

JAMAICA MOVES FORWARD

OVERCOMING POLITICAL AND ELECTORAL VIOLENCE



Hon. Donna Parchment Brown, CD, JP
Political Ombudsman, Jamaica
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OVERVIEW

The Problem

Women & Violence

Structure & Actions

Where to Next



POLITICAL VIOLENCE

The use of force by an individual or a group with a political purpose or motivation. ACLED – Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project

Community militia or gangs aligned to political parties. ACLED

GENDER ISSUES AND VIOLENCE IN JAMAICA

Gender based violence, national concern

Political/electoral violence does not appear gender based

ILO study 2015 “Women In Business and Management” study ranked Jamaica first of 108 countries at 59.3% women leaders,

Columbia and Panama also in the top 3

2016 – A YEAR OF TURMOIL

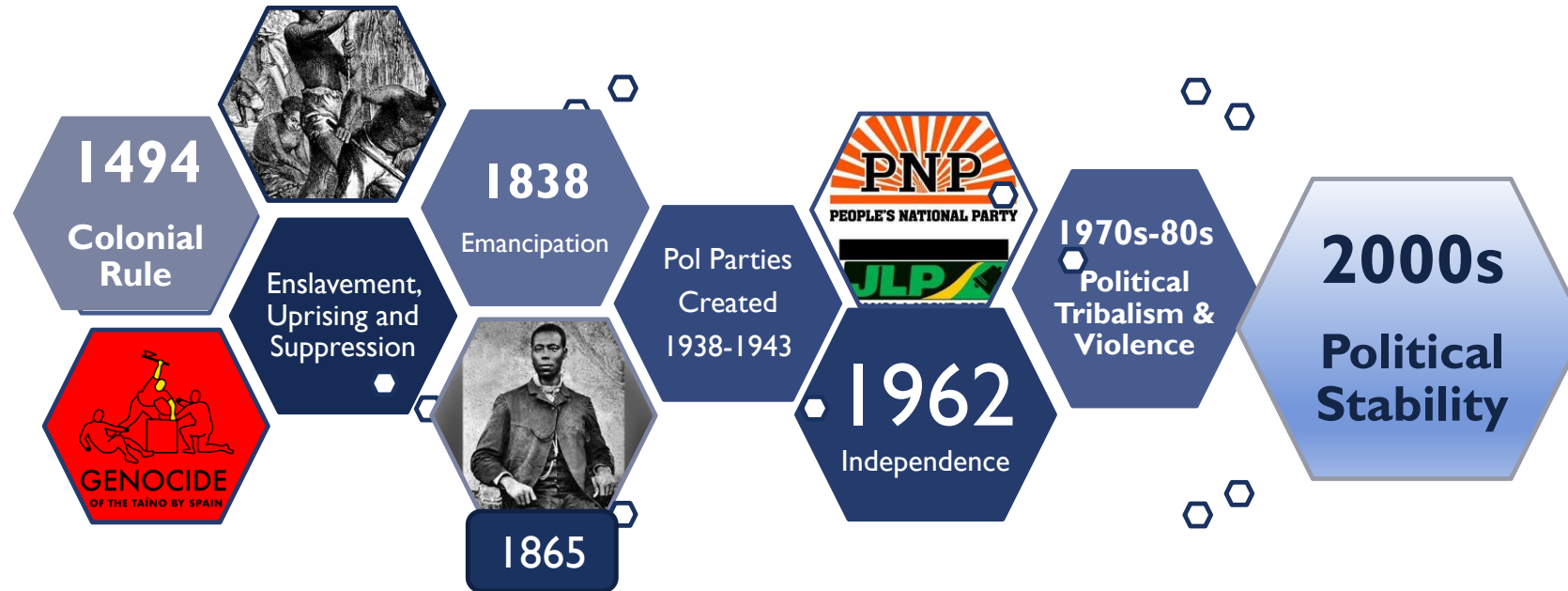
United States – widening social cultural divisions expressed politically and accompanying political violence

