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**Contemporary Social Problem: Crime**

**Topic: Law Reform Act is Effective in the Fight Against Crime in Norwood, Jamaica.**

Usually, when one thinks of a reform, one of the first words that pops into mind is change. The Miriam Webster’s Dictionary defines the word reform as, the most common way of creating changes in something, particularly an establishment or practice to further develop it. By and large, this has been the mandate of an act known as the Law Reform (Zones of Special Operations) (Special Security and Community Development Measures) Act which was introduced in Jamaica in 2017 to tackle the island’s ongoing crime problems. No doubt, crime, especially violent crimes is a social ill in Jamaica. When one thinks of crime in Jamaica, the words of Harriot and Jones (2016) resonates. In their view crime is a major public security issue for Jamaicans and a huge danger to the nation's human and financial advancement. They further posited that there are significant degrees of criminal activity and defilement on the island and Jamaica’s rates of homicide are remarkably higher than both the international and regional averages. It cannot be denied that the impacts of crime on Jamaica are extremely detrimental. In fact, for 2020, the Jamaica had the greatest rate of homicide in the Caribbean and Latin America with approximately 47 murders committed per 100,000 inhabitants. (Statista, 2021). As such, in recent times the Government of Jamaica has implemented numerous initiatives to fight against this social ill. One such initiative was the implementation of the Law Reform (Zones of Special Operations-ZOSO) (Special Security and Community Development Measures) Act. The Law Reform (Zones of Special Operations) (Special Security and Community Development Measures) Law is pointed towards lessening and eventually eradicating the country's crime problems through security force regulation of communities that are vulnerable to crime (House of Parliament, 2017). Under this law, if the chiefs of the JDF or JCF demands that a ZOSO be declared, the leader of government, the Prime Minister, do this. The solicitation would be based, probably, on insight (House of Parliament, 2017).

The Law Reform (Zones of Special Operations) (Special Security and Community Development Measures) Law is very important and merits analyzing and studying considering the way that it includes the undertakings of the Jamaican government in the fight against crime in the nation. It is of merit as it basically shows Jamaicans and the rest of the world that the Jamaican government has perceived that crime is harming the nation and as such has made arrangements to help with fighting this social problem so Jamaica can be a protected nation to live in. Additionally, this topic is critical in light of the fact that it brings to light a societal deviance which has prospered in Jamaica and is causing annihilation and other social issues. At the point when this issue is featured, everybody can altogether pursue changing the statusquo. This paper will be guided by the thesis, The Law Reform (Zones of Special Operations) (Special Security and Community Development Measures) Law has effectively delivered on its objectives in Norwood St. James, however, it needs to be more effective in promoting social and economic development in the area/zone. The Law will be discussed in relation to policing in the community of Norwood, St. James. Initially, the main tenets of the law will be briefly discussed. After that, there will be a discussion surround my view of the law’s efficiency in fighting against crime in Norwood, St. James. Finally, I will use a conclusion to accentuate the importance of the topic and reiterate the main points in the paper. To ensure constancy and authenticity, the information for this research essay was recuperated from scholarly diary articles, official government websites and genuine newspaper evidence. Different materials were scrutinized so a thorough understanding of the point could be gained and from that point on the most valid and reliable ones chosen and used.

The Law Reform (Zones of Special Operations) (Special Security and Community Development Measures) Act, 2017 gives individuals from the JCF and JDF certain fundamental powers needed to tackle genuine violations while maintaining law and order and securing residents' essential privileges and opportunities (House of Parliament, 2017). It additionally works with the execution of key social intercessions in areas unfavorably impacted by violence and crime, among different arrangements. As indicated by the Jamaica Social Investment Fund (JSIF), The Law Reform (Zones of Special Operations) (Special Security and Community Development Measures) Act is an initiative to accommodate exceptional procedures for maintaining and safeguarding, public request, the safeness of citizens, the Rule of Law and public wellbeing inside certain geologically characterized areas on the island, or, to put it plainly, ZOSOs (House of Parliament, 2017). On the exhortation of the National Security Council, the Prime Minister can pronounce any criminal area in the country a zone for exceptional security tasks and local area improvement measures. This act looks to adjust the requirement for security and it also seeks to endow individuals from the JCF and the JDF specific fundamental powers that are needed to address genuine crime, in one instance, and maintaining law and order and ensuring the key privileges and opportunities of residents, in the other instance. The primary objectives of The Law Reform (Zones of Special Operations) (Special Security and Community Development Measures) Act, 2017 are as listed below.

