



TRADEBEAT



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INTERNATIONAL CUSTOMS DAY

CUSTOMS
PROTECTING
SOCIETY THROUGH
VIGILANCE &
COMMITMENT



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Customs Protecting Society through Vigilance and Commitment

INTERNATIONAL CUSTOMS DAY 2026

The Jamaica Customs Agency (JCA), along with our Customs colleagues worldwide, celebrates International Customs Day (ICD) on January 26 of each year. ICD provides an opportunity to raise awareness about Customs and our processes, as well as showcase our accomplishments and future outlook. This year the theme is **“Customs Protecting Society through Vigilance and Commitment.”** The theme highlights the critical role Customs plays in safeguarding our nations, even as we strive to collect the revenue due and facilitate legitimate trade.

The JCA, through strategic planning, implementation and monitoring, ensures that continuous vigilance and commitment to protecting Jamaica’s society is a part of who we are and what we do. Key enablers of these objectives include:

- the adoption of a risk-based and post clearance audit approach
- comprehensive, modern Customs legislation
- leveraging technology
- optimization of human capital
- adoption of international standards
- focused anti-corruption and ethics initiatives
- collaboration with stakeholders

PROTECTING SOCIETY THROUGH COMMITMENT & VIGILANCE

The words commitment and vigilance are not static, rather, they describe sustained action, on the part of the JCA in their efforts to protect society.

Commitment at the Agency starts at the executive level, with the Commissioner, Dr. Velma Ricketts Walker, and the management team and extends to every member of staff. It is also captured in the Agency’s strategic plans, policies and procedures.

The positive outcomes speak for themselves and is reflected in the advanced stage of the repeal and replacement of the Customs Act; the creation and implementation of appropriate policies and procedures, including standard operating procedures (SOPs); employment of international tools and best practices, as guided by the World Customs Organization (WCO), World Trade Organization (WTO) and other relevant international bodies; attainment of ISO 9001:2015 Quality Management System certification; a dedicated Anti-Corruption & Integrity Section; an Anti-Corruption Programme; continuous investment in training and development of JCA team members.





KEY ENABLERS

The WCO has identified “information and intelligence sharing, regional cooperation, capacity building, risk management, detection equipment and data analysis as the backbone of effective enforcement.” The JCA acknowledges these practices and tools as being essential, and in pursuit of excellence has broadened our scope to specifically include :

- **Risk-based and Post Clearance Audit (PCA) Approach.**

Facilitates efficient resource allocation, allowing focus on high-risk areas, while facilitating the flow of legitimate trade. PCA complements risk management, with audits being conducted from 2 - 7 years post clearance, the Agency ensures vigilance even after the clearance process.

- **Modern legislation**

Recognizing the foundation that good legislation lays, the JCA is currently working assiduously on repealing and replacing the old Customs Act. The proposed new legislation is in an advanced stage and will bring modern language, risk-based processes and updated provisions, fit for today's environment.



- **International Standards and Certification**

Demonstration of the JCA's commitment to quality and continuous improvement is seen in the Agency's attainment and maintenance of ISO 9001:2015 Quality Management System certification. This certification necessitates rigorous scrutiny of every process, including border enforcement, and ensures that they are standardized and auditable.



- **Technology**

ICT is cross-cutting at the JCA and underpins all our operations internally and with external stakeholders. Key ICT initiatives include the Automated System for Customs Data (ASYCUDA), Jamaica Single Window for Trade (JSWIFT), the Customs Mobile App, new JCA website, internal fit for use modules, for e.g. risk management, PCA, as well as collaborations with the Port Authority of Jamaica (Port Community System), and the Passport, Immigration & Citizenship Agency (electronic C5).



