



PULAALI'I NIKOLAO PULA  
GOVERNOR

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LT. GOVERNOR

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**EXECUTIVE ORDER NO. 001 – 2026**

**AN ORDER TEMPORARILY TRANSFERRING THE DEPARTMENT OF  
CORRECTIONS UNDER THE CONTROL OF THE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC  
SAFETY, AND APPOINTING THE COMMISSIONER OF PUBLIC SAFETY AS THE  
INTERIM DIRECTOR OF CORRECTIONS**

**Section 1: Authority**

This Executive Order is issued under the authority granted to the Governor in Article IV, Section 6 and 7 of the Revised Constitution of American Samoa, and Section 4.0111 of the American Samoa Code Annotated.

**Section 2: Preamble**

**WHEREAS**, Title 4, section 4.0111 of the American Samoa Code Annotated (ASCA) establishes the executive branch framework and vests the Governor with “general supervision and control of all departments, offices, divisions, bureaus, agencies or instrumentalities of the executive branch of the government”;

**WHEREAS**, the Department of Corrections (“DOC”) is responsible “for the safety and security of persons who are lawfully detained or committed to its care,” ASCA Section 9.0101, specifically, those detained at the “Tafuna Correctional Facility (“TCF”), the Juvenile Detention Center (“JDC”), and any other location in American Samoa where inmates and juvenile detainees are confined,” ASCA Section 9.0102(2);

**WHEREAS**, for many years the TCF and JDC, have been plagued by inmate escapes and substandard living conditions, raising serious concerns for the safety of correctional staff, inmates, and the public;

**WHEREAS**, in response to these longstanding concerns, the American Samoa Government in 2022 established the DOC as a standalone executive department, separating correctional operations from the Department of Public Safety (“DPS”);

**WHEREAS**, notwithstanding the improvements intended by the 2022 law, inmate escapes from the TCF have continued unabated, highlighted by the most recent escape involving a corrections officer who allegedly assisted the escape of an inmate in the trunk of her vehicle;

**WHEREAS**, the ongoing security failures at the TCF and JDC present a clear and immediate threat to public safety and demand urgent executive action;

**WHEREAS**, the Governor has the responsibility to ensure the protection of the public, the effective enforcement of the laws of American Samoa, and the proper functioning of executive branch agencies; and

**WHEREAS**, temporarily placing the DOC under the DPS, and appointing the Commissioner of DPS as Interim Director of Corrections, is necessary to immediately address security issues at the TCF and JDC.

**NOW, THEREFORE, I, PULAALI’I NIKOLAO PULA**, Governor of American Samoa, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Revised Constitution of American Samoa and the American Samoa Code Annotated, hereby order as follows:

**Section 1: Temporary Operational Oversight**

For the purpose of restoring order and security at the TCF and JDC, the DOC shall operate under the direct control, oversight, and coordination of the DPS, with the Commissioner of DPS serving as Interim Director of DOC. The Commissioner of DPS, in his capacity as Interim Director of DOC, shall exercise all the powers and duties of the Director of Corrections set forth in Title 9 and all other applicable provisions of the ASCA.

The Commissioner of DPS, in his capacity as Interim Director of DOC, shall take all necessary steps to:

- a. Stabilize operations at the TCF and JDC through the deployment of DOC and DPS personnel and resources to ensure the security and supervision of all inmates and detainees;
- b. Implement standard operating procedures and practices (“SOPs”) for the operations of the TCF and JDC, to include but not be limited to, procedures that govern facility security and control, admission and classification of inmates and detainees, inmate movement and transport, emergency response to escapes and other critical incidents, search procedures, use of force and inmate welfare policies, and compliance with federal and territorial standards; and
- c. Improve staff training on SOPs and other professional standards, including required training, conduct expectations, and disciplinary procedures.

**Section 2: Review of Legal Authorities and Development of Legislative Proposals**

A review and assessment of the legal authorities applicable to the DOC and DPS shall be undertaken, and legislative proposals shall be developed, in consultation with the Attorney General’s Office, to enhance the ability of American Samoa Government to perform the corrections functions set forth in Title 9 and all other applicable provisions of the ASCA.

**Section 3: Effective Date**

This Executive Order is effective immediately.

Date: 03/16/24



**PULAALI' NIKOLAO PULA**  
Governor of American Samoa