



Home Office

Country Background Note Jamaica

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Preface

Purpose

This note provides a summary of and links to country of origin information (COI) for use by Home Office decision makers handling particular types of protection and human rights claims. It is not intended to be an exhaustive survey of a particular subject or theme.

It is split into two main sections: (1) general background to the country concerned, including demography and geography; and (2) issues which may be relevant to protection claims. Unlike country policy and information notes, it does **not** contain an assessment of risk, availability of protection or reasonableness of internal relocation.

Decision makers **must**, however, still consider all claims on an individual basis, taking into account each case's specific facts.

Country of origin information

The country information in this note has been carefully selected in accordance with the general principles of COI research as set out in the [Common EU \[European Union\] Guidelines for Processing Country of Origin Information \(COI\)](#), dated April 2008, and the Austrian Centre for Country of Origin and Asylum Research and Documentation's (ACCORD), [Researching Country Origin Information – Training Manual, 2013](#). Namely, taking into account the COI's relevance, reliability, accuracy, balance, currency, transparency and traceability.

The structure and content of the country information section follows a [terms of reference](#) which sets out the general and specific topics relevant to this note.

All information included in the note was published or made publicly available on or before the 'cut-off' date in the country information section. Any event taking place or report/article published after this date is not included.

All information is publicly accessible or can be made publicly available, and is from generally reliable sources. Sources and the information they provide are carefully considered before inclusion.

Factors relevant to the assessment of the reliability of sources and information include:

- the motivation, purpose, knowledge and experience of the source
- how the information was obtained, including specific methodologies used
- the currency and detail of information, and
- whether the COI is consistent with and/or corroborated by other sources.

Multiple sourcing is used to ensure that the information is accurate, balanced and corroborated, so that a comprehensive and up-to-date picture at the time of publication is provided of the issues relevant to this note.

Information is compared and contrasted, whenever possible, to provide a range of views and opinions. The inclusion of a source, however, is not an endorsement of it or any view(s) expressed.

Each piece of information is referenced in a brief footnote; full details of all sources cited and consulted in compiling the note are listed alphabetically in the [bibliography](#).

Feedback

Our goal is to continuously improve our material. Therefore, if you would like to comment on this note, please email [the Country Policy and Information Team](#).

Independent Advisory Group on Country Information

The [Independent Advisory Group on Country Information](#) (IAGCI) was set up in March 2009 by the Independent Chief Inspector of Borders and Immigration to support him in reviewing the efficiency, effectiveness and consistency of approach of COI produced by the Home Office.

The IAGCI welcomes feedback on the Home Office's COI material. It is not the function of the IAGCI to endorse any Home Office material, procedures or policy. The IAGCI may be contacted at:

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Information about the IAGCI's work and a list of the documents which have been reviewed by the IAGCI can be found on the Independent Chief Inspector's pages of the [gov.uk website](#).

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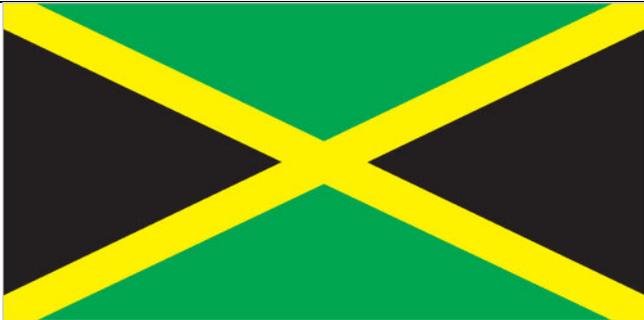
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Country information

Section 1 Updated: 11 July 2019

1. Geography and demography

1.1 Key geographic and demographic facts

Full country name:	Jamaica ¹
Area:	total: 10,991 sq km land: 10,831 sq km water: 160 sq km Jamaica is the 167th largest country in the world by area ²
Flag:	 ³
Population:	July 2018 estimate: 2,812,090 ⁴
Capital city:	Kingston ⁵
Other large cities:	The island is divided into 3 counties: Cornwall, Middlesex and Surrey. The counties are subdivided into 14 parishes and each parish has a capital. Two parish capitals, Montego Bay in St. James and Kingston, have city status. ⁶
Position:	'Caribbean, island in the Caribbean Sea, south of Cuba'. ⁷
Languages:	English, English patois ⁸
Ethnic groups:	'Jamaicans are 90.9 percent black, 1.3 percent East Indian, 0.2 percent white, 0.2 percent

¹ BBC, 'Jamaica Country Profile' 10 January 2018, [url](#).

² CIA World Factbook, 'Jamaica' (Geography), updated 7 July 2019, [url](#).

³ CIA World Factbook, 'Jamaica' updated 7 July 2019, [url](#).

⁴ CIA World Factbook, 'Jamaica' (People and Society), updated 7 July 2019, [url](#).

⁵ CIA World Factbook, 'Jamaica' (Government), updated 7 July 2019, [url](#).

⁶ Jamaica Information Service, 'Parish Profiles', (Overview of Jamaica), undated, [url](#)

⁷ CIA World Factbook, 'Jamaica' (Geography), updated 7 July 2019, [url](#).

⁸ CIA World Factbook, 'Jamaica' (People and society - Languages), updated 4 June 2019, [url](#).

	Chinese, 7.3 percent mixed ethnicities, and 0.1 percent other ethnicities'. ⁹
Religions:	'Protestant 64.8%... Roman Catholic 2.2%, Jehovah's Witness 1.9%, Rastafarian 1.1%, Other 6.5%, none 21.3%, unspecified 2.3% (2011 est.)'. ¹⁰ For further information, see Freedom of Religion

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1.2 Adminstrative divisions

1.2.1 Jamaica is divided into 14 parishes; Clarendon, Hanover, Kingston, Manchester, Portland, Saint Andrew, Saint Ann, Saint Catherine, Saint Elizabeth, Saint James, Saint Mary, Saint Thomas, Trelawny, Westmoreland. Kingston and Saint Andrew are merged as a single corporate body, called the Kingston and Saint Andrew Corporation¹¹.

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1.3 Maps



1.3.1 This [map of Jamaica](#) shows the country's capital, as well as other major cities, towns, parish boundaries, transportation roads and airports¹².

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⁹ Oxford African American Studies Centre, 'Jamaica', 2010, [url](#)

¹⁰ CIA World Factbook, 'Jamaica' (People and Society - Religions), Updated 4 June 2019, [url](#).

¹¹ CIA World Factbook, 'Jamaica' (Government - Adminstrative Divisions), Updated 4 June 2019, [url](#).