KEY ENABLERS cont'd

• Coordinated Border Management

Coordinated Border Management (CBM) is a collaborative approach adopted by border regulatory agencies (BRAs) in managing trade and travel flows, while ensuring compliance requirements are met. The JCA works with other BRAs, such as the Ministry of Health & Wellness, Ministry of Industry, Investment & Commerce, Ministry of National Security, our own parent Ministry, the Ministry of Finance & Planning, as well as other local and international partners, in conducting coordinated inspections, information-sharing and international collaboration, resulting in more effective and efficient risk management across borders.

• Robust Anti-Corruption Strategy

The JCA has a strong focus on integrity, one of our core values, and commits to maintaining high ethical standards. Key initiatives include: adoption of the tenets of the WCO's Revised Arusha Declaration (global standard for good governance in Customs); a dedicated Anti-Corruption & Integrity Section; targeted internal and external engagement in the form of panel discussions and training sessions; secure anonymous reporting channels for e.g. 1-800-CORRUPT hotline, the Customs Relationship Feedback Form or direct contact with the Internal Affairs Division; security vetting and re-vetting of staff; use of monitoring and evaluation tools such as the WCO's Customs Integrity Perception Survey (CIPS), in partnership with the WCO's Anti-Corruption and Integrity Promotion (ACIP) Programme.

THE JCA'S BORDER PROTECTION DIVISION - PROTECTING NATIONAL SECURITY

The Border Protection Division (BPD) is comprised of 5 units: the Intelligence Unit, Non-Intrusive Inspection & Security Management Branch (NISMB), the Contraband Enforcement Team (CET) and the Operational Risk Management & Targeting Branch. The Division plays a crucial role in Jamaica's security and reduction of crime, through the interdiction of restricted and prohibited goods such as firearms and ammunition, illicit drugs, and radioactive materials; instances of lottery scamming, money laundering, other corrupt trading practices; as well as the enforcement of intellectual property rights (IPR).

The BPD is highly intelligence-driven and operates through the analysis and dissemination of properly gathered intelligence to a well-trained team in a confidential and controlled manner.

The Division successfully accomplishes its mandate of securing our nation's borders through engaging in strategic partnerships, employing a collaborative approach in the form of joint engagements, intelligence and information sharing, coordinated multi-agency law enforcement capacity building and enhanced inter-agency cooperation.





THE JCA'S BORDER PROTECTION DIVISION - PROTECTING NATIONAL SECURITY cont'd

Key local and international collaborations include:

- Jamaica Constabulary Force (JCF)
- Jamaica Defence Force (JDF)
- PICA
- Major Organized Crime Agency (MOCA)
- Financial Investigations Division (FID)
- PAJ
- Jamaica Civil Aviation Authority (JCAA)
- various embassies in Jamaica
- WCO
- Caribbean Customs Law Enforcement Council (CCLEC)
- Caribbean Community Implementation Agency for Crime & Security (CARICOM IMPACS)
- United Nations Office on Drugs & Crime (UNODC)
- the European Union
- International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL)

Record-breaking Work

The BPD enjoyed a very productive and successful year in 2025, reaping marked increases in the detection and seizures of contraband, arms and ammunition, currency, as well as arrests. Notable statistics for the period January to December 2025 reflected:

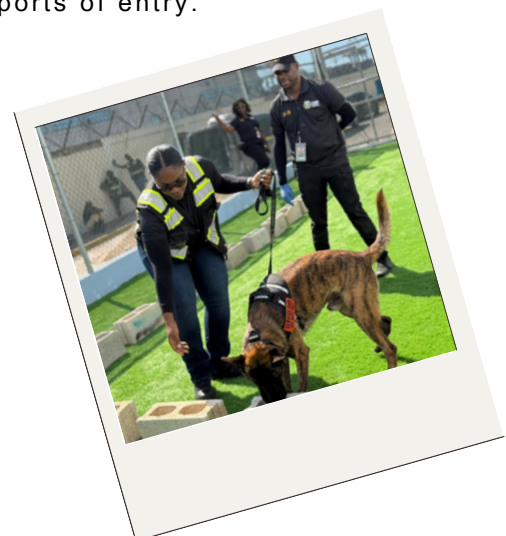
- over 200 seizures, a 28.6% increase compared to the previous year.
- notable increases in marijuana and debit/credit card seizures
- dramatic increases in currency seizures (USD at 114.4%; CAD at 142.77%; JMD at 13,100%)

However, it was on May 27, 2025 that the JCA made its largest seizure of arms and ammunition to date, recovering more than 200 firearms, over 20,000 rounds of ammunition along with various firearms parts and assorted magazine rounds.