1. To engage the Prime Minister in committee to proclaim a region a ZOSO
2. To maintain law and order to secure the crucial privileges and opportunities of the people who live or direct legal business in the zone
3. To lead law implementation exercises to free a zone of ammunition, unlawful weapons and contraband.
4. To engage individuals from the Joint Force to search an individual, motor vehicle or residence without a warrant, inside a zone, assuming they sensibly speculate that an offense has been, is or alternately is going to be done.
5. To give that the Joint order might build up a cordon and proclaim a curfew time limit in an area.
6. To advance social and financial improvement in the zone through the endeavors of different government organizations and common society
7. To give the foundation of the advisory group to, in addition to other things foster a sustainable economic improvement plan in the zone

The Zone of Special Operations (ZOSO) is a main tenet of this act. By definition, a ZOSO is a thorough and comprehensive crime interference strategy initiated ina zone that has ongoing culpability and gang violence, heightening brutality and murders and a danger to law and order (JIS, 2017). According to JIS (2017), few principles that oversee the ZOSO during an operation are:

a) No one can be arrested confined in a Zone except appropriate grounds can be controlled by the individual in control.

b) Anyone who is arrested ought to, upon capture be educated regarding the explanation. The individual ought to be brought before a Justice of the Peace to decide if the justification behind the capture is supported. If the Justice of the Peace considers the explanation defended, the individual ought to be saved in guardianship for a limit of twenty-four hours. Any other way, the individual ought to be freed right away.

c) No instruments of lawful exchange ought to be seized.

d) Only women security officials might search a female resident.

e) If vehicles are taken away the proprietor or individual possessing the vehicle(s) should be furnished with a receipt for the item(s), remarking the item(s) taken.

 It ought to be noticed that a request annulling a Zone might be made whenever by the Prime Minister (House of Parliament, 2017). As it relates to the act carrying out its mandate in Norwood, St. James, it must first be noted that no act, no matter the task or tasks it is assigned to do will guarantee a 100% immediate stoppage of a social problem or issue it seeks to address (House of Parliament, 2017). The important thing is that it executes a step-by-step process of change which will overtime eradicate the issue. With that hat being said, it is my view that act has delivered on its objectives in relation to policing in Norwood, St. James. However, it needs to be more consistent and effective. It is my belief that although there are still a few loopholes, the passing of the act has done a fair job in reducing the prevalence of crime in Norwood.

Firstly, the ZOSO has prompted the capture of unlawful firearms and ammunition in Norwood and the and capture of various people engaged with crimes. One of the primary targets of the act is to direct law requirement exercises to free a zone of illicit weapons, ammunition and contraband. As such, since illegal guns and ammunition has been seized and persons arrested, we cannot say that the act has failed in carrying out its objectives. According to Grant (2021), the Head of the JCF, Corporate Communications Unit, SSP, Stephanie Lindsay announced June 21, 2021 that the recently executed ZOSO in Norwood, St. James was at that point harvesting achievement and procuring a good outcome. There has been ZOSOs in Norwood previously, but because of an upsurge in crime and brutality in the community, a new ZOSO was announced on Sunday June 20, by Prime Minister, the Most Honorable Andrew Holness. Cautious investigation of the presence of a ZOSO in Norwood as of late uncovered that those activities directed by the security powers have prompted the capture of illicit firearms and ammunition, and various people have been held (Grant, 2017). For instance, in a procedure on June 21, 2021, the members of the island’s security teams held onto two illicit guns alongside eighteen rounds of ammunition Furthermore, in another procedure they held three people who they said can help them in various ongoing investigations that are happening in the Norwood region. Now, does this sound like an initiative that is not achieving its mandate and objectives? The hypocrisy of the society in which we lives is of such that persons expect everything to be done overnight. Very few persons believe in baby steps or the Jamaican cultural rhetoric of, “one one cocoa fill basket.” We are cultured to believed that everything should be done in big portion and done immediately. As such a lot of Jamaicans measure the efficiency, proficiency and viability of a phenomenon based on immediate result. However, situations vary and this cannot always be the case. The fact of the matter is the Law Reform (Zones of Special Operations) (Special Security and Community Development Measures) Act, especially ZOSOs have positively impacted Norwood, so it is unfair and illogical to say it has not delivered on its objective. Whilst it is understood that there have been shortfalls, the act cannot, and should not be looked at as a total failure. The Head of the JCF Corporate Communications Unit SSP, Stephanie Lindsay, revealed in June 2021, that a portion of the people captured in Norwood have been distinguished as people of interest and these people would be handled and data assembled from them used to assist with battling crime locally. She likewise noticed that that there are different people of interest who are known and who have association in crime that the security powers expect to pursue in an attempt to free Norwood of crime. The previously mentioned are altogether goals of the act, so we can't throw the act to the side and say it has not followed through on its objectives. The endeavors ought to be perceived and appreciated.