¹² Nations Online, Map of Jamaica, Carribbean, undated, [url](#)

1.4 Physical geography

- 1.4.1 The Central Intelligence Agency stated that Jamaica is ‘the third largest island in the Caribbean Sea (after Cuba and Hispaniola)’.¹³
- 1.4.2 Regarding Jamaica’s geography, the World Atlas stated that the island is: ‘...mostly mountainous, with a narrow, discontinuous coastal plain. The island is ringed by numerous bays, small cays and islands, and white-sand beaches stretch for miles in some areas. Volcanic in origin, Jamaica can be divided into three landform regions: the eastern mountains, the central valleys and plateaus, and the coastal plains.’¹⁴
- 1.4.3 Regarding environmental risks, the U.S Department of State (USSD) Overseas Security Advisory Council (OSAC) stated in its 2019 Jamaica crime and safety report that ‘Jamaica shares a major geographic fault line with Haiti; tremors are very common throughout the country. Jamaica also lies within the Atlantic hurricane belt; the hurricane season runs from 1 June through 30 November.’¹⁵
- 1.4.4 The Meteorological Service in Jamaica reported that due to the island’s increased frequency and intensity of tropical weather systems, ‘which can partly be attributed to climate change’¹⁶, Jamaica ‘has experienced loss of lives and property; damage to infrastructure; periodic isolation of communities; and disruption to the school system and health services.’¹⁷
- 1.4.5 The source continued:
‘The government forged a partnership with the European Union and the United Nations Environment Programme in a project to reduce the risks caused by natural hazards and to increase resilience of vulnerable areas in an effort to adapt to climate change. Known as GOJ/EU/UNEP Climate Change Adaptation and Disaster Risk Reduction Project, with 4.4M Euros in funding from the EU and technical and managerial support from UNEP and the GOJ was implemented over the period 2011-2013.’¹⁸

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1.5 Main population centres

- 1.5.1 The CIA World Factbook noted the ‘population density is high throughout, but increases in and around Kingston, Montego Bay, and Port Esquivel.’¹⁹
- 1.5.2 Encyclopaedia Britannica noted that:
‘Most of the urban centres are located on the coastal plains, where the main commercial crops are grown.
‘... Kingston is the commercial, administrative, and cultural centre of the island and the focus of its transportation services.

¹³ CIA World Factbook, ‘Jamaica’ (Geography), 4 June 2019, [url](#)

¹⁴ World Atlas, ‘Jamaica - Geography’, 7 April 2017, [url](#)

¹⁵ OSAC, Jamaica 2019 Crime & Safety Report, 30 May 2019, [url](#)

¹⁶ Met Service Jamaica, ‘Climate change adaptation ...’, undated, [url](#)

¹⁷ Met Service Jamaica, ‘Climate change adaptation ...’, undated, [url](#)

¹⁸ Met Service Jamaica, ‘Climate change adaptation ...’, undated, [url](#)

¹⁹ CIA World Factbook, ‘Jamaica’ (People and Society), Updated 4 June 2019, [url](#).

'Other southern coastal towns include Savanna-la-Mar (in the southwest), Portmore (just west of Kingston), and Morant Bay (east).

'Important centres in the interior are Spanish Town (the old capital, 13 miles [21 km] west of Kingston), May Pen, and Mandeville, high in the Manchester Highlands.

'Montego Bay is the largest city on the northern coast; smaller northern towns include St. Ann's Bay, Port Maria, Ocho Rios, and Port Antonio...Ocho Rios developed particularly rapidly in the late 20th century as a centre for hotels and cruise ship stopovers.'²⁰

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1.6 Transport links

1.6.1 The FCO stated in its foreign travel advice webpage that, 'road accidents and fatalities are common. Many roads are badly maintained with poor signage. Roads in rural areas are narrow, winding and poorly lit at night. Speeding and drink-driving are common.'²¹

1.6.2 Encyclopaedia Britannica stated that, 'Jamaica's main roads encircle the island, loop into the valleys, and traverse the mountains via three major north-south routes, and the Kingston metropolitan area has a major public bus system...

'There are three international airports...Norman Manley, on the Palisadoes in Kingston,...Donald Sangster, at Montego Bay...[and] Ian Fleming International Airport, near Ocho Rios....Those airports, together with Tinson Pen in Kingston, also handle domestic flights. Port Antonio, Ocho Rios, and Negril have major public airstrips, and there are privately owned airstrips throughout the island.'²²

1.6.3 According to the OSAC Jamaica 2019 Crime and Safety Report:

'With the completion of the North-South Highway toll road in 2016, there is now a modern, expedient route between Kingston and the North Coast area near Ocho Rios. The A1, A2 and A3 highways provide links between the country's most important cities and tourist destinations... road conditions are hazardous due to poor repair, inadequate signage and poor traffic control markings.'²³

1.6.4 The CIA World Factbook noted that Discovery Bay (Port Rhoades), Kingston, Montego Bay, Port Antonio, Port Esquivel, Port Kaiser and Rocky Point are the main seaports, whilst Kingston is the container seaport²⁴.

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1.7 Languages

1.7.1 Encyclopaedia Britannica noted:

²⁰ CIA World Factbook, 'Jamaica' (People and Society), Updated 4 June 2019, [url](#).

²¹ Foreign Travel Advice, Jamaica, Undated, [url](#)

²² Encyclopaedia Britannica, 'Jamaica', Transportation, undated [url](#)

²³ OSAC, 'Jamaica 2019 Crime & Safety Report', 30 May 2019, [url](#)

²⁴ CIA World Factbook, 'Jamaica' (Transportation), Updated 4 June 2019, [url](#).

‘English, the official language, is commonly used in towns and among the more-privileged social classes. Jamaican Creole is also widely spoken. Its vocabulary and grammar are based in English, but its various dialects derive vocabulary and phrasing from West African languages, Spanish, and, to a lesser degree, French. The grammatical structure, lyrical cadences, intonations, and pronunciations of Creole make it a distinct language.’²⁵

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Section 2 Updated: 11 July 2019

2. Economy

2.1.1 Key economic points:

Currency:	Jamaican Dollar (JMD) ²⁶
Exchange rate:	1 GBP = \$168.27 (21/05/2019) ²⁷
GDP per capita:	\$ 9,200 (2017 est.) ²⁸

2.1.2 The World Bank observed that ‘the Jamaican economy grew a year-on-year 2.0 percent in the fourth quarter of 2018, bolstered by growth in agriculture, manufacturing, construction, mining and quarrying activities.’²⁹ Similarly, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) stated that ‘unemployment is near all-time lows, business confidence is high, and the economy is estimated to have expanded by 1.8 percent in 2018, buoyed by mining, construction and agriculture.’³⁰

2.1.3 Jamaica is ranked 97 out of 189 countries in the 2017 index produced by the [UN Human Development Programme](#).

2.1.4 Jamaica is ranked 70 out of 180 countries in the [Corruption Perceptions Index 2018](#), produced by Transparency International.

2.1.5 According to a 2016 estimate, 17.1% of the population is living below the poverty line.³¹

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Section 3 Updated: 11 July 2019

3. History

3.1.1 According to Encyclopaedia Britannica:

‘The island’s various Spanish, French, and English place-names are remnants of its colonial history. The great majority of its people are of African ancestry, the descendants of slaves brought by European colonists. Jamaica

²⁵ Encyclopaedia Britannica, ‘Jamaica’, (People), undated, [url](#)

²⁶ CIA World Factbook, ‘Jamaica’ (Economy), updated 4 June 2019, [url](#).

²⁷ InforEuro – European Commission, [url](#)

²⁸ CIA World Factbook, ‘Jamaica’ (Economy), updated 4 June 2019, [url](#).

