

Equal Justice Initiative

Criminal Justice Issues and Prisoners' Rights

<https://eji.org/news/failure-to-respond-to-alabama-prison-crisis-claims-another-life/>

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124 results for "**Prison**"

02.13.19

Jamie Prim with his sister.

On Sunday, the third incarcerated Alabama homicide victim in the last six weeks died from complications and inadequate medical care. This marks the 22nd homicide within Alabama prisons in the last two years and the 12th murder since 2018, a staggering homicide rate that is 10 times the national average. No significant reforms have been implemented to improve safety in the states prisons during this time period and a serious crisis continues.

Jamie Prim, age 34, died Sunday due to complications from a serious assault at Fountain Correctional Facility in June 2018 that left him with a traumatic brain injury and paralysis. Mr. Prim was incarcerated for nonviolent offenses and was granted parole on November 29, 2018, to live under the care of his sister in Baldwin County. Mr. Prim died before the Alabama Department of Corrections could process his release.

In the immediate aftermath of his assault at Fountain, doctors were hopeful that he could avoid permanent paralysis and regain motor function with physical therapy. However, Mr. Prim who was classified for a minimum custody work release facility was sent to St. Clair Correctional Facility, where EJI filed a class action lawsuit in 2014 following the failure of the Alabama Department of Corrections to protect men at the prison.

At St. Clair, Mr. Prim had no access to therapeutic care and his condition worsened. He sustained further injuries to his brain after allegedly falling out of a bed at the prison, developed large bed sores, and had fluid in his lungs. Mr. Prim was admitted to Brookwood Hospital as a result of these complications and died there on February 10, 2019.

In early December, EJI released a [report](#) describing Alabamas prisons as the deadliest in the nation. Since then, prison violence and inaction from department leadership has claimed the lives of at least three more men: Jamie Prim, Terrence Andrews, and John David Teague.

On December 29, 2018, Terrence Andrews was killed at St. Clair. Mr. Andrews had been transferred to St. Clair shortly before his death and was killed in a housing area known to have the most frequent and serious incidents of violence at the prison.

On January 7, 2019, John David Teague was killed at Staton Correctional Facility. Mr. Teague was found unresponsive at 3:30 a.m. with multiple stab wounds and died from his injuries.

The rate of prison homicides in Alabama exceeds 50 homicides per 100,000 people incarcerated more than 10 times the national average from 2001 to 2014. No system-wide reforms, emergency response, or action has been implemented to disrupt lethal violence and improve security within Alabamas prisons.

The deaths of Jamie Prim, Terrence Andrews, and John David Teague make clear that Alabamas prison system is in crisis. The failure of department leadership and elected officials to urgently respond to this crisis puts the lives of incarcerated people and prison staff, and public safety, at serious risk.

Tags:

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