



www.hearchildrencry.com

48 Constant Spring Road, Kingston 10
929-0431, 822-0483 hearchildrencry@yahoo.com

PRESS RELEASE

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HEAR THE CHILDREN'S CRY CALLS FOR
MORE QUESTIONS, CREDIBLE ANSWERS

In case of two year old Joshua's death, dismemberment

Hear the Children's Cry is calling for some credible answers in the gruesome case of two year old Joshua, who police found dead in a suitcase at his parents' dilapidated home on Sunday January 15 – and whose internal organs had allegedly been removed. The children's service organization is just as strident in its call for more questions – and wants to know why Jamaicans are not more alarmed, outraged and angry about this and the many other cases of atrocities perpetrated against Jamaican children.

"Why is there no outrage?" demands Celta Kirkland, Family Counselor with Hear the Children's Cry; "And what really happened to this pitiful little boy? We need more credible answers than those which have been made public. Senior Police Superintendent Delroy Hewitt is quoted in the press as announcing that a pathologist's report claims the boy died from natural causes. But this is not easily believed – if the child's internal organs had been removed, it would be impossible for an autopsy to reach a realistic conclusion about cause of death – the state of the organs would have had to be known to draw such a conclusion!"

Mrs. Kirkland, a trained nurse and former nursing administrator and lecturer, also bemoans the fact that little Joshua had reportedly been dead for months before the discovery of his body; the frustration of the family's neighbours who worried about his sudden absence but were unable to rescue him, and the seeming lack of response from the society in general to the levels of violence being perpetrated against Jamaica's children.

"Where is the outrage?" she asks, "Once again we have an atrocity against a child, left wide open. Where are the answers? We are tired of these kinds of horror stories. Hear the Children's Cry is very concerned about what is happening to our children – rape, abduction, murder, dismemberment, and a host of other violent abuses. And nothing seems to be done. How much longer are we going to ignore the causes of our children?"

"We are calling on the Government to prioritize the affairs of Jamaica's children. The demise of a child should not be an "also ran" on the national agenda. The murder of a child should not even be possible, in a sane society. We are calling on caring citizens to demand credible answers when a child is hurt, lost, or killed. We are calling on all Jamaicans to be active and effective protectors of the children around them. And we are calling on the authorities to carry out a thorough and speedy investigation into what happened to little Joshua, and WHY is was ALLOWED to happen."

Hear the Children's Cry is a voluntary organization providing urgently needed services for children and young people. Established in 2002, it combines vigorous, high profile advocacy with practical programmes for children, families and youth. It established its multi-faceted **Missing Children's Support Programme** in April 2009, with continuing support from Jamaica Yellow Pages.

This is Jamaica's only entity, public or private, providing counseling for the families of missing children, as well as for returned missing children. It works with the security forces to access statistics on missing children, analyzing and publishing these. It also carries out islandwide programmes of Safety Education in Schools and Parenting Education, and networks with other stakeholders serving the welfare of Jamaican children.

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