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MDOC OFFICERS RETURN TO SMCI TO COMPLETE SHAKEDOWN

JACKSON – A large number of MDOC officers returned to South Mississippi Correctional Institution in Leakesville on Tuesday to complete searching the 3,000 inmate-plus prison under Operation Zero Tolerance.

During the shakedown, one officer who works at the facility was assaulted by an inmate while enforcing grooming standards. The injury is non-life-threatening.

Areas I and III were searched this time. Last week's shakedown occurred in Area II, where fewer than a dozen inmates out of 1,836 said they were on a hunger strike. The facility, which can hold a maximum 3,082 inmates, reports that no inmate, however, is now refusing to eat.

Contraband items found Tuesday include 17 shanks, 11 cell phones, 18 cell phone chargers, 5 green dot numbers, 5 tattoo ink bottles, footwear, small amounts of tobacco and spice, and an assortment of pills.

“It is good to see that the amount of contraband we found on Tuesday is far less than what we have been finding,” Corrections Commissioner Pelicia Hall said, “especially considering that we have seen drones lately and have had reports of drones flying around SMCI. Like other prisons around the country, we suspect the use of drones to introduce contraband into our facilities.”

The shakedown is the ninth statewide in about six weeks. Hall has instituted zero tolerance to reduce the flow of contraband at state, private and regional facilities to improve safety for both staff and inmates. Hall said all facilities will have an unannounced search.

SMCI's population was 3,062 at the time of Tuesday's shakedown. The prison is the newest of the state's three state prisons.

The other locations searched so far are the 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.