

**PRESS RELEASE**

The Lawyers Christian Fellowship protests the upsurge in murders and violence against women, especially against pregnant women. The recent flare-up of gun-violence against women must force us as a nation to face the growing disrespect and disregard for womanhood. In times gone by men, both young and old, would regard women with care as they walked on the roads, rode buses and went about their everyday lives. Our men took care of them on the streets and gave up their seats on buses. It was once unthinkable for women to be the targets of gruesome crimes and gun violence, least of all a woman with child.

Twenty-seven year old Kay-Ann Lamont, 8 months pregnant, was gunned down by a Police Officer when they got into a trivial verbal altercation. It is reported that Ms. Lamont was angry that her money was stolen and that she was not being properly attended to by the Police. The policeman allegedly opened fire on Ms. Lamont and her two sisters. She was shot twice in the head, her sister Novia was also injured and another sister escaped. A few days later Ashmarie Palmer and Shantell Davis (9 months pregnant) were also gunned down by gunmen in St. James in two separate incidents. The killings of these women are acts of cowardice of the greatest degree.

We cannot allow our women and pregnant mothers to be the targets of such violence. These tragedies must not be allowed to pass without seriously looking at ourselves and calling for action. The LCF vehemently denounces the use of excessive and deadly force by the Jamaica Constabulary Force. It is a matter of critical importance that the JCF's use-of-force policies be implemented and adhered to by all members of the Force and that the JCF adopts a position of care and protection when relating to all members of society. It cannot be that members of the force show no more discretion than the criminal elements they fight.

Admittedly the case of Kay-Ann Lamont is an extraordinary event and not the usual response of members of our Police Force. There are many honourable and courageous police officers that continue to serve our country well. In this regard we recommend periodic psychometric and psychosocial testing for police officers on the frontline and we strongly encourage the JCF to put measures in place to ensure that their members are cared for emotionally, mentally and spiritually. These tragedies must not be allowed to happen again.

We must protect our women and children for therein lies our very future!

Shirley Richards  
Interim President