

Department of Correctional Services Responses

18th of April

Request for comment on allegations made against the Sun City Prison

I would also just like to follow up on the situation at the Johannesburg correctional Centre (otherwise known as Sun City).

Reports have been emerging from the prison about inadequate screening of inmates by nursing staff since lockdown began as well as inadequate disinfectant provided for inmates to disinfect their cells. As well as no protective equipment being provided to official in the prison until recently.

Has the Department received any such complaints? And is there any truth or proof regarding these allegations? Has any kind of investigation been conducted?

I'd also like to get comment on specific allegations being made against Sun City Prison for the following:

1. Watered down disinfectant solution given to prisoners

Response: The Department procured appropriate decontamination and personal protection equipment and we have stated that there is no shortage as we are managing stock levels.

2. Prisoners not being able to contact the Judicial Inspectorate

Response: That is impossible. Inmates do utilize the register and this is done every morning on daily basis. In that register, inmates can then place a request to report a matter to any office. It could be National Office, Judicial Inspectorate, and other structures.

3. Overcrowding in cells

Response: We have responded on the mitigation factors should there be positive cases in the cells. Hence, we said we will utilize park homes for quarantine and isolation purposes, should the identified cells be fully utilized.

4. A lack of or inadequate screening of inmates

Response: There is mass screening and testing currently taking place.

5. Rumours that a warden and several prison staff have tested positive for COVID-19 but it has not been reported

Response: Only East London has inmates who tested positive. We have been very transparent and we will be the first to communicate when we have positive cases.

6. No or inadequate protective gear for prison staff

Response: Again, I will repeat, we have a system that assist us to monitor stock levels. Centres report twice a day on their activities. It is therefore impossible you will have a centre not having sufficient supplies.