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Joint enforcement at NMIA leads to POCA convictions; travellers fined after declaring large cash sums

October 13, 2025, Kingston, Jamaica: The Jamaica Customs Agency (JCA), working in collaboration with the Financial Investigations Division (FID), secured convictions against two men who attempted to depart Jamaica with large sums of cash, in breach of Section 101A of the Proceeds of Crime Act (POCA). The results follow stepped-up enforcement of regulations governing cross-border movement of money.

One passenger, en route to Curaçao, declared US\$64,408 to Customs Officers and stated that the funds were received from a Montego Bay-based wholesale for goods supplied by his warehouse. Two days later, another traveller heading to the same destination, accompanied by a minor, declared US\$50,000, similarly claiming it had been collected from the same Montego Bay establishment in relation to goods supplied to them from the Curaçao-based company.

Both men were referred to the FID, charged under Section 101A of POCA, and brought before the court. They each pleaded guilty and were fined \$200,000.

Director of Investigation at Jamaica Customs, Cassell Dunkley, said the incidents underscore the Agency's vigilance in protecting Jamaica's financial system from abuse and serve as a reminder to travellers and business operators of their legal obligations and to use the formal banking system.

"We are reminding business persons that the payment of \$1,000,000 or more in cash is prohibited under the Proceeds of Crime Act. Even if payments are broken up into smaller amounts, once they are linked, it still constitutes a breach and offenders will be charged," Mr. Dunkley explained.

He added that while carrying cash across borders is not illegal, travellers must declare any amount over US\$10,000 (or its equivalent) and must be able to verify its source and purpose. *"These safeguards are designed to deter money laundering, trade-based money laundering and other forms of illicit finance that threaten the integrity of our economy,"* he said.

Keith Darien, Principal Director of Investigations at the FID, said the outcomes highlight effective inter-agency coordination and the importance of using regulated financial channels: *"These convictions reflect the strength of our partnership with the Jamaica Customs Agency and our shared focus on protecting Jamaica's financial system. When significant sums move across borders, the law requires transparency about the source and purpose of those funds."*

We will continue to work side-by-side with Customs to detect, investigate, and prosecute breaches of POCA, and we urge businesses and travellers alike to use the formal banking system and comply fully with the declaration requirements."

The JCA and FID reiterate their joint commitment to combating illicit financial flows and ensuring Jamaica remains compliant with global anti-money-laundering and counter-terrorism-financing standards.