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US report baseless, says Jamaica

Date June 06, 2005

Brief KINGSTON - Jamaica's government yesterday denounced a United States State Department report criticising the island's efforts to fight human trafficking, saying the findings were not supported by hard evidence and ignored recent measures to stem the practice.

KINGSTON - Jamaica's government yesterday denounced a United States State Department report criticising the island's efforts to fight human trafficking, saying the findings were not supported by hard evidence and ignored recent measures to stem the practice.

Jamaica was among 14 countries accused of not doing enough to stem human trafficking in the report released Friday. The countries could face US sanctions if they don't crack down.

"We are offended," said Donovan Nelson, a spokesman for Jamaica's National Security Ministry. "There's no information to substantiate what they've said."

A separate government statement called the report "highly prejudicial".

The annual report called Jamaica a "source country" for the internal trafficking of child sex workers, citing a 2001 **International Labour Organisation** report that found 100 boys and girls were working on the island as prostitutes.

The report said Jamaican authorities have taken "no discernible action" against the local trafficking of child sex workers, faulting inadequate legislation, scarce resources and "a lack of political will".

Nelson rejected that, saying the government had set up hot lines for child victims of sexual exploitation and other crimes and tightened its immigration laws to better track people entering and leaving. (AP)

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