In addition to the capture of unlawful weapons and ammunition and capture of various people associated with crimes in Norwood, the residents of Norwood feel this liberating sensation and gladness to have the security powers locally offering help (Grant, 2017). This lines up with the target of the Law Reform (Zones of Special Operations) (Special Security and Community Development Measures) Act which expresses that the act will maintain law and order to ensure the major privileges and opportunities of the people who live or direct legal business in the zone. Again, we see another objective of the act being played out with the implementation of a ZOSO. It therefore follows that it is one-sided and prejudice to argue that the act has not delivered on its objectives. Residents of Norwood have been and still are very welcoming of the increased presence of the security forces in the community. The reaction from the residents has been extraordinary particularly in light of the fact that they have been having difficulties with these hoodlums, the brutality, the shootings, and the horrendous deaths in Norwood (Grant, 2017). The community members have noticed that the ZOSO brings a positive feeling and a feeling of consolation that the security powers are moving forward and being with them locally to protect them. Community members, particularly the individuals who have lost close families and companions to crime in Norwood has revealed overpowering appreciation (Grant, 2017). As per Hines (2021), one lady, who lost direct relations, including her mom, during the long-standing brutality in the community communicated her appreciation for the improved safety effort. She related that she welcomes the ZOSO as the murder have been continuous. She also echoed sentiments that the ZOSO should have been implemented earlier and it should be in all areas of the community. Similarly, a male residents pointed out that the community is better since ZOSO. He stated that he likes the initiative as it protects the community, especially hard-working persons who are not involved in any kind of wayward activities. He had confidence that the ZOSO would reestablish harmony as it had done previously. The fundamental rights and freedoms of all citizens are very important in a constitution. Therefore, if the act aims at protecting same, and as noted by citizens of Norwood, the act has been protecting same, how can anyone say it has failed at delivering its objectives? It is generally known that the government of a country has a particular responsibility to ensure that people are able to enjoy their rights.They are mandatory to launch and maintain regulations and amenities that permit individuals to relish a life in which their rights are appreciated and endangered. For example, the right to freedom of movement and the right to safety say that everyone is entitled to feel safe and also to move about freely. This means that the government has an obligation to ensure that measures are in place to facilitate free movement and safety of citizens. It is clearly seen by the feedback of citizens in Norwood that the ZOSO in Norwood has done just this. It is based on this that one can argue that it has not failed in carrying out its objectives.

 Thirdly, Law Reform (Zones of Special Operations) (Special Security and Community Development Measures) Act has prompted a decrease in crime in Norwood (Ferguson, 2021). This again shows that it has not failed in delivering its objectives. ACP Clifford Chambers, the commandant for the Area One Police Division in Montego Bay, detailed that despite the fact that killings in St James have surged by more than thirty eight percent yearly, more individuals would have been murdered in the Norwood area had the ZOSO not been set up in Norwood (Ferguson, 2021). Chambers additionally revealed that since the implementation if a ZOSO on June 21, 2021, there have not been any significant crimes in Norwood which is normally seen as a centre of the wanton disorder tormenting St James, (Ferguson, 2021). In this way, while one can contend that the needed aim, as far as having a crime free Norwood has not yet been accomplished, commendations are in place for the fact that the ZOSO has upset the free development of crooks or people who have a criminal interest or goal and that in itself is a major advantage for the community. Omar Sweeney, vice chairman of the social intrusion aspect of the ZOSO upholds the view that the security powers have had a beneficial outcome which sets the tone for social intercession under the construction stage. It is a fact also, that one cannot ignore the numerous benefits of the Zones of Special Operations in Norwood. These benefits include, but are not limited to, building more trust and confidence between citizens and the police, the building of local knowledge, strengthening intelligence gathering capabilities, fewer confrontations between criminals and the police and criminal, easier identification of criminals, faster and more effective responses to citizen reports through proximity policing, supporting unattached youths to gain employment with businesses or learn skills and less complaints against the police by citizens. All this is demonstrative of the objectives of Law Reform (Zones of Special Operations) (Special Security and Community Development Measures) Act given by parliament. As such, one cannot say that the objectives of the act were not delivered. All this is demonstrative of the objectives of Law Reform (Zones of Special Operations) (Special Security and Community Development Measures) Act given by parliament. As such, one cannot say that the objectives of the act were not delivered.

