

Kingston, Jamaica, Wednesday May 6, 2026

## **Jamaican premiere of *Beach Inna Bondage* brings urgent spotlight to fight for public beaches**

**KINGSTON – Last Saturday, May 2, the Jamaican premiere of the documentary *Beach Inna Bondage: The Fight for Jamaica’s Coastline* took place at Café Rosa to overwhelming interest, drawing a crowd of well over 200 attendees. The outdoor screening was followed by an engaging discussion featuring participants from the film alongside representatives of JaBBEM, underscoring the urgent call to action around beach access and land justice.**

*Beach Inna Bondage* is a Caribbean Creativity production made by Kingston-based Dutch filmmaking duo Emiel Martens and Elsie Vermeer in collaboration with the Jamaica Beach Birthright Environmental Movement (JaBBEM) and reggae artist Keznamdi, who recently won a Grammy Award for Best Reggae Album. Keznamdi’s powerful track ‘Colonial Bondage’ is woven throughout the documentary, amplifying its message. Even before of its official release, the film is already gaining significant online traction both locally and internationally. Teasers shared on social media this week have drawn thousands of viewers and sparked widespread discussion. Jamaicans at home and across the diaspora are responding passionately to its purpose, while people worldwide are expressing solidarity and share similar concerns about what’s happening to their own coastlines.

At just under 30 minutes, *Beach Inna Bondage* delivers an urgent exploration of the growing loss of beach access in Jamaica. Since the 1950s, most of Jamaica’s beaches have been taken over by private and tourist interests, and particularly since the 2000s large-scale hotel developments have limited beach access for Jamaicans. The film follows the grassroots movement resisting the privatization of Jamaican beaches by focusing on three frontline struggles: Bob Marley Beach near Kingston, the Blue Lagoon in the parish of Portland, and Mammee Bay Beach on the island’s North Coast. The interviewees, all Jamaicans, reveal how the 1956 Beach Control Act, which is still in effect today, vests ownership of the foreshore in the Jamaican state and traces how this colonial-era law, combined with the island’s all-inclusive tourism model, displaces communities, disrupts livelihoods, and degrades environments.

Interwoven with archival footage, news clips, and recordings of protest rallies and court cases, the interviewees situate today’s beach access struggles within Jamaica’s troubled history of land ownership following emancipation and independence. They argue that the island’s tourism industry replicates plantation logic by monopolizing land, concentrating wealth, exporting profits, and, ultimately, marginalizing the people. *Beach Inna Bondage* shows that beach access, which is not only an issue in Jamaica but across the Caribbean and beyond, is an urgent matter of historical, economic, social, cultural and environmental justice, raising the pressing question: Who truly benefits from Jamaica’s tourism industry?

The premiere screening of the film last Saturday was paired with a screening of *Aqui Vive Gente (People Live Here)*, a short film by Bianca Graulau in collaboration with Bad Bunny on gentrification and displacement in Puerto Rico, reinforcing the shared Caribbean experience of land and coastal struggles. Following the films, a discussion moderated by Rae-ann Smith invited a dialogue between the filmmakers, beach access advocates, and the audience, creating a shared space for reflection and engagement on the future of Jamaica’s beaches. Following the strong attention and interest the film has generated, additional screenings of *Beach Inna Bondage* in Kingston and across the island will be announced soon.

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## Notes to editors

### About the film

- Title: *Beach Inna Bondage: The Fight for Jamaica's Coastline*
- Directors: Emiel Martens & Elsie Vermeer in collaboration with JaBBEM & Keznamdi
- Year: 2026
- Country: Jamaica and the Netherlands
- Runtime: 29 minutes
- The documentary explores the growing struggle for public beach access in Jamaica, where less than 20% of all beaches remains publicly accessible, focusing on the grassroots resistance movement at Bob Marley Beach, Blue Lagoon, and Mammee Bay.

### Key collaboration

- Produced in collaboration with the Jamaica Beach Birthright Environmental Movement (JaBBEM) and reggae artist Keznamdi.
- Keznamdi, whose song 'Colonial Bondage' features prominently in the film, is a recent Grammy Award winner for Best Reggae Album (2025) for *BLXXD & FYAH*.

### About JaBBEM

- JaBBEM (Jamaica Beach Birthright Environmental Movement) is a grassroots initiative advocating for public beach access, environmental protection, and coastal justice in Jamaica.
- The movement engages communities through advocacy, education, and action to protect Jamaica's coastal heritage.
- More information: [www.jabbem.org](http://www.jabbem.org)

### About Caribbean Creativity

- Caribbean Creativity is Dutch non-profit organization committed to programming and promotion of Caribbean and Caribbean-themed cinema in the Netherlands and beyond.
- This (academic) year they are based in Jamaica working on several film projects, including *Beach Inna Bondage*.
- More information: [www.caribbeancreativity.nl](http://www.caribbeancreativity.nl)

### Media contact

- Dr. Emiel Martens (University of Amsterdam / University of the West Indies, Mona Campus)
- +1 876 874 1833
- [emiel@caribbeancreativity.nl](mailto:emiel@caribbeancreativity.nl)
- [www.caribbeancreativity.nl](http://www.caribbeancreativity.nl)

