



# Jamaica: Background and U.S. Relations

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## Summary

The Caribbean island-nation of Jamaica has had a relatively stable parliamentary political system stemming from its history of British colonial rule. Current Prime Minister Bruce Golding of the Jamaica Labour Party was elected in September 2007 when his party defeated the long-ruling People's National Party led by then-Prime Minister Portia Simpson. In late May 2010, however, Jamaica's stability was challenged after Prime Minister Golding agreed to extradite to the United States an at-large alleged drug kingpin and gang leader, Christopher Coke. The Jamaican government deployed police and soldiers seeking to execute a warrant for Coke, but his armed supporters erected barricades and roadblocks to battle the security forces. In the ensuing violence, 76 people were killed, including two policemen and a soldier. Human rights organizations have called on the government to conduct a thorough investigation into the killings, especially since Jamaica's police forces have been criticized for many years for extrajudicial killings and the indiscriminate use of force. Coke was ultimately captured and extradited to New York in late June 2010 to face drug and weapons trafficking charges.

High rates of crime and violence have plagued Jamaica for many years. In the 1970s and 1980s there was a high level of politically motivated violence when political parties became allied with armed gangs to deliver votes at election time. Jamaica's gangs initially were involved in the trafficking of marijuana in the 1970s (Jamaica is the Caribbean's largest producer and exporter of marijuana), but in the mid-1980s became involved in cocaine trafficking, with Jamaica used as a transit country, as well as weapons trafficking. Since the 1990s, much of the violent crime in the country has been associated with this drug trafficking and related intra-gang and internal gang feuds. Jamaica's challenges include bringing down the high levels of gang violence, reforming the police and justice system to prevent extrajudicial killings by police and impunity, and breaking the linkages between the political parties and armed gangs.

Jamaica's services-based economy has averaged only modest growth rates over the past two decades, and has been in recession since 2008 because of the global economic crisis, which hurt the tourism sector and reduced the price and demand for Jamaican bauxite/alumina exports. A difficult economic challenge for the government is dealing with a large external debt burden, which has limited the government's ability to respond to the effects of the global economic crisis. In February 2010, the International Monetary Fund approved a \$1.27 billion stand-by arrangement to help the country deal with the consequences of the global economic downturn and support the government's fiscal, debt, and financial sector reforms.

U.S. relations with Jamaica are close, and are characterized by significant economic and cultural linkages and cooperation on a range of bilateral and transnational issues, including cooperation on anti-drug trafficking efforts. Congress has regularly supported a variety of foreign assistance programs for Jamaica, and the country will likely receive funding under the Administration's new Caribbean Basin Security Initiative. There had been increasing tension in U.S.-Jamaican relations in recent months because of the Golding government's reluctance to extradite Christopher Coke to the United States, but in the aftermath of the Jamaican government's extradition, U.S. officials commended the Golding government for its efforts. For additional information, see CRS Report RL33951, *U.S. Trade Policy and the Caribbean: From Trade Preferences to Free Trade Agreements*, and CRS Report R41215, *Latin America and the Caribbean: Illicit Drug Trafficking and U.S. Counterdrug Programs*.

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## **Political and Economic Situation**

An English-speaking Caribbean nation with a population of about 2.8 million, Jamaica has had a relatively stable parliamentary political system stemming from its history of British colonial rule, even though extensive political violence often marred national elections in the 1970s and 1980s. Two political parties—the People’s National Party (PNP) and the Jamaica Labour Party (JLP) have dominated the political system since before the country’s 1962 independence. In the 1970s and 1980s, the two parties had distinct ideological differences, with the PNP under Michael Manley (1972-1980) espousing democratic socialism and increasing state ownership of the economy, and the JLP under Edward Seaga (1980-1989) adopting a policy of economic liberalization and privatization. When Michael Manley returned to power in 1989, however, his PNP government did not roll back the JLP’s pro-business policies, but instead adopted a similar approach. Since that time, there have been few ideological differences between the two parties.

Percival J. “P.J.” Patterson of the PNP, who took over as Prime Minister when Manley resigned in 1992 for health reasons, won three elections and served as head of government until his retirement in March 2006. He was replaced by Portia Simpson Miller of the PNP, who became Jamaica’s first female Prime Minister. PNP rule under P.J. Patterson and later Simpson was characterized by a policy orientation of market liberalization, support for the private sector, and close ties with the United States. While Prime Minister Simpson had the support of rank-and-file PNP supporters, she only narrowly won a party leadership contest in 2007 over Minister of National Security Peter Phillips who had the support of party leaders.

The PNP’s 18-year stretch of governing ultimately ended in September 2007, when the JLP, headed by Bruce Golding as party leader, returned to power. One of the contributing factors to the change of government was that Prime Minister Simpson’s government faced growing public dissatisfaction with increasing crime and violence. The JLP currently holds a narrow margin, 32 of 60 seats, in Jamaica’s House of Representatives, the lower body in the country’s bicameral parliament, while the PNP holds the remaining 28. The JLP ran on an anti-crime and anti-corruption platform, but the Golding government has continued to face challenges in both areas.

