

Correctional Services to deal with "inmate Facebook" creators

PRETORIA: The Department of Correctional Services says it views the creation of an "inmate Facebook account" at Pollsmoor Correctional Centre in Cape Town in a serious light and will deal with the creators of the page.



Stuart Mles via freedigitalphotos.net

The department said senior department officials have already visited the centre and questioned officials as well as three offenders from the Medium B Centre, who illegally posted their pictures on Facebook, allegedly using cell phones.

"An investigation has been opened and a joint operation, comprising Correctional Services and other law enforcement agencies have been initiated to get to the root of the illegal activity.

"Preliminary investigations are expected to be concluded within seven days, after which disciplinary processes will be instituted against the perpetrators. Security operations, including impromptu searches, have also been stepped up across the facilities, as part of the department's Back-to-Basics Security Campaign," the department said in a statement.

Cell phone detection technology

The department added that the installation of cell phone detection technology at various correctional centres across the country is at an advanced stage with installation at Pollsmoor expected to start soon.

Other centres include Umzinto, Durban-Westville, St Albans, Johannesburg and Kgosi Mapuru II.

The department explained that the installation of the cell phone technology is a pilot phase informed by a security risk assessment which identified priority centres in respect of security.

"The rollout to other centres will be informed by lessons learnt from the pilot sites. The introduction of this technology follows its success in new generation correctional centres, built with standard cell phone detection systems, including Malmesbury

and Brandvlei in the Western Cape, Tswelopele and Mangaung in the Free State/Northern Cape region, as well as Kutama Sinthumule in the Limpopo/Mpumalanga/North West region.

"The department has stepped up security operations and continues to confiscate thousands of cell phones. We appeal to members of the public, including families of inmates to assist in curbing the smuggling of cell phones into correctional centres, as they are used to perpetrate further criminal activities including cybercrime."

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