



## Ministry of Local Government & Rural Development

61 HAGLEY PARK ROAD, KINGSTON 10, JAMAICA

Telephone: 876-618-7360-1

# PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
MARCH 14, 2021

### **LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT MINISTER ANNOUNCES ADJUSTMENT TO ISLAND-WIDE BAN ON BURIALS**

Minister of Local Government and Rural Development, Hon. Desmond McKenzie, has announced an adjustment to the two-week ban on burials currently in force, to allow for the disposal of human remains in specially prescribed circumstances. "Having met with Funeral Directors and related stakeholders last week, a number of proposals emerged from those conversations. Accordingly, approval has been given for:

1. **The burial or cremation of bodies that are in an advanced state of decomposition.**
2. **The burial or cremation of bodies that are not in an advanced state of decomposition, but have been recommended for immediate burial by the appropriate health authorities, and**
3. **The burial or cremation of indigent persons who die in state care.**

**"These measures took effect on Saturday, March 13. I want to make it clear that only the clergy will be allowed to administer the final rites for persons who are buried or cremated in these three circumstances. No family gathering will be allowed. The current Order prohibiting burials remains in effect."**

The Minister also stated that approval has been given to allow families to obtain Death Certificates for submission to the Registrar General's Department, to facilitate preparations for burials once the ban is lifted. "What this means is that **effective Monday March 15, the Registrar General's Department will issue Burial Orders after receiving Death Certificates,** so that families and Funeral Homes can make all the necessary arrangements for the final send-off of the deceased once the ban on burials is lifted. **No burials are being authorized by this change.** As an additional measure to ensure compliance with the ban on burials, **I also want to make it very clear that the Municipal Corporations will not be issuing Interment Orders, without which no final disposal of a body can be done.** This ban on burials came about because of the total disregard for the COVID-19 protocols at gravesites all over the country, and the connection between this behaviour and the spike in cases and hospitalizations. The Government will continue to do everything to bring these numbers down, and save lives."

Minister McKenzie also indicated that the Government is considering additional proposals made by the stakeholders in the afterlife industry, and commended them for their understanding, strong sense of partnership and co-operation with the Administration, as it continues to implement the necessary strategies to preserve and promote public health.

**Contact: Communications Unit  
Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development  
61 Hagley Park Road  
Kingston 10  
Tel: 876-618-7360-1**