## **2010 Coke Extradition and Political Fallout**

In late May 2010, Jamaica’s stability was challenged after the government of Prime Minister Golding agreed to extradite to the United States an at-large alleged drug kingpin, Christopher “Dudas” Coke, the reputed leader of the Shower Posse.<sup>1</sup> The United States had originally requested Coke’s extradition in August 2009, after a federal grand jury in New York had indicted him for narcotics and arms trafficking.<sup>2</sup> Prime Minister Golding denied the request, with his government maintaining that evidence gained from wiretapping had been obtained illegally. There was increasing U.S. pressure in 2010 to extradite Coke, with the State Department’s March

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<sup>1</sup> Initially formed in the 1970s, the Shower Posse—so-named because it rained bullets on rival gangs—developed links in the United States during the 1980s as it became involved in the drug trade. Christopher Coke’s father, Lester Coke, led the gang in the 1980s, and reportedly was deeply involved in drug and weapons trafficking. Lester Coke was indicted by a U.S. Federal Court in 1988, and was killed in a prison fire in 1992 while he was awaiting extradition to the United States. See Jennifer Lebovich and Trenton Daniel “Jamaican drug king’s father found fertile ground in Miami;” *Miami Herald*, June 1, 2010.

<sup>2</sup> *U.S.A. v. Christopher Michael Coke*, S15 07 Cr. 971 (Southern District Court of New York 2009).

2010 International Narcotics Control Strategy Report (INCSR) stating that the Jamaican government's delays in extraditing Coke and others called into question the country's commitment to law enforcement cooperation with the United States. The report also maintained that the delay in extraditing Coke highlighted the "potential depth of corruption in the government" because of Coke's reported ties with the ruling party.

At around the same time, reports surfaced that Prime Minister Golding had hired a U.S. lobbying firm (Manatt, Phelps, & Phillips) to lobby on behalf of the government of Jamaica to convince the United State not to seek the extradition of Coke. Golding subsequently confirmed in mid-May 2010 that he had approved the hiring of the lobbyists, not in his capacity as prime minister, but as leader of the JLP. It appears that the political fallout of this admission was a factor that led Golding to reverse course and issue the arrest warrant for Coke.

In response, Coke's followers in the West Kingston neighborhood of Tivoli Gardens attacked several police stations on May 23. The Jamaican government responded by issuing a state of emergency in portions of the capital and deploying police and soldiers to West Kingston seeking to execute a warrant for Coke, whose armed supporters erected barricades and roadblocks to battle the security forces. In the ensuing violence over the next several days, 76 people were killed, including two policemen and a soldier. Security forces ultimately secured the areas of West Kingston by late May, but human rights organizations called for the government to conduct a thorough investigation regarding the deaths and determine whether the use of force was appropriate.

Coke eluded capture until June 22, 2010, when he was arrested by police after his vehicle was stopped at a checkpoint. An evangelical preacher who was with Coke when he was captured maintained that the two were on their way to the U.S. Embassy as Coke had decided to turn himself over to U.S. authorities. Coke subsequently was extradited to the United States on June 24 and arraigned in U.S. Federal District Court in New York on June 25 for running a large marijuana and crack cocaine drug ring from Jamaica.

Golding's admission to hiring the U.S. lobbying firm prompted considerable public criticism and calls for his resignation. The Prime Minister was also criticized for his handling of police operations and the extent of killings in the attempt to capture Coke. Nevertheless, the Prime Minister narrowly survived a no-confidence vote in parliament on June 1, by a vote of 30-28.

The political fallout from the Coke extradition case and police operations will likely continue to pose challenges for the Golding government, especially as it implements fiscal austerity measures agreed to under an International Monetary Fund (IMF) stand-by arrangement. At this juncture, while the JLP's popularity has declined, this has not translated into a significant boost of support for the PNP, which continues to suffer from internal divisions and from poor public perceptions of its long period of rule from 1989 to 2007.<sup>3</sup>

## **Crime and Violence**

High rates of crime and violence have plagued Jamaica for many years. In the 1970s and 1980s, there was a high level of politically motivated violence surrounding national elections. After

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<sup>3</sup> "Jamaica Country Report," *Economist Intelligence Unit*, June 2010.

