

Two more Mississippi inmates killed at Parchman prison. Inmate death toll reaches nine.

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Two more inmates were killed at the Mississippi State Penitentiary at Parchman, the Mississippi Department of Corrections announced Tuesday, bringing the death toll at prisons up to nine in less than a month.

MDOC identified the inmates as 35-year-old Timothy Hudspeth, who was serving 10 years for possession of firearm by a felon out of Tate County, and 36-year-old James Talley, who was sentenced out of Lee County to 11 years for aggravated assault and possession of a firearm by a felon.

Both men were pronounced dead at the prison, MDOC said in a release, "following an altercation with other inmates." The cause of death is pending an autopsy, the agency said.

Sunflower County Coroner Heather Burton said both victims appeared to have died from blunt force beating injuries. Hudspeth died in a bed inside Unit 30, building B, Burton said in a news release, while Talley died in the emergency room at Parchman Hospital.

Though MDOC initially said the two men had died Monday night, Burton's release said they were pronounced dead around 5:20 a.m. Tuesday.

"Thus far, investigators have determined that the conflict that resulted in these two deaths is unrelated to the recent series of killings within the prison system," MDOC said.

"The safety of staff and prisoners at Parchman is our immediate priority, and we are working hard to restore and maintain order," said Interim Commissioner Tommy Taylor. "We believe that the motivation behind this latest altercation is limited to this new tragic set of circumstances. The environment that makes such violence possible must be addressed quickly, and we are committed to making changes to do so."

On Dec. 29, MDOC officials announced a statewide prison lockdown following a fight at South Mississippi Correctional Institution that left one inmate dead and two others injured. In the following days, riots and fights continued despite the lockdown, leading to four more killings across the state. Some of the violence, MDOC officials have said, is gang-related.

'A recipe for disaster': Democratic lawmakers visit Parchman after deadly violence (</story/news/2020/01/11/mississippi-state-penitentiary-parchman-lawmakers-visit-after-deadly-violence/4420450002/>)

Prison crisis: Inmates killed during Mississippi's prison violence: Who are they? (</story/news/local/2020/01/03/parchman-riot-ms-prison-violence-who-are-inmates-killed/2803405001/>)

The lockdown has since been lifted on all prisons except Parchman, where much of the violence has taken place. Seven men incarcerated at Parchman have died this month, including three who were killed by other inmates, one who died at a hospital of natural causes and one who was found hanging in his cell over the weekend (/story/news/2020/01/19/parchman-death-inmate-found-hanging-cell-coroner-says/4520805002/?fbclid=IwAR2TBuiQSKayMahmzNpgGiYVN6h4Aqgy_TLuPqD3hx_NwQqOzZx-LnNErRc), according to Burton.

Activists say gangs alone are not to blame for the recent surge of violence. Systemic issues related to repeated budget cuts and chronic understaffing have created an environment for violence to thrive, they say.

Prison crisis: Jay-Z lawsuit. Deaths. Riots. Gang violence. What you need to know about Mississippi's troubled prisons (</story/news/2020/01/15/mississippi-prisons-jay-z-yo-gotti-lawsuit-riots-gang-violence/4476867002/>)

U.S. Congressman Bennie Thompson and nearly a dozen civil rights and social justice organizations had [requested the U.S. Department of Justice to investigate \(/story/news/2020/01/08/why-advocates-calling-feds-investigate-mississippi-prisons/2845650001/\)](#) Mississippi prisons, charging that state leaders have known about the understaffing and "horrific conditions," yet have repeatedly failed to take action.

Parchman inmates are suing former MDOC commissioner Pelicia Hall and the prison's superintendent Marshal Turner, [alleging they have violated prisoners' constitutional rights \(/story/news/2020/01/14/jay-z-yo-gotti-sue-mississippi-prison-official-behalf-inmates/4469555002/\)](#) by subjecting them to cruel and unusual punishment. The incarcerated men are being represented by attorneys working with hip-hop stars Jay-Z and Yo Gotti.

The lawsuit describes unsanitary conditions inside Parchman, including flooding, black mold and a rat infestation. Units go without running water and electricity for days at a time, it alleges.

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