



## **IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Date:** July 12, 2017  
**Contact:** Office of Communications  
**Phone:** (601) 359-5608  
**E-mail:** [MDOCOfficeofCommunications@mdoc.state.ms.us](mailto:MDOCOfficeofCommunications@mdoc.state.ms.us)

### **MDOC Makes Largest Regional Contraband Bust This Year at Alcorn County**

JACKSON – More than 100 cellphones and cellphone chargers, large bags of tobacco and numerous other contraband items, including shoes and shanks, were seized this morning at Alcorn County Regional Correctional Facility in the largest bust at a regional since the Mississippi Department of Corrections began major shakedowns in March.

Cellphones hidden in the ceilings fell as MDOC officers searched. Light fixtures were being used to charge the phones. Phones also were found on surprised inmates. One inmate tried to conceal a cellphone by lying on it, an MDOC officer noted.

Contraband also was found in the back of television sets, inside garbage cans, and in the desk of an employee.

“I am stunned at the amount of contraband found and the level to which it appears to have been hidden in this facility housing 240 inmates,” Commissioner Pelicia E. Hall said. “Until the Department of Corrections receives a corrective plan of action, this facility is on lockdown. There is no way staff or inmates are safe with this amount of contraband.”

Hall stressed that the issue of cellphones in the hands of inmates is a public safety concern. She noted there have been numerous cases, not only in the state but also across the country, of cellphones being used to aid in criminal activity. She cited that earlier this month, a South Carolina maximum security prisoner caught in Texas reportedly used a smuggled cellphone in his escape.

“These shakedowns are being done for the sake of public safety,” Hall said. “This is our 15<sup>th</sup> shakedown under Operation Zero Tolerance. By now, all facilities should expect an unexpected visit from us.”

Alcorn, which is located in Corinth, is the ninth of 15 regional facilities to be searched. Other shakedowns have occurred at Winston-Choctaw County Regional Correctional Facility, Bolivar County Regional Correctional Facility, Washington County Regional Correctional Facility, Stone County Regional Correctional Facility, George County Correctional Facility, South Mississippi Correctional Institution, Hinds County Restitution Center, Carroll-Montgomery County Regional Correctional Facility, Wilkinson County Correctional Facility, East Mississippi Correctional Facility, Marshall County Correctional Facility, Yazoo County Regional Correctional Facility, and Holmes-Humphreys County Regional Correctional Facility.