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CRIMINALITY AND RESILIENCE

Rocky Point, Jamaica



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Cover photo: Multi-coloured fishing vessels dot the shoreline in Rocky Point, Jamaica. © *Emma Witbooi*

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

| | |
|---------|---------------------------------------------------------|
| CARICOM | Caribbean Community |
| C-CAM | Caribbean Coastal Area Management Foundation |
| CRFM | Caribbean Regional Fisheries Mechanism |
| FAO | UN Food and Agriculture Organization |
| GDP | gross domestic product |
| IUU | illegal, unreported and unregulated (fishing) |
| JCF | Jamaican Constabulary Force |
| JCG | Jamaica Coast Guard |
| JLP | Jamaica Labour Party |
| NCPCSS | National Crime Prevention and Community Safety Strategy |
| NGO | non-governmental organization |
| PNP | Jamaican People's National Party |



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The clusters of brightly painted fishing canoes along Jamaica's beaches attest to the central role of fishing in this Caribbean nation. They speak to the livelihoods of the more than 40 000 fishers on the island who use the hundreds of fishing beaches dotted along the coastline.¹

These are the same types of vessels deployed in the smuggling of narcotics and arms, primarily pistols and revolvers,² between Jamaica and neighbouring Haiti, as well as Central and South America.

Small fishing boats leave the Jamaican coast, carrying marijuana on a round trip to Haiti, where the marijuana is exchanged illegally for guns; the guns return to Jamaica in the fishing vessels. This is dubbed the 'drugs-for-guns' trade; intelligence indicates that this trade 'model' has added a new flow – namely the bartering of marijuana for cocaine. The drugs-for-guns trade is well documented and recognized. The cocaine model of the trade is less well documented but officially recognized.

The illicit cargos of arms and cocaine traded for marijuana are said to enter Jamaica under cover of dark via drop-off points along the coast, where myriad inlets and small bays among the mangroves provide ideal cover. Rocky Point is fingered as one of the main fishing villages involved in the drugs-for-guns trade between Jamaica and Haiti, along with Old Harbour Bay.³

Rocky Point, on Jamaica's south coast, falls in the island's third largest parish (a unit of local government in Jamaica), Clarendon (see the map on page 6). Initially established by a small group of fishers because of its proximity to Jamaica's richest fishing ground, Pedro Bank,⁴ this unplanned informal settlement is home to some 2 200 residents,⁵

Communities like Rocky Point, above, provide fertile ground for recruitment into drug-trafficking operations.

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FIGURE 1 Location of Rocky Point and the Pedro Bank fishing zone

the majority of whom derive their primary source of livelihood from fishing. It is also home to the second-largest fish market by volume of trade in Jamaica.

Living and working conditions there are harsh – Rocky Point is located on peninsular flatland, which is highly susceptible to both flooding and drought, and the effects of hurricanes, and at risk of a potential rise in sea level due to climate change.⁶

Clarendon Parish is also said to be home to around 15 of the over 200 gangs estimated to exist in Jamaica,⁷ making it the parish with the second-highest concentration of gangs after the capital, Kingston. Jamaica has high homicide rates by both regional and global standards, with violent crime fuelled by organized crime, gangsterism and access to guns. In 2013, according to police data, some 79 per cent of homicides on the island were related to gang activities, involving predominantly adolescent males.⁸

Numerous factors, including large-scale overfishing and inclement environmental conditions due to climate change, have drastically reduced fish stocks in Jamaica, with the result that artisanal fishing is no longer a profitable way to make a living.

Faced with limited alternative ways to generate income, the predominantly youthful population of Rocky Point is increasingly engaging in criminal activity, and gangs are potentially the drivers and conduits of illicit economies in coastal communities. However, there is relatively little formal literature on how organized crime has infiltrated fishing communities, and none relating to Jamaica.⁹

Within the framework of available knowledge on organized crime and gangs in Jamaica, this report uses an illustrative case example to examine how criminal economies have infiltrated fishing communities in Jamaica, particularly studying the issue in a localized environment against the backdrop of broader organized criminal gang activity, in order to better understand the topic and prompt further discussion. Preliminary findings indicate that criminal economies in the fishing community under study are connected to gang-related violence with links to broader organized-criminal networks.

Analysis also indicates that the involvement of youth in criminal activities in Jamaica is often associated with membership to gangs, which have ties to organized criminal networks and are linked to violent crime.

Strengthening resistance to the expansion of criminality in communities may be best rooted in a combination of effective, authoritative, yet just, law enforcement that focuses on the relationship between illicit activities within the community and organized criminal networks (as opposed to lower-level street gangs), as well as community-focused violence-prevention measures that strengthen the community, with a particular focus on at-risk youth.

Solutions are likely to find traction only if they take into account the centrality of the criminal economy to Jamaican development.



Methodology

There is an acknowledged lack of state control over Jamaica's 240 000-square-kilometre marine environment. Drug cartels favour the Caribbean as a transit zone as lengthy coastlines are ideal for transporting narcotics.

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The research is informed by fieldwork conducted in Jamaica (between 23 March and 3 April 2019) in Rocky Point and its surrounds, facilitated by the Caribbean Coastal Area Management Foundation (C-CAM),¹⁰ which provided contacts in the Rocky Point fishing community and Kingston. Interviews were conducted with Jamaican law-enforcement representatives and the Jamaican Fisheries Division (both unofficially); NGO representatives; regional experts and body representatives; fishers from Rocky Point, Portland Cottage, Salt River, Welcome Beach; fish traders at Old Harbour Bay and Rocky Point; taxi drivers in the Lionel Town and Rocky Point areas; Rocky Point community members; and fishing community hawkers.

Supplementing the primary research, a desktop study and literature review was conducted of relevant academic works, published documents and grey literature, including reports and working papers from NGOs and regional bodies,¹¹ national government documents, white papers and evaluations. Information was also obtained and supplemented by email, Skype, and WhatsApp messaging and calls.

Organized crime (and the associated illicit economies) is a difficult subject of scientific inquiry given its clandestine nature. Research on the topic in Jamaica is particularly sparse.¹² Verifiable data tends to be scarce and reliance on anecdotal evidence is necessary, painting an incomplete picture of the problem. This is even more acute in Rocky Point, where limited research findings tend to focus on environmental issues. The various areas identified in the report would benefit from dedicated research.



INTRODUCTION: ORGANIZED CRIME AND GANGS IN JAMAICA

By all accounts, Jamaica provides fertile ground for illicit economies and organized crime. Its 'narco-geography' and porous borders attract international drug-smuggling networks;¹³ its developing status and struggling economy ensure a demand for illegal goods and services; the entrenched system of facilitative political patronage interfaces with gang activity and facilitates a robust shadow economy; and the ineffective state enforcement machinery, combined with a limping criminal-justice system,¹⁴ do not greatly deter criminals.¹⁵ Two of the primary markets that feed the illicit economy are the trades in illegal drugs and guns, both of which are dominated by local gangs, many with international links to organized-criminal networks.