²⁹ The World Bank, ‘The World Bank in Jamaica’, Overview, 1 April 2019, [url](#)

³⁰ IMF, ‘IMF reaches staff level agreement on fifth review ...’, 8 March 2019, [url](#)

³¹ CIA World Factbook, ‘Jamaica’ (Economy), Updated 4 June 2019, [url](#).

became independent from the United Kingdom in 1962 but remains a member of the Commonwealth.³²

3.1.2 The BBC's Jamaica Profile timeline:

2010	'May – June - Dozens killed in operation to arrest alleged drug lord Christopher "Dudus" Coke. He is extradited to the US, sentenced and jailed.' ³³
2011	'October - Andrew Holness takes over as premier, after Golding quits, citing the "Dudus" Coke affair... 'December - Portia Simpson-Miller from the People's National Party wins a snap general election.' ³⁴
2012	'November - Jamaica abolishes flogging and whipping from its penal code.' ³⁵
2015	'February - Parliament decriminalises the possession of small quantities of cannabis for personal use. The law also permits the use of marijuana for religious, medical and scientific purposes.' ³⁶

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Section 4 Updated: 11 July 2019

4. Political system

4.1.1 Key points about the political system:

Government:	Parliamentary democracy under a constitutional monarchy. ^{37 38}
Type	'A bicameral legislature and party system, based on universal adult suffrage.' ³⁹
General elections	'In national elections in 2016, the Jamaica Labour Party led by Prime Minister Andrew Michael Holness won 32 of the 63 seats in the House of Representatives. The party gained an additional seat in an October 2017 by-election to increase its majority in parliament to 33-30.' ⁴⁰ 'Elections are held at intervals not exceeding five years'. ⁴¹

³² Encyclopaedia Britannica, 'Jamaica', undated, [url](#)

³³ BBC, 'Jamaica Profile – Timeline', undated, [url](#)

³⁴ BBC, 'Jamaica Profile – Timeline', undated, [url](#)

³⁵ BBC, 'Jamaica Profile – Timeline', undated, [url](#)

³⁶ BBC, 'Jamaica Profile - Timeline, undated, [url](#)

³⁷ USSD, Country Report on Human Rights Practices 2018, Executive Summary, [url](#)

³⁸ The Commonwealth, 'Jamaica: Constitution and politics, updated, [url](#)

³⁹ The Commonwealth, 'Jamaica: Constitution and politics, updated, [url](#)

⁴⁰ USSD, 'Country Report on Human Rights Practices 2018 – Jamaica', (Executive Summary 1), [url](#)

⁴¹ The Commonwealth, 'Jamaica: Constitution and politics, updated, [url](#)

Major political parties represented in parliament:	Jamaica Labor Party (JLP) People's National Party (PNP) National Democratic Movement (NDM). ⁴²
Main Political Figures:	Prime Minister: Andrew Michael Holness since 2016. ⁴³

- 4.1.2 Freedom House stated in its 'Freedom in the World 2018' report that, 'political parties form and operate without restriction. Although various smaller parties are active, politics at the national level is dominated by the social democratic PNP and the more conservative JLP...Opposition parties operate freely, and political power has alternated between the PNP and JLP.'⁴⁴
- 4.1.3 The same report further stated that, 'The elected Prime Minister and national legislative representatives determine the policies of the government. However, powerful criminal gangs, as well as corruption in politics, can affect democratic policy making.'⁴⁵
- 4.1.4 The 2019 USSD report covering events in 2018 noted that 'no laws limit participation of women or members of minorities in the political process, and they did participate.'⁴⁶
- 4.1.5 The 2019 OSAC report noted that 'there is moderate risk from political violence in Jamaica. Jamaica's political system is stable, and the country has a history of peaceful transfers of power between the two political parties, the Jamaica Labour Party (JLP) and the People's National Party (PNP).'⁴⁷

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Section 5 Updated: 15 July 2019

5. Media and telecommunications

- 5.1.1 Freedom House mentioned in its 2018 report that, 'the constitutional right to free expression is generally respected. Most newspapers are privately owned, and express a variety of views. Broadcast media are largely state-owned but espouse similarly pluralistic points of view. Journalists occasionally face intimidation, especially in the run-up to elections.'⁴⁸
- 5.1.2 Key media/telecommunications points:

International Dialling code:	+ 1-876 ⁴⁹
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⁴² CIA World Factbook, 'Jamaica' (Government), Updated 4 June 2019, [url](#).

⁴³ USSD, Country Report on Human Rights Practices 2018', (Exec Summary 1), 13 March 2019, [url](#)

⁴⁴ Freedom House, 'Freedom in the World 2018 - Jamaica', (sections b1 and b2), 27 August 2018, [url](#)

⁴⁵ Freedom House, 'Freedom in the World 2018 - Jamaica', (sections c1), [url](#)

⁴⁶ USSD, Country Report on Human Rights Practices 2018', (section 3), 13 March 2019, [url](#)

⁴⁷ OSAC, Jamaica 2019 Crime & Safety Report, 30 May 2019, [url](#)

⁴⁸ Freedom House, 'Freedom in the World 2018 - Jamaica', (section d1), 27 August 2018, [url](#)

⁴⁹ Countrycode.org, 'Jamaica', [url](#)

Internet domain:	.jm ⁵⁰
Broadcast media:	<p>The CIA World Factbook stated: ‘3 free-to-air TV stations, subscription cable services, and roughly 30 radio stations’.⁵¹</p> <p>The BBC observed that television channels in Jamaica include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ‘Television Jamaica Limited (TVJ) - private • CVM TV - private • Love TV - religious • PBC Jamaica – public’⁵² <p>The BBC also mentioned that some radio channels include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ‘Radio Jamaica Ltd (RJR) - operates RJR 94 FM and other networks • Kool 97 - commercial • NewsTalk 93 - commercial • Irie FM - commercial, reggae’⁵³
Newspapers	<p>Jamaica’s three main newspapers are:</p> <p>The Jamaica Gleaner</p> <p>Jamaica Observer</p> <p>Jamaica Star</p>

5.1.3 The BBC noted that ‘Jamaica has a free press and its newspapers frequently criticise officials’⁵⁴. It also stated that ‘Broadcast media are mainly commercial and carry diverse comment. The main newspapers are privately-owned.’⁵⁵

5.1.4 Encyclopaedia Britannica noted that, ‘The major local television stations are privately owned, and there is a variety of commercial radio stations. A government-appointed Broadcasting Commission monitors and regulates broadcast radio and television as well as cable television.’⁵⁶

5.1.5 The 2019 USSD report noted:

‘The constitution provides for freedom of expression, including for the press, and the government generally respected this right. An independent press,

⁵⁰ WorldStandards.eu, ‘internet country domains list’, 30 January 2019, [url](#).

⁵¹ CIA World Factbook, ‘Jamaica’ (Communications), Updated 4 June 2019, [url](#).

⁵² BBC News, Jamaica Profile – Media, 3 April 2018, [url](#)

⁵³ BBC News, Jamaica Profile – Media, 3 April 2018, [url](#)

⁵⁴ BBC News, Jamaica Profile – Media, 3 April 2018, [url](#)

⁵⁵ BBC News, Jamaica Profile – Media, 3 April 2018, [url](#)

⁵⁶ Encyclopaedia Britannica, ‘Jamaica – media and publishing’ undated, [url](#)

generally effective judicial protection, and a functioning democratic political system combined to promote freedom of expression, including for the press. Independent media were active and expressed a wide variety of views without restriction.’⁵⁷

5.1.6 The report further noted:

‘...The government did not restrict or disrupt access to the internet or censor online content, and there were no credible reports that the government monitored private online communications without appropriate legal authority. According to the International Telecommunication Union, 49 percent of the population used the internet in 2017.’⁵⁸

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Section 6 Updated: 18 July 2019

6. Citizenship and nationality

6.1.1 The multiplecitizenship.com website noted that citizenship can be acquired in different ways:

'Citizenship: Citizenship is based upon the Jamaican Nationality Act of 1962, amended March 2, 1993.