 As stated before, this paper is guided by the thesis, the Law Reform (Zones of Special Operations) (Special Security and Community Development Measures) Law has not failed to deliver on its objectives in Norwood St. James, however, it needs to be more effective in promoting social and economic development in the area/zone. Therefore, though the act has not failed on delivering its mandate/objectives, to be more effective it needs to pay more attention to social and economic change in particular zones/areas. The blatant reality is that, ZOSOs cannot and will not last forever. As such, the government needs to ensure that the intervention incorporates developing zones socially and economically to ensure that the zones do not revert to the norm of crime after the security forces are pulled from these areas. The government must make it a mandate that measures are in place in these zones to propel social and economic change. For example, a community like Norwood needs maintainable development and advancement. ZOSO should prioritize this and it should be supported by social intervention mechanism. One of the principal advantages of this is that when residents of Norwood realize that this work is one to advance their community, there will be more prominent residents’ activism (Violence Prevention Alliance, 2021). Kaodi McGaw, a delegate of The Violence Prevention Alliance (VPA) exhorted that when social and financial reform happens in ZOSO, there will likewise be higher commitment from the actual residents who will attempt to ensure their own business and security. She additionally expressed that this would prompt more economical mediations that are co-claimed and created by the actual residents (Violence Prevention Alliance, 2021). The perspectives of Ms. McGaw are lined up with those of Teeple (2019) who posited that the most ideal method of interceding or getting involved in a community in crisis is to apply a community area change model, which includes interrupting the community either through commitment and intercession; restorative camps, guiding and truces. From that point, the subsequent stage will be a kind of recuperating and compromise and this includes people in the crime and violence. Any social mediation procedure should examine further developing education to work on intellectual capacities, utilizing little pay procuring tasks to redirect people from unlawful strategies, empowering through sports and expressions and the redesign of parks and other green areas to be used by the community (Violence Prevention Alliance, 2021). The Law Reform (Zones of Special Operations) (Special Security and Community Development Measures) therefore needs to focus on the aforementioned things to develop Norwood socially and economically. This initiative could then be trailed by some success estimation measures and norms for progress. The structure of mediation ought to be characterized and rules set up that promote straightforward and effectively comprehended proportions of accomplishment.

The conclusion therefore is that, the Law Reform (Zones of Special Operations) (Special Security and Community Development Measures) Act has not failed in delivering its objectives in the community of Norwood, in Montego Bay, St. James. In fact, the discussion above demonstrates that the act has done a fair enough job in carrying out its mandate, though it needs to improve in the area of promoting social and economic reform in the community of Norwood. The Law Reform (Zones of Special Operations) (Special Security and Community Development Measures) Act is very significant as it promotes social and economic development in communities across Jamaica, it fights against social ills, particularly crime and it plays a huge role in protecting the rights and freedoms of citizen. Additionally, any topic that highlights a government’s attempts to rid a community of a social ill is worth studying and highlighting. All governments have a mandate to protect the citizens of a community and by extension a country so such initiatives are always welcomed. The Law Reform (Zones of Special Operations) (Special Security and Community Development Measures) Act has prompted the capture of illicit firearms and ammunition and capture of various people associated with crimes in Norwood. The residents of Norwood feel this liberating sensation and are glad to have the security powers locally offering help and the Law Reform (Zones of Special Operations) (Special Security and Community Development Measures) Act has prompted a decrease in crime in Norwood. This large number of significant achievements ought to not the slightest bit be minimized. They are significant accomplishments of the act. Going ahead nonetheless, the act should zero in additionally on guaranteeing that social and economic change are a part of the mediation. It is recommended that there should be the development of supplementary community infrastructure through social investment and proper youth engagement. For example, agencies related to skills training like the HEART/NSTA Trust could come in and play a big role in getting youths certified in certain fields. The Ministry of Education could also come on board and provide some community resources in Norwood that will enable youths to be more educated and get a life skill so they can give back to the community. Necessities such as water supply and electricity supply need to be normalized in the community as well. The truth of the matter is changes accordingly can influence the quantity of assets accessible to a nation and financial change can adjust the design and generally speaking bearing of an economy and furthermore influence common liberties (Teeple, 2019). Monetary changes will be pointed toward achieving a high pace of financial development while social change holds the key for decreasing misery as well as for changing individual and local area/public activity in manners that can give favourable conditions to a useful and positive way to deal with life, releasing inventiveness and working on the community and by extension country (Teeple, 2019). As stated previously, no act is 100% effective, but the Law Reform (Zones of Special Operations) (Special Security and Community Development Measures) Act of 2017 has done a fair enough job in delivering its objective in the community of Norwood, in Montego Bay, St. James.

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