

The Most Hon. Andrew Holness
Prime Minister
National Heroes Day Message 2023

Jamaica!

Today, as we have been doing for many decades, actually since 1969, we mark our National Heroes' Day.

It is a day wherein we celebrate the strength, service, and sacrifice of our national heroes, and importantly a day that calls upon us to look within ourselves and put into action our own heroism in the service of our country and our fellow citizens.

Jamaica needs heroes. Our nation was built on the backs of our heroes, and if we are going to continue our march towards peace, progress, and prosperity for our people, we must all answer the call to be heroes.

We need our society to be a society of heroes who do the right things, say the right things, and live in the right ways that promote harmony in our society.

As we acknowledge the need for more Jamaican heroes, we salute those who are already heroes among us - individuals and communities who rise above challenges, who lend a helping hand, who inspire hope, and who exemplify the true Jamaican spirit.

- The many families who work together and raise their children with love, respect, and positive values.

- The many community members who lookout for their neighbours and assist the senior citizens in their communities.

- The patriots who refuse to give refuge to criminals and provide vital information that helps to apprehend them.

- The single mothers and fathers who work tirelessly to provide for their children.

- The teachers who go the extra mile to inspire young minds.

- The young people who take charge of their own lives and take up opportunities like HEART training Programmes, to advance themselves and secure a better future

- The citizens who care for the environment, by properly disposing of garbage and planting more trees.

- The healthcare workers who care for the ill.

- The security personnel who put themselves in harm's way to ensure our safety.

- The sanitation workers who work hard to keep our surroundings clean.

- The firemen and women who go into a burning building to rescue fellow citizens.

- The children who assist their friends and colleagues at school, who may be in distress.

Every one of you has made a choice to stand up for what is right, to make a positive difference and to be a beacon of hope for others. Every one of you is a hero, and today, Jamaica celebrates you!

We need heroes who will uplift our country by fostering meaningful dialogue, instead of engaging in destructive misinformation practices that create strife, discontent, discord, and hostility in our society.

Our individual actions in our circle of influence, whether it be amongst our friends, families, churches, schools, clubs, and groups, have a profound impact on our country as a whole. We cannot allow our society to sink into moral, intellectual, social, and economic depression; we must choose to make our country better through our daily actions.

This Heroes Day, let us not pay lip service to ourselves and to our country, let us no longer collectively commiserate about what's wrong with Jamaica, but rather, let us resolve to work individually and

collectively to create the Jamaica we all so desperately yearn to see. We have the capacity; we can all be heroes for Jamaica.

Marcus Mosiah Garvey, Nanny of the Maroons, Sam Sharpe, Paul Bogle, George William Gordon, Norman Washington Manley, and Sir Alexander Bustamante, exemplify what it means to be a hero and we must reflect often on their legacy which calls on us to be architects of positive change, the guardians of justice and champions of unity.

In 2023, we find ourselves facing a unique set of challenges. As Jamaica undergoes significant transformation our communities continue to grapple with issues such as economic inequality, crime, environmental issues, as well as the access to quality education and healthcare. My fellow Jamaicans, I am here to tell you that there is hope. As we wrestle with these challenges, good things are also happening in Jamaica.

For every bad thing that you see or hear about, there are also many good things. It is up to each of us to not only take note of the good things, but to share the good things that are happening. The fact is that amidst the global challenges Jamaica has been able to report:

- Nine consecutive quarters of economic growth since the pandemic.

- A historically low unemployment rate of 4.5%, which is lower than even some of our developed country partners.

- Increased export earnings.

- A significantly lower level of national debt.

- The best international credit rating that we have ever received in our history.

What does all of this mean for you? It means more jobs and more economic opportunities. It means your government can now allocate more money in the budget to fix our roads, build more houses, supply water to our communities, improve our schools, improve our hospitals, pay our police, teachers, nurses and workers generally, more.

On this Heroes Day, assume an optimistic mindset, embrace your own heroism, and grasp opportunities before you to make a meaningful change in your life and the lives of others. I encourage you to believe in yourself and your ability to make a positive difference.

Be compassionate and empathetic to others. Seek out opportunities to contribute positively to your community and your country; but above all, recognize that by your own actions you can transform your country and your life. You are who you have been waiting for.

This Heroes Day, be a catalyst for renewed determination. Let us be heroes in our homes, in our churches, in our schools, in our workplaces and in our communities.

Let us work hand-in-hand to build a Jamaica that continues to shine as a beacon of progress, inclusivity and prosperity.

May the indomitable spirit of our heroes guide and inspire us all to overcome any obstacle, surmount any hurdle, and continue our journey towards a brighter tomorrow.

Together we must keep on BUILDING JAMAICA.

Happy Heroes Day!

May God continue to Bless each and every one of you, and God Bless Jamaica, Land we Love.