Jamaica's position, lying as it does between the world's primary source of cocaine and heroin in the south and the largest consumer markets in the north, makes it a convenient country for drug trafficking.¹⁶ Drug cartels favour the Caribbean as a transit zone due to its archipelagic layout, which offers lengthy coastlines ideal for transporting narcotics and which are almost impossible to patrol effectively.¹⁷

Two of the three major drug corridors into the US pass through the Caribbean. Jamaica is the largest Caribbean supplier of marijuana to the US¹⁸ as well as being a significant transit point for cocaine trafficked from South America to North America and Europe.

The Caribbean is also predicted to become a more active trafficking route following the recent spike in production and increased purity of cocaine originating in Colombia. The cultivation of coca, the base ingredient of cocaine, is said to have increased by 134 per cent between 2013 and 2016 in Colombia.

Soldiers on lookout in Tivoli Gardens, Kingston, 27 May 2010. Jamaica's ruling party has advocated a militarized response to gang violence.

© Reuters/Hans Deryk



FIGURE 2 Clarendon Parish (said to be home to a number of organized-criminal gangs)

The Jamaican diaspora ties, linked to the country's history of colonial rule, are relevant to domestic drug distribution in parts of North America, Europe and Britain and a strong expatriate European and US community in the Caribbean, particularly British, strengthens this network.

Caribbean states struggle to contain money laundering because of the extensive offshore financial services they provide to the US and European markets, coupled with limited state capacity for effective oversight, among other factors.²⁰ Despite some progress, a Caribbean Financial Action Task Force report on money laundering concluded that

Jamaica still has insufficient measures in place to deter money laundering in an effective way.²¹

Related to these issues, corruption remains a huge challenge in Jamaica and is recognized as one of the main threats to national security.²² Research indicates that organized crime is a prime source of corruption in the state and society.²³ Leading researchers on organized crime in Jamaica point to members of the police (the Jamaican Constabulary Force – JCF) being corrupted by individuals in the criminal underworld who benefit from police protection and facilitation of their illicit activities.²⁴

Gang-related violence

Drug trafficking is known to be associated with high rates of violent crime, particularly involving use of firearms.²⁵ A study conducted across various Caribbean countries, including Jamaica, found on average a 34 per cent higher homicide rate in the sampled states than in countries elsewhere in the world with similar income per capita, growth rates, inequality and past crime rates.²⁶

It has been argued that a major contributing factor to this phenomenon is the fact that all the sample countries are major drug-transit nodes, and that the rise in violent crime in the sampled countries over time coincided with the expansion of the narcotics trade in the region.²⁷ In Jamaica, an integral element of the illegal drug trade is the trafficking of arms and ammunition; both trades are dominated by gangs.²⁸

Research supports the assertion that gangs and organized crime are the major engines of violence in Jamaica, particularly homicides.²⁹ Data reflects that gangs and organized-crime networks accounted for some 79 per cent of all murders in Jamaica in 2013.³⁰ In the same year, Jamaica's homicide rate was ranked sixth highest in the world.³¹

It is recognized that the illicit drug trade in Jamaica is part of a wider international network.³² There is also ample evidence supporting the association between the high levels of violence in Jamaica and the illegal trade in narcotics and arms controlled by organized-criminal gangs.³³

JCF data indicates that the majority of murders committed in Jamaica are carried out with the aid of a firearm, and Jamaica is identified as having an established, high-level pattern of armed crime. Small firearms and light weapons are not manufactured locally, so while some are purchased legally from overseas, the majority are suspected to be illegal, originating from the US, Colombia, Haiti, Honduras and Venezuela, although many of the guns from these countries originate in the US as well.³⁴

Gang members have relatively easy access to illegally imported firearms.³⁵ The domestic trade in illegal arms has not been sufficiently studied and is not well understood.³⁶ Notwithstanding, evidence indicates that illegal arms continue to enter Jamaica, including through the drugs-for-guns trade with Haiti.³⁷ Some illegal ammunition and weapons originate internally from the JCF, suggesting corrupt relations between the police and local criminals.³⁸

Perpetrators – and victims – of violent crime in Jamaica are overwhelmingly male and under the age of 35.³⁹ Violence is also noted in younger children, including Jamaican schoolchildren, with data indicating increasing levels of violent behaviour – such as extortion, wounding and stabbing – which are linked to the emergence of gang-related activities in schools.⁴⁰

Findings of cross-national and Jamaica-specific studies indicate that the lack of availability of legitimate economic opportunities, high rates of youth unemployment (at 38.3 per cent in 2013), low educational achievement, and insufficient access to education are all risk indicators associated with

Research supports the assertion that gangs and organized crime are the major engines of violence in Jamaica, particularly homicides.

violent crime in Jamaica. In particular economic inequality, which mirrors class lines reflective of Jamaica's history of enslavement, is key to understanding violence.⁴¹

Demographics and associated social exclusion are also relevant: JCF data shows that violent crimes are disproportionately concentrated in communities with high levels of social exclusion, in particular inner-city and less formal settlements.⁴²

Gangs are distributed nationwide, and the majority are concentrated in informal settlements and communities of the urban and semi-urban poor. The largest concentration of gangs is found in the marginalized inner-city communities of Kingston, particularly West Kingston, followed by the southern coastal semi-urban area stretching from Kingston to Clarendon.⁴³

Government crime statistics indicate that violent crime has spread over time – from initial pockets clustered in the Kingston metropolitan area to suburban areas. This parallels the growing influence of gangs throughout the island and highlights the fluidity of crime in Jamaica.⁴⁴

The relationship between gangs and violence in the Caribbean, including Jamaica, has been chronicled since the 1970s, for example, by Chevannes.⁴⁵ More recently, a number of researchers such as Harriott, Leslie, Levy and Moncrieffe, have made significant contributions to developing an understanding of the Jamaican gang context and the interface between gang activity and violent crime,⁴⁶ including shedding light on the relationship between youths, violence and gangs in Jamaica.⁴⁷

While much is still to be learnt about the socio-demographic characteristics of gang members, early data indicates that members are predominantly youthful and male, although a 2009 study reported a strong presence of females in Jamaican gangs.⁴⁸

Evolution of Jamaican gangs

Jamaican gangs have traditionally tended to have a hierarchy structured along a division of labour, typically with an all-powerful leader (the 'don') followed by an upper echelon, a middle echelon and workers at the bottom ranks.⁴⁹ Most discussions about gang organizational structure in Jamaica have focused on the dons, who are predominantly male. The emergence of these structured gangs is closely tied to modern Jamaican political history, specifically the organized political violence associated with the lead-up to the 1959 violence-plagued general elections, which saw the two main parties engage in a ruthless battle for dominance.