United Kingdom – Brexit contest and conflict

Jamaica - Intersection of gang political conflict

5 cases inter and intra party

SNAPSHOT OF JAMAICA'S HISTORY



JAMAICA'S MODERN HISTORY

- 1938 – public labour uprising against colonial oppression
- 1938/43 – Major political parties formed
- 1962 – Independence
- 1960s-80s – Upsurge in political tensions and violence

BREAKTHROUGH

- 1988 both major parties agreed to a new approach
- Strengthened Electoral Commission of Jamaica – Gold Standard
- Worked in collaboration with civil society, academia, religious leaders
- Worked towards creating Standards
- Created institutions, like the Political Ombudsman, to enforce the standards to which the politicians agreed
- **OAS Report of the observer group at February 2016 general elections noted the Political Ombudsman as a good practice.**

AGREEMENT AND DECLARATION ON POLITICAL CONDUCT (CODE)

Negotiated by political parties and civil society

Specific focus on the **'conduct'** of political actors in Jamaica.

Binding on officials of political parties, candidates, representatives and supporters.

A Breach of the Code may constitute misconduct

Breaches will be investigated by the Political Ombudsman

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1. **Non-Violence and Non-Intimidation**
 2. Safety of Private & Public Property
 3. Avoiding Confrontation
 4. **Public Utterances**
 5. Freedom of Access
 6. Avoidance of Defacing of Buildings or Installations
 7. Ending Political Tribalism
 8. Code of Ethics

THE CODE

OFFICE OF THE POLITICAL OMBUDSMAN OF JAMAICA

8 Standards of Conduct

NON VIOLENCE AND NON-INTIMIDATION

- No weapons or ammunition in political activities
- No threats of violence, expressed or implied, against anyone due to their political affiliation
- Freedom of movement, from harassment. Actively discourage roadblocks
- Candidates and their agents, **MUST** not use funds to influence electoral choices (vote buying)
- Clean money only

PUBLIC UTTERANCES

Party officials and their representatives may not make statements that are:

- inflammatory or likely to incite others to violence
- slanderous or libellous
- malicious

WHAT WE DO

Investigate actions taken by a political party, its members or supporters that breach the code or prejudice relations between parties or their supporters

Conduct investigations, either in response to a complaint or on own initiative.

Determine, propose and **report on resolutions**

Make recommendations to the Prime Minister and Leader of the Opposition

Determine if a sanction is necessary when people make false or misleading statements to the OPO

Public education and partnerships

WHAT WE DO – ELECTIONS AND CAMPAIGNS

Work with Custodes for all candidates to sign adherence to the Code.

Election Centre chaired jointly by the Director of Elections and the Political Ombudsman to monitor and react quickly to breaches and potential breaches of electoral laws and codes

Monitor activities in all 63 MP constituencies and 228 divisions

Activate Police Political Ombudsman Liaison Officers for investigations

ACHIEVEMENTS

- ❑ **Significant decline in political violence.**
- ❑ OPO resolves dozens of disputes a year.
- ❑ No party to a resolved dispute has reoffended
- ❑ Dialogue and partnerships with key groups pivotal (church)
- ❑ New expanded public awareness campaign before next election

75 % BELIEVE
POLITICIANS ARE
CORRUPT

- ❑ New research indicates high degree of distrust for politicians
- ❑ Negative social media content proliferating
- ❑ Political parties must bear responsibility for social media content, for integrity of elections and good governance.
- ❑ EU – Facebook agreement on political abuse needs to be expanded to the South and to all social media channels

CHALLENGES

WHAT NEXT?

- ❑ Extensive public campaign in 2020
- ❑ Youth Champions leading by example
- ❑ Partnering with other Commissions
- ❑ Working with women's groups, academia, politicians and business to discuss options to manage social media

