

*3rd Place*

# What is Corruption: A Youth View

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## What is corruption; A Youth View

What is this insanity which pervades all levels of the hierarchy of our society? What causes men to abandon justice and equity to pursue a path which satisfies their greed? What disease sucks the life out of our beautiful island, Jamaica? Undeniably, the monster of corruption plagues our society and is unraveling our societal framework to obscurity. Additionally, social issues like extra-judicial killings, mismanagement of public funds and parliamentary "cussing" fiascos are just a few symptoms of the disease of corruption. Now, do you want an unequivocal view on corruption? Join me as I enlighten your confusion, with the logic embodied in my opinion.

Corruption, in this context, may be defined as the perpetual dishonesty and injustice which pervades all levels of the hierarchy of our society? This is in fact the disease which is ailing the head and the madness which turns our leaders to greed. In 2014, our Global Corruption Perception Index was 38 which indicates that our social system is indeed known be corrupt. Let's face it, we have both the fastest sprinters and one of the muddiest political systems in the world. National scandals like the Finsac Crisis and Olint Scheme are oftentimes directly linked to our government which seems to be more adept at hiding their corruption than planning strategies to prevent it and prosecute offenders. It seems as if our leaders see the country's affairs and wellbeing as being secondary to their personal gain. Even when these acts are brought to light and justice is demanded, we are left with a situation like the sacked Finsac Inquiry. Hence, few youth are disillusioned by the justice met out by our legal system. It is as if the laws of the land are perceived to be a minor annoyance in light of potential personal gain.

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I was once in a conversation revolving around the issue of our government's "selling out" of Jamaica. It seems as if everything we have of value in our nation has a 'for-sale sign' attached to it. 'Failing' enterprises owned by our government are bought out by foreign countries who 'miraculously' transform them into lucrative businesses. In light of this fact, let us now take a look at a company we have been hearing a lot about lately, namely China Harbour Engineering Company (CHEC). They are popularly known as the interested buyers of the environmental sanctuary of the Goat Islands. Now, instead of the government making it a priority to protect this safe haven for some endangered flora and fauna, our "corrupticians" decided to 'sell out' our environment for money. Furthermore, they were and are still willing to do business with a company black listed by the World Bank for fraud and corruption. It's truly amazing to witness what the government will do in order to attain progress which never seems to benefit the ordinary Jamaican.

Every Jamaican has fallen victim at one point or another to systematic corruption. I pause to recall one of my earliest experiences with this monster. I was about eight at the time and was shocked out of my normal routine one day with the news, told by my tearful mother, that my cousin had been killed. How? He was murdered by police on patrol while walking through an inner city community. Why? He bore some semblance to a notorious gun man so they shot him before verifying this information to be true. Now, my confrontation with this arm of the monster isn't alien to many Jamaicans as proven by the killing of Mario Deane in a police lock-up and the massacre of the Tivoli Incursion. The trial against the state in the Mario Deane's killing has yielded a hasty police cover-up and the Tivoli Commission of Inquiry is way too high profile to serve much purpose than to waste our money. In fact as I watch the Inquiry, I wonder why taxpayer's money (about \$350 million Th1D) is being spent on a soap opera. Truly, the only purpose

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inquiries in Jamaica serve is to strengthen the public's distrust of the justice system. We, the youth, are disgusted by the theatrical production we have for a legal system which costs taxpayers a lot of money to maintain.

So, where are the press and the various anti-corruption agencies who serve to demand integrity of the leaders in our nation? Well, on the side of the anti-corruption agencies, like the Office and the Public Defender and the Independent Commission of Inquiry, they just happen to be understaffed and underfunded. On the side of the press, when they do decide to rouse national outrage it is often short-lived and to no result. This is why many youth see these agencies as a "joke" when viewed in light of their mandated responsibilities.

I have long wanted to be a politician, but the sad reality is that almost no one else my age does. In fact many youth abhor the very thought of entering a career in Politics or Law. Even the Business field isn't seen as lucrative if you are not willing to court corruption. Sadly, this is the culture we have been left with by previous generations. Lust for money and power to suit one's purposes has become the pre-requisite for many who seek to build a career in these fields. Hence, many youth are advised to avoid these professions like the plague.

It seems as if our leaders undergo a training course which makes them well-versed and skilled in the art corruption. False promises seem to be one of the devices taught in this curriculum, and are used of a means of getting votes to continue to systematic fattening of offshore bank accounts. This is why the majority of 'voting class' Jamaicans simply do not vote, as they have lost trust in our politician's ability to adequately manage our country. The few young people, like me, who are willing to change our current system, have the daunting task of

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dismantling a deeply-rooted evil and replacing it with the justice Jamaica needs if we are going to save ourselves.

The downhill plunge our country is experiencing is a direct consequence of the long lasting corruption which pervades our social system. This monster will remain immortalized if we do not seek to eradicate the greed which accompanies the posts of those we elect to preside over us. In conclusion, it is my view that that corruption is a major part of our system and efforts should be made to eradicate it before it is too late.

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