

Corrections authorities agree to meet with civil rights groups about violence

Luke Broadwater, The Examiner
Oct 12, 2006 5:00 AM (6 hrs ago)

BALTIMORE -

Prison authorities Wednesday agreed to meet with civil rights groups about recent incidents of violence in Maryland's jails and prisons.

Mary Livers, deputy secretary for Operations of the Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services, wrote in letters to the Baltimore City NAACP and Justice Maryland that prison officials "are concerned about recent media reports regarding a number of incidents in both Central Booking and the Detention Center."

She wrote prison corrections authorities believe the same people "who are terrorizing the citizens in Baltimore City are continuing their dangerous and menacing behavior once they are incarcerated.

"As you may imagine, the seriousness of the crimes committed by the inmates and detainees under our custody has escalated over time," she wrote.

On Monday, Kimberly Haven, executive director of Justice Maryland, a criminal justice advocacy group, called for an emergency meeting with jail authorities after two men were stabbed — one fatally — at the Baltimore City Detention Center over the weekend.

"My office continues to get letters from inmates asking for help, phone calls from concerned family members, and visits from correctional officers who are concerned about their safety and their ability to do their jobs," Haven wrote to corrections officials.

Justice Maryland's letter came after the Baltimore City chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People sent jail officials a similar letter over the weekend.

The weekend's stabbings at the city's detention center, along with the slaying of two correctional officers in 2006 and reports on the state of Maryland's juvenile justice system, have caused concern from the civil rights groups, residents and legislators.

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