

Equal Justice Initiative

Criminal Justice Issues and Prisoners' Rights

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07.16.21

This week another man was murdered in an Alabama prison, making his the seventh reported death within the states troubled system in the last two weeks.

Tyrone Billups had served more than 16 years on a burglary and drug possession charge when he was fatally stabbed on July 12 three days before his 40th birthday at Fountain Correctional Facility.

This homicide follows four deaths from drug overdose, one suicide, and the unexplained death on July 5 of a 28-year-old man who was in a segregation cell at Donaldson Correctional Facility.

Uncontrolled violence remains a serious problem within Alabama prisons, where for years staff shortages, poor management, and inadequate security protocols have maintained a prison homicide rate far above the national average. Pending litigation by the Justice Department and multiple lawsuits have not produced significant changes in management or practices within Alabamas prisons.

There is widespread corruption drugs and contraband are routinely smuggled into state prisons by staff and employees, resulting in an epidemic of addiction and drug overdoses. John Gordon, Tyrone Triplett, Kevin Rush, and Joseph Lawrence have all died from drug overdose at Bibb Correctional Facility in the last two weeks.

Inadequate mental health care continues to characterize conditions within the prisons. This week yet another man incarcerated at Bullock Correctional Facility killed himself.

Alabama remains one of only a few states that have continued to ban family visits in response to the Covid-19 crisis. The ban has clearly aggravated conditions for many people who are imprisoned.

Experts and advocates have recommended a range of immediate reforms to address problems in Alabamas prisons that have not been implemented over the last several years.

EJI is receiving a record number of calls and letters each day from people who are incarcerated reporting serious life-threatening conditions of confinement in Alabama.

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