of violent incidents.

"The citizens who we spoke with in two areas representing the JLP and PNP welcomed the visit. They had some things on their minds they were able to share with us, and we were able to share their views with the other group as well," she said.

Parchment Brown said that some residents in the hotly contested constituency told her that they were concerned about incidents in the parish that had attracted media coverage, most of which were negative.

"They are concerned that some of the negative had to do with people who are from outside the constituency. There is concern that whoever is coming in needs to behave properly and don't create any further antagonism in the area," she said.

According to Parchment Brown, based on her observation and interactions with the people of St Mary South East, there was no need for any action on her part as it relates to the question of campaigning. However, she urged the candidates in the October 30 by-election to do what they promised in terms of cleaning up the areas that were defaced with political material.

She told **The Gleaner** that Heywood had assured her that the necessary human resources and equipment would be provided for the by-election.

The political referee encouraged voters in the constituency to obey the laws and rules governing elections and "come out and vote on Election Day".

In what is deemed as one of the toughest by-elections in the country's political history, the governing JLP is seeking to increase the number of seats they now hold in the Lower House.

The by-election for St Mary South East became necessary after the death of the PNP's Dr Winston Green, who was the Member of Parliament.

The PNP's Dr Shane Alexis will be doing battle with the JLP's Dr Norman Dunn.

Two other seats will also be contested on October 30 - that of St Andrew South West and St Andrew South. The seats became vacant following the resignations of former opposition leader Portia Simpson Miller and Dr Omar Davies, respectively.

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## **EDUCATIVE ROLE OF THE OPO**

Education as a social process, is a fundamental human right and should be viewed as an element of support towards a peaceful and civilized society. The OPO's objectives in employing an educative role are to:

- Share and make available pertinent information on the OPO.
- Encourage and empower citizens to actively participate in the political transformation process
- Encourage an attitude of open- mindedness to different opinions and the willingness to listen to such opinions.
- Emphasize the importance of treating individuals decently and fairly, regardless of background or political affiliation.
- Ensure that knowledge is accompanied by understanding.

### **Youth Engagement – why engage youth?**

No matter how much we disagree and quarrel, for a society to survive there must be shared common values and objectives to keep us working together, or at the least, an ability to manage our disagreements. It is generally agreed, that not all members of a society will have the same values and goals or all are agreed on the crucial tasks that have to be done to effect positive changes.

The twenty- first century has ushered us into a time of rapid change and a consciousness of our young people's potential to change the widely held perception of disinterest in good governance, Rule of Law and political systems and structures. Our young people are a creative force for social change and listening to and recognising their voices is vital for a thriving society. Young people are at the forefront of technological and cultural changes associated with globalisation and are using the wide span of global media to express themselves. The fallacy that young people shouldn't have a say when it comes to dealing with issues of the society of which they are a part, must become a thing of our past.

The '**Conversation with Young Jamaicans**' initiative was birthed out of this ideal. The program targeted upper level students of secondary and tertiary institutions across the island. The initiative started in 2016 and continued in 2017 with the Office visiting the following institutions:

- Sam Sharpe Teachers' College and Caribbean Maritime Institute, St. James
- Titchfield High School, Portland
- DeCarteret College, Manchester

The structure and delivery of the town-hall style meeting, allowed for practicality and accessibility in information sharing and created an atmosphere conducive to gaining insights and feedback on the participant's views on government and governing issues, communication and the positive and negative role of social media.

Below is a detailed presentation of the findings:

## **CONVERSATIONS WITH YOUNG JAMAICANS FEEDBACK SURVEY 2017**

### **A. Schools visited and number of respondents.**

<b>NAME OF SCHOOL</b>	<b>NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS</b>
1. Caribbean Maritime Institute	13
2. DeCarteret College	125
3. Sam Sharpe Teachers' College	128
4. Titchfield High School	95
5. York Castle High School	107

**TOTAL RESPONDENTS = 468**

### **B. Percentage responses to the following closed-ended questions.**

<b>QUESTIONS</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>	<b>NO RESPONSE</b>
1. Generally, did you enjoy this presentation?	89.31%	10.68%	1%
2. Did you find this presentation informative?	99%	0%	1%
3. Did you find the information presented useful?	97%	2%	1%
4. Do you think you were able to participate enough in the presentation?	73.3%	22%	4.7%

What are your thoughts on Government bodies such as the Office of the Political Ombudsman (OPO), actively participating and incorporating schools in their outreach projects?