During the pre-election period, inner-city neighbourhoods were divided according to political allegiance to either of the two rival national parties, namely the Jamaica Labour Party (JLP) or the Jamaican People's National Party (PNP). Rival party supporters were forced out of opposition-controlled residential areas, resulting in the violent forging of political identities along spatial boundaries.

The drug economy rose to replace politics as the driver of violence between rival gang-controlled communities.

This led to the establishment of large-scale, state-sponsored and politically controlled housing divisions – known as 'garrisons' – in the mid-1960s. These remained in place until the early 1980s, becoming symbols of the 'institutionalisation of criminal power structures'.⁵⁰ Politicians and dons became mutually dependent on one another: dons served members of parliament by providing them with political support through votes from their communities in exchange for patronage, access to arms and the space to carry out criminal activities.⁵¹ Dons could then provide social goods, such as housing, food, medical assistance, policing services and even early childhood education for citizens loyal to them,⁵² and control opportunities for political advancement for loyalists with political aspirations.⁵³

Commentators suggest that a significant influx of illicit guns into Jamaican society through the gangs originated in the political rivalry of the 1950s and

1960s. During this period, dons and their supporting gangs were largely permitted to operate with impunity in their garrisons, with the result that urban gangs assumed increasingly more influential roles in the distribution and use of politically sanctioned violence. This culminated in the bloodiest elections in Jamaican history in the 1980s, during which widespread national gang violence resulted in more than 800 murders, the majority of which were within the garrison communities.⁵⁴

While the relationship between gangs and political leaders has shifted somewhat since then (discussed below), gangs nevertheless continue to play a vital social role. This is particularly the case in communities lacking in formal control and basic services, where gangs maintain a certain level of local order and provide social goods.

In this way, gangs have been empowered and become ingrained in the fabric of daily life, with gang leaders becoming role models and mentors. This perpetuates a culture that values and legitimizes criminal organizations and their role in the community.⁵⁵ As is the case with South African gangs, gang rule in Jamaica hinges on '[s]ocial support and the distribution of resources'.⁵⁶

According to the generational gang classification system employed by the JCF, which ranks gangs on the basis of organizational characteristics, type of criminal activities and levels of violence, the relationship between the least organized street gangs and most organized criminal gangs is a simple linear matter.⁵⁷

The most organized groups – those with transnational links and which employ the highest levels of violence – are labelled third-generation gangs; second-generation gangs are local gangs (that may or may not have a so-called 'big daddy' overseas);⁵⁸ while first-generation gangs are characterized by the least organizational sophistication, employ the lowest levels of violence, engage in armed conflict with similar groups and commit theft.

For the JCF, there is a natural progression from first- to third-generation gangs 'by way of a ladder or slippery slope (depending on one's perspective)'.⁵⁹ This rigid gang-classification system adopted by the state is,



however, subject to criticism, as it fails to account for a high degree of fluidity in gang structures in practice.⁶⁰ The rise in organized crime in Jamaica nevertheless reflects the maturation, or even mutation, of criminal and street gangs from an earlier era.⁶¹

In 2003, about 10 of the then 200-odd gangs operating in Jamaica were organized-criminal groups headed by dons, and in 2013 four of the 238 gangs nationwide were categorized as third-generation organized-criminal gangs. Data notwithstanding, organized-crime elements are nevertheless regarded as prevalent and extremely active among many gangs.⁶² There is a recognized need for dedicated research on the matter, particularly on the risk factors associated with Jamaican gangs forming transnational links with gangs elsewhere in the Caribbean and beyond.⁶³

Since the late 1980s, Jamaican gangs have moved from focusing on political allegiance to increasing involvement in drug trafficking. This has been due to a combination of factors, including the effects of globalization; the accompanying increased access to illegal markets and lucrative sources of income; and a reduction in benefits from Jamaican politicians due to the depressed local economy. This coincides with the period when organized crime emerged in Jamaica,

Soldiers stand watch in Tivoli Gardens, Kingston, during the search for druglord Dudas Coke, May 2010.

© Reuters/Hans Deryk

confirming the assertion that the rise in organized crime paralleled the maturation of existing gangs.⁶⁴

Statistics reflect a dramatic increase in drug- and gang-related offences between 1989 and 1998. Gangs initially trafficked cocaine from South America to the US, and later moved on to the production and distribution of crack cocaine, which was primarily manufactured in crack houses in the Tivoli Gardens garrison, Kingston. Jamaican gangs are said to have pioneered the crack cocaine market on the US East Coast.⁶⁵

The drug economy subsequently rose to replace politics as the driver of violence between rival gang-controlled communities, as dons and gangs acquired their own finances through narcotics economies and became less dependent on the politicians.⁶⁶ Dons nevertheless continued to provide food and basic social services for the most needy in their garrisons and, additionally, meted out so-called jungle justice (vigilantism) in the absence of effective formal law enforcement and criminal justice in the garrisons,

implementing swift and harsh punishments to offenders for robbery, rape and other crimes.⁶⁷

By the early 1990s, Kingston had become key to the regional drug trade, serving as a convenient coastal conduit through which drug cartels transported cocaine (primarily from Colombia) and Jamaican marijuana to the US.⁶⁸

The illicit drug trade was part of a wider international network controlled by gangs with transnational links.⁶⁹ An apt example was the Shower Posse, a gang formed in New York in the 1980s by traffickers from Tivoli Gardens and allied garrisons, which operated in the US from Miami and was controlled in Jamaica first by Lester Lloyd Coke (aka Jim Brown), and later, his son Christopher 'Dudus' Coke, from Tivoli Gardens.

Today, gang violence is tied to disputes over territory and resources.⁷⁰ While overt political patronage has dissipated, gang violence nevertheless retains political undertones, as dons maintain an unofficial seat at the government table when important decisions are made.⁷¹ The National Security Policy for Jamaica notes that 'the threat presented by gangs could be minimised if the country significantly reduced the political and social tolerance of criminal "dons"'.⁷²

While overt political patronage has dissipated, gang violence nevertheless retains political undertones.

Official statistics indicate a steep rise in gang-related murders, increasing from 3 per cent of all murders committed in Jamaica in 1983 to 52 per cent in 2009,⁷³ which reflects increased gang involvement in drug trafficking from the early 1990s as well as the build-up to and arrest of the gang kingpin Dudus Coke in 2010. His arrest marked a major turning point in the explicit gang-politician relationship.

