



MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND FOREIGN TRADE
2 Port Royal Street, Kingston, Jamaica, W.I.

PRESS RELEASE

FOREIGN MINISTER URGES JAMAICANS TO FOLLOW IMMIGRATION LAWS OF THE COUNTRIES THEY VISIT

(MFA&FT: April 5, 2023)

Senator the Honourable Kamina Johnson Smith, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade, is urging Jamaicans to abide by the immigration laws governing the countries they visit. The Minister was addressing concerns arising from recent reports of irregular migration of Jamaicans in Belize, Mexico and Panama.

"I am very concerned by recent reports of some Jamaicans using these countries as transit points to illegally enter other countries. This type of activity often puts the lives of our nationals in grave danger and poses reputational risks for all countries involved. Furthermore, law-abiding Jamaicans are being negatively impacted in their experience at immigration points and could be even more affected in the future."

According to the Foreign minister, "The Jamaican Government is concerned that nationals are taking decisions to travel under circumstances that are extremely risky, and in some cases taking children with them, exposing them to dangerous situations, including kidnapping, sex trafficking and even death." She added that all countries maintain the right to determine who enters their borders, and that the countries mentioned may have already implemented heightened surveillance at immigration points.

Johnson Smith added that, "The Government of Jamaica has been monitoring the situation in these countries and has been assessing available data. We are actively engaging through a consultative process with the relevant authorities, both locally and overseas, as we seek to address these issues."

Minister Johnson Smith reiterated, "We urge those Jamaicans who are thinking about taking these illegal actions, to be aware of the risk to them and their families as well as the effect on law abiding Jamaicans legitimately travelling to these countries."

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