**C. Responses by classification and percentage.**

<b>CLASSIFICATION OF RESPONSES</b>	<b>PERCENTAGE</b>
1. Innovative	7.9%
2. Excellent	11.96%
3. Be more involved	6.83%
4. Very important initiative	12.82%
5. Good	27.35%
6. Informative	16.02%
7. Proactive	4.7%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>87.58%</b>
<b>No answer</b>	<b>12.42%</b>

What do you think can be done to have you participate more in the session?

**D. Responses by classification and percentage.**

<b>CLASSIFICATION OF RESPONSES</b>	<b>PERCENTAGE</b>
1. More activities/prizes	10.47%
2. Group work	5.12%
3. Nothing	11.96%
4. More time	9.4%
5. More questions to audience	17.73%
6. Voluntary participation	8.97%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>63.65%</b>
<b>No answer</b>	<b>36.35%</b>

What do you think can be done to improve the presentation?

**E. Responses by classification and percentage.**

<b>CLASSIFICATION OF RESPONSES</b>	<b>PERCENTAGE</b>
1. Distribute more books	2.99%
2. Interact more with the students	8.11%
3. More prizes/activities	6.19%
4. Include videos/more hand-outs and presenters	25.21%
5. More time	4.91%
6. No improvement needed	12.6%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>60.01%</b>
<b>No answer</b>	<b>39.99%</b>

# Conversations with Young Jamaicans' initiative

*Jamaica Gleaner, 22 Nov 2016*



**Political Ombudsman Donna Parchment Brown with students from Frome.**

*THE OFFICE of the Political Ombudsman builds on relationship with youth through the 'Conversations with Young Jamaicans' initiative*

*Creating a strong and long relationship with Jamaica's youth, The Office of the Political Ombudsman, which has started the Conversations with Young Jamaicans initiative, seeks to inform the younger generation of Jamaicans about the purpose and role of the political ombudsman under the Political Ombudsman (Interim) Act. Investigation of actions from political parties which break the Agreement and Declaration on Political Conduct, signed in 2005 to promote and ensure good political practices, is a priority. The initiative gives the youth a platform to share their views and opinions on the same aspects of Jamaican governance and politics that the ombudsman monitors in order to facilitate both youth empowerment and interest in Jamaican politics and governance.*

*The High Commission of Canada in Jamaica has partnered with the Office of the Political Ombudsman in this initiative.*

*As part of the initiative, the Political Ombudsman Donna Parchment Brown and her team went on a school tour to visit sixth-formers at six schools. Mona High School was visited in the Corporate Area, while Frome Technical High School, Manning's School, Munro College, Bethlehem Moravian College and Parchment Brown's alma mater, Hampton School for Girls, were the schools visited in the west. At each school, Parchment Brown explained her role as the political ombudsman and the importance of standards in politics and good governance. This provided a platform for a robust and free-flowing discussion with the students, who shared their own views and opinions on these matters. The students completed a brief survey at each session.*

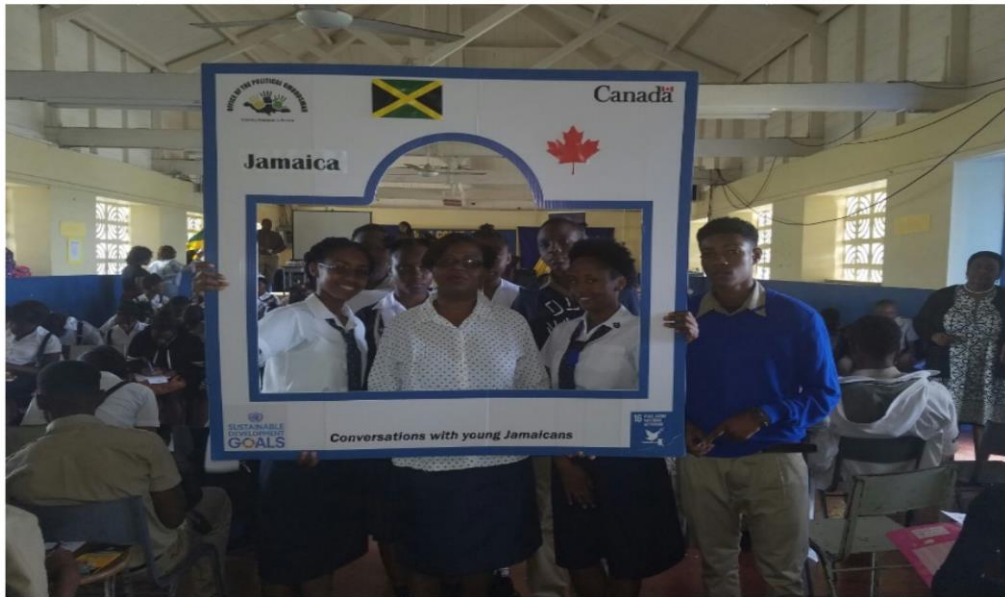
*Based on the responses of the survey, the ombudsman's visit was generally well received by the students as all the respondents found the information she presented to be both useful and informative. They were also appreciative of the fact that their views, which they often thought as being ignored due to their age, were, in fact, being seen as important enough that a major government official such as the political ombudsman would ask, listen and engage in conversation based on these opinions.*

