



Prime Minister Portia Simpson Miller has expressed sadness and outrage at the violent death of a 14 year old student of Haile Selassie High School in St. Andrew. She was speaking at a Social Development Commission parish forum at St. Hilda's High in Browns Town, St. Ann on Wednesday, January 30. The Prime Minister who was obviously shaken said she received the disturbing news on her way to the meeting.

"If I'm feeling this way, I can imagine the parents of this young girl"

The Prime Minister used the forum to appeal to parents and guardians to be extra vigilant and more protective of their children. She said they should be aware of the whereabouts of their children at all time.

"Whether they're in school or whether they're elsewhere, who are their friends? I'm appealing to the parents of Jamaica to stand up in the name of the future of this country [and] our little children," she said.

Mrs. Simpson Miller also called for a return of community parenting, imploring persons to take a vested interest in the welfare of the children in their area.



"We need to treat our children as the treasures they are. We need to set good examples for them to follow. We need to get back to the days when the community is also responsible for the growing up of our children, giving true meaning to the African proverb "It takes a village to raise a child". To protect our children we have to see them as our responsibility," she said.

In the meantime, the Government has re-iterated its commitment to the fight against crime even as it grapples with the country's financial challenges and debt.

Minister of Finance and the Public Sector, Dr. Peter Phillips, who also addressed the forum, said that after servicing the national debt, education, child welfare and national security are among the administration's top priorities.