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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Homophobia should not be ruled out in Terry's murder

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The Jamaica Forum for Lesbians, All-sexuals and Gays (J-FLAG) is concerned about the manner in which investigation into the murder of British Honorary Consul, John Terry on Wednesday, September 9 is proceeding. While J-FLAG believes that Mr. Terry's murder is yet another sign of the general disregard that many in our society have for human life, the content of a note reportedly found at the murder scene suggests he was the victim of a violently homophobic crime.

In the Friday, September 11 edition of the U.K.-based *Guardian* newspaper, it was reported that the handwritten note, signed "Gay-Man", warned: "This is what will happen to ALL gays". If this report is true, it would suggest that Mr. Terry's killing was indeed a hate crime.

Given this report and police declarations that they have no strong leads as to the motive for Mr. Terry's murder, J-FLAG is surprised that homophobia has been ruled out as a motive. J-FLAG believes that this is a precipitous decision and calls on the Jamaica Constabulary Force to provide evidence to justify its claim this early in the investigation. Further, the Force must also deny or confirm that a note of the kind reported by the *Guardian* was found at the crime scene.

As detectives continue their probe into the murder, J-FLAG hopes that their declaration that the killing was not motivated by homophobia is not an expedient attempt to counter the international perception that Jamaica is a homophobic society. J-FLAG calls on the security forces to treat this case with the utmost importance not because of Mr. Terry's status but by virtue of his humanity. It also implores them to assure that their statements about the nature of the killing are not made based on attempts to protect the image of the nation but on the evidence in the case.

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