Jamaica's independence from Britain in 1962 and especially in the 1970s, political parties enlisted the support of armed local criminal gangs, also known as posses, to deliver votes at election time in so-called "garrison communities" in inner cities. These garrison communities had developed in the 1960s and 1970s when the ruling party would allocate housing units in large government built housing projects to their political supporters; the allocation of government housing in effect was used to create JLP and PNP strongholds.<sup>4</sup> Gang leaders known as "dons" often dominated their communities and received government contracts and protection from the law in exchange for their commitment to the JLP or PNP. Garrison communities have been described as a "state within a state," where gangs exert control through violence and intimidation, but also by providing protection and services to the community. The political violence associated with these "garrison communities" reached a peak in the 1980 election when some 800 people were killed in clashes between rival groups. While political violence at election time has been reduced considerably, the 2007 general election was still marred by some violence with nine people killed, and voters living in "garrison communities" faced pressure and intimidation.<sup>5</sup>

Jamaican gangs have also been involved in drug and weapons trafficking, and have links abroad, largely in New York City and Toronto, Canada. In the 1970s, the gangs were largely involved in the trafficking of marijuana, but beginning in the 1980s gangs became involved in cocaine trade and weapons trafficking. As the gangs became connected to the international cocaine trade, their power appeared to emanate from the drug trade itself as opposed to their connection to the political parties or individual politicians. Likewise, the availability of guns began to grow as a result of the connection to the international drug trade.<sup>6</sup> Since the 1990s, violent crime in the country has been associated in large part with drug trafficking. A 2007 joint United Nations/World Bank study maintained that the rise in crime and violence in the Caribbean in recent years, including Jamaica, can be explained by narcotics trafficking in and through the region.<sup>7</sup>

Jamaica currently has one of the world's highest murder rates, with over 1,583 murders committed in Jamaica in 2007, 1,611 murders in 2008 (the first full year under the Golding government), and 1,680 murders in 2009. About half of the murders in 2009 were reported to be related to intra-gang and internal gang feuds.<sup>8</sup> The connection between gangs and the importation of guns has been a serious concern, with over 70% of murders involving guns, with the majority of weapons originating in the United States.<sup>9</sup>

The Golding government established a joint military/police task force in late 2007 to help deal with the violence, and in late 2008 said that it would introduce legislation to criminalize gang membership. In early May 2010, before the outbreak of violence associated with the Coke

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<sup>4</sup> Mark Figueroa and Amanda Sives, "Homogenous Voting, Electoral Manipulation and the 'Garrison' Process in Post-Independence Jamaica," *Commonwealth & Comparative Politics*, Vol. 40, No. 1, March 2002, p. 83; and Colin Clarke, "Politics, Violence and Drugs in Kingston, Jamaica," *Bulletin of Latin American Research*, Vol. 23, No. 3, July 2006, p. 436.

<sup>5</sup> U.S. Department of State, *2009 Report on Human Rights: Jamaica*, March 11, 2010.

<sup>6</sup> Colin Clarke, *op. cit.* p. 434.

<sup>7</sup> United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and World Bank, *Crime and Violence and Development: Trends, Costs, and Policy Options in the Caribbean*, March 2007, p. i.

<sup>8</sup> Amnesty International, *Public Security Reforms and Human Rights in Jamaica*, July 2009; "Jamaica Has Record Number of Murders in 2009," *BBC Monitoring Americas*, January 12, 2010.

<sup>9</sup> "Jamaica: Criminalising Gang Membership," *Latin American Security & Strategic Review*, November 2008; and "Jamaica Has Record Number of Murders in 2009," *BBC Monitoring Americas*, January 12, 2010.

extradition, Jamaica's National Security Minister maintained that the government was preparing anti-gang legislation. In the aftermath of the violence, the government maintained that it would fast track anti-crime legislation.

One of the most difficult challenges for Jamaica's political system is breaking the remaining linkages between the political parties and armed gangs. Prime Minister Golding's decision to extradite Christopher Coke, whose Shower Posse dominated Tivoli Gardens (in the Prime Minister's electoral district) and was a strong JLP supporter for many years, could prove to be a turning point in Jamaican politics. Some observers point out, however, that because a number of Jamaican politicians have links to "garrison communities," it will not be easy to break the entrenched linkages between armed gangs and the political parties.<sup>10</sup> Moreover, even if the government is successful at dismantling criminal gangs, some question whether the Jamaican state will be able to step in to provide security and services that have been supplied by the gangs.

## **Human Rights**

The State Department, in its March 2010 human rights report, maintained that the Jamaican government generally respects human rights, but that several serious problems remain, including unlawful killings committed by members of the security forces, abuse of detainees and prisoners by police and prison guards, poor prison and jail conditions, impunity for police who committed crimes, an overburdened judicial system and frequent lengthy delays in trials, violence and discrimination against women, trafficking in persons, and violence against persons based on their suspected or known sexual orientation.

**Police Violence and Extrajudicial Killings.** At the same time that Jamaica has experienced high rates of crime and violence, the country's police forces have been criticized for many years for extrajudicial killings and indiscriminate use of force. In 2008, 224 people were fatally shot by police officers and in 2009, 253 people were killed as a result of police force. According to Amnesty International, in most cases the police justified the killings as the result of shoot-outs with gunmen, but the human rights organization maintains that in many cases they amounted to unlawful killings.<sup>11</sup> When Jamaican security forces commenced operations in late May 2010 to secure the extradition of Christopher Coke, the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR), international human rights organizations such as Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch, and Jamaican human rights groups such as Jamaicans for Justice (JFJ) expressed concern about the violence and called on the Jamaican government to conduct a thorough and impartial investigation into the death of civilians. At the OAS General Assembly in Lima held in early June 2010, the Jamaican government pledged that it would respect human rights as its security forces continued to search for Coke.

