



“A Message from the Inspector General: Limited-Scope Review of the Federal Bureau of Prisons’ Strategies to Identify, Communicate, and Remedy Operational Issues,” May 2023

Hello, I’m Michael Horowitz, Inspector General for the U.S. Department of Justice.

Today, my office released a report on the Federal Bureau of Prisons, or BOP’s, strategies to identify, communicate, and remedy operational issues. We initiated this review after certain safety and security issues became so serious at two BOP institutions - USP Atlanta and MCC New York – that the BOP significantly limited operations at the former and closed the latter.

In today’s report, we found that, despite the prior BOP Executive Staff being aware of long-standing operational issues at many BOP institutions, they were unable to remedy them. These former BOP executives identified four fundamental, enterprise-wide challenges that they said stood in their way.

First, the BOP’s internal audit function has significant weaknesses, which may result in audit ratings not accurately reflecting conditions at institutions. Indeed, when we reviewed the specific audit ratings at USP Atlanta, we found they were in stark contrast to the actual conditions there.

Second, the BOP employee discipline process is substantially backlogged due to insufficient staffing. As a result, the BOP is unable to effectively enforce its Standards of Employee Conduct and employees who may have engaged in misconduct, as well as those found to have engaged in misconduct, remain BOP employees for extended periods of time.

Third, the BOP does not fully understand how many staff it needs to manage its prisons safely and effectively.

And fourth, the BOP lacks a strategy to manage its aging prison infrastructure and address the more than \$2 billion in unfunded improvements and repairs the BOP has said is needed.

The safety and security of federal prison depends on BOP’s Executive Staff being able to identify and remedy severe operational issues in a timely fashion. We believe that responding to the challenges described in today’s report should be an urgent priority not only for the BOP, but also for DOJ and all of the BOP’s stakeholders.

To read our report and our five recommendations, please visit our website oig.justice.gov, or go to oversight.gov.

Thank you for joining me today.

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