*More events like this were called for, not only by the political ombudsman but by other senior government officials as well, to further inform the youth and hear their own opinions.*

*Due to the recent calling of local government elections, the office has postponed the school tour until January, when she intends to visit more rural and urban schools across the island. In the meantime, recognising that social media is a powerful tool and the most effective means of reaching a young demographic, the Office of the Political Ombudsman will post the Conversations the Young Jamaicans initiative events online to show the work of the office, while giving young people a medium to express their own views and participate in politics and governance in Jamaica.*

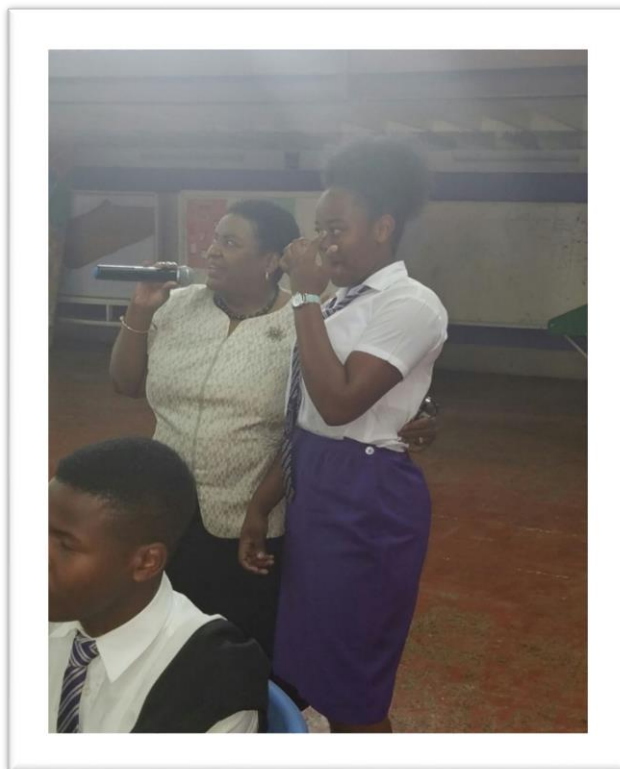
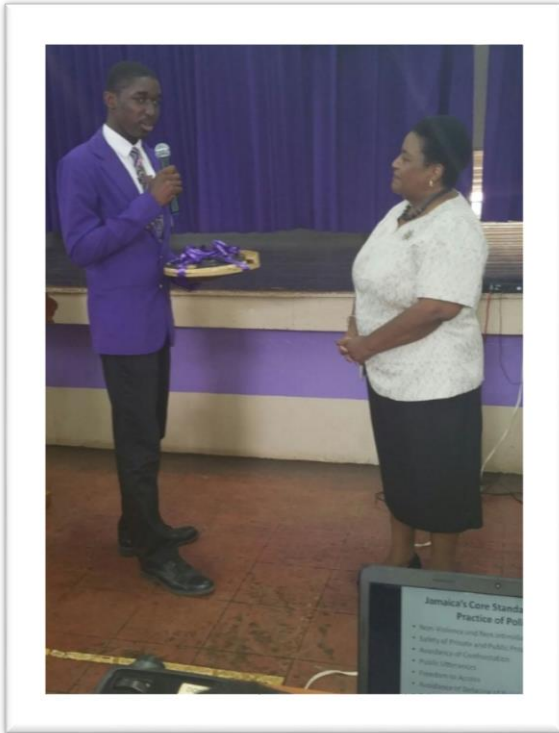
***The Office of the Political Ombudsman can be found on Facebook @The Office of the Political Ombudsman, on Twitter @OmbudsmanJA and on Instagram @PoliticalOmbudsmanJA.***

## Titchfield High School, Portland





**DeCarteret College, Manchester**





**York Castle High School, St. Ann**



**Sam Sharpe Teachers' College and Caribbean Maritime Institute, St. James**



## PARTNERSHIPS AND THE OPO

The media has assisted the Office in various ways towards:

- Keeping the public informed
- Generating public debates on critical issues
- Uncovering actions which may be breaches of the Agreement and Declaration on Political Conduct
- Keeping political actors attuned to public opinions while also offering them a medium to explain policies/decisions to the public and build on the necessary support.