In July 2009, Amnesty International issued an extensive report examining the Jamaican government's efforts to tackle deep-rooted violence, serious human rights violations, and impunity. The human rights organization lauded efforts by the Jamaican government to reform the police and justice system and tackle corruption, but also contended that success will involve reducing homicides and the number of killings by police, bringing to justice police and other state

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<sup>10</sup> "Jamaica: Golding Grants an Extradition, Triggers Upheaval," *Latin American Security & Strategic Review*, May 2010.

<sup>11</sup> Amnesty International, *Jamaica, Amnesty International submission to the UN Universal Periodic Review, Ninth session of the UPR Working Group, November-December 2010*, April 19, 2010.

officials responsible for human rights violations, increasing public trust in the police and justice system, and improving the socio-economic situation and rights of those living in inner city communities.<sup>12</sup>

**Abuses Based on Sexual Orientation.** There has been concern in recent years about abuses against Jamaica's gay and lesbian community. Prime Minister Golding stirred controversy in May 2008, when he stated in an interview that he would not allow any gay people in his Cabinet, and maintained that "Jamaica is not going to allow values to be imposed on it from outside." Gay rights groups called on the Prime Minister to consider how the outside world perceives Jamaica through such statements.<sup>13</sup>

The Jamaica Forum for Lesbians, All Sexuals, and Gays (J-FLAG) reports human rights abuses, including arbitrary detention, mob attacks, stabbings, harassment of homosexual patients by hospital and prison staff, and targeted shootings of homosexuals. According to the State Department's 2009 human rights report, J-FLAG members have faced attacks on their property and home intrusions and death and arson threats; in one case, a firebombing at the home of two men left one of them with extensive burns. In September 2009, an honorary British consul in Montego Bay was strangled in bed, with a note left denouncing the victim as gay. According to the State Department, gay men were hesitant to report incidents against them because of fear for their physical well-being; lesbian women also were subject to sexual assault as well as other physical attacks. Human rights organizations also have criticized Jamaica's pervasive homophobia and targeted violence that has carried over to discrimination and even violence against people living with HIV/AIDS and organizations providing HIV/AIDS services.<sup>14</sup>

Jamaica's leading gay rights activist and co-founder of J-FLAG, Brian Williamson, was murdered in 2004, while a noted Jamaican AIDS activist, Steve Harvey, was murdered in 2005 in what appeared to be a hate crime. Williamson's murderer was convicted in 2006, while the trial for six suspects arrested for Harvey's murder initially began in 2007, but was then postponed, and has not yet recovered.

## **Economic and Social Conditions**

Jamaica has a largely services-based economy, which accounts for 60% of gross domestic product. Tourism is the country's largest source of employment while most foreign exchange is derived from tourism, remittances, and bauxite/alumina production. From 1990-2007, economic growth averaged about 1.5%, not much above population growth. Major constraints for growth have included the country's vulnerability to external shocks (such as hurricanes, fluctuations in commodity export, import prices, and tourism demand), and a large public debt burden.<sup>15</sup>

With a per capita income of \$4,879 (2008), Jamaica is classified by the World Bank as an upper middle income developing country, although this characterization masks pockets of urban and rural poverty. Nevertheless, the country has made significant progress in poverty alleviation.

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<sup>12</sup> Amnesty International, *Public Security Reforms and Human Rights in Jamaica*, July 2009; also see Amnesty International, *Jamaica, 'Let Them Kill Each Other': Public Security in Jamaica's Inner Cities*, April 2008.

<sup>13</sup> "Gay Group Calls on Jamaican Premier to Re-think Position," *BBC Monitoring Americas*, May 21, 2008.

<sup>14</sup> For example, see *Hated to Death: Homophobia, Violence, and Jamaica's HIV/AIDS Epidemic*, Human Rights Watch, 2004.

<sup>15</sup> "Jamaica: Country Report," *Economist Intelligence Unit*, January 2009.



