

Equal Justice Initiative

Criminal Justice Issues and Prisoners' Rights

<https://eji.org/news/another-man-stabbed-death-alabama-prison/>

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03.05.19

Alabama Department of Corrections officials confirmed today that another incarcerated person has been stabbed to death at St. Clair Correctional Facility in Springville, Alabama. The murder of Steven Mullins marks the latest in an unrelenting series of homicides at St. Clair and across Alabama's prison system. Mr. Mullins is the fourth homicide victim at St. Clair in the last six months and the 24th homicide victim in an Alabama prison in the last two years. Alabama's prison homicide rate is one of the highest in the nation and 10 times the national average.

Despite repeated calls for reforms, safety and security conditions have not been meaningfully improved in Alabama state prisons. Last week, just two days after Mr. Mullins was killed, prison officials did an intensive large-scale contraband search at St. Clair, a search that advocates have been seeking for over a year. ADOC publicized their contraband search but did not report the stabbing death of Mr. Mullins until nearly a week later.

In the days and weeks before his murder, ADOC received numerous reports that Steven Mullins was at risk, had been threatened with violence, and could not live safely without protective housing. Rather than place him in a protective unit, he was placed in a dorm known for violence and serious assaults, commonly referred to as the hot bay. On Monday, February 25, Mr. Mullins reported to ADOC officials that he had been threatened with stabbing and sexual assault and that he needed immediate assistance from prison officials. No action was taken. He was stabbed to death the next day.

EJI filed a [lawsuit](#) against St. Clair Correctional Facility in 2014 after ADOC failed to address dangerous conditions and an extraordinarily high rate of violence, including six homicides in the preceding 36 months. ADOC signed a settlement agreement in federal court in November 2017 that mandated the implementation of reforms to improve the safety of officers and inmates. In June 2018, EJI notified the federal court that ADOC has not complied with the agreement and has failed to implement those reforms.

St. Clair has experienced three escapes since December 2017. Two of the men escaped using firearms. In the past year, five men were stabbed to death and dozens of other incarcerated people have been seriously assaulted, raped, and beaten. EJI has asserted that these problems are largely the result of insufficient management, training, staffing, and classification, and of oversight issues that will not be solved with a new prison, which has been ADOC's primary focus.

EJI has called on the ADOC Commissioner and Alabama's governor to declare that emergency action is needed to prevent further violence in the state's prisons.

Tags:

[Prison Conditions](#)

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