'By Birth: Child born in the territory of Jamaica, regardless of the nationality of the parents.

'By Descent: Child born abroad, at least one of whose parents is a citizen of Jamaica.'Marriage: Person, who marries a citizen of Jamaica, is eligible for Jamaican citizenship.

'By Naturalisation: Jamaican citizenship may be applied for upon fulfilment of the following conditions: Person has resided in Jamaica for at least the 12 months prior to the application for citizenship. Person has resided in Jamaica for an aggregate of at least four years during the five-year period before the application. Person intends to reside in Jamaica once citizenship is granted. Person is of good character, has a permanent residence and livelihood, and is involved in Jamaican society.

'Dual Citizenship: Recognised. The Jamaican Constitution does not specifically refer to dual citizenship, but it does not prohibit citizens from acquiring a second nationality.

'Jamaican law states that any Jamaican who acquires a foreign citizenship will be subject to all the responsibilities of the new citizenship and cannot claim any exemptions of their Jamaican nationality.Regarding the loss of citizenship, the source stated: 'Voluntary: Jamaican citizens do not lose their Jamaican citizenship upon the acquisition of a foreign citizenship. Any citizen wishing to renounce Jamaican citizenship must be granted permission by the government of Jamaica...' ⁵⁹

⁵⁷ USSD, 'Country Report on Human Rights Practices 2018', (section 2a), 13 March 2019, [url](#)

⁵⁸ USSD, 'Country Report on Human Rights Practices 2018', (section 2), [url](#)

⁵⁹ Multiplecitizenship.com, 'Jamaica', undated, [url](#)

6.1.2 The 2019 USSD report noted that ‘Every person born in the country after independence in 1962 is entitled to citizenship. Persons outside the country born to or adopted by one or more Jamaican parents, as well as those married to Jamaican spouses, are entitled to citizenship.’⁶⁰

6.1.3 The Bertelsmann Stiftung Transformation Index (BTI) 2018 mentioned:
‘The right to acquire citizenship through birth or descent, without discrimination, is protected under law. The state is sometimes challenged by some vulnerable groups, who report that their ability to exercise their full citizenship rights is constrained. For example, some vulnerable groups have claimed that are unable to access public health care or legal support from the justice system. These Jamaican citizens include young men and women living in extreme poverty, who are often denied access to certain services and sometimes employment due to their home address or being a member of the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender community (LGBT).’⁶¹

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Section 7 Updated: 15 July 2019

7. Official documents

7.1 National Identification System (NIDS)

7.1.1 On its official website, The Office of the Prime Minister mentioned:

‘The Government of Jamaica is designing and developing a National Identification System (NIDS), that will provide a comprehensive and secure structure to enable the capture and storage of personal identity information for citizens and persons ordinarily resident in Jamaica. The NIDS will become the primary source for identity assurance and verification, and will result in improved governance and management of social, economic and security programmes...

‘The National Identification System, called NIDS, is a unique, reliable and secure way of verifying an individual’s identity. It will establish a reliable database of all Jamaican citizens and will involve the issuance of a unique lifelong National Identification Number to every person. In the long term, the NIN may be used alongside a multipurpose card, or be uploaded onto smart phones. The use of biometric (fingerprint or retina) scan is also being explored...

‘At present, Jamaica does not have a central national database with the accompanying systems to support secure, reliable identity verification and authentication. The various systems issue different numbers based on the diverse standards and are not necessarily able to connect and share information with each other due to logistical or legal barriers. Therefore, individuals can assume multiple identities.’⁶²

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Section 8 updated: 18 July 2019

⁶⁰ USSD, ‘Country Report on Human Rights Practices 2018, (section 6), 13 March 2019, [url](#)

⁶¹ Bertelsmann Stiftung, BTI 2018 Country Report – Jamaica’, (section 1), 23 March 2018, [url](#)

⁶² Office of the Prime Minister, ‘National Identification System (NIDS)’, 2019, [url](#)

8. Healthcare

8.1.1 Jamaica's Ministry of Health and Wellness stated in its 2019 – 2030 ten year strategic plan:

'The Ministry of Health & Wellness is responsible for the health of the people of Jamaica and is focused on developing and implementing national strategies for improving health, delivering effective quality health services, setting standards and regulations and carrying out essential public health functions while promoting inter-sectoral actions for health. Acknowledging that a healthy and stable population is needed to drive the country's development, the Ministry of Health & Wellness has developed its Vision for Health 2030 – ten-year Strategic Plan.'⁶³

8.1.2 Amongst other objectives, The Ministry aims to restructure the health service by introducing a National Health Insurance (NHI) scheme and policy measures to 'promote efficiency gains and spending rationalization in the health care sector'.⁶⁴

8.1.3 The Bertelsmann Stiftung Transformation Index (BTI) 2018 report noted that 'In 2015, only 82% of the population have access to sanitation and 94% to water. In the last two years during the current IMF program, cuts in government expenditure have seriously impacted the ability of health care facilities to provide good basic health care.'⁶⁵

8.1.4 The Commonwealth Health Online, a resource dedicated to health in the Commonwealth, stated:

'In keeping with the World Health Organization philosophy of health as a fundamental right of every citizen, the Government is keen on providing universal access to quality care at the primary level, while investments are made to improve the infrastructure and service delivery at the secondary and tertiary levels. Jamaica's outlay of health facilities includes over 330 health centres, 24 public hospitals, the University Hospital of the West Indies, a regional teaching institution partially funded by Regional Governments including Jamaica, 10 private hospitals and over 495 pharmacies. The public health sector accounts for some 5,000 hospital beds, while the private sector provides approximately 200 beds serving a population of 2.7 million. The 24 public hospitals are spread across the nation's 14 parishes and four Regional Health Authorities and are designated A, B and C based on the range of services offered.'⁶⁶

8.1.5 For more information, please see [The Ministry of Health and Wellness Ten year strategic plan 2019 – 2030](#).

8.1.6 For further information on healthcare in Jamaica, please see [Pan American Health Organisation/World Health Organisation \(PAHO/WHO\) – Jamaica](#).

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⁶³ Ministry of Health and Wellness, 'Vision for health 2030 ...', (page 7), 8 May 2019, [url](#)

⁶⁴ Ministry of Health and Wellness, 'Vision for health 2030 ...', (page 5), 8 May 2019, [url](#)

⁶⁵ Bertelsmann Stiftung, 'BTI 2018 Country Report – Jamaica', (section 1), 23 March 2018, [url](#)

⁶⁶ Commonwealth Health Online, 'Health in Jamaica', undated, [url](#)

Key issues relevant to protection claims

The issues below are not meant to be exhaustive; rather the key topics which may be relevant to protection claims. They are listed in alphabetical order.

