November 24, 2021

OPEN LETTER TO DR. THE HONOURABLE HORACE CHANG, DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER OF JAMAICA AND MINISTER OF NATIONAL SECURITY AND

DR. THE HONOURABLE NIGEL CLARKE, MINISTER OF FINANCE AND THE PUBLIC SERVICE

Dear Dr. Hon. Horace Chang and Dr. Hon. Nigel Clarke,

Re: Proposed Settlement Offer for Rank & File Police Officers

We write this open letter to you in a final effort to reach a reasonable resolution regarding payment due to rank & file police officers; payment which is owed to us as far back as 2008. As you are aware, police officers have repeatedly been scheduled to work twelve (12) hour shifts and their duties often require them to go over and above these twelve (12) hours when, for example, they have to process crime scenes, attend court and provide protection for officials of government.

In trying to resolve this matter, a compromise was suggested, to which we agreed, that the police would be paid for an additional 10 hours each week. We further agreed to give up all claims from 2008 to 2014 and to accept payment for 2015 to present only, in good faith. However, the government is now insisting on denying us compensation for 2008 up to 2018 and instead only wants to compensate us from 2019; only two (2) years proposed payment with police officers now asked to give up more than ten (10) years of payment. Additionally, the Government of Jamaica wants to pay the Police these 2 years over the next 6 years.

On our calculation, our members are owed an average of $19,500.00 per month, for 165 months between 2008 and 2021, payment of which would greatly alleviate the financial hardship which many of our members and their families have to grapple with. This money could have assisted officers greatly just to feed their families. The police man or woman below the gazetted rank is forced to subsidize the government every month just to keep him or herself on the job and for years has been crying out for a liveable wage. Each month finds the officer in a deficit as he or she fights hard financially to go to work, feed him or herself and family, pay transport, pay to launder uniforms, at times paying for those uniforms before he or she can even pay their utilities and rent or mortgage.

We are aware of the budgetary constraints and have reviewed your offer to make payment retroactive to 2019 over a six (6) year period. By virtue of inflation this would not be worth much to the officers. This is not a reasonable offer for the officers in light of all the circumstances. For more than 100 years, every year each police man and woman has given up an average of 1560 hours free which has never been paid for due to Exigencies of duty and dedication to the business of National Security and the people of Jamaica. This conservatively translates into over 1.5 BILLION HOURS of Unpaid work done by the police.

What we ask even at this juncture is that you consider even payment from 2015 and we would agree to a percentage now and the balance of payment made in the next two (2) years. Minister, we have tried to be reasonable. What we are proposing would still involve great loss to our members as not only would we be giving up eight (8) years pay but due to constant inflation we are very much aware that what ten dollars ($10) can buy today in six (6) years' time that same item may very well cost five hundred dollars ($500) and in eight years' time perhaps the price of the same item will likely be at a cost of seven hundred dollars ($700).

We plead with you to have the relevant civil servants revise the figures and that you come up with an offer which will help to remove the feeling among many of our members that their best interest is not of interest or at heart to be considered and that the Police is being consistently taken for granted.

We are fearful that unless a fair resolution is reached, it will further affect and undermine the morale of our members and negatively impact the quality of policing for our nation.

Our Police deserve better. The people of Jamaica deserve to be reassured of Quality and focused Policing.

Yours truly,

Central Committee
Jamaica Police Federation