

JAMAICAN BAR ASSOCIATION PRESS RELEASE

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Members of the Jamaican Bar Association (JBA) at a meeting convened on 13th December 2008 have expressed opposition to any proposal to amend the Constitution of Jamaica to effectively reverse court rulings, which have established that any death sentence imposed by a court must be carried out within 5 years.

Members present noted that the proposed removal of the time limit now established by law, is an admission of the failings of the system of justice and in particular, the chronic delays arising out of the inefficiencies in the administration of justice.

There was consensus among members that the high rate of crime must be addressed, but in ways which did not stop at appeasing genuine concerns but rather, extend to long term and fundamental solutions.

Members further expressed that Parliament should concentrate its attention and resources on correcting these problems that exist in the administration of justice, as recognized and recommended by the Justice Reform Task Force; as well as in addressing the socio-economic conditions, which lead to crime.

The Members noted that any government should be slow to tinker with the constitutional protections, which are entrenched for the protection of all citizens and the preservation of our democracy.

The position of the JBA will be further discussed at future meetings. In the meantime, the JBA continues to be committed to working with the government and civil society to find meaningful solutions to the current challenges facing our nation and to monitor developments.