The media's coverage of **Code Signing events** has helped to place before the public, Jamaica's standards for politics, to which all political actors should be accountable.

Following the nomination of candidates for the by-elections, the OPO collaborated with the Custodes of each Parish in conducting *Code Signing Events*.

This included production of certificates for each candidate and a presentation on the Code at the ceremonies. Each event was held in the respective Parish capitals. A copy of the Code was given to each candidate and a presentation was done by the Custos explaining in detail the provisions of the Code along with the signing of certificates in duplicate by each duly nominated candidate, witnessed by the respective Parish Custos or their representative. By public demonstration, through the signing of the certificate, each Candidate committed to adhere to the provisions as stated in the Agreement and Declaration on Political Conduct (the Code)

The media, writers of letters to the editor and contributors, kept the matter of garrisons and political tribalism and the need for clear action on the front burner. It is noted that the Agreement and Declaration on Political Conduct, 7th tenet, speaks clearly to political tribalism, of which garrisons are an extreme example. The OPO communicated with the Government on this matter and developed a plan for removal of garrison politics for completion in 2018.

In August of 2017 the OPO began a partnership with Cuso International, and was matched with a volunteer to support the Office in drafting and implementing a structured communication plan aimed at addressing issues of good governance.

Cuso International is a registered charity in Canada and the United States. It is a non-profit international development organization established in 1961 and works to improve the lives of people around the globe.

The main activities of the one year placement involve:

- Supporting the implementation of the *Conversation with Young Jamaicans* project
- Providing Social Media (SM) training to the staff of the OPO, to include guidelines for use of SM.
- Designing and creating broadcast-quality video that captures the work of the OPO
- Supporting the OPO in designing an online consultative space for youth.

# Candidates For By-Elections To Sign Political Code Of Conduct

Published: Friday | October 13, 2017 | 12:00 AM



Candidates for the upcoming by-elections in St Mary South Eastern, St Andrew Southern, and St Andrew South Western are expected to affirm their commitment to good governance and to fair campaigning by signing the Agreement and Declaration on Political Conduct today.

This was announced yesterday by Political Ombudsman Donna Parchment Brown.

The candidates contesting the two St Andrew constituencies are scheduled to sign the document at the offices of the Political Ombudsman, 85A Duke Street in Kingston at 8:30 a.m.

The People's National Party's (PNP) Mark Golding, who is being challenged by the Jamaica Labour Party's (JLP) Dane Dennis, is seeking to retain the PNP stronghold of St Andrew South.

At the same time, the PNP's Angella Brown Burke will go up against the JLP's Victor Hyde for the St Andrew South West seat, which former PNP president Portia Simpson Miller held for nine terms.

In St Mary South East, where a bruising battle is under way for the seat that became vacant following the death of Dr Winston Green, the two contenders will sign the Agreement and Declaration on Political Conduct at the St Theresa's Catholic Church, Main Street, in Annotto Bay at 2 p.m.

The JLP's Dr Norman Dunn will, for the second time, attempt to secure a seat in Parliament when he challenges the PNP's Dr Shane Alexis in the October 30 by-elections.

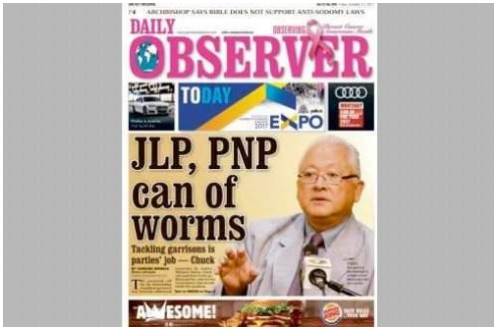
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## ***Letters to the Editor***

### ***Dismantle the garrisons now!***

Tuesday, October 17, 2017



**Dear Editor,**

The National Democratic Movement (NDM) welcomes and endorses the recent call by Justice Minister Delroy Chuck for the People's National Party (PNP) and Jamaica Labour Party (JLP) to dismantle the garrisons. The NDM has, from its inception in 1995, been calling for the end of the shameful and awful practice of 'garrison politics' wherein zones of political exclusions (garrisons) were created and enforced by criminal elements working in tandem with politicians in the country's two major political parties — an ugly culture which breeds crime and stifles the growth and development of Jamaica.

