

STATEMENT

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Statement on Incident at His Majesty's Prison, Balsam Ghut From Superintendent of Prison Jay Kendall

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From Superintendent of Prison Jay Kendall

March 31, 2025

On Sunday, 30 March 2025, an incident occurred at His Majesty's Prison, Balsam Ghut, involving a prisoner with known mental health challenges who attacked a prison officer. I wish to assure the public that our staff responded swiftly and effectively, using appropriate and measured force to de-escalate the situation and ensure the safety of all involved.

Both the officer and the inmate received medical attention at Dr D. Orlando Smith Hospital and were treated and released the same day. I would like to extend my sincere gratitude to the medical professionals who provided prompt and compassionate care.

I also commend my staff for their professionalism, vigilance, and quick response. Their decisive actions prevented further harm and demonstrated the critical role our officers play in maintaining a secure and supportive environment while managing inmates with complex needs.

This incident underscores the unpredictable nature of corrections work and highlights the ongoing challenges associated with mental health in custodial settings. Over the past 18 months, we have worked in close partnership with the Ministry of Health and Social Development and the Governor's Office to strengthen safety, security, and rehabilitation efforts within the prison. These initiatives have included enhanced officer training, mental health awareness programmes, and the provision of improved protective equipment, including upgraded communication tools for responding in critical situations.

While we have made meaningful progress, we acknowledge that continuous improvement is necessary. We remain committed to reviewing and enhancing our policies, procedures, and resources to uphold the highest standards of care, security, and rehabilitation.

Mental health remains a key priority. Many incarcerated individuals face significant psychological challenges that require a balanced approach—one that ensures institutional safety while providing rehabilitative support. In collaboration with our partners, we will continue working to strengthen mental health interventions and improve overall inmate management.

I extend my appreciation to all those who assisted in managing this situation and reaffirm our shared commitment to the safety, security, and well-being of both our staff and the individuals in our care.