Coke was extricated from his JLP stronghold, Tivoli Gardens, after a bloody, five-week military operation in 2010 that transformed Kingston into a mini war zone⁷⁴ and resulted in the death of over 70 people. Coke was subsequently extradited to the US, where



Christopher 'Dudus' Coke
© Wikipedia Commons

he was tried and convicted for trafficking drugs and guns.

Data indicates a declining trend in violent crime from 2010 to 2013,⁷⁵ most likely associated with the intensive campaign by the police to control gangs following Coke's arrest. However, it should be noted that the JCF's constant change in classification of homicide motives – currently categorized as 'gang' or 'non-gang' – has been subject to criticism, mainly because it reveals less and less over time.⁷⁶

The adverse effects of violent crime in Jamaica are extensive, including high public-health costs (as a consequence of direct medical care), loss of productivity (due to death and injuries), increased police costs and weakened investor confidence. World Health Organization data put direct medical-care costs at the equivalent of 4 per cent of Jamaica's annual GDP in 2006.⁷⁷

In addition to deriving income from drug and arms trafficking, gangs also receive significant remittances from members abroad.⁷⁸ Gangs are also involved in widespread extortion of a range of businesses, with extortion 'rent' forcibly extracted from minibus-taxi businesses, shops and commercial enterprises, among others.⁷⁹ Owners of small-scale businesses attest to having to avoid attracting the attention of the gangs.⁸⁰ Kidnapping and lottery scams are also prevalent, with the latter a particularly favoured criminal market for gangs.⁸¹

The Jamaican coastline is one of the main entry points for the flow of illicit goods into the country. Small fishing communities, such as those of Rocky Point, are heavily reliant on a struggling local fishing industry, whose members, skilled at navigating the adjacent ocean, are susceptible to involvement in facilitating these flows. Evidence points to fishers on the south-west coast transporting illicit goods to Jamaican shores where local gangs facilitate the movement of these goods further inland to wider gang networks. Fishers from Rocky Point are implicated in this trade, specifically the exchange of Jamaican marijuana for illegal weapons from Haiti.



SUBSISTENCE AND CRIMINALITY IN ROCKY POINT

Illicit flows in Rocky Point

Rocky Point, Clarendon, an informal fishing settlement located on Jamaica's south coast which was initially established by a small group of fishers because of its proximity to Pedro Bank, is now home to approximately 2 200 residents, the majority of whom are dependent on fishing as their primary source of income. It is also a fishing community, along with Old Harbour Bay, that is implicated via ample anecdotal evidence, in the 'drugs-for-guns' trade.⁸²

Ample anecdotal evidence supports the contention that vessels laden with marijuana are known to set sail from Rocky Point after sunset and arrive just before sunrise in neighbouring Haiti, where the cargo is exchanged for illicit firearms. The round trip can be completed in under 24 hours.⁸³ The guns are stashed at drop-off spots along the myriad narrow inlets cut into the coastline of crocodile-infested mangroves.⁸⁴

It is alleged that Jamaica has traded marijuana for guns with Haiti since 2007.⁸⁵ Sharing the island of Hispaniola with the Dominican Republic, Haiti struggles with political and economic instability, compounded by a series of devastating natural disasters in the 21st century, including, most recently, Hurricane Matthew in 2016, and is ranked as one of the world's most corrupt countries.⁸⁶ In 2015, the cultivation (and consumption) of marijuana in Jamaica was legalized (subject to regulation),⁸⁷ rendering the planting and subsequent trade of marijuana for illicit goods, such as weapons and drugs, a potentially highly lucrative enterprise.

Rocky Point is one of the fishing communities implicated in the 'drugs-for-guns' trade.

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Some of the guns traded for marijuana with Jamaica, which include pistols, revolvers and submachine guns, are alleged to have originated from the Haitian police armoury.⁸⁸ The 'drugs-for-guns' trade is said to be thriving,⁸⁹ mostly using motorized fishing canoes to transport the goods.⁹⁰

Intelligence from 2017 indicates that, in addition to the marijuana-for-guns trade, a newer, similar, 'business' model involves marijuana bartered for cocaine from Haiti.⁹¹ Fishing canoes are similarly the chosen mode of transport, ferrying anything between 350 and 1 600 kilograms of marijuana to Haiti in exchange for cocaine.⁹²

Foreign fishing vessels from Central and South America, including Costa Rica, Honduras and Guyana, have also been implicated in cocaine trafficking in Jamaica. Jamaican intelligence suggests that these vessels operate as mother ships offloading cocaine to local fishing canoes that transport their cargo to shore. Drugs or guns may be dropped overboard into the water, marked by a buoy, for local fishermen to pick up and transport to shore.⁹³

Anecdotal evidence also indicates that cocaine enters the community by opportunistic means, whereby locals supposedly find cocaine on the beach or in the nearby mangrove swamps.⁹⁴ The commonly held view is that the plastic-wrapped cocaine packages are either washed out of their hidden coastal drop-off spots by the tide, or drift ashore, having been dumped overboard by individuals at sea when approached by marine law-enforcement officials in an attempt to dispose of evidence.⁹⁵

Economic insecurity in the Rocky Point community has made some residents, particularly at-risk youth, vulnerable to gang recruitment.

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Residents of Rocky Point and neighbouring communities say that, over the last 10 years, there has been an influx of cocaine into Rocky Point, and that the drug has brought about some 'big problems'.⁹⁶ A number of citizens recount suspicious events in Rocky Point and the nearby coastal area, providing accounts of increased criminal activity. One spearfisherman was attacked by men wielding an AK-47 who took his canoe. On another occasion, five men in a canoe among the mangroves were approached by a fisheries enforcement patrol, and claimed they had engine trouble but, when the officers drew nearer and offered assistance, started their engine and sped out to the open sea. In another incident, a man on board a fishing vessel, after sighting a nearby patrol vessel, landed his boat at the nearest beach, set it on fire and fled from the scene.⁹⁷

Cocaine is not only passing through Rocky Point in transit to end markets, but also infiltrating it.⁹⁸ Demand for personal consumption is allegedly low (given the limited average income of local residents), but addicts can be seen in Rocky Point (and nearby Lionel Town), and residents say that cocaine use is a problem within the community.⁹⁹ There is low tolerance of synthetic drug usage in Jamaican society (which is not the case when it comes to marijuana),¹⁰⁰ and cocaine use is not a topic that people in the community are willing to discuss; nevertheless, cocaine addicts are known in communities.¹⁰¹