According to the World Bank, poverty declined from 30.5% in 1989 to 9.9% in 2007, and the country has made remarkable progress in the areas of financial sector reform and reform of the social sectors, including social safety nets, HIV/AIDS prevention, and education. Remaining significant social challenges include high levels of crime and violence and high unemployment, especially among the youth.<sup>16</sup> The country still faces a significant HIV/AIDS epidemic, with an adult prevalence rate of 1.6%, and a considerably higher rate among vulnerable populations.<sup>17</sup>

The global financial crisis and recession in the United States and other countries has had a significant effect on the Jamaican economy, with reduced demand for Jamaican bauxite and alumina and declines in tourism. As a result, the economy contracted 0.9% in 2008 and 2.8% in 2009. The recession in Jamaica is continuing in 2010, with a forecast of 1.1% decline in the gross domestic product. Unemployment has increased since 2008, and is currently over 13%. The decrease in demand for mining exports led to the closure of two bauxite/alumina plants in 2009 resulting in layoffs and a decline in foreign exchange earnings. Tourism declined significantly in the first half of 2009, but rebounded in the second half of the year.<sup>18</sup> There are concerns, however, that the recent outbreak of violence associated with the capture of Christopher Coke could have an effect on tourism.<sup>19</sup> Remittances from Jamaicans living abroad have become a leading source of foreign exchange in recent years, amounting to about \$2 billion in 2008, but falling to almost \$1.8 billion in 2009.<sup>20</sup> In 2010, however, remittances have begun to rebound.

As noted above, one of the most difficult economic challenges for the Jamaica government has been dealing with a large debt burden (over \$10 billion), which has limited the government's ability to respond to the effects of the global economic crisis with counter-cyclical policies. In February 2010, the IMF approved a \$1.27 billion stand-by arrangement with Jamaica to help the country cope with the consequences of the global downturn and support the country's economic reforms. As of June 2010, total disbursements under the arrangement amounted to just over \$700 million. According to the IMF, the pillars of the program include fiscal reform, public debt restructuring (to reduce the amount of maturing debt over the next three years), and financial sector reform. The economic program is also designed to ensure an increase in social spending for targeted social safety net programs. According to the IMF, the stand-by agreement will generate about \$1.1 billion in funding from other international financial institutions, including the Inter-American Development Bank and the World Bank.<sup>21</sup>

Like most other Caribbean nations, with the exception of Trinidad and Tobago, Jamaica is dependent on oil imports for almost all of its energy consumption needs, importing some 78,000 barrels of oil per day. In an effort to combat rising oil prices, Jamaica was the first Caribbean nation in September 2005 to sign on to PetroCaribe, a Venezuelan program offering oil on preferential terms. Under the program, Jamaica imports up to 23,500 barrels per day of oil with

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<sup>16</sup> "Jamaica Country Brief," World Bank, 2010.

<sup>17</sup> "Jamaica National HIV/STI Programme," United Nations General Assembly Special Session (UNGASS) Country Progress Report, 2010 Reporting, March 31, 2010.

<sup>18</sup> "Jamaica: Country Report," *Economist Intelligence Unit*, June 2010.

<sup>19</sup> Jim Wyss, "Amid Jamaica Extradition Crisis, Tourism Could Take a Beating," *Miami Herald*, June 12, 2010.

<sup>20</sup> Inter-American Development Bank, Multilateral Investment Fund, Remittances to Latin America and the Caribbean 2009, available at [http://www.iadb.org/mif/remesas\\_map.cfm](http://www.iadb.org/mif/remesas_map.cfm)

<sup>21</sup> IMF, "IMF Executive Board Approves US\$1.27 Billion Stand-by Arrangement with Jamaica" Press Release No. 10/24, February 4, 2010, and "IMF Executive Board Concludes First Review Under Stand-by Arrangement with Jamaica and Approves \$93.9 Million Disbursement," Press Release No. 10/255, June 23, 2010.

50% of the oil financed over 25 years at an annual rate of 1%. (In mid-2008, the program was altered to allow up to 60% of the oil to be financed when oil prices were over \$100 a barrel.) Prior to PetroCaribe, Jamaica was already benefitting from preferential support from Venezuela under the Caracas Energy Accord begun in 2001, and from both Venezuela and Mexico under the San Jose Pact that began in 1980. The PetroCaribe accord, however, goes further than other preferential oil agreements because it includes financing for energy and economic development projects. For example, a PetroCaribe development fund is financing a wind farm expansion project in Jamaica's Manchester parish (see **Figure 1** for a map of Jamaica).

## U.S. Relations

U.S. relations with Jamaica are close, and are characterized by significant economic and cultural linkages and cooperation on a range of bilateral and transnational issues, including cooperation on anti-drug trafficking efforts. Both the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) and the Peace Corps have provided assistance to Jamaica since its independence in 1962. Some 10,000 Americans, many dual nationals, live in Jamaica, and over a million U.S. tourists visit the country each year.<sup>22</sup>

There had been increasing tension in U.S.-Jamaican relations in recent months because of the Golding government's reluctance to extradite Jamaican gang leader Christopher Coke to the United States on drug trafficking charges. But in the aftermath of the Jamaican government's efforts to capture Coke and extradite him to the United States in late June 2010, U.S. officials commended the Golding government for its efforts.