We are hoping that the slaughter of approximately 70 persons in Tivoli Gardens (a JLP garrison) in 2010, who were sacrificed at the altar of garrison politics, and the hundreds of millions of dollars spent by Government from taxpayers' money to stage a commission of enquiry, will not go down in vain. One of the key recommendations coming from the final report of that commission is for the dismantling of the garrison structure which it found to be a blight on our democracy and our country.

We recall that former US President Jimmy Carter, on his visit to Jamaica in 1997 to observe the general election that year, expressed shock and horror at the existence of political garrison communities — a phenomenon he said he was seeing for the first time and had not seen anywhere else in the world. He made an appeal for the practice to end.

Let us hope that Justice Minister Delroy Chuck's call for the dismantling of the garrisons at this time — a time when we celebrate our national heroes and on the eve of by-elections in two major garrison seats (St Andrew South Western and St Andrew Southern, both PNP garrisons) — will gain traction and gather momentum for the process of de-garrisonising Jamaica now.

The JLP and PNP owe at least this much to Jamaica if their promises about Vision 2030 are not just mere platitudes.

In the name of our national heroes, who fought for our freedom and liberty, set our people free from the clutches of garrison politics.

**Peter A Townsend**

**President**

**National Democratic Movement**

**ndmjamaica@yahoo.com**

Partnership for Jamaica, Political Parties and the Office of the Political Ombudsman are but a few of the many stakeholders committed to the building of a robust democracy in Jamaica.

This grouping is committed to:

- The principles of social dialogue and partnership in furtherance of the process of deepening democracy.
- Subscribing to the realization of a transformed Jamaica.
- Recognizing the need to build upon preceding efforts to forge a social partnership.
- Adhering to the objectives of a stable, humane society, where there is increased respect for the Rule of Law.

# JLP, PNP can of worms

## Tackling garrisons is parties' job — Chuck

BY TANESHA MUNDLE  
Observer staff reporter  
mundlet@jamaicaobserver.com

Friday, October 13, 2017



**CHUCK... the garrison phenomenon is a blight on our democracy and our country**  
**THE perennial call for the dismantling of political garrisons was frontally addressed yesterday by Justice Minister Delroy Chuck who said that it is the political parties, and not the Government, that should tackle the problem.**

Minister Chuck, who was addressing the Rotary Club of Kingston at the Jamaica Pegasus Hotel in Kingston, said that the dismantling of these zones of political exclusion was one of 10 recommendations coming out of the Tivoli Commission of Enquiry. However, he said that the Government had no response as to how it can be done.

"One of the areas, however, which no response will be made to the recommendation, is the whole question of tackling the garrisons," the minister said.

"When we examined it... the question is: Is that something that a Government can deal with, or is this to be dealt with by the country at large, starting perhaps with the Parliament?"

"I need not tell you that the garrison phenomenon, as the commission found, is a blight on our democracy and our country. And the real question is, how do you dismantle it? Because the commission urged that, unless you do, the likelihood of those communities developing will be really slim," Chuck further noted.

