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DOJ OIG Releases Report on the DOJ's Efforts to Protect BOP Facilities Against Threats Posed by Unmanned Aircraft Systems

Department of Justice (DOJ) Inspector General Michael E. Horowitz announced today the release of a report examining the Department's efforts to protect Federal Bureau of Prisons (BOP) facilities against threats posed by unmanned aircraft systems, commonly referred to as drones.

The DOJ Office of the Inspector General (OIG) found that the BOP faces significant and growing challenges to protect its facilities from drone threats. Drones have been used to deliver contraband to inmates, and could also be used to surveil institutions, facilitate escape attempts, or transport dangerous weapons such as firearms or explosives. The specific findings in the report released today include:



- **Enhanced Drone Incident Tracking Is Needed.** In 2018, the BOP began to formally track drone incidents at its federal facilities. While the BOP's data reflects a growth in reported incidents from 23 in 2018 to 57 in 2019, we believe this number likely underreports the number of drone incidents. We found that the BOP could improve its tracking of drone incidents by clarifying its reporting policy for federal facilities, as well as taking steps to comprehensively track drone incidents at its contract facilities. Improved tracking will allow the BOP to better determine the extent of the threat posed by drones and identify areas of highest risk.
- **Improving Drone Response Guidance.** Recent flight restrictions and other legal authorities gained from 2018 to 2019 will help DOJ combat the drone threat at BOP facilities. However, delays in finalizing Department-level guidance on implementing DOJ authorities to counter drones has hampered the BOP's ability to propose and receive approval for deploying counter-drone measures and train its staff.
- **Identifying and Obtaining Protective Solutions.** DOJ faces several challenges in its ongoing evaluation of solutions suitable to secure BOP facilities from drone threats. These include identifying appropriate technologies, verifying that they deliver on promised capabilities, and assessing the cost and benefits of these purchases. Given the limited resources available to the BOP and the rapid evolution of technology, continued collaboration both within DOJ and among other federal agencies will be essential to addressing these challenges and protecting BOP facilities from drone threats.

Today's report makes seven recommendations to DOJ and the BOP to improve the BOP's tracking of drone incidents at its facilities and to promote the BOP and DOJ's efforts to protect BOP facilities against threats posed by drones. The BOP and DOJ agreed with all seven recommendations.

Report: Today's report is available on the OIG's website under "Recent Reports" and at the following link: <https://oig.justice.gov/reports/audit-department-justices-efforts-protect-federal-bureau-prisons-facilities-against-threats>.

Video: A two-minute video and downloadable transcript of Inspector General Horowitz discussing today's report are available at the following link: <https://oig.justice.gov/news/multimedia/video/message-inspector-general-audit-department-justices-efforts-protect-federal>

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