When violence broke out in late May 2010 between government security forces and criminal gangs in the capital of Kingston and surrounding areas, the State Department issued a travel alert to let U.S. citizens know about the situation. The most recent travel alert was issued on June 24, 2010 and expires on July 23. It notes that the Jamaican government has imposed a state of emergency in Kingston, St. Andrew Parish, and St. Catherine Parish, including Spanish Town (see **Figure 1**), and that U.S. citizens in Jamaica should monitor local news and radio when venturing from their homes or hotels in the Kingston area. (See the full travel alert, available at [http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis\\_pa\\_tw/pa/pa\\_4985.html](http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/pa/pa_4985.html).)

## U.S. Foreign Assistance

Over the years, Jamaica has received considerable amounts of U.S. foreign assistance. Over \$500 million was provided in the 1990s, while from FY2000-FY2006, U.S. foreign aid averaged almost \$23 million annually. Most of this aid was Development Assistance (DA) and Economic Support Funds (ESF) for USAID to implement a variety of development projects. More recently, U.S. assistance to Jamaica has declined somewhat. From FY2007 through FY2010, U.S. assistance averaged about \$12.7 million annually.

For FY2011, the Obama Administration requested \$13.1 million in assistance for Jamaica, with \$10.8 million in DA implemented by USAID to support a wide variety of projects (such as community policing and other police reform programs, youth and education programs, local

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<sup>22</sup> U.S. Department of State, "Background Note: Jamaica," December 2009.

community-based organizations involved in providing social services, technical assistance for trade, investment and economic growth projects, and agriculture diversification); \$1.5 million for Child Survival and Health (CSH) assistance for activities to combat HIV/AIDS; and \$800,000 for International Military Education and Training (IMET).

USAID work in Jamaica in recent years has focused on five program areas: 1) economic growth, including efforts to promote free market policies and improve worker skills; 2) rural development, with efforts focused on agribusiness, eco-tourism, and cottage industries that help preserve Jamaica's biodiversity; 3) health, especially projects supporting HIV/AIDS activities; 4) democracy, including efforts to help underserved communities beset with violent crime and to improve community policing initiatives; and 5) education, with efforts to improve literacy and other skills and to support the regional Caribbean Center for Excellence in Teacher Training (C-CETT) that supports education in eight Caribbean countries.<sup>23</sup>

Security assistance to Jamaica has included support to assist Jamaica with port and border security measures and to increase the counternarcotics and counterterrorism capabilities of the Jamaican security forces and their capability to protect Jamaican waters. Funding has also supported training for the Jamaica Defense Force to increase their readiness, interoperability among their services, and professionalism. In 2008, the U.S. Southern Command provided Jamaica with four high-speed interceptor boats under a maritime security assistance initiative known as Enduring Friendship.

In addition to regular bilateral assistance funding, Jamaica is also likely to receive some of assistance under the Caribbean Basin Security Initiative (CBSI), a program begun in FY2010 as an offshoot of the Mérida Initiative for Mexico and Central America aimed at helping Caribbean nations reduce illicit trafficking, increase public safety and security, and promote social justice. Congress appropriated \$37 million in assistance for the program in FY2010, and the Obama Administration has requested \$79 million for FY2011. According to the State Department, CBSI funds will: combat illicit trafficking in drugs and small arms; develop and strengthen the capacity of regional defense, law enforcement, and justice sector institutions to detect, interdict and prosecute criminal elements in the Caribbean; increase skills and educational opportunities for populations vulnerable to criminal recruitment; foster community and law enforcement cooperation; and provide alternatives to at-risk youth.<sup>24</sup>

The United States has had a Peace Corps program in Jamaica dating back to 1962. There are currently about 70 volunteers in the country working to help in youth projects, HIV/AIDS education, water sanitation, and environmental education.

## **Drug Trafficking**

Jamaica is the Caribbean's largest producer and exporter of marijuana, and is also a drug transit country for South American cocaine destined for the U.S. and other markets. The government cooperates closely with the United States on counternarcotics efforts, with the United States providing training and material support to elements of the Jamaica Constabulary Force (JCF) and Jamaica Defense Force (JDF) in order to strengthen their counternarcotics capabilities and

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<sup>23</sup> U.S. Agency for International Development, "Jamaica Country Profile," 2008.

<sup>24</sup> U.S. Department of State, "Secretary Clinton and CARICOM Ministers Celebrate the Launch of the Caribbean Basin Security Initiative (CBSI), A Shared Regional Security Partnership," June 10, 2010.

promote greater bilateral cooperation. The U.S. Marshals Service has a regional office in Jamaica, and provides support to the Jamaica Fugitive Apprehension Team (JFAT) for training, equipment, guidance and operational support. Jamaica has extradited a number of wanted drug traffickers to the United States for prosecution, including 15 in 2009. The JDF Coast Guard participated in joint deployments with the United States in 2009 under the auspices of “Operation Riptide.”

The State Department’s March 2010 International Narcotics Control Strategy Report (INCSR) maintained that while cooperation between U.S. and Jamaican law enforcement agencies remains strong, delays in proceeding with the extradition request for Christopher Coke and delays in other extradition requests called into question Jamaica’s commitment to bilateral law enforcement cooperation. As noted above, with Coke’s extradition in late June 2010, the State Department commended the Golding government for its action.

