

# Maricopa County Sheriff's Office

## Joe Arpaio, Sheriff



Date: May 18, 2009

### **ARPAIO PUTS JAILS ON LOCK DOWN AS INMATE TO INMATE THREATS CONTINUE OVER HUNGER STRIKE**

(Phoenix, AZ) Effective at 3 PM today, Monday, May 18, 2009, three out of seven Maricopa County jails will be on indefinite lockdown as a security precaution to prevent further inmate on inmate assaults.

Since May 2, inmates have participated in a periodic hunger strike with evening meals repeatedly refused by hundreds of inmates. Those inmates who accept the evening meals have been repeatedly threatened by other inmates. Since the problems began, six inmates have requested to be placed in protective custody so they can eat without fear of reprisal, according to the Sheriff.

The hunger protest inside the facilities began when an anti illegal immigration enforcement march culminated with 2,000 citizens loudly demonstrating in front of the Sheriff's jails.

While the numbers of those participating since the May 2 march have fluctuated, in the last four days, Arpaio says, the numbers of inmates refusing to eat have grown. On Thursday of last week 1,504 refused the evening meals, on Friday – 1,800 refused, on Saturday 1,219 did not eat and last night 1,080 inmates turned down the evening meal. Also over the weekend, a number of inmates got into a brawl in a housing unit at Lower

News Release

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Buckeye Jail.

Lower Buckeye Jail, Towers and the downtown 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue Jail where inmates continue to threaten others who eat are targeted for lockdown.

Nearly 4,200 medium and maximum security inmates will be affected. Visitation to these jails will be suspended indefinitely, as will inmate phone calls and all television viewing.

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