Section 9 Updated: 17 July 2019

9. Children

9.1 Violence Against Children

9.1.1 The 2019 USSD report observed:

‘The law bans child abuse in all forms. Corporal punishment is illegal; however, it was practiced informally in the home, schools and children’s correctional facilities, as well as when a child was under state care. The penalty is a potential fine of 250,000 JMD (\$1,900) or a prison sentence with hard labour for a period not to exceed three months.

‘Legislation also criminalizes sexual relations by an adult with a child, male or female, under the age of 16 and provides for penalties ranging from 15 years’ to life imprisonment. The law requires anyone who knows of or suspects child abuse to make a report to the registry office, with a penalty of up to 500,000 JMD (\$3,800) and six months’ imprisonment, or both, for failure to do so...

‘Informal corporal punishment and other forms of child abuse were prevalent. Estimates from the non-governmental organisation (NGO) Jamaicans for Justice showed that 80 percent of children experienced psychological or physical violence administered as discipline and a similar number had witnessed a violent crime in their home. Physical punishment in schools remained commonplace. Nonetheless, the NGO noted that overall reported instances of child abuse trended slightly downward during the year [2018]...

‘The law criminalizes the commercial sexual exploitation of children and applies to the protection, possession, importation, exportation and distribution of child pornography. It carries a maximum penalty of 20 years’ imprisonment and a fine of 500,000 JMD (\$3,800). Reports continued of the commercial sexual exploitation of children.’⁶⁷

9.1.2 Based on a variety of sources, UNICEF observed in a 2018 report that, ‘Approximately 80 per cent of Jamaican children experience some form of psychological or physical violence administered as discipline.’⁶⁸

9.1.3 The report further noted ‘JCF figures for 2017 indicate that there were 55 child murders for that calendar year, which represents an increase of 34 per cent above 2016. Also, very troubling is the increase in the number of girls murdered, which rose from 8 in 2016 to 20 in 2017. Most child murders occurred in the adjoining parishes of Kingston and St. Andrew (15), followed by St. James (13).’⁶⁹

⁶⁷ USSD, ‘Country Report on Human Rights Practices 2018’, (section 6), 13 March 2019, [url](#)

⁶⁸ UNICEF, ‘Situation analysis of Jamaican children’, (page 19), 2018, [url](#)

⁶⁹ UNICEF, ‘Situation analysis of Jamaican children’, (page 20), 2018, [url](#)

9.1.4 An October 2018 report by the Jamaica Observer stated:

‘The police are reporting that a total of 353 major crimes have been committed against children across Jamaica since the start of 2018.

‘According to the statistics out of the police's Corporate Communications Unit (CCU), this is a reduction of 128 or 27 per cent in major crimes committed against children over the corresponding period in 2017, when 481 major crimes were committed against children.

‘Despite the downward trend, Commissioner of Police Major General Antony Anderson today gave his assurance that the safety and security of children remain a primary focus of the Jamaica Constabulary Force (JCF).

‘This comes against the recent incidents of violence against children, several of which emanated from domestic conflicts.

“The JCF continues to place high priority on the safety and well-being of our children. All reported incidents of violence or abuse are taken seriously and treated with urgency,” Anderson said.

‘An examination of respective categories of major crimes also indicated that the year-to-date murders figure for children is 38, which is comprised of 24 males and 14 females.

‘When compared with the corresponding period in 2017, there were 48 murders (30 males and 18 females). This represents a decrease of 10 murders or 21 per cent...’⁷⁰

9.1.5 The Private Sector Organisation of Jamaica (PSOJ), ‘a national organisation of private sector associations, companies and individuals working together to promote a competitive and productive private sector’⁷¹, noted in May 2019:

‘Renee Morrison-May, Chairperson of the PSOJ Gender And Disability Affairs Committee in expressing her concern said “The crime statistics are a cause for grave concern in every well thinking Jamaican. Since the start of 2019 fifteen children have been murdered...

‘PSOJ CEO, Makeba Bennett-Easy added her voice to the call for action. “We’re being inundated daily with reports of missing children too many of whom are then found murdered.

‘In November 2016 the PSOJ launched a “Violence against Children Reward Fund”, which is administered by Crime Stop. It rewards people who assist in the arrest and charge of anyone who has committed violent acts against children, including teenagers up to the age of 18 years...’⁷²

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⁷⁰ Jamaica Observer, ‘353 major crimes committed against children in 2018 – JCF’, 31 Oct 2018, [url](#)

⁷¹ PSOJ, ‘welcome to the PSOJ’, undated, [url](#)

⁷² PSOJ, ‘PSOJ disturbed at increase in violent crimes against children ...’, 16 May 2019, [url](#)

9.2 Child marriage

- 9.2.1 The 2019 USSD report mentioned, ‘The legal minimum age for marriage is 18, but children may marry at 16 with parental consent.’⁷³

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9.3 Child labour

- 9.3.1 The 2019 USSD report stated:

‘The law prohibits the worst forms of child labour and provides a minimum age of employment in all sectors. There are limitations on working hours. The government did not effectively enforce the law and penalties only marginally deterred violations.

‘The minimum age for general employment is 15, with strict prohibitions on employing children under age 13 in any type of work. The law permits children between ages 13 and 15 to engage in “light work.” While the Labour Ministry does not have an official definition for this status, it maintained a list of prescribed occupations applicable for those ages 13 to 15.

‘The government estimated that more than 24,400 children ages five to 14 years old were engaged in child labour. Government agencies did not inspect the informal sector, so the number was likely to be under-reported. Children continued to work in farming, fishing and in public markets. Children were employed as domestic servants in homes or for street work, such as peddling goods, services, begging and garbage salvaging. In the worst forms of child labour, commercial sexual exploitation remained prevalent. Children were also victims of forced labour in domestic work. Violent gangs used children to courier drugs and weapons, as lookouts and as armed gunmen.’⁷⁴

- 9.3.2 The U.S Department of Labor, Bureau of International Labor Affairs, Jamaica has observed that:

‘In 2017, Jamaica made moderate advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labour. The government passed the National Identification System law that requires all citizens to receive a national identification card, allowing children without birth certificates to have identification documents. The Anti-Trafficking in Persons Unit collaborated with the Jamaica Fire Brigade to close establishments suspected of facilitating commercial sexual exploitation of children by finding and enforcing fire code violations.

‘Additionally, the government expanded the Program for Advancement through Health and Education to serve 297,135 participants, increased free weekly school meals from 3 to 5 and offered transportation assistance to students. However, children engage in the worst forms of child labour, including commercial sexual exploitation and illicit activities. Although the government has laws prohibiting the use of children in some illicit activities, it

⁷³ USSD, ‘Country Report on Human Rights Practices 2018’, (section 6), 13 March 2019 [url](#)

⁷⁴ USSD, ‘Country Report on Human Rights Practices 2018’, (section 7), 13 March 2019, [url](#)

does not provide higher penalties for using, procuring, or offering children for the production and distribution of drugs compared to those for using adults. In addition, programs to combat child labor are insufficient to address the country's child labor problem.⁷⁵

- 9.3.3 The USSD Bureau of International Labor Affairs reported statistics on child labour and education in 2017. The report stated that 6.2 per cent of children aged between 5 to 14 were working in 2017⁷⁶.