In the 2010 INCSR, the State Department encouraged the Jamaican government to enhance its collaboration with the United States and other regional partners, to development a comprehensive gang reduction strategy, and pass legislation to criminalize participation in organized criminal gangs. The State Department also called for the Jamaican government to demonstrate its political will to address corruption by investigating, prosecuting, and convicting corrupt officials at all levels of government service. The INCSR maintained that “pervasive public corruption continues to undermine efforts against drug-related and other crimes, and plays a major role in the safe passage of drugs and drug proceeds through Jamaica.” According to the report, the Jamaican government’s ambitious anti-corruption and anti-crime legislative agenda remained stalled in parliament. In late May 2010, the Golding government maintained that it would fast-track several anti-crime and anti-gang measures.

## **Criminal Deportees**

The deportation of Caribbean citizens from the United States at times has been a thorny issue in U.S. relations with the region, with challenges centered on criminal deportees and social stigma faced by the deportees when returning to Jamaica. Current Jamaican Minister of National Security Dwight Nelson maintains that the return of criminals from Britain, Canada, and the United States has contributed to gang activities in Jamaica.<sup>25</sup> In recent years, U.S. criminal deportations to Jamaica numbered 1,178 in FY2007, 1,261 in FY2008, and 1,252 in FY2009.<sup>26</sup> (It should be noted that Canada and Britain also have deported a large number of Jamaicans.) A 2007 joint UN/World Bank study concluded that evidence from Jamaica and other Caribbean countries shows that it is unlikely that the average deportee is committing violent crime, but that a minority may be causing serious problems both by direct involvement in crime and indirectly by providing a negative role model for youth.<sup>27</sup>

Some Jamaican politicians contend that the deportees have learned their criminal ways in the United States and that many have lived in the United States since they were young children. In contrast, noted Jamaican criminologist Bernard Headley contends that the majority of criminal

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<sup>25</sup> “Jamaican Minister Blames “Deportees” for Rising Crime,” *BBC Monitoring Americas*, September 15, 2009.

<sup>26</sup> Information provided to CRS by the Department of Homeland Security, Immigration and Customs Enforcement, Office of Detention and Removal.

<sup>27</sup> UNODC/World Bank report, p. ii.

deportees in Jamaica are not hardened criminals, and that only a minority of deportees were raised in the United States at a young age.<sup>28</sup>

At a June 2007 CARICOM meeting in Washington, DC, then-Prime Minister Portia Simpson Miller called for international assistance for rehabilitating and reintegrating the deportees into society, and mechanisms for effective monitoring.<sup>29</sup> The UN/World Bank study cited above maintained that assisting reintegration efforts in the Caribbean for deported offenders could be a cost-effective way for deportee-sending countries to promote development and weaken international criminal networks. The study recommended improved coordination and information sharing on criminal deportees by sending countries; research on the link between deportees and crime; and the financing of deportee reintegration programs, including financial support from sending countries.<sup>30</sup> In 2008, the United Kingdom began funding a three-year project for returning deportees from the UK after completing prison sentences. The project is designed to improve the deportees' integration into Jamaican society, and includes the renovation of facilities for short and long-term accommodations for deported males and support for the development of a deportee database.<sup>31</sup>

## Trade and Investment

Jamaica has been a beneficiary of the Caribbean Basin Initiative (CBI), a U.S. preferential trade program for imports from the region since 1984. It was designated a beneficiary of the Caribbean Basin Trade Partnership Act (CBTPA) in 2000, which effectively provides NAFTA-equivalent tariff treatment, including preferential treatment for qualifying textile and apparel producers. CBTPA benefits were scheduled to expire at the end of September 2010, but in May 2010 Congress approved an extension of the trade preferences through September 2020 (P.L. 111-171).<sup>32</sup>

Despite Jamaica's participation in these preferential trade programs, its manufacturing exports to the United States have not increased significantly, in large part because of competition from such low-cost producers as the Dominican Republic and Honduras as well as competition from Asia. Nevertheless, the United States remains Jamaica's main trading partner, accounting for about 45% of Jamaican imports and 30% of its exports.<sup>33</sup> Moreover, Jamaica has taken advantage of CBI tariff preferences for ethanol, which has spurred development of the industry.<sup>34</sup> Because of the global economic downturn, however, Jamaican exports to the United States in 2009, valued at \$468 million, reflected a 36% decline from the previous year while imports from the United States, valued at \$1.4 billion in 2009, reflected a decline of almost 46%. Jamaica's top exports to

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<sup>28</sup> UNODC/World Bank report, p. 88; Bernard Headley, "Giving Critical Context to the Deportee Phenomenon," *Social Justice*, Vol. 33, No. 1, 2006; Marc Lacey, "No Paradise for Criminals Deported to Jamaica," *New York Times*, March 21, 2007.