There is little official data on drug usage in Jamaica. The 2016 National Drug Use Prevalence Survey provides some information, based on a cross-sectional survey of Jamaicans aged 12 to 65, indicating that alcohol, cannabis and tobacco are most commonly consumed among Jamaicans. There are no comparable statistics on synthetic drug usage, although the survey reports that the age group of 25–44 years had the easiest access to cocaine.¹⁰²

There appears to be limited state support for drug addicts and rehabilitation centres, with only one dedicated detoxification centre, located at the University Hospital of the West Indies in Kingston.¹⁰³ Addicts are sent to the US for treatment if their families can afford it, while those from low-income backgrounds most likely end up fending for themselves on the street.¹⁰⁴

Gangs in an under-resourced coastal community

Anecdotal evidence points to Rocky Point gang involvement in drug dealing and extortion, and the use of illegal guns in homicides, almost all of which are believed to be gang-related. Rocky Point is notorious for violent flare-ups between the two main gangs, the Compton gang and the Cuban gang.¹⁰⁵

Evidence of pervasive gang presence has been pointed out by residents: there are said to be houses where gang members are known to reside; an empty local bar-cum-nightclub, whose owners were allegedly arrested in relation to drug trafficking and dealing; and an abandoned corner house, its former residents, a husband and wife, supposedly shot and killed for involvement in gang and/or drug activity.¹⁰⁶

The link between gang gun violence in Rocky Point and the drugs-for-guns trade is also alluded to in online media reports,¹⁰⁷ which emphasize that Clarendon Parish is regarded as one of the major gateways for guns entering the island from Haiti.¹⁰⁸

The head of the Clarendon Police Division, commenting on gun violence in the town, stated that 'illegal drug activity is really serious [in Rocky Point]'.¹⁰⁹ Residents, in response to a suspected gang murder in 2015, told the media that 'the community is now awash with illegal guns'.¹¹⁰ Researchers have linked the drugs for guns trade to broader drugs and arms-trafficking by organized gangs both within Jamaica and internationally.¹¹¹

Declining opportunities for legitimate livelihoods

Fishing and fishing-industry-related occupations have been the dominant source of livelihood for Rocky Point residents – combined, the fishing

industry provides the only source of income for up to 87 per cent of households.¹¹² Constraints in economic opportunities provided by fishing in recent years have made the Rocky Point community increasingly susceptible to embracing and legitimizing criminality. In Jamaica, there is a high incidence of illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing, and it is suspected that the same vessels involved in drug trafficking also engage in IUU fishing.¹¹³

Clarendon Parish is regarded as one of the major gateways for guns entering Jamaica from Haiti.

Alternative employment options in the community and its surrounds are limited. Around a third of the Rocky Point population have not studied beyond primary-school level, closing off opportunities for potential employment.¹¹⁴ Outside of fishing, work prospects in the area include ad hoc labour in the construction industry, tailoring and selling charcoal. But wages are low. In most families, a member works abroad – men as seasonal fruit pickers or construction labourers, and women as household helpers or cleaners (mainly in the US and Canada), sending back money to family members in Jamaica to pay for household expenses and, commonly, the construction of a residential home.

Most fishers have no formal training, having learnt their trade from other fishers, with skills often passed down through generations. Almost all are subsistence fishers who sell additional catch to pay for household basics (around 90 per cent of all

Jamaican fishers fall within the artisanal sector).¹¹⁵ Many do not own the canoes they use or the engines to propel their vessels. The result is a high degree of interdependence between those who engage in fishing livelihoods, including boat owners, engine owners, fishers, fish vendors and scalers, and people who make and repair fishing equipment.¹¹⁶

Fish vendors, who are overwhelmingly female, play a central role in the industry, particularly in terms of local food security. They meet the boats when they come ashore and purchase the catch to sell it at the fish market.¹¹⁷

Investment costs in the local fishing industry vary, depending on the job, as does overall profit, which is adversely affected by frequent theft of equipment.¹¹⁸

Declining fishing livelihood options and a lack of alternative legal employment opportunities in Rocky Point lend themselves to unemployed youth becoming involved in the illicit flow of goods into Rocky Point and with local gangs. These gangs are suspected of having ties to organized criminal networks.

Dual challenges: IUU fishing and climatic threats

Making a decent living from fishing in the village has, for a number of reasons, become an increasing struggle. One of the main reasons for the diminished profitability of fishing is the decline in the size and availability of targeted fish species. Jamaica's fish stocks are largely overexploited, particularly coral-reef fin fish (targeted overwhelmingly by artisanal fishers), which have been in decline for the last 10 years, as well as coastal pelagics.¹¹⁹ High-value species, such as lobster and conch, harvested on the Pedro Bank both by local fishers and foreign vessels, are likewise overfished.¹²⁰

Reasons for plummeting stocks include illegal fishing in national waters; the use of destructive fishing gear and methods; inclement weather, including hurricanes and severe storms, which churn up the ocean bed, destroy coral reefs and displace targeted stocks; and climate change.

Although the precise extent of IUU¹²¹ fishing in Jamaican waters is unknown, it is recognized that large-scale illegal fishing for queen conch, lobster and fin fish by foreign industrial vessels is prevalent,

particularly on the Pedro Bank,¹²² as illustrated by the highly publicized April 2019 arrest of 57 Dominican Republic nationals for various illegal activities under the Fisheries Act.¹²³ Jamaica is reported to lose at least US\$10 million in economic value from the illegal fishing of lobster and fin fish annually, and US\$1.3 million from conch.¹²⁴

Illegal fishing carried out by local fishers compounds the problem of plummeting stocks and harms the ocean environment. Of particular concern are the significant degradation of coral reefs¹²⁵ and the destruction of mangroves, which serve as buffers to storm surges and provide nursery grounds of fish stocks. Extreme weather conditions, such as violent storms and hurricanes, not only hamper fishing opportunities but also result in widespread destruction of fishing equipment and infrastructure on land.

The town has weathered a series of hurricanes and associated storm surges, most recently Hurricane Dean in 2007, which destroyed housing and fishing infrastructure, debilitating fishing livelihoods.

Although the government and NGOs have provided some financial relief and helped rebuild damaged infrastructure,¹²⁶ many fishers do not have the financial reserves to resume business as usual.¹²⁷ Consequently, some are still struggling to recover from the 2007 Hurricane Dean.¹²⁸ Additional factors that threaten fishing livelihoods are the high costs of engine fuel and fishing equipment (such as wire for fish traps), and the inability of fishers to access credit.

Rocky Point is severely under-resourced: there is no local school, healthcare facility or police station. For these basic services, the residents must commute to Lionel Town, some 15 to 20 minutes away by car. This lack of services and facilities has made the community highly self-sufficient, but also particularly vulnerable to infiltration by illicit revenue streams and gang activities that bring social benefits, such as a source of income to feed and clothe families, fund the construction of housing and provide for basic medical care. Almost half of the village residents are under the age of 20, with high rates of birth and teenage pregnancy.¹²⁹ This is relevant given the statistical correlation between youth and involvement in gang-related violent crime noted above.