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9.4 Education

- 9.4.1 Scholaro Inc, a 'U.S. based company that provides services in the areas of international verification, credential evaluation, and translation'⁷⁷, stated on its website, 'The 6 years of primary school education in Jamaica is compulsory and free. Children receive their instruction in English, and remain there between the ages of 6 and 12. Schools may be state-owned, or private preparatory schools.'⁷⁸
- 9.4.2 Regarding secondary education, Scholaro Inc noted 'The government has embarked on a program to upgrade secondary schools. This is to meet the needs of an emerging economy that requires more advanced literacy and mathematics skills. Libraries have been restocked and computers installed with internet access. Schools are either single-sex or mixed. Many still favour the British grammar school model. When students leave secondary school their education ceases to be free.'⁷⁹
- 9.4.3 For vocational education, Scholaro Inc. noted 'The National Training Agency oversees vocational training in Jamaica that is provided by state vocational training centres and private academies. Programs tuned to the nation's needs include agriculture, automotive skills, beauty services, clothing manufacture, commercial skills, information technology, and building and construction skills.'⁸⁰
- 9.4.4 Regarding tertiary education, the source stated 'Tertiary education is provided through five universities and a variety of community and teachers colleges, some state-owned and some privately funded. A traditional western-based curriculum is followed. Universities include the University of the West Indies Mona Campus, The University of Technology, the College of Art, Science and Technology, the North Caribbean University and the University College of the Caribbean.'⁸¹
- 9.4.5 The USSD Bureau of International Labor Affairs reported statistics on child labour and education in 2017. The report stated that 'Although the law mandates free public education and school attendance rates are high, the cost for transportation, food, books, and clothing creates barriers to

⁷⁵ USDoL, 'Child labor and forced labor reports – Jamaica', 2017, [url](#)

⁷⁶ USDoL, 'Child labor and forced labor reports – Jamaica 2017', 2017, [url](#)

⁷⁷ Scholaro, 'About Scholaro', 2019, [url](#)

⁷⁸ Scholaro Pro, Education System in Jamaica, 2018, [url](#)

⁷⁹ Scholaro Pro, Education System in Jamaica, 2018, [url](#)

⁸⁰ Scholaro Pro, Education System in Jamaica, 2018, [url](#)

⁸¹ Scholaro Pro, Education System in Jamaica, 2018, [url](#)

education for some children.⁸² The report added that 98.9 per cent of children between 5 to 14 attended school, whilst 7.2 per cent of children between 7 to 14 combined school with work⁸³.

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10. Political opposition

10.1.1 According to the Freedom in the World 2018 report:

‘In 2016, the opposition JLP won 32 seats in the legislature, in a narrow victory over the incumbent PNP, which took 31. Monitors from the Organization for American States (OAS) deemed the 2016 general elections competitive and credible, but recorded instances of election-related violence ahead of the polls and expressed concern about voter apathy, which was manifested in a historically low voter turnout of 48 percent...

‘Political parties form and operate without restriction. Although various smaller parties are active, politics at the national level is dominated by the social democratic PNP and the more conservative JLP. Opposition parties operate freely and political power has alternated between the PNP and JLP.’⁸⁴

10.1.2 The 2019 USSD report noted that ‘There were no reports of political prisoners or detainees.’⁸⁵ The report further added that the country has ‘a functioning democratic political system’⁸⁶ and that ‘the law provides citizens the ability to choose their government in free and fair periodic elections held by secret ballot and based on universal and equal suffrage.’⁸⁷

10.1.3 Furthermore, the report mentioned that ‘No laws limit participation of women or members of minorities in the political process, and they did participate.’⁸⁸

10.1.4 In February 2019, The Gleaner reported:

‘Member of Parliament for East Portland Dr Lynvale Bloomfield has been found stabbed to death at his home in Passley Gardens. Bloomfield, a medical doctor by profession, first won the seat in 2011 on a People's National Party ticket. He managed to retain the seat in 2016 despite the party's defeat at the polls. The news of the murder has shocked the constituency.’⁸⁹

10.1.5 The Jamaica Observer noted that ‘The police have offered no further details about the murder, stating that “strict orders” have been given not to speak openly about the investigation.’⁹⁰

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⁸² USDoL, Child labor and forced labor reports – Jamaica’, 2017, [url](#)

⁸³ USDoL, Child labor and forced labor reports – Jamaica’, 2017, [url](#)

⁸⁴ Freedom House, ‘Freedom in the World 2018’, (sections A2 and B1), 27 August 2018, [url](#)

⁸⁵ USSD, Country Report on Human Rights Practices 2018’, (section 1e), 13 March 2019, [url](#)

⁸⁶ USSD, Country Report on Human Rights Practices 2018’, (section 2a), 13 March 2019, [url](#)

⁸⁷ USSD, Country Report on Human Rights Practices 2018’, (section 3), 13 March 2019, [url](#)

⁸⁸ USSD, Country Report on Human Rights Practices 2018’, (section 3), 13 March 2019, [url](#)

⁸⁹ The Gleaner, ‘East Portland MP Dr Lynvale Bloomfield found stabbed to death’, 2 Feb 2019, [url](#)

⁹⁰ Jamaica Observer, ‘We are devastated’, 4 February 2019, [url](#)

11. Prison conditions

11.1.1 See Country Policy and Information Note on [Actors of Protection](#).

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12. Crime

12.1 Police corruption

12.1.1 According to the 2019 USSD report:

'The law provides criminal penalties for corruption by officials, but the government generally did not implement the law effectively. Officials sometimes engaged in corrupt practices with impunity. There were numerous reports of government corruption during the year, and it remained a significant problem of public concern. Media and civil society organisations continued to criticize the government for being slow and at times reluctant to prosecute corruption cases.'⁹¹

12.1.2 The Gleaner observed in an October 2018 article :

'Twenty percent of the men and women in the police force, including senior officers, are "corrupt criminals and totally beyond help", a former high-ranking member of the JCF has asserted. Mark Shields, the British-trained cop who served in the JCF for nearly 15 years before stepping down as Deputy Commissioner, asserted, too, that another 60 percent would engage in corrupt practices "if the circumstances arise".

'The other 20 percent are "beyond reproach", said Shields, noting that his assessment was based on what he was told by a senior member of the JCF.

"Corruption within the JCF went to the highest levels," he declared during the CIN Caribbean lecture series held at the Schomburg Centre for Research in Black Culture in New York... Seeking to support his assertions, Shields pointed to allegations of extrajudicial killings and that police personnel were "involved directly" with criminals ... "including intelligence that senior officers have been complicit in allowing drugs to be trafficked with massive pay-offs to the senior cops, who, in turn, paid the lower ranks for their escort duty."

"The reputation of the JCF is poor. Some would argue they are just not fit for the purpose. Throughout my career I saw the intelligence reports to substantiate this," the former JCF crime chief insisted. He revealed, too, that in 2007, with support from a United States (US) law enforcement agency, members of a specialist unit within the JCF were administered lie-detector tests "and over 60 percent of the police investigators on that unit failed".⁹²

12.1.3 The Jamaica Observer noted in an April 2017 article:

⁹¹ USSD, Country Report on Human Rights Practices 2018 - Jamaica, (section 4), 13 March 2019, [url](#)

⁹² The Gleaner, 'No shield for cops - Mark goes hard on 'corrupt, criminal, beyond help' JCF', 26 October 2018, [url](#),

'The Corruption (Prevention) Act ("the CPA") is one legal basis for checking the behaviour of those who hold public office, and deals with the investigation and punishment of corruption. The CPA requires that government officials file annual statutory returns which assist the Commission for the Prevention of Corruption to, in one sense, garner whether an official's income is proportionate to his or her position.

