

Maricopa County Sheriff's Office

Joe Arpaio, Sheriff



Date: June 29, 2009

SHERIFF ORDERS JAIL SYSTEM LOCKDOWN OVER RACIAL TENSION

Inmate Visitation Cancelled Until Further Notice

(Phoenix, AZ) Sheriff Arpaio has ordered that all Maricopa County jails, which house approximately 10,000 inmates, to immediately be placed on lockdown after Sheriff's intelligence officials received information that inmates were planning large scale assaults that are racially motivated.

"I am sending a message to these inmates that I run the jail system, not the inmates. I will not condone inmates targeting each other because of their race" Arpaio said.

Until further notice, visitation, inmate phone calls, and all non-essential movement will be restricted until the lockdown is lifted by the Sheriff. Sheriff's SWAT units will also be standing by available to assist should a disturbance break out. Inmates will only be allowed to eat sack lunches and will only be able to leave their cells for court appearances. The Sheriff's Office currently transports on average roughly 800 inmates per day to court appearances.

Intelligence reports show that the reason behind the planned assault is inmate's dislike for bunking with other inmates who are not of the same race. The racial breakdown of the Maricopa County jail system indicates that of the total population, 44% are Hispanic, 37% are White, and 14% are Black. Over half of the Hispanic inmates are illegal aliens.

Arpaio says "This is a proactive move on our part to ensure the safety of all inmates." The lockdown is expected to last until it is determined that the tension has subsided.

News Release

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