



Urban Alliance On Race Relations

2 Carlton Street, Suite 1001, Toronto, Ontario M5B 1J3
Tel: (416) 703-6607 Fax: (416) 703-4415 e-mail: info@urbanalliance.ca
Charitable Registration 11928-0022-RR0001

Women's rights activist in Jamaica charged under Cybercrimes Act for allegedly naming sexual offenders on social media

MARCH 24, 2017

FACT SHEET

Latoya Nugent & the Tambourine Army

- Latoya Nugent, a co-founder of the Tambourine Army, was arrested and charged last week under Jamaica's Cybercrimes Act with three counts of using a computer for "malicious communication" for allegedly naming sexual perpetrators on social media.
- The Tambourine Army is a social justice movement working to eliminate sexual violence and protect the rights of women and children in Jamaica.
- The Tambourine Army was born out of the hashtag #TambourineArmy after activists hit a pastor with a tambourine during a protest calling attention to a high-profile sexual assault case within the Moravian Church.

Context of Sexual Violence in the Caribbean

- According to the United Nations, the Caribbean has some of the highest rates of sexual assault in the world. It is estimated that one in three women have experienced sexual or physical violence, and 14-38% of women have experienced intimate partner violence at least once.
- National legislation in Jamaica is criticized as failing to adequately address sexual violence, and the Sexual Offences Act very narrowly defines rape as "non-consensual penile penetration of a woman's vagina by a man."
- While crimes involving sexual violence are considered significantly under-reported, additional concerns include lack of investigation and prosecution. As few as half of all reported sexual violence cases in Jamaica are ever closed.

The Legal Challenge

- Critics of the move to prosecute Nugent are arguing she has been targeted because of her prominent activism. She has been vocally critical of the Jamaican and other Caribbean governments' inadequate enforcement of sexually violent crimes.
- Several lawyers and human rights advocates have also suggested that the Cybercrimes Act offers a loophole for prosecuting criminal libel, which was abolished in 2013 with the Defamation Act.
- Nugent maintains her innocence and made her first court appearance on March 22.
- There have been allegations that Nugent has been denied medical assistance while being held in custody.

###

The Urban Alliance on Race Relations is a non-profit charitable organization that works primarily and proactively with the community, public and private sectors to provide educational programs and research, which are critical in addressing racism in society. Learn more at urbanalliance.ca.