'If a public servant cannot account for assets disproportionate to his or her income, when called upon by the commission, and corruption is alleged, that public servant will be liable for illicit enrichment. Failure to file a statutory declaration, or filing an unsatisfactory declaration, can also cause an official to fall subject to an inquiry by his or her public body, and the director of public prosecutions.'⁹³

- 12.1.4 For more information on police corruption including drug-related crime, gang violence and kidnaping threats, please see CPIN on [Jamaica: Fear of organised criminal groups](#) and [Jamaica: Actors of Protection](#).

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Section 15 Updated: 17 July 2019

13. Freedom of Religion

- 13.1.1 The 2017 USSD International Religious Freedom Report on Jamaica stated:

'The constitution provides for freedom of religion, including the freedom to worship and to change religion. It prohibits discrimination based on belief. A colonial-era law criminalizing the practices of Obeah and Myalism remains in effect, but it is not enforced...

'Seventh-day Adventists said they continued to face difficulties in finding or keeping private sector employment because of their observance of the Sabbath from sunset on Friday to sunset on Saturday. They said some businesses were still reluctant to hire employees who could not work Saturdays even though the parliament had passed a "flexi-work" law in 2014 granting employees the right to negotiate working hours. Rastafarians said elements of their religious observances, such as wearing dreadlocks and smoking marijuana, continued to present barriers in private and public sector employment and professional advancement. Local media outlets continued to provide a forum for religious dialogue open to participants from all religious groups. The nongovernmental organization (NGO) Jamaica Council for Interfaith Fellowship, which includes representatives from Christian, Rastafarian, Hindu, Family Federation for World Peace and Unification (Unification Church), Bahai, Jewish, Muslim, and Buddhist organizations, held events to educate the public about religious tolerance and diversity.'⁹⁴

- 13.1.2 Encyclopaedic Britannia observed:

'Freedom of worship is guaranteed by Jamaica's constitution.

⁹³ Jamaica Observer, 'Uneasy lies the head: ...', 18 April 2017, [url](#)

⁹⁴ USSD, 'International Religious Freedom Report 2017', (Executive summary), 29 May 2018, [url](#)

'The Jewish community is one of the oldest in the Western Hemisphere. Jamaica also has a small Hindu population and small numbers of Muslims and Buddhists. There are some religious movements that combine elements of both Christianity and West African traditions. The central feature of the Pukumina sect, for example, is spirit possession; the Kumina sect has rituals characterized by drumming, dancing, and spirit possession. Obeah (Obia) and Etu similarly recall the cosmology of Africa, while Revival Zion has elements of both Christian and African religions.'⁹⁵

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Section 16 Updated: 17 July 2019

14. Sexual orientation and/or gender identity

14.1.1 See CPIN on Jamaica: [Sexual orientation and gender identity](#).

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Section 17 Updated: 17 July 2019

15. Trafficking

15.1.1 The US Trafficking in Persons report 2018 observed:

'The government maintained law enforcement efforts. The government criminalized sex and labour trafficking through its Trafficking in Persons (Prevention, Suppression, and Punishment) Act, which prescribed penalties of up to 20 years imprisonment, a fine, or both. These penalties were sufficiently stringent; however, with respect to sex trafficking, by allowing for a fine in lieu of imprisonment, these penalties were not commensurate with those for other serious crimes, such as rape. The Jamaican Parliament approved and enacted an amendment to the Trafficking Act to allow such cases to be tried by a Judge rather than a Jury.'⁹⁶

15.1.2 Furthermore, the same report noted:

'Jamaica is a source and destination country for adults and children subjected to sex trafficking and forced labour. Sex trafficking of Jamaican women and children, including boys, reportedly occurs on streets and in nightclubs, bars, massage parlors, hotels, and private homes, including in resort towns. Traffickers increasingly use social media platforms to recruit victims. Jamaican citizens have been subjected to sex trafficking and forced labour abroad, including in other Caribbean countries, Canada, the United States and the United Kingdom.'⁹⁷

15.1.3 The Epoch Times, an independent media outlet⁹⁸ reported in a June 2018 article:

'The United States pledged \$4.5 million through a four-year Child Protection Compact (CPC) to help Jamaica establish a program to prevent child trafficking.

⁹⁵ Encyclopaedia Britannica, 'Jamaica', (religion), undated, [url](#)

⁹⁶ USSD, '2018 Trafficking in Persons Report: Jamaica', (prosecution), 28 June 2018, [url](#)

⁹⁷ USSD, '2018 Trafficking in Persons Report – Jamaica', (trafficking profile), 28 June 2019, [url](#)

⁹⁸ The Epoch Times, 'About us', undated, [url](#)

'The CPC works with foreign governments to help reduce child trafficking by helping establish agreements and projects tailored to each country. According to the Jamaican Government's information services website, Jamaica is the fourth country selected for a CPC partnership, and the first in the Caribbean...

'The agreement was signed in Kingston, Jamaica on 31 May [2018] by Charge' d'Affaires Eric Khant of the U.S Embassy in Kingston and by Marcia Gilbert-Roberts, the Jamaican Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade Ambassador.

'Gilbert-Roberts said the agreement aims to prevent the trafficking of Jamaican children and at-risk youth...

'[Khant] noted that in Jamaica, human trafficking takes many forms, and that "child trafficking in particular has a devastating and lasting impact on children, undermines security and the rule of law, and is sometimes linked to organized crime or gang violence."

"These crimes often remain hidden, occurring undetected within local communities," Khant said. "Through the CPC partnership, we will work together to enhance the capacity of the government, civil society, and the public to identify, refer, and address these crimes."⁹⁹

15.1.4 The US Trafficking in Persons Report 2018 noted that:

'The Government of Jamaica does not fully meet the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking; however, it is making significant efforts to do so. The government demonstrated increasing efforts compared to the previous reporting period.... The government demonstrated increasing efforts by increasing funding for victim assistance, publishing standard operating procedures (SOPs) for labour and health care officials, passing a legal amendment designed to enhance the government's efforts to prosecute and convict traffickers under its anti-trafficking law, and increasing awareness efforts. However, the government did not meet the minimum standards in several key areas. In particular, under Jamaica's anti-trafficking law, penalties for trafficking are not commensurate with other serious crimes. The government initiated significantly fewer investigations compared to the previous year, did not provide adequate protection for some potential or confirmed trafficking victims, and did not publish an annual report on government efforts.'¹⁰⁰

15.1.5 For more information, see the [US Department of State Trafficking in Persons report 2018](#).

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⁹⁹ The Epoch Times, 'U.S, Jamaica Sign Agreement to Fight Child Trafficking', 4 June 2018, [url](#)

¹⁰⁰ USSD, '2018 Trafficking in Persons Report – Jamaica', (Tier 2), 28 June 2018, [url](#)

16. Women

16.1 Violence Against Women

16.1.1 Based on various sources, The Social Institutions and Gender Index report on Jamaica observed:

‘The Domestic Violence (Amendment) Act 2004 and the Sexual Offences (Amendment) Act 2011 are the two key pieces of legislation addressing violence against women...

