



JICS

Judicial Inspectorate for
Correctional Services

MEDIA RELEASE

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JICS INVESTIGATING POLLSMOOR SEARCH INCIDENT

JICS is investigating a search incident, as allegations of mass assault have been made by inmates that appear prima facie to have exceeded the bounds of minimum, necessary, and reasonable force.

The Inspectorate was informed by a JICS Independent Correctional Centre Visitor (ICCV) of a special search incident which took place on the 20th August 2018 at Pollsmoor Med B Correctional Centre, which involved the activation of 96 Department of Correctional Services (DCS) Regional Emergency Support Team (EST) members, and 66 SAPS members.

JICS places on record that the operation, which lasted approximately 7 hours, according to sources, was not video recorded. The legal requirement (B-Orders) is that all such operations must be video recorded and JICS has been advised that this did not occur. JICS has repeatedly raised concerns that DCS acts in breach of its own policies. The use of force within a prison context is strictly governed by the Constitution, the Correctional Services Act, the Mandela Rules, the UN Convention against Torture and other international human rights instruments.

According to the DCS incident report, the search involving two cells, was activated after several gang related stabbing incidents occurred at Pollsmoor Medium B from 17th of August 2018 to 19 August 2018.

Before the search ensued, inmates allegedly became agitated, and according to the incident report, several projectiles were thrown, sponge mattresses were burned and damage to property ensued.

To contain the situation an action plan was executed to extradite the 58 inmates from the first cell. The use of pyrotechnical equipment and shotguns (rubber bullets/white reduced charge) was authorized by the SAPS POPS Commander. The Use of Force (minimum force) was approved to extradite inmates and bring the situation under control. As part of the ongoing investigation JICS will be looking at the role of SAPS in terms of permitted access (necessity) by DCS, as well as authority granted for equipment used.

All inmates that appeared to have sustained injuries and who requested medical treatment was immediately attended by nursing staff on standby before they were transferred to Pollsmoor Remand Detention Facility as an immediate precautionary

measure. The cell was locked as it was regarded as a crime scene and items found in the cell is yet to be reported once SAPS Forensic team has finalized its investigation.

After the situation in the first cell was brought under control and inmates were removed from Pollsmoor Medium B. The EST proceeded to search the second cell without any challenges or resistance. During this search, 13 self-made knives and eight cell phones were confiscated. JICS condemns the use and or smuggling of any contraband material that may endanger the lives of fellow inmates and officials within the correctional system.

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