



An official website of the United States government

[Here's how you know](#)



THE UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE
JUSTICE NEWS

Department of Justice

Office of Public Affairs

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Tuesday, September 14, 2021

Justice Department Announces Investigation into Conditions in Georgia Prisons

The Justice Department announced today that it has opened a statewide civil investigation into conditions of confinement of prisoners held in Georgia's prisons.

The investigation will examine whether Georgia provides prisoners reasonable protection from physical harm at the hands of other prisoners. The department also will continue its existing investigation into whether Georgia provides lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex prisoners reasonable protection from sexual abuse by other prisoners and by staff.

"Ensuring the inherent human dignity and worth of everyone, including people who are incarcerated inside our nation's jails and prisons, is a top priority," said Assistant Attorney General Kristen Clarke of the Justice Department's Civil Rights Division. "The Justice Department's investigations into prison conditions have been successful at identifying systemic constitutional violations and their causes, fixing those causes and stopping the violations. We are investigating prison violence and abuse in Georgia's prisons to determine whether Constitutional violations exist, and if so, how to stop them."

"Individuals sentenced to prison in Georgia Department of Corrections facilities deserve to be treated humanely," said Acting U.S. Attorney Kurt R. Erskine for the Northern District of Georgia. "Our office is committed to ensuring state prisoners are safe while serving their sentences. We look forward to working cooperatively with the Georgia Department of Corrections to ensure the safety of all individuals in its prisons."

"Prison conditions that enable inmates to engage in dangerous and even deadly activity are an injustice, jeopardizing the lives of detainees, staff members and other corrections personnel," said Acting U.S. Attorney Peter D. Leary for the Middle District of Georgia. "Our local law enforcement and corrections partners, with whom we work with closely each and every day, are indispensable to our united goal of achieving a safer Georgia for all. Under the leadership of the department's Civil Rights Division, we look forward to collaborating with our state partners to address our mutual concern for safety in the corrections system."

"This investigation is an example of our office's commitment to stamping out violence in our district, no matter where it is found, no matter who the victim is," said Acting U.S. Attorney David H. Estes for the Southern District of Georgia. "We look forward to working with the State of Georgia, the Georgia Department of Corrections, the Civil Rights Division of the Department of Justice, and our counterparts in the U.S. Attorney's Offices for the Northern and Middle Districts of Georgia to further our shared mission to keep correctional facilities safe for the sake of our community, the prisoners housed there and the dedicated staff who work there."

The department has not reached any conclusions regarding the allegations in this matter. The investigation will be conducted under the Civil Rights of Institutionalized Persons Act (CRIPA). Under CRIPA, the department has the authority to investigate whether any violations of prisoners' constitutional rights result from a "pattern or practice of resistance to the full enjoyment of such rights." The department has conducted CRIPA investigations of many

correctional systems, and where violations have been found, the resulting settlement agreements have led to important reforms.

The Special Litigation Section of the Department of Justice Civil Rights Division is conducting this investigation jointly with the U.S. Attorney's Offices for the Northern, Middle and Southern Districts of Georgia. Individuals with relevant information are encouraged to contact the department via phone at (844) 401-3736 or by email at Community.GeorgiaDOC@usdoj.gov.

Additional information about the Civil Rights Division's CRIPA investigations related to prisons and jails can be found here: <https://www.justice.gov/crt/rights-persons-confined-jails-and-prisons>.

Topic(s):

Civil Rights

Component(s):

[Civil Rights Division](#)

[Civil Rights - Special Litigation Section](#)

Press Release Number:

21-863

Updated September 14, 2021