‘...gender-based violence is a widespread phenomenon in Jamaica, and is often under-reported due to social and cultural norms. Harmonisation of national data from various agencies is ongoing, to better assess prevalence, and will be executed by a Crime Observatory in collaboration with the Bureau of Gender Affairs...

‘There remain some challenges, including a reported lack of understanding and insufficient training by law enforcement personnel such as police officers and judges. Furthermore, that the delayed judicial process and fear of reprisals, continue to serve as a deterrent to reporting and prosecution...

‘With respect to so-called honour crimes, there is no evidence to suggest that this is practiced in Jamaica.’¹⁰¹

16.1.2 Based on various sources, regarding sexual harassment, SIGI 2019 report noted that ‘There is presently no legislation relating to sexual harassment, and the CEDAW Committee notes concern of the high incidence of sexual harassment in the work place.’¹⁰²

16.1.3 Regarding rape, the 2019 SIGI report stated, ‘A person found guilty of such an offence is liable to life imprisonment, or any other term deemed appropriate by the court...’¹⁰³

16.1.4 Amnesty International observed in its 2017/2018 annual report:

‘In March [2017], women’s movements and survivors of gender-based and sexual violence took to the streets in the capital, Kingston, to protest against impunity for sexual violence.

‘Jamaican NGOs made a series of recommendations to the Joint Select Committee of Parliament tasked with reviewing national legislation related to sexual offences, domestic violence, child care and child protection. These included, among other things, repealing marital rape exceptions under the Sexual Offences Act to protect women against rape, irrespective of their marital status.’¹⁰⁴

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16.2 Domestic Violence

16.2.1 According to the 2019 USSD report:

¹⁰¹ SIGI, ‘Global report 2019 - Jamaica’, (section 2a), March 2019, [url](#)

¹⁰² SIGI, ‘Global report 2019 - Jamaica’, (section 2d), March 2019, [url](#)

¹⁰³ SIGI, ‘Global report 2019 - Jamaica’, (section 2c), March 2019, [url](#)

¹⁰⁴ Amnesty International, ‘Annual Report 2017/2018 – Jamaica’, 22 February 2018, [url](#)

‘The rape of women is illegal and carries a penalty of 15 years’ to life imprisonment...

‘Married women do not have the same rights and protection as single women. The law criminalizes spousal rape only when one of the following criteria has been met: the act occurs after legal separation or court proceedings to dissolve the marriage; the husband is under a court order not to molest or cohabit with his wife; or the husband knows he suffers from a sexually transmitted disease. Legally, marriage implies sexual consent between husband and wife at all times...

‘According to estimates from the Ministry of National Security’s Research Evaluation Unit, there were 442 rape cases in 2017, which corresponded to approximately a 16 percent reduction from the previous year. Advocacy groups, however, contended that rape was significantly under-reported because victims had little faith in the judicial system and were unwilling to endure lengthy criminal proceedings.

‘Some cases occurred in gated, all-inclusive resorts on the northern coast. In each case reports noted a lack of action by the JCF and no-one was charged. Observers suspected that not all cases were reported, since foreign tourists could not stay in the country long enough to contend with a lengthy legal process.

‘The government operated a Victim Support Unit (VSU) to provide direct support, crisis intervention, legal advocacy and technical services. The VSU managed 13 independent parish offices throughout the island, each with its own hotline and staff of trained providers. Furthermore, the VSU co-ordinated with a network of NGOs with capabilities such as counselling resiliency training and shelters. The Child Protection and Family Services Agency provided similar services for children. Shelter facilities for women and children were insufficient and less available outside the capital area. Police officers and first responders had limited training to understand which services were available.’¹⁰⁵

16.2.2 Based on various sources, the 2019 SIGI report noted:

‘Within the provisions of the Domestic Violence (Amendment) Act 2004, s. 4(2), the definition includes the use of, or threat to use, violence causing physical or mental injury, and the likelihood to repeat. Acts that result in physical injury for example assault or wounding may be subject to criminal law and may be prosecuted under the Offences against the Person Act and under the Common law. In accordance with section 3 of the Act, the law is also extended to former partners and members within the family. The revised Domestic Violence act therefore widened the range of persons who may be protected, and also enacted provisions for investigation and prosecution of perpetrators.

‘There are presently no government established shelters, though the National Policy objectives include such establishments island-wide. A 24-hour toll free hotline is provided through a national NGO, Woman

¹⁰⁵ USSD, Country Report on Human Rights Practices 2018 - Jamaica, (section 6), 13 March 2019, [url](#)

Incorporated. Generally, the Government supports several women's NGOs and their work on domestic violence, including the funding of income generating activities...¹⁰⁶

16.2.3 Regarding marital rape, the report stated:

'...The law also makes provisions for marital rape, which is defined as a man having sexual intercourse with his wife without her consent, or is reckless as to whether she consents. However, the law becomes applicable only within certain circumstances, and is not always criminalized. Such circumstances include: separation or where proceedings to dissolve the marriage or have it annulled have begun; orders by the court for a husband not to molest or cohabit with the wife; or where the man has sexual intercourse with his wife knowing that he suffers from a sexually transmitted infection...'¹⁰⁷

16.2.4 In November 2018, The Jamaica Information Service mentioned:

'Nearly 15 per cent of all women in Jamaica, aged 15 to 49, who have ever married or partnered have experienced physical or sexual violence from a male partner in the previous 12 months.

'This was revealed by Health Minister, Dr. the Hon. Christopher Tufton, as he addressed a public forum on gender-based violence on Wednesday (November 21), at the Terra Nova All-Suite Hotel in St. Andrew.

'He was citing statistics from the Ministry's soon-to-be released 2017 Knowledge, Attitude, Belief and Practice (KABP) report, which covers intimate-partner violence.'¹⁰⁸

16.2.5 For further information, see the CPIN on Jamaica: [Women Fearing Domestic Violence](#).

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¹⁰⁶ SIGI, 'Global report 2019 - Jamaica', (section 2b), March 2019, [url](#)

¹⁰⁷ SIGI, 'Global report 2019 - Jamaica', (section 2c), March 2019, [url](#)

¹⁰⁸ JIS, 'Nearly 15 per cent of Jamaican women experience violence from a male partner', 23 November 2018, [url](#)

Terms of Reference

A 'Terms of Reference' (ToR) is a broad outline of what the CPIN seeks to cover. They form the basis for the [country information section](#). The Home Office's Country Policy and Information Team uses some standardised ToRs, depending on the subject, and these are then adapted depending on the country concerned.

For this particular CPIN, the following topics were identified prior to drafting as relevant and on which research was undertaken:

- Geography
 - Physical geography
 - Human geography
- Economy
- History
- Political system
- Media and telecommunications
- Citizenship and nationality
- Official documents
- Healthcare

Key issues relevant to protection claims

- Children
- Political opposition
- Prison conditions
- Fear of organised crime
- Corruption
 - Forged documentation
 - Police corruption
- Crime
- Religious freedom
- Sexual orientation and/or gender identity and expression
- Trafficking
- Women

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Version control

Clearance

Below is information on when this note was cleared:

- version **3.0**
- valid from **9 September 2019**

Changes from last version of this note

Change to CPIN format and updated Country Information.

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