CRIMINALITY IN A CONTEXT OF WEAK LAW ENFORCEMENT AND CRIMINAL JUSTICE

Fishermen gather after
a local meeting of the
Caribbean Coastal Area
Management Foundation.

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It can be argued that the weak authority of the state facilitates crime in Jamaica.¹³⁰ While Jamaica has the policy, legal and strategy framework in place to reduce crime and violence, a major hurdle is the inability to translate the strategy into effective action.¹³¹

The backbone of this framework is the 2007 National Security Policy, updated in 2013, which focuses on a reduction in crime, violence and corruption, along with enabling legislation, including the 2013 Proceeds of Crime (Amendment) Act and the 2014 Criminal Justice (Suppression of Organized Criminal Groups) Act, which is popularly known as the 'anti-gang law'. The 2014 Act was passed in an attempt to slow the rise in violent crime in Jamaica largely associated with gang activity. While there have been arrests under the Act, very few cases have been successfully prosecuted, amid allegations of police corruption, and an overburdened and sluggish criminal-justice system.

The Jamaican government's response to criminality and violence more generally over the last five years has been to enable joint military and police security operations in specified geographical areas by declaring (and frequently extending) states of emergency, in terms of which security forces are able to exercise 'extraordinary powers', including the power to search, curtail business operating hours, restrict access to places and detain persons without a warrant,¹³² and by introducing zones of special operations.¹³³

Operationally, crime reduction is primarily a policing mandate and falls to the JCF. The Transnational Crime and Narcotics Division, which is charged with supervising all major drug investigations and seizure operations, is under the remit of the JCF Criminal Investigation Branch, and supplements the work of the Major Organized Crime and Anti-Corruption Taskforce. The state holds a monopoly on the use of force in principle, but in practice is challenged by organized-criminal gangs, and the dominant strategy for addressing criminality is thus militarized.

Various law-enforcement efforts over the years, such as Operation Kingfish, an intelligence-driven anti-crime initiative launched in 2004,¹³⁴ have targeted gang leaders and dons with the aim of dismantling their criminal organizations. The JCF has also implemented an anti-gang strategy aimed at disrupting gang activity.¹³⁵ While media reports

have cited some successes as a result of these endeavours, on the whole, law enforcement struggles to contain organized crime. The JCF also stands accused of gross human-rights violations, including use of excessive force and numerous extrajudicial killings.¹³⁶ A report claims that 73 civilians were killed by the police in the 2010 arrest of Christopher Coke in Tivoli Gardens.¹³⁷

Set up to respond to the country's high levels of violent crime, Jamaica established a dedicated gun court, which hears criminal cases involving firearms and related charges under the 1974 Gun Court Act. Sentences handed down by the court and its restrictions on the rights of the accused have been subject to criticism.¹³⁸ The court also suffers from lengthy delays in hearing cases and delivering written judgments, which is common in the Jamaican court system more generally.¹³⁹

Embryonic community programmes target root causes of organized crime

There has been a recent attempt at state level to complement its traditional law-enforcement strategy to reduce crime with an increased focus on community intervention. To this end, various government initiatives implemented through the National Crime Prevention and Community Safety Strategy (NCPCSS) under five core programmes – the Citizen Security and Justice Programme, the Community Empowerment and Transformation Project, Jamaica Violence Prevention, the Peace and Sustainable Development Programme, and the Inner City Basic Services for the Poor – aim to identify the drivers of violent crime.

The NCPCSS focuses in particular on the five parishes with the highest levels of violence on the basis of criminogenic risk factors, such as drugs, guns, gangs and high rates of youth unemployment.¹⁴⁰ The ministries of culture, and education, youth and information, among others, are included in the government's crime-prevention framework, due to the correlation between age and the propensity to commit crime, as reflected in Jamaica's crime statistics.

Studies have highlighted the need for increased employability and employment opportunities for youth, through, for example, public-private partnerships and investment in communities through

mentorship and training.¹⁴¹ Root-cause strategies focusing on problem-solving skills and improving academic, economic and social opportunities for educational success, job training and placement are also advocated for at-risk youth.¹⁴²

Various state programmes and activities towards these ends, some in partnership with the private sector and NGOs, are under way. Additionally, there is a range of crime-prevention interventions stemming from informal and formal practices, and programmes within non-state institutions (some of which do not have crime prevention as their stated focus). There has been no comprehensive evaluation of outcomes: partners rarely systematically evaluate the impact of their programmes, and there is limited data on programme implementation, beneficiaries and results.¹⁴³ Research highlights that collaborative community-centred responses have shown particular promise, however.¹⁴⁴

Constitutionally, Jamaica's next general election is due in 2021 but the Prime Minister may call an election earlier. Government response to gang violence is highly politicized: the ruling JLP is likely to seek popular mandate to continue the militarized response to gang violence, whereas the opposition



PNP party favours a civil-society approach, maintaining that a series of states of emergency is not the solution to the country's problems with crime and violence.

A sea patrol is conducted in the Caribbean Coastal Area Management Foundation area.

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Challenges of policing the coast

Law enforcement along Jamaica's 1 022-kilometre coastline, comprising over 300 coves and inlets, and approximately 240 000 km² of sovereign maritime waters, is the primary responsibility of the Jamaica Coast Guard (JCG), the marine division of the Jamaican Defence Force.

The JCG engages in regular sea patrols, as do the marine police (the marine division of the JCF), which operate in coastal waters up to 12 nautical miles from baseline. Their duties are, however, hampered by the lack of available vessels and fuel, as well as personnel issues. The JCG has a base at Pedro Cays but is unable to maintain a constructive presence on the Pedro Bank owing to a lack of proper landing infrastructure.¹⁴⁵ The JCG therefore struggles to secure Jamaica's maritime borders, and to monitor and interdict effectively illegal activities in its waters.¹⁴⁶ It is recognized that there is a general lack of state control over Jamaica's marine environment.¹⁴⁷

Despite the flow of illicit goods to Jamaica's mainland via the ocean, the JCG has admitted its very limited success in intercepting in the last 10 years illicit drugs and guns at sea.¹⁴⁸ In addition to the JCG's resource constraints, offshore patrol vessels struggle to detect canoes with fibreglass bottoms using radar.¹⁴⁹ And, making detection even more difficult, most canoes operate after dark, when patrols are scarce.

