

Authorities to target mothers who solicit young daughters for monetary gain

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Minister of Justice Delroy Chuck (left) speaks with Minister of National Security Dr Horace Chang and Carol Palmer, permanent secretary in the Ministry of Justice, during Wednesday's launch of the Jamaica-United Nations Blue Heart Campaign Against Human Trafficking at Emancipation Park in St Andrew.

For the upcoming fiscal year, mothers who sexually solicit young daughters to men for monetary gain will become targets for the Ministry of Justice and other local entities engaged in the fight against human trafficking.

Carol Palmer, permanent secretary in the Ministry of Justice, made the disclosure while addressing Wednesday's launch of the Jamaica-United Nations (UN) Blue Heart Campaign against Human Trafficking, held at Emancipation Park in St Andrew.

The launch signalled Jamaica becoming the first Caribbean nation to formally join the UN's Blue Heart Campaign, which will see the country increasing its human trafficking sensitisation efforts island wide.

Citizens will be encouraged to actively participate in the fight.

"As we move into the nooks and crannies of Jamaica for the new fiscal year, I make an appeal, especially to mothers, to stop the practice of giving their daughters or young females in their spheres of influence to men, for the purpose of sex in exchange for money," Palmer said.

"The laws are in place, not just to pursue those involved in the sexual exploitation of others, including women and minors. Parents who are complicit will be held accountable under the law."

Palmer, who is the chairperson of the National Task Force against Trafficking in Persons, said the Jamaica Constabulary Force's Trafficking In Persons Unit will begin to receive a lot more resources to rescue victims and vigorously go after offenders.

She indicated that the ministry "will move to hit violators where it hurts, and take the profit out of human trafficking".

With the help of the media, Palmer said more and more Jamaicans have become aware of human trafficking, which she underlined as an important element in the fight against modern-day slavery.

"Let me commend the media for the work it has done to raise public awareness on human trafficking. According to the 2017 Latin American Public Opinion Project Americas Barometer national survey, that examines the perception of human trafficking in Jamaica, the media has assisted in making a lot of [persons] very aware of human trafficking," she said.

"The National Task Force against Trafficking in Persons will continue to partner with the media to reach more communities. Slavery must end!"