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Jamaica: Commission of Inquiry must take strong action to end impunity

Reports of more brutal beatings of inmates by soldiers and warders in St Catherine's prison, Jamaica, shows yet again the need for urgent steps to be taken to protect all prisoners from reprisals, including repeated torture and ill-treatment, Amnesty International said today.

The Commission of Inquiry into the beating of 300 prisoners in May is due to announce the results of its findings soon. Amnesty International is calling on the Commission of Inquiry to include these new incidents in its deliberations.

"Even as the Commission has retired to consider its findings, soldiers continue to brutalise inmates. The continuing violence reflects a climate of impunity surrounding human rights abuses in Jamaica's prisons," Amnesty International said.

Since strike action by guards in January, the human rights situation inside Jamaica's prisons has steadily deteriorated. The authorities have failed to take measures to prevent violence by soldiers and guards, and inmate-on-inmate killings and brutality.

One lawyer representing a number of prisoners has spoken of the "constant fear" to which prisoners are subjected.

Since 1975, there have been several inquiries into alleged brutality in the country's prisons. Amnesty International is calling on the

Commission of Inquiry to take positive steps to end impunity in Jamaica's prison system and the cycle of violence.

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