

PRESS RELEASE

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First order of business for Justice Minister-INDECOM

March 11, 2016 - The Minister of Justice, the Hon. Delroy Chuck has hit the ground running, with his first order of business being the Independent Commission of Investigations (INDECOM). The Minister met with Commissioner of INDECOM, Terrence Williams to discuss the state of affairs of the Commission and the way forward.

On this first visit Minister Chuck and Permanent Secretary, Mrs. Carol Palmer had discussions with the Commissioner, met the senior manager of the Commission and was given a tour of the facilities.

Chief among the issues on which the Minister was briefed:

- The Clarendon Investigation
- Human Resources
- Decline in incidents of fatal shootings
- Operational Protocols with JCF

In a brief meeting with senior managers, Minister Chuck said he will be emphasizing the importance of the protection of the rights and freedoms of the Jamaican people, but will also be giving the good men and women of the security forces his support.

"I will be praising the police for the work that they are doing, but at the same time I will be urging them to act professionally and to adhere to the JCF's Use of Force policies hence limiting the instances of excessive use of force.

I will be urging citizens, that where they see misconduct or any sort of infringement of their rights or the law by police officers, they should come to INDECOM and report it."

Recognizing the slow pace at which matters are completed in the courts, the Minister said the completion of the cases concerning members of the security forces in a speedy manner is a priority for his Ministry as police officer's lives and careers hang in the balance when these cases languish in the court system.

In his closing comments Minister Chuck said: "INDECOM has done a great job with its image in the public, but don't rest on your laurels, instead keep making the point that the Commission is here to stop injustice if it is coming from the security forces. The security forces may not be happy with the work of INDECOM, because of the checks and balances now in place, but do not be discouraged in doing your work. You are protecting the rights of citizens." This he said while making the point that the police officers are also citizens and will be protected should they be subjected to abuse by their own colleagues.

According to the Minister, INDECOM enjoys a high level of confidence from the general public and for that he thanked the Commissioner and its staff for sending a strong signal that there will be checks and balances.

Welcoming the support of the Minister, Commissioner Williams, commented that Jamaica needs a professional police force that enjoys broad public support. This public support, Mr. Williams said, can only come where there is a widespread perception that the members of the force are accountable for their actions. He said the men and women of INDECOM are committed to detecting corrupt and oppressive conduct where it exists and seek to correct it.

Following the meeting, the Minister Chuck and Mrs. Palmer were given a tour of the facilities and greeted some staff members.