The Division credited extensive training initiatives, enhanced intelligence-sharing, advanced port screening systems and strengthened inter-agency and international collaboration as the reasons for their success.

The Canine Unit - BPD's Newest Team

The BPD has also had an exciting addition to their team through the Agency's new Canine Unit. The Unit is comprised of 12 staff members and 8 highly trained canines, who are expected to maintain the tradition of success in border security by bolstering the detection of narcotics, explosives, munitions and other restricted or prohibited goods at the major ports of entry.





OTHER WAYS THE JCA PROTECTS SOCIETY

The JCA not only protects society through border enforcement activities, but also through the enforcement of multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs), and even through the WCO's Harmonised System (HS).

Protection of the environment is often overlooked from the perspective of Customs. The JCA, along with partner BRAs, such as the National Environment & Planning Agency (NEPA), has the responsibility to enforce the MEAs to which Jamaica is party. These MEAs govern the movement of environmentally sensitive items, including endangered plants and animals; hazardous substances and products such as hazardous waste, pollutants, ozone-depleting substances and other chemicals.

Also overlooked as one way that the Agency protects the society, is through the employment of the HS, a key tool used by over 200 economies, Customs and economic unions for the classification of goods and as the basis for their national tariffs and collection of trade data. The HS is the foundation upon which Jamaica's National Tariff is built and is utilized to administer our trade policies. From a border security perspective, it is essential in identifying hazardous goods, restricted chemicals, ozone-depleting substances and other regulated items, and determining the treatment they should be accorded. In this way, the HS supports the effective monitoring of these specified goods and enforcement measures, as appropriate.

THE JCA'S COMMITMENT

As the Agency continues on our journey towards achieving our Vision and Mission, while embracing the principles of our core values of Customer -focused, Accountability, Professionalism, Integrity and Transparency ('CAPIT'), every team member plays an important role in our success. The protection of society is not an abstract principle, but is one that impacts our daily lives and those of every Jamaican. The JCA commits to continuing to show our commitment to this worthy task and to remaining vigilant in our processes and interventions, so that our nation will be a prosperous, secure country that we can be proud to live, work and do business in.



Learn More



For more information on some of the ways the JCA protects our nation on a daily basis, click on the links provided to the appropriate TradeBeat.

Useful links:

1. [Basel Convention & The Role of Customs](#)
2. [The Plastic Waste Amendments to the Basel Convention](#)
3. [Green Customs Contributing to a Sustainable Future](#)
4. [Kigali Amendment to the Montreal Protocol](#)
5. [Coordinated Border Management](#)
6. [Intellectual Property Rights Part 1](#)
7. [Intellectual Property Rights Part 2](#)
8. [The Revised Arusha Declaration](#)
9. [Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna & Flora](#)
10. [JCA's Anti-Corruption Strategy](#)

The International & Industry Liaison Branch (IILB) is committed to raising awareness on topics relating to the International Trade, as well as issues concerning the Caribbean Community which may affect our internal and external stakeholders. Our quarterly Newsletter seeks to highlight global trade topics and their importance to Customs Administrations worldwide, specifically as it relates to the Jamaica Customs Agency.

As we realize our vision to becoming a modern customs administration delivering excellent service, we recognize the importance of knowledge transfer in delivering our objectives and use this forum as one way of contributing the vision of Jamaica Customs Agency (JCA). The IILB is located at JCA's Head Office, and our officers are available to respond to your trade-related queries. **Contact us at: iilu@jca.gov.jm.**

