

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Virgin Islands Inmate N'Kosi Parris Killed In Mississippi Prison Day-Room Brawl

Local Mississippi reporting says Parris suffered multiple stab wounds during a brawl involving several inmates at Tallahatchie County Correctional Facility, as concerns are raised about how Virgin Islands prisoners are being housed and treated.

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Ernice Gilbert **April 14, 2026**



An interior view of the Tallahatchie County Correctional Facility in Tutwiler, Mississippi.

A Virgin Islands inmate housed at the Tallahatchie County Correctional Facility in Tutwiler, Mississippi, was killed late Thursday, a death that Bureau of Corrections officials confirmed Monday morning after days of social media rumors.

The incident, which a local Mississippi newspaper reported stemmed from a day-room brawl, has also renewed scrutiny of conditions for Virgin Islands prisoners housed at the facility, as Senator Franklin Johnson says he has been trying for months to get the Bryan administration and the Bureau of Corrections to address safety and classification concerns there.

The deceased was identified as 34-year-old N’Kosi Parris, a Virgin Islander who had been transferred to the Mississippi prison. Bureau of Corrections officials told The Consortium on Monday that his next of kin had been notified.

“The matter remains under active investigation, and no further details are available at this time,” said Kyza Callwood, chief strategy officer of the Bureau of Corrections.

According to the Mississippi newspaper, which cited Tallahatchie County Coroner Anthony Hawkins, Parris suffered multiple stab wounds during a brawl in a day room involving several other inmates and was later pronounced dead. The paper identified the prison as the Tallahatchie County Correctional Facility, or TCCF, in Tutwiler.

The killing has brought fresh attention to concerns about conditions at the Mississippi facility. [WTJX reported](#) Monday that Senator Franklin Johnson said the death of Mr. Parris prompted him to speak publicly about issues he has been trying to get addressed since a December visit to Tallahatchie.

Mr. Johnson said he had prearranged the trip after receiving complaints from inmates, but was blocked from meeting with them and from observing a Virgin Islands Parole Board hearing at the facility. The publication further reported that Mr. Johnson said at least four Virgin Islands inmates, including Mr. Parris, had been badly stabbed at Tallahatchie within the last three to four months. He attributed the violence in large part to what he described as a broken classification process that allows rival inmates from the Virgin Islands to be housed together in the same cluster.

Mr. Parris had long been involved in serious criminal matters in the territory.

In 2011, he and another man were charged with first-degree murder in the death of a Frederiksted meat store owner during a robbery at the establishment. A second victim was injured during the incident.

In 2012, Mr. Parris was arrested again and charged with the murder of 16-year old Jamal Richardson, whose body was found the previous January in a church construction site in Frederiksted.

Arrests for assault followed in 2014, and in 2015 Mr. Parris was stabbed at the Golden Grove correctional facility while awaiting trial.