

U.S. Civil Rights Division for Prisons

Washington

The justice department announced yesterday creation of a new unit dealing with civil rights violations in prisons and other institutions.

Attorney General John N. Mitchell said the new Office of Institutions and Facilities would handle non-criminal violations such as segregated facilities, discriminatory hiring practices and complaints by prison inmates, hospital patients and others that their rights were being violated.

A department spokesman said no investigation of Attica prison is planned because of a department policy giving state officials first crack at

alleged violations.

Besides prisons, the unit will handle complaints involving juvenile institutions, hospitals, mental institutions and orphanages, the Department said.

The complaints are not always racial, the spokesman said.

He said cases to be handled by the unit include a suit by inmates of the Mississippi State Penitentiary at Parchman charging bad conditions in violation of the constitutional ban on cruel and unusual punishment. The department has intervened in the case on behalf of the inmates.

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