TEAR GAS FIRED TO QUELL TEENS IN DON DALE RIOT.

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By Zach Hope

SIX teenage detainees allegedly tore up Don Dale Detention Juvenile Centre and injured a staff member during a three-hour siege that ended when the anti-riot team fired tear gas. Five of the teens, who were all aged 14 and 17 years of age, were the same who escaped the facility on August 2 and spent days on the run.

The incident has forced the closure of Don Dale about a month earlier than anticipated.

Correctional Service commissioner Ken Middlebrook said that they allegedly began smashing cells and equipment about 5.30pm Thursday night in the secure unit of facility, where they had been placed since their capture. One of the detainees escaped his cell and began damaging other areas of the facility.

Mr Middlebrook said the youths threatened staff with weapons fashioned out of smashed dinner plates, light fittings and windows.

At least one of the weapons appeared to be a knife made from plastic and fastened with tape, indicating it may have been made and stowed well before the uprising. One staff member was cut on the arm and required treatment.

A member of the dog squad and three members of the Immediate Action Team, a group of officers specially trained in quelling riots, were called from the adult Berrimah prison when Don Dale staff could not take control of the youths and when other detainees from the non-secure section threatened to become involved.

The IAC fired tear gas at the six youths until they were subdued.

Mr Middlebrook said they were immediately washed down and none were injured.

The youths are now under extra security until their move to a completed area of the soon-to-be-opened new prison over the weekend.

Mr Middlebrook said it was the first time in his seven years in the Territory that ear gas was used to quell detainees at the centre.