



OFFICE OF THE LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION

May 29, 2024

Dr. Horace Chang, CD, MP
Deputy Prime Minister & Minister of National Security
NCB Towers, North Tower
2 Oxford Road, Kingston 5

Dear Minister Chang,

I acknowledge receipt of your letter dated May 28, 2024. These were the critical issues raised by our Opposition Spokesperson on National Security, Senator Peter Bunting, at the recent Police Federation Conference:

1. The unjust and unconstitutional interdiction of Police Federation Chairman Corporal Rohan James for advocating compliance with a court order regarding overtime payments. That action appears to be a blatant attempt at union busting, demoralizing the rank and file and undermining the Federation's role as the advocate for police welfare. It raises serious questions about the accountability of the High Command, who failed to implement the court's directives promptly.
2. The JCF is a paramilitary organization, operating under strict discipline, where members cannot legally strike. Therefore the Police Federation, effectively serving as the police union, is essential in advocating for the officers' rights. The High Command's punitive actions against its leadership for performing this role are petty, vindictive, and intolerant. This is not just about one individual's disciplinary issue; it is about preserving the independence and effectiveness of the Federation, and ensuring that all officers have robust representation free from undue influence.
3. We cannot allow a system where there is accountability for some and impunity for others. Your suggestion that public commentary on these issues crosses a line is misplaced and unfortunate. The Opposition's advocacy is aimed at ensuring a fair and just system, where the rights of police officers are upheld and where their leadership is empowered to advocate on their behalf without fear of retribution.

I consider our Spokesperson's remarks to be appropriate and in keeping with our constitutional responsibility to the Jamaican People, notwithstanding the apparent discomfort occasioned to some who would prefer to leave the status quo undisturbed. When in Opposition we are obliged to remain vigilant and purposeful on fundamental matters such as those which are engaged by the situation on which he spoke.

I take this opportunity to urge you to reconsider the actions taken against Corporal James, and also to address the broader issues of accountability within the High Command. The current approach is detrimental to the morale and effectiveness of the JCF.

We must work together to develop policies that enhance public safety, while always respecting the rights and welfare of those who serve.

Yours sincerely,

Mark J Golding, MP
Leader of the Opposition