

ABILL

ENTITLED

AN ACT to Amend the Offences Against the Person Act.

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BE IT ENACTED by The King's Most Excellent Majesty, by and with the advice and consent of the Senate and House of Representatives of Jamaica, and by the authority of the same, as follows:—

1. This Act may be cited as the Offences Against the Person (Amendment) Act, 2023, and shall be read and construed as one with the Offences Against the Person Act (hereinafter referred to as the principal Act) and all amendments thereto.

Short title
and
construction.

Amendment
of section 3
of the
principal Act.

2. Section 3 of the principal Act is amended—

- (a) in subsection (1)(b), by deleting the word “fifteen” and substituting therefor the word “forty-five”;
- (b) in subsection (1C)(a), by deleting the word “twenty” and substituting therefor the word “fifty”;
- (c) in subsection (1C)(b)(i), by deleting the word “fifteen” and substituting therefor the word “forty”; and
- (d) in subsection (1C)(b)(ii), by deleting the word “ten” and substituting therefor the word “thirty-five”.

MEMORANDUM OF OBJECTS AND REASONS

A decision has been taken that Jamaica's peculiar reality—namely, an uncontrolled and unabated murder rate that ranks highest among 22 Latin American and Caribbean countries, the adverse impact on domestic safety and security, the reputational damage to Jamaica resulting therefrom and, by extension, the impact on the country's Gross Domestic Product—warrants a similarly distinctive approach and necessitates penalties that are especially punitive.

A decision has therefore been taken to amend the Offences Against the Person Act to increase the mandatory minimum penalty specified for murder under section 3(1)(b) of the Act and to increase the minimum periods that must be served before an offender is eligible for parole, as specified in section 3(1C) of the Act. This Bill seeks to give effect to that decision.

DELROY CHUCK
Minister of Justice.

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As introduced by the Honourable Minister of Justice.

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