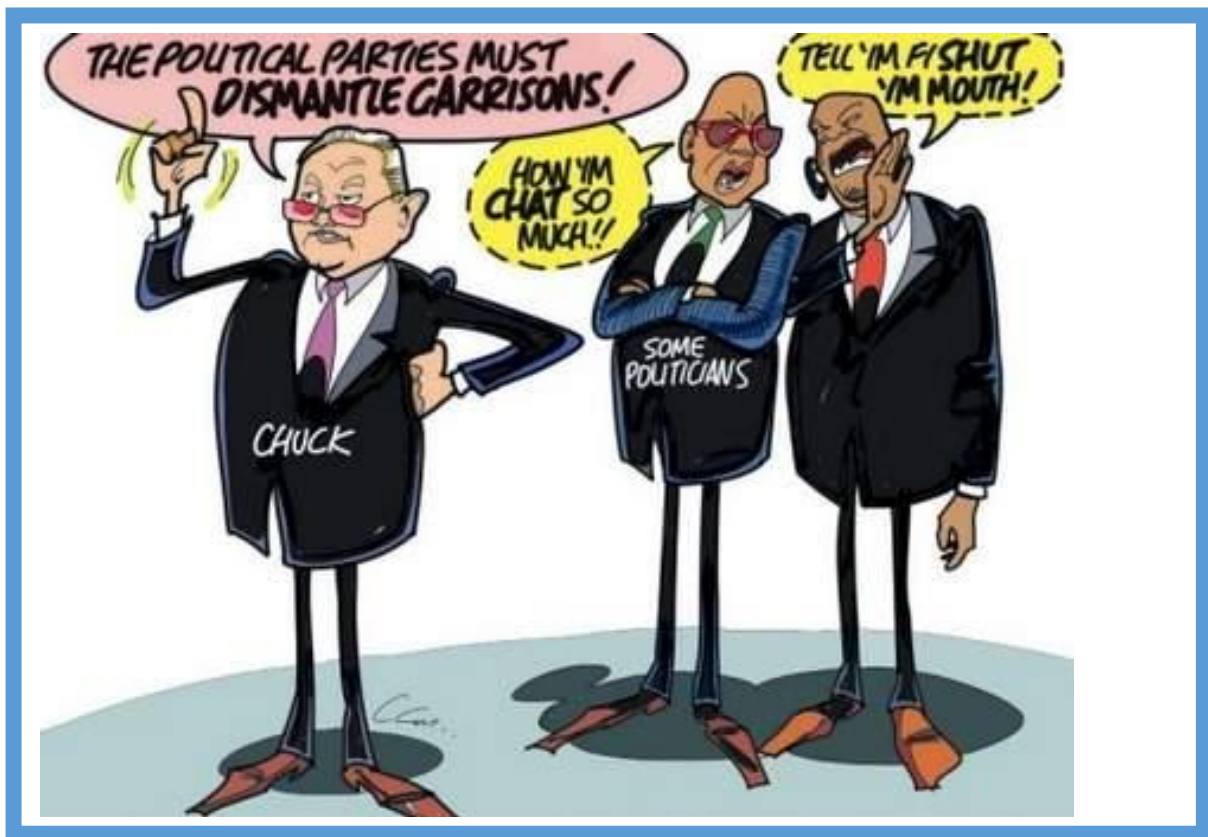
He added that the commission made several proposals as to how to dismantle the garrisons, but when the proposals were examined he was not certain that they would be successful in addressing the problem.

At the same time, Minister Chuck reasoned that there should be public discussion on the matter and contended that he feels it should be the responsibility political parties to fix the communities.

"I have no doubt that when we look at the garrisons we will have to take it back to Parliament, and that is what the intention is, for discussion to take place in the society. But eventually when we respond on the recommendations of the Tivoli Commission of Enquiry we intend to say that this is a matter that has to be dealt with by political parties, and how do we get a third party or others or a Vale Royal discussion so that we can start to dismantle, degarrisonise areas within our societies because we must show that these communities must have outstanding leaders leading the charge and not the dons and thugs leading the charge," he said.

Garrison communities are those where votes are cast, by will or force, heavily in favour of either of the island's two major political parties.

Yesterday, Chuck argued that garrisons, poverty, and deterioration of communities can be stemmed, but economics must be at the forefront of what is being done, instead of political decisions affecting residents of these communities...





## **CONCLUSION**

Jamaica's development with equitable inclusion of all her citizens, requires a fair and respected political system that facilitates participation with diverse contending views, to arrive at the best decisions for the country.

Political leaders by enacting the Political Ombudsman (Interim) Act, after lengthy consultations, public outcry at the levels of tension, hostility and violence that characterized Jamaica's politics, determined to raise the standard of politics thereby increasing public safety and participation.

The Agreement and Declaration on Political Conduct which followed in 2005, further clarified/expanded by agreement, matters which would breach the law setting out a Standard for Jamaica's Politics.

This office pledges to continue to uphold the law and promote democracy and to courageously address actions which create political conflict or breach codes, protocols or laws involving political actors. Public education by appropriate events signage, outreach, the 'Conversations with Young Jamaicans', Dismantling of Garrisons and consultations with political parties on the conduct of elections, will be priorities along with staff welfare and law reform.

The OPO recognizes and accepts with humility the duty and privilege granted by the Political Ombudsman (Interim) Act.