[Name of the Writer]

[Name of Instructor]

[Subject]

[Date]

Alabama’s correctional system

# Introduction

The possession of illegal drugs in Alabama is unlawful. The possession of illegal medications and drugs can result in felony charges. Since these charges are punishable they may result in imprisonment from one to ten years. From many decades, the state of Alabama has remained a hub for drug consumption and its trade. Efforts of limiting such crimes have resulted in minimal gains. Oxycontin, methadone, suboxone, cocaines, and heroin are among widely used and smuggled drugs in Alabama. This is the reason that many inmates in Alabama are charged for a felony. The department of justice urges that inmates with such charges must be housed in correctional facilities which can increase the chances of their becoming a healthy part of the society.

In the United States, each state has different constitutional arrangements for dealing with such offenses. Many criminologists argue that among all states, Alabama has the highest ratio of drug convicts. These drug convicts have added a large number in the overall prison population in Alabama. These overcrowded prisons have resulted in the worst kind of illegal activities which are largely related to drugs. The recent letter written by the Department of Justice to Governor in Alabama reveals the horrific situation of the illegal drug-related activities in the prisons. These illegal drug activities are related to fighting over the debt caused by drugs, health complexities after over dozing and regular fights over drug possessions. This research paper will target the loopholes in the prison system in Alabama which results in such massive illegal use of drugs.

# Discussion

The correctional system in Alabama is responsible for the incarceration of convicted prisoners. A large number of prisoners in Alabama are convicted for the illegal use of drugs. Different to many state’s correctional systems, Alabama’s correctional system is handling the pressure of drug convicts. The recent figures estimate that between 2015 and 2018, it dealt with more than twenty-four thousand cases. During this time period, it housed around twenty thousand prisoners at a single time in a facility with a capacity of twelve thousand inmates. The Alabama illegal drug correctional system spends the least amount on the welfare of inmates compared to the rest of the states in America. In the year 2016, some more disturbing facts were revealed after a survey conducted by the American Department of Justice (Holland et al.). Various times, different courts in the state of Alabama pointed out the inadequate facilities for the personal hygiene of the inmates. Some studies also suggest that the number of correctional officers needed in Alabama is much less than required.

In 1970, Alabama correctional system underwent some major reforms. These reforms were made after a court decision which remarked that the facilities in prisons of Alabama are barbaric. After these remarks by a court in the state, the judge ordered to close the “dog houses”. These dog houses were actually the filthy cells which included a large number of inmates. In 2007, the same court ordered to end the farming programs. Since this decision, the prisons have become so crowded with fewer facilities available (Connor). With the growing population in the state, the correctional facilities are becoming jammed with every passing day.

## How do they deal in jail?

Under the jurisdiction of Alabama authority of Corrections (ADOC), there are twelve corrections facilities for men. The women inmates are kept at Tutwiler prison for women. This prison facility is specifically designed for the women inmates and the correctional programs there are quite different from that of other facilities. The prison authorities have suggested many times to expand the capacity of correctional facilities so that each inmate can get individual attention. At present, the majority of the inmates are divided into categories with similar offenses. At first, these all prisoners undergo a general program of rehabilitation and afterward, they are sent to the correctional facilities designed specifically to the offenses. There are no correctional programs for the prisoners on the death row (Connor). The Alabama jail authorities also provide no counsel to such prisoners. According to some reports of the department of justice issued recently, mentions that the prisoners in jail receive physical harm and sexual abuse. This is common among the inmates who have just crossed their teens. Many prisoners in Alabama are not provided the facility of state counselor. Resultantly, they have to spend a large portion of their ages in prison. The use of excessive forces over inmates, lack of correctional officers and restricted access to recreational facilities are major problems of the correctional system of Alabama.

## Alabama illegal and deadly prison system

The prison system in Alabama has been facing serious criticism from many decades. It is believed that the prison system in Alabama is the most deadly and illegal system, throughout the whole country. The criminological experts have opined various time that the department must take strict actions over the dangerous conditions of the prison system in Alabama. Recently, the Department of Justice has issued a notice in which it called the state to take swift actions to make better the facilities in its prison. The illegality in the prison system is linked with the absence of state counselors, lack of correctional facilities and the absence of the healthcare facility. A report released by the department of justice mentions that the prison authorities remained to fail in protecting the prison- on- prison attack and the sexual abuse of the prisoners (Roberts). The reports also include the remarks of a former warden who called this system barbaric.

