



NATION

U.S. will continue use of privately run prisons, Attorney General says

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U.S. Attorney General Jeff Sessions (R) next to FBI Director James Comey holds his first meeting with heads of federal law enforcement components Feb. 9 at the Justice Department in Washington, D.C. Photo by REUTERS/Yuri Gripas.

Attorney General Jeff Sessions has signaled his support for the federal government's use of private prisons, rescinding a memo meant to phase out their use.

Sessions issued a new memo Thursday replacing one issued last August by Sally Yates, the deputy attorney general at the time.

That memo told the Bureau of Prisons to begin reducing and ultimately end its use of privately run prisons. She said the facilities were less well run than those managed by the Bureau of Prisons, and were less necessary given declines in the overall prison population.

But Sessions says in his memo Thursday that Yates' directive contradicted longstanding Justice Department policy and "impaired the Bureau's ability to meet the future needs of the federal correctional system."

PBS NewsHour will update this story as more information becomes available.