In the few instances that suspects are approached by law-enforcement patrols, they tend to jettison their illicit cargo to avoid prosecution. Although there is no official data from Jamaican law-enforcement agencies on how the influx of guns and drugs from sea occurs, unofficially, according to a former high-ranking Jamaican law-enforcement officer, there is some, albeit limited, 'hard evidence of the involvement of fishers or fishing communities in the organized trafficking of illicit drugs and guns; quite a bit of intelligence pointing thereto; and a lot of rumours seemingly confirming it'.¹⁵⁰



There is some evidence of Jamaican fishing communities' involvement in organized trafficking of illicit goods.

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Illegal fishing and links to organized crime

Despite the incidence of flows of illicit goods, law-enforcement activities in the marine environment appear to focus more on illegal fishing. Whereas local fishers tend to engage in minor infractions, such as failure to register fishing vessels or using prohibited gear, industrial foreign fleets, including those from Honduras, Nicaragua and the Dominican Republic, are known to engage in large-scale illegal harvesting of high-value species and there is suspicion that some function as mother ships offloading cocaine. It is also suspected that there are cases of human trafficking for forced labour on board some foreign vessels operating in Jamaican waters.

Illegal fishing is a recognized risk indicator of other criminal activities in the fishing sector.

The numbers of arrests and successful prosecutions are, however, minimal, and the low fines issued for violations under the 1975 Fisheries Act provide little deterrent effect. The new 2018 Fisheries Act, which has been enacted by government but which, as yet, is still not in operation, includes only slightly harsher penalties.¹⁵¹ This is despite the fact that illegal fishing in Jamaican waters depletes national fish stocks, threatening fishing as a national revenue

stream (fishing accounts for around 6.6 per cent of the national GDP, together with agriculture and forestry)¹⁵² and as a source of income for more than 125 000 Jamaican inhabitants,¹⁵³ and undermining food security.

IUU fishing, which in 2009 was estimated as accounting for 18 per cent of world catch,¹⁵⁴ has contributed to the classification of 59.9 per cent of the world's commercial fish stocks as fully fished.¹⁵⁵ Furthermore, illegal fishing is a recognized risk indicator of other criminal activities in the fishing sector. Referred to as 'fisheries crime', these activities include drug trafficking, corruption and human trafficking for forced labour.¹⁵⁶ Fisheries violations are therefore an ideal entry point for law enforcement to detect and investigate associated criminal activities, and ultimately to identify and prosecute key organizers within criminal networks.¹⁵⁷

There is, however, no reflection in Jamaican national policy or at the operational level of the interface between illegality in the fishing sector and organized crime more broadly. In the few instances where Jamaican law-enforcement officers do apprehend fishers engaging in suspicious activities, there is a tendency to fine the offenders for minor infractions rather than flag the matter for further investigation of links to wider organized-criminal activity.¹⁵⁸



THE COMMUNITY CONTEXT AND POSSIBLE WAYS FORWARD

The illicit flow of narcotics and guns from the sea to the Rocky Point fishing community continues largely to slip between the cracks of law enforcement. Jamaica's prime location on the drug route from Global South to North and the continuing demand for illegal narcotics in the US and Europe suggest that drug-trafficking networks will continue to favour the island as a key post in the large-scale movement of goods.

The fish market at
Old Harbour Bay
© Emma Witbooi

Vulnerable communities and the shadow economy

With coastal communities facing increasing livelihood constraints caused by over-fishing and environmental degradation, and with limited alternative income-generating options, communities like Rocky Point provide fertile ground for recruitment into drug-trafficking operations.

Jamaica's entrenched gang network, with established links to international organized crime, provides a focal point for drug trafficking and related arms-smuggling activities. The relationship between the gangs of Rocky Point and Jamaica's organized-criminal gangs is unclear, mirroring the blurred line between ordinary so-called street gangs and larger organized-criminal networks at national level identified by researchers, but initial observation would suggest a link.¹⁵⁹



Jamaica's largest concentration of gangs is found in marginalized inner-city communities of the capital, Kingston. © Tuesday Reitano

The extent to which criminal livelihoods associated with gang activity are accepted and legitimized in Rocky Point is not known – there is no dedicated research on the topic. However, research conducted on gangs elsewhere in Jamaica, particularly in Kingston, suggests a significant degree of tolerance, if not support, for the social benefits that these illicit activities bring vulnerable communities.

This reflects the so-called beneficial role of illicit economies in developing countries, where anecdotal evidence supports the idea that revenue generated from such economies provides a crucial funding stream both for local communities and government.¹⁶⁰

Research highlights that in weak or transitioning states, in particular, state actors may actively enable the shadow economy, facilitating it, protecting its participants and cloaking it with a degree of legitimacy.¹⁶¹ Organized crime that provides income in areas with limited livelihood options, as is the case in Rocky Point, can likewise bring these illegal activities considerable legitimacy, particularly when accompanied by social goods and welfare for the affected communities.¹⁶²

In such contexts, crime prevention and law enforcement are likely to be challenging, both at a community and state level, as they may be perceived as a threat to livelihoods and revenue streams. The state's engagement in and sustaining of the criminal economy cannot be ignored.¹⁶³

Community resistance to law-enforcement interventions are likely to be particularly strong if the state is unable to provide the social services and goods currently supplied by the criminals.¹⁶⁴ This may be compounded by a sense of loyalty that community members may feel to the criminals, and possibly also by fear. The way gangs relate to communities as both providers of public services and security, as well as drivers of violence and fear, is documented.¹⁶⁵

Research indicates that many low-income communities in Jamaica do not necessarily regard illegal activities as criminal in practice and will frequently not support the police in their law-enforcement role. Many police officers recognize this and consequently only half-heartedly pursue offenders, or turn a blind eye.¹⁶⁶

Research also highlights that the material benefits and sense of peer-group security membership provided by a gang is particularly attractive to youth, especially at-risk youth, with gang culture often celebrated in popular music.¹⁶⁷

Dancehall, a genre of Jamaican music, has in particular been criticized for its possible contribution to a culture of violence among the youth, with police suggesting links between some dancehall entertainers and criminal gangs in murder investigations.¹⁶⁸ In 2016, the then national police commissioner called for a detailed study into the link between violent dancehall lyrics and crime.¹⁶⁹

The high percentage of youth involved in gang activity further contributes to an attitude of acceptance of gangs and legitimization of their activities in Jamaican communities. As noted earlier, young people may even regard gang leaders as role models.

In fishing communities such as Rocky Point, while members of the older generation express a strong desire to continue their fishing traditions, the youth are increasingly less inclined to learn the trade from their parents.¹⁷⁰

Data shows that most Rocky Point youth will not advance their studies beyond high school. Given the high rates of youth unemployment nationally, it will be a struggle for them to find ways to generate income. In the absence of viable legitimate income-generating options, gangs and associated criminal livelihoods may well be more attractive.

