

IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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MDOC Ends Year of Shakedowns with Search at Parchman's Largest Unit

JACKSON – Thursday's shakedown at Parchman's Unit 29, the prison's largest unit, marked the completion of the first round of unannounced searches in the prison system under Operation Zero Tolerance.

The three state prisons, three private prisons, 15 regional facilities, 10 community work centers, four restitution centers and three technical violation centers all can expect the major searches to continue in 2018, Commissioner Pelicia E. Hall said.

"My administration started these major shakedowns in March as a way to decrease the amount of contraband inside our facilities for the safety of our staff and inmates," Commissioner Hall said. "The amount and types of items found in these last nine months show we must stay on top of keeping these illegal items out of the hands of inmates."

The last shakedown of the year occurred at a unit with 1,418 inmates, including those on death row and with behavioral problems. Staff from all three prisons and Probation and Parole agents, along with K-9 officers, searched Unit 29 A-L building for several hours.

The seized contraband includes 68 cellphones, 81 cellphone chargers, 15 cellphone batteries, 79 homemade weapons, 104 packs of marijuana, 47 packs of methamphetamine, 30 packs of tobacco, 21 packs of spice, 45 cigars, 38 cigarette lighters, 12 bottles of tattoo ink, two tattoo guns, 51 packs of Top paper, six homemade pipes, 16 Sim cards, 14 packs of unmarked pills, three pairs of digital scales, a remote control, and a host of other assorted items.

Commissioner Hall said her administration is aggressively pursuing leads indicating how the contraband items are getting behind prison walls, and will refer the cases to respective district attorneys for prosecution.

