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Saskatchewan Government and General Employees' Union

NEWS RELEASE

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www.sgeu.org

1011 Devonshire Drive North
Regina, SK S4X 2X4
(p) 522.8571
1.800.667.5221
(f) 352.1969

1114-22nd Street West
Saskatoon, SK S7M 0S5
(p) 652.1811
1.800.667.9791
(f) 664.7134

33-11th Street West
Prince Albert, SK S6V 3A8
(p) 764.5201
1.800.667.9355
(f) 763.4763

Saskatchewan correctional centres a 'powder keg' due to poor Sask Party government policies

The situation of severe overcrowding, assaults on staff, cancellation of family visitation, gang violence, lack of support and training for correctional staff, lack of proper medical care for inmates, changes to vacation leave and poor management decisions have created a volatile situation for inmates and staff alike at Saskatchewan's correctional centres, according to SGEU President Bob Bymoan.

"The situation is so explosive that these centres are a powder keg waiting to go off. It's only a matter of time before the situation disintegrates even further," said Bymoan.

According to staff at the province's four centres, there are continual assaults on correctional officers, every unit is over capacity, inmates are sleeping on floors in holding units and in visiting pods, and prisoners are being misclassified into wrong security areas.

Correctional staff say assaults against officers have increased dramatically and the situation is "progressively getting more dangerous."

The province's correctional centres currently hold over 1,800 inmates. Half of those individuals are being held in remand and have therefore not been convicted of a crime. The numbers in remand are rising year over year since 2010-11. The provincial auditor has also recently chastised the Sask Party government for a lack of proper medical care. Further, recent reports state that most family visit days over the past few weeks have been cancelled due to inmates sleeping in the general visiting area.

"This government needs to plan immediate action to deal with this toxic environment, which is having a direct effect on the health of correctional officers. The Sask Party government has to stop with the talk and start providing proper resources before things deteriorate further," said Bymoan.

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For further information contact:

Colin McGarrigle
Communications Officer, SGEU
306.551.5165