The community as a counterforce to crime

Research on youth violence and organized crime in Jamaica points to the community as both a source of many problems, but also a potential well of solutions given its social and human capital, and propensity for nurturing bonding relationships.¹⁷¹

Communities may therefore play a key role in addressing crime-associated gang activity and violence, especially when it comes to young people, the primary target group. Research indicates that reducing community violence contributes to countering criminal violence by interrupting the criminalization process of social exclusion that is pushing youth from idleness into turf defence and sometimes serious crime. Communities then begin to take responsibility for themselves and their children, and to respect the rule of law. The emerging culture of peace and collaboration with the police provides a climate in which crime is less likely to flourish.¹⁷²

A two-pronged approach is advocated, comprising improved community-based policing that asserts the central authority of the state, together with a socio-economic, community-grounded development approach that focuses on minimizing social exclusion of at-risk youth. The latter aligns with the state's more recent emphasis on initiatives aimed at the prevention and reduction of crime rooted in an epidemiological approach, as discussed earlier.¹⁷³

Designed to complement traditional law enforcement,¹⁷⁴ this approach holds that while violence is

pervasive, it is also both predictable and preventable. In this regard, locations of violent crime in Jamaica are regarded as predictable and concentrated, as they tend to be in vulnerable and volatile areas characterized by high youth unemployment, drugs, guns and gangs.¹⁷⁵ The factors that contribute to violence, including attitude and behaviour, as well as broader social, economic, political and cultural conditions, can be changed.¹⁷⁶ Research shows that a significant number of criminal gang members have indicated interest in pursuing an alternative, legal lifestyle.¹⁷⁷

Given the highly militarized nature of Jamaican law enforcement and its record of alleged human-rights violations, upscaled state policing may carry the risk of ordinary community members being negatively affected by aggressive law-enforcement efforts.

While there appears to be a desire, particularly in inner-city gang-ridden communities, for the government to regain control and put an end to gang impunity, albeit without the repressive element seen in the apprehension of Dudus Coke,¹⁷⁸ it is not known if this approach could be easily replicated in Jamaica's semi-urban coastal community settings, such as Rocky Point, and should thus be advocated with caution.

It may also be a partial solution in the Rocky Point context to push to improve the community's ability to derive a decent, sustainable income from fishing. The fact that fishing is increasingly considered a

non-viable way to make a living is likely to be one factor behind the propensity for illicit activities among the fishing community. Should this change, fishing may become once again more attractive to youth as a feasible, licit employment option.

To this end, community-based activities to enhance sustainable fisheries management from an environmental, social and economic perspective could be valuable. This might include initiatives aimed at improving stocks, reducing harm to the coastal region and enhancing the health of marine ecosystems; capacity building and skills-transfer programmes for improved management of finances and small-business management; improving access to micro-credit; and smarter use of technology to improve safety at sea and safeguard equipment. Exploration of alternative fishing grounds or targeting of under-fished species may also be options. There are currently a number of programmes to this effect facilitated and supported by local environmental NGOs, such as C-CAM, as well as state disaster-management and -alleviation processes.¹⁷⁹

One of the challenges of boosting the fishing industry, however, is that, ironically, increased profits may attract the attention of local organized-criminal gangs. Globally, there is ample evidence of organized-criminal networks infiltrating the legitimate fishing industry¹⁸⁰ and some comparable case examples of the capture of specific fishing sectors by criminal gangs, such as the illicit abalone industry in South Africa.¹⁸¹

Communities may play a key role in addressing crime-associated gang activity and violence.

Given the presence of gangs in Rocky Point and their potential links to organized-criminal networks, there may be a risk of criminal capture of the fishing industry should it become more profitable. In particular, there is the risk of extortion given the gangs' tendency to engage in this method of extracting 'rent'.¹⁸² Despite the threat to businesses and national security posed by extortion, there is a lack of data and analysis of protection rackets in

Jamaica,¹⁸³ and further research in this regard would be valuable.

One possible way to minimize the risk of criminal gangs infiltrating the fishing sector is to advocate for stronger governmental regulation of the industry, with a particular emphasis on transparency of business ownership and finances. This is in line with the recognized need at international level to increase transparency in the fisheries sector to prevent organized-criminal networks from investing, disguising and laundering the proceeds of their crimes through entities such as anonymous shell companies and in tax havens.¹⁸⁴

The new Jamaican fisheries law (referred to above) seeks to modernize and tighten regulation of the industry, in particular by introducing administrative bodies, including a national fisheries authority, a national fisheries advisory council and an appeals tribunal; by expanding the list of offences; imposing stricter penalties for non-compliance; and introducing a more effective licensing system.

However, although the Act is said to promote transparency in the industry, there is insufficient evidence of this so far, and its impact will depend largely on effective enforcement, which has been lacking hitherto.

The Caribbean Financial Action Task Force on Money Laundering has identified a need for improved accuracy of beneficial ownership information for companies, and the regulation of the micro-financing services sector and 'designated non-financial businesses' in Jamaica.¹⁸⁵

Within the context of a culture of corruption, these findings bring into question the required levels of financial oversight. In summary, while it may be desirable to bolster fishing livelihoods in Rocky Point, authorities may need to consider safeguarding against the involvement of criminal actors.

Income generated from illegal trades benefits gangs and their community supporters and, by implication, associated government groups. The growth of such criminal economies, also labelled 'deviant globalization', has been examined in the context of African countries,¹⁸⁶ but has not yet been a topic of study

in Jamaica. Addressing organized crime in Jamaica would arguably benefit from such studies.

Mindful of the predominant legitimization of illicit activities and economies in Jamaica, this report draws on relevant national research in concluding that the solution to reducing further criminal activity in Rocky Point is best rooted in a combination of effective authoritative, yet just, law enforcement, and community-focused violence prevention measures. The former should focus on pursuing the links between illicit activities within the community and organized criminal networks (as opposed to ordinary street gangs). Community-centred measures should strengthen the resilience of the community to engagement in criminal activities, with a particular focus on the youth.

Solutions will be likely to find traction only if they are mindful of the centrality of the criminal economy to Jamaican development. The various areas identified in this report as suffering from a paucity of knowledge in the paper would benefit from dedicated research.

To conclude, although the interface between legitimate and illicit trade, and more particularly illicit trade and the Jamaican political economy, has not yet been the subject of in-depth analysis, it nevertheless appears that the flow of guns and drugs in and out of Jamaica, which cater to an external market, is locally controlled by criminal gangs and, given political patronage ties, most likely with the acquiescence of government and opposition groups, shored up by corruption and systems of protection. Both elements in these illicit economies have shown their capacity for violence.

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