Some non- partisan criminal justice organizations also pointed out the constitutional violations in Alabama prisons. Their comparative studies suggest that unlike other states, the correctional facilities in Alabama do not care for the constitutional provisions regarding the inmates in American prisons. The New York Time report mentioned that civil right violations are routine affairs in the vicinity of Alabama prisons (Benner and Dewan). This report uncovered some more gruesome violations in the prison system of Alabama. It includes that the prisoners in Alabama jails have endured the highest suicidal rates in the country. In addition to this, the number of rape incidents occurred in Alabama's prison system are also shocking. Some sources argue that these violations are the result of the flagrant disregard by prisoners of their right to freedom. In America, no other state has such highest number of incarceration. The reason for such long detaining period is the antiquated, dangerous and short- staffed correctional system. Some other violations observed in the prison system of Alabama are the involvement of the security officials in contrabanding, deficiencies in supervision, systematic violations of the prison manuals and solitary confinement of vulnerable inmates. The illegal prison system of Alabama has remained the subject of civil rights litigations for such serious violations.

## Illegal drugs in Alabama’s correctional system

In a letter written to the governor of Alabama in April 2019, the department of justice released some mentioned some dark aspects of the illegal drug trade in the prisons of Alabama. In the letter, the department of justice mentions that a systematic violation is resulting in increasing trafficking of illegal drugs to and from the prisons in Alabama. These illegal drugs mainly include methadone, suboxone, cocaines, and heroin. According to these officials, the security personnel responsible for the safety of prisoners are involved in such contraband activities. This contrabanding is just not limited to illegal drugs, but some cases of weapons smuggling have been reported too. Such activities are the result of the inefficient training of the security staff deputed around the vicinity of the prisons (Davis). After some random pat down activities in search of the illegal drugs, conducted inside the prisons resulted in findings of some plastic bags containing hallucinogen drugs and cigarettes laced with drugs. The criminological experts believe that it is much difficult and almost impossible to eradicate the contrabanding activities in prisons.

After the publication of this report, it was noted that unlike other prisons in America, the correctional officers which are supposed to work for the rehabilitation of inmates were also involved in illegal drug dealing and contra bandings (Davis). During the efforts of decreasing the prison population in Alabama, a new category of the inmates was introduced. In this category, prisoners related to illegal drug cases and property related crimes were included. After the introduction of this category, the inmate population in the correctional facility was notably reduced. The Department of Justice has presented a plan to the prison authorities in Alabama for reducing the drug-related cases including the drug intake and contrabanding activities. This program suggests that proper identification of death causes, the review of the mortalities and proper tracking of the security personnel can be some primary corrective actions (Davis). The illegal drug trafficking and trade in the Alabama correctional system have resulted in the death of many inmates. These deaths occurred as a result of a fight over the failure of paying drug debts.

# Conclusion

The correctional system is the essential arm of the justice system in each state. The Department of Justice in the American correctional structure oversees the operational mechanism of each state's correctional system. Governor of each state comes next in the rank who supervises the facilities available correctional facilities. Under the authority of Governor, four supervisors look after the legislation, interdepartmental communications, health facilities, and quality control. Under these supervisors, there are various officers who look after the affairs of parole, research, management, operations and planning about human resource development. The correctional system of each state also looks after the matters of security, healthcare, money, and welfare of inmates. In the correctional management system of each state, there is a diverse kind of issues. The first and foremost issue observed in each state is about the security and safety of the inmates. The management at first categorizes threats according to the rules and policies of the threat perception mechanisms. According to the threat perception drawn, the management of the correctional facility put the operational policies in place.

The cases mentioned above are not particularly related to prisons in Alabama. The Department of Justice in America have pointed various other states which oversee the constitutional prerequisites regarding the prison manual. In Alabama the situation is horrific. It has crossed the previous records in terms of a number of prisoners, the death ratio and the drug-related incidents. The involvement of the federal department of justice and the warning issued by the department regarding the lawsuit against Alabama authorities have made this scenario more horrific. According to some experts of correctional related cases, Alabama needs to implement some strict reforms in the correctional manuals in jail. The gruesome situation in Alabama requires effective and quick measures for reforms. Fair vengeance could be achieved after the deployments of corrective and punitive practices. The criminals could be condemned in the form of human protection and supervision.

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