

## PRESS RELEASE

March 20, 2020

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **PARISH COURT SITTINGS ADJOURNED UNTIL APRIL 20 TO MINIMISE IMPACT OF COVID-19**

KINGSTON, Jamaica – Effective Monday, March 23, 2020, the following measures will take effect in the Parish Courts and Specialized Courts to contain the spread of COVID-19 in the country.

#### **Suspension of all sittings/hearings**

- **All sittings and hearings will be suspended until April 20, 2020**, save and except for matters deemed by the Judge to be fit for hearing during this period. New dates will be assigned and those dates will be communicated through the media.
- Matters in relation to Domestic Violence, Maintenance, Breaches of the Quarantine Act and cases involving children will **ALWAYS** be treated as emergency matters.
- In civil matters, no trials are to take place. Judgments in default may continue within the discretion of the judge having regard to all the circumstances.

#### **Bail**

- All persons on bail, will have their bail extended until their next court date, which will be announced on our websites and through the press.

#### **Criminal Courts**

- All matters are to be adjourned until April 20, 2020. Guilty pleas are to be facilitated.

### **Traffic Court**

- All matters for trial are to be adjourned for a future date. Guilty pleas will be facilitated.

### **Night Court**

- All night court hearings are postponed with immediate effect. Affected persons can call the hotlines for the new dates and for further information.

### **Drug Treatment Courts**

- All matters before the Drug Treatment Courts are to be adjourned for a date in the future.

### **Family Services (at the Parish Courts)**

- Counselling matters are to be facilitated by phone (for existing clients) where possible or suspended until further notice. A Counsellor should be available in case of an emergency.
- Declaration of Paternity and Custody matters are to be suspended until further notice.

### **Spirit Licenses**

- Applicants for spirit licenses need not to turn up for court. Applicants will be advised of the outcome of their applications by phone. For applications not granted, the application is to be heard at the next sitting.

### **Emergency Call Centre**

- An emergency call centre has been set up using some of the straight lines to the courts. Personnel from CAD will answer these lines and contact the courts for information in relation to each caller. The numbers from St. James, Corporate Area Criminal and CAD will be given to the public as numbers to call for information. The numbers are: 876-926-3750, 876-613-8800 and 876-754-8337.

These measures are aimed at discouraging public gatherings and promoting social distancing. The Court Administration Division (CAD) continues to urge our staff and members of the public to practice proper hygiene to better protect themselves from the spread of the virus.

Please visit the following websites: [www.supremecourt.gov.jm](http://www.supremecourt.gov.jm), [www.cad.gov.jm](http://www.cad.gov.jm) and [www.parishcourt.gov.jm](http://www.parishcourt.gov.jm) for information on new court dates.