



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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DOJ OIG Releases Report on the BOP's Strategies to Identify, Communicate, and Remedy Operational Issues

Department of Justice (DOJ) Inspector General Michael E. Horowitz announced today the release of a report on the Federal Bureau of Prisons' (BOP) strategies to identify, communicate, and remedy operational issues. The DOJ Office of the Inspector General (OIG) initiated this limited-scope review after certain operational issues became so serious at U.S. Penitentiary (USP) Atlanta and Metropolitan Correctional Center (MCC) New York that, in 2021, the BOP significantly limited operations at the former and closed the latter.

BOP Executive Staff members in place in 2021 and 2022 told us that they had been largely aware of long-standing operational issues at USP Atlanta and MCC New York. Nevertheless, we found that the BOP's then-Executive Staff was not able to take actions to effectively remedy them.

These officials cited four foundational, enterprise-wide challenges that they believed limited their ability to address operational issues at BOP institutions and, more generally, to ensure that BOP institutions operated safely and effectively: (1) weaknesses in the BOP's internal audit function, (2) delays in the BOP's employee discipline process, (3) inadequate BOP assessments of institution staffing needs, and (4) the BOP's inability to address its aging infrastructure.

In today's report, the DOJ OIG describes the significant concerns related to each of these four challenges. Our findings include:

- **There Are Weaknesses in the BOP's Internal Audit Function, Which May Result in Audit Ratings Not Accurately Reflecting Conditions at Institutions.** We found that many then Executive Staff members did not believe that the BOP's internal audit process was historically independent. They questioned whether the



Examples of Contraband Discovered During the June–July 2021 Search of USP Atlanta

Source: BOP (The OIG modified the bottom image to anonymize the individual.)

BOP's overwhelmingly positive enterprise-wide audit ratings reflected actual institution conditions. Validating this concern, a January 2020 internal audit of USP Atlanta rated the institution's operations as acceptable. However, by the summer of 2021 the BOP had to significantly limit operations at the institution due to serious issues there.

- **The BOP Has Not Been Able to Effectively Investigate Employee Misconduct Cases Due to Insufficient Investigative Staffing.** We found that the BOP has not been sufficiently staffed to investigate employee misconduct cases, and, as of September 2022, 7,893 BOP employee misconduct cases remained open. As of the same date, the BOP had not yet imposed discipline in 2,279 other cases in which a BOP investigation had already sustained an allegation of misconduct.
- **The BOP Does Not Fully Understand Its Staffing Needs.** We found that the BOP does not know whether the number of staff it represents as necessary to manage its institutions safely and effectively is accurate. The absence of reliable information about appropriate staffing levels makes it difficult for the BOP to determine whether its institutions are appropriately staffed and to communicate its needs to stakeholders in the executive and legislative branches.
- **The BOP Lacks an Infrastructure Strategy, Exacerbating Its Infrastructure Challenges and Creating Significant Management Issues.** We also found that the BOP's lack of an infrastructure strategy affected its ability to address its infrastructure requirements and request adequate funding to meet its infrastructure needs. We provided greater detail about this challenge in the [DOJ OIG's report released earlier this week](#).

We believe that responding to the challenges identified in this report should be an urgent priority, not only for the new BOP Director but also for DOJ and all of the BOP's stakeholders.

The DOJ OIG made five recommendations to help the BOP ensure that its institutions operate safely and effectively. The BOP concurred with all five recommendations.

Report: Today's report can be found on the OIG's website at the following link: <https://oig.justice.gov/reports/limited-scope-review-federal-bureau-prisons-strategies-identify-communicate-and-remedy>

Video: To accompany today's report, the OIG has released a 2-minute video of the Inspector General discussing the report's findings. The video and a downloadable transcript are available at the following link: <https://oig.justice.gov/news/multimedia/video/message-inspector-general-limited-scope-review-federal-bureau-prisons>

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