<sup>29</sup> CARICOM Secretariat, Press Release 143/2007 (June 20, 2007), "Address by the Most Hon. Portia Simpson Miller, Prime Minister of Jamaica, Washington, DC, June 19, 2007."

<sup>30</sup> UNODC/World Bank report, pp. xvi and 81.

<sup>31</sup> "Final year of UK/Jamaica Deportees Project," *Jamaica Observer*, March 28, 2010.

<sup>32</sup> For additional information on U.S. trade policy toward the Caribbean, see CRS Report RL33951, *U.S. Trade Policy and the Caribbean: From Trade Preferences to Free Trade Agreements*, by J. F. Hornbeck.

<sup>33</sup> U.S. Department of Commerce (U.S. and Foreign Commercial Service) and U.S. Department of State. *Doing Business in Jamaica: A Country Commercial Guide for U.S. Companies*, February 18, 2010.

<sup>34</sup> See CRS Report RS21930, *Ethanol Imports and the Caribbean Basin Initiative (CBI)*, by Brent D. Yacobucci.

the United States in 2009 were ethanol and aluminum (oxides and ores), which accounted for about 63% of the total, while major imports from the United States included oil, machinery (home, office, and construction), food and other consumer goods, and industrial supplies.<sup>35</sup>

As a member of the 14-member Caribbean Community (CARICOM), Jamaica participates in the Caribbean Regional Negotiating Machinery (CRNM), headquartered in Kingston, which has coordinated and managed the region's external trade negotiations since 1997. While CARICOM nations had participated in negotiations for the Free Trade Area of the Americas, and even held talks in 2006 with U.S. officials exploring the possibility of a free trade agreement between CARICOM and the United States, a number of Caribbean nations have expressed concerns about the impact of such agreements on the region. Many have argued for special and differential treatment for small economies that would include longer phase-in periods for opening their markets to some products, and some type of development component that would help smaller economies meet their needs for human resources, technology, and infrastructure.

According to the U.S. Department of Commerce, Jamaica has a long history of attracting foreign direct investment from the United States. Currently there are more than 80 major U.S. investors in the country,<sup>36</sup> and U.S. direct investment in Jamaica on a historical-cost basis was estimated at \$901 million in 2008.<sup>37</sup>

Jamaica remains on the U.S. Watch List for those countries with problems in the protection of intellectual property rights. According to the Office of the United States Trade Representative (USTR), Jamaica's delay in enacting legislation to implement patent protection obligations under the World Trade Organization Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Agreement and the U.S.-Jamaica Bilateral Intellectual Property Agreement remains a U.S. concern. While the Jamaican government increased its enforcement activity and public awareness efforts in 2009, the United States urges it to reform its patent protection law in accordance with international standards.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> U.S. Department of Commerce statistics, as presented by Global Trade Atlas.

<sup>36</sup> U.S. Department of Commerce (U.S. and Foreign Commercial Service) and U.S. Department of State. *Doing Business in Jamaica: A Country Commercial Guide for U.S. Companies*, February 18, 2010.

<sup>37</sup> U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of Economic Analysis, "U.S. Direct Investment Abroad Tables," Survey of Current Business, September 2010, Table 14, p. 242.

<sup>38</sup> USTR, "2010 Special 301 Report," April 30, 2010.

**Figure I. Political Map of Jamaica**



Source: CRS Graphics.

## **Appendix A. Links to U.S. Government Reports**

### **Background Note, Jamaica**

*Date:* December 2009

*Full Text:* <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/2032.htm>

### **Congressional Budget Justification for Foreign Operations FY2011, Annex: Regional Perspectives (Jamaica, pp. 728-732 of pdf)**

*Date:* March 2010

*Full Text:* <http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/137937.pdf>

### **Country Reports on Human Rights Practices 2009, Jamaica**

*Date:* March 11, 2010

*Full Text:* <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2009/wha/136118.htm>

### **Country Reports on Terrorism 2008 (Western Hemisphere Overview)**

*Date:* April 30, 2009

*Full Text:* <http://www.state.gov/s/ct/rls/crt/2008/122435.htm>

### **Doing Business in Jamaica: A Country Commercial Guide for U.S. Companies**

*Date:* February 18, 2010

*Full Text:* [http://www.buyusainfo.net/docs/x\\_3846719.pdf](http://www.buyusainfo.net/docs/x_3846719.pdf)

### **International Religious Freedom Report 2009, Jamaica**

*Date:* October 26, 2009

*Full Text:* <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2009/127396.htm>

### **International Narcotics Control Strategy Report 2010, Vol. I (Jamaica, pp. 388-392 of pdf)**

*Date:* March 2010

*Full Text:* <http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/138548.pdf>

### **Trafficking in Persons Report 2009 (Jamaica, pp. 188-190 of pdf link)**

*Date:* June 14, 2010

*Full Text:* <http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/142979.pdf>



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