

# Justice Maryland calls for meeting on jail violence

Luke Broadwater, The Examiner  
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## **BALTIMORE -**

The executive director of Justice Maryland is calling for an emergency meeting with jail authorities after two men were stabbed — one fatally — at the Baltimore City Detention Center over the weekend.

In a letter sent to Secretary of Public Safety and Correctional Services Mary Ann Saar on Monday, Kimberly Haven, the executive director of Justice Maryland, wrote that her office constantly hears concerns from people who feel unsafe while in various correctional institutions.

“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 writes.

Corrections spokesman Mark Vernarelli said because Monday is a state holiday, officials would not have received the letter and therefore cannot respond to it.

Justice Maryland’s letter comes on the heels of a letter sent by the Baltimore City National Association for the Advancement of Colored People to jail officials over the same concerns.

“It’s definitely a civil rights issue,” said Marvin “Doc” Cheatham, the NAACP president. “These institutions hold people who are awaiting trials. Their civil rights are being jeopardized by being in these institutions. They have [the] right to live to see their trials, without being attacked or killed.”

On Sunday, a man who was fatally stabbed at the Baltimore Detention Center was identified, and another detainee who was wounded has been released from the hospital.

Those stabbings, along with the slaying of two correctional officers in 2006 and damning reports on the state of Maryland’s juvenile justice system, cause concern from the civil rights groups.

“We believe that time is of the essence,” Haven states in her letter Monday. “There is a growing sense of ‘crisis of confidence’ in our correctional system and we can wait no longer. The violence this past weekend only serves to underscore the urgency of this request.”

— The Associated Press contributed to this report.

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