

# AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL PRESS RELEASE

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## **Jamaica: Investigations of police killings a farce**

New information concerning the recent collapse of the trial of the police officer accused of killing 13-year-old Janice Allen highlights the way in which police officers who kill are protected by the system, Amnesty International said today.

A primary reason for the collapse of the case was the lack of evidence linking the police officer to the gun that killed Janice Allen due to the "loss" of records documenting the issuing of guns.

"That this evidence was not immediately secured by the investigating officers shows a lack of understanding of the most basic procedures for the investigation of police killings and a gross dereliction of duty" Amnesty International said.

The Prosecution would have been able to link the officer to the gun via the testimony of one of the investigating officers, Detective Sergeant Dunchie, but told the court that the officer was not going to be in the country for some time. However, the Detective was in Jamaica and remained a serving police officer.

Amnesty International is calling for a full investigation into how the Prosecution needlessly sabotaged its own case based on wrong information.

"The investigation needs to show who gave the incorrect information to the Prosecution, and why, upon receiving the information, the Prosecution chose to continue with a trial they must have known they would lose, rather than attempting to have an adjournment and locate Detective Sergeant Dunchie" Amnesty International added.

"Today marks the fourth anniversary of Janice Allen's death. During those four years the relatives of Janice Allen have attended endless pre-trial hearings and suffered harassment and intimidation by the police as they wait to have their day in court. When the day finally arrives, they witness the Prosecution end their hopes of having a jury hear the evidence. This is an unacceptable affront to justice."

### **Background Information**

In the years that Amnesty International has monitored killings by the Jamaican security forces, many statements have been made by the authorities regarding the protection of human rights and the reform of the system that investigates police killings. In reality, nothing has changed.

The last conviction of a police officer for an unlawful killings committed while on duty was in October 1999, over four years ago. During that time, hundreds of Jamaicans have been killed by police

officers in questionable circumstances. The name of Janice Allen will be added to the long list of individuals killed by state agents whose cases were not adequately investigated by the courts.

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For more information please call Amnesty International's press office in London, UK, on +44 20 7413 5566

Amnesty International, 1 Easton St., London WC1X 0DW. web: <http://www.amnesty.org>

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