

PRESS RELEASE

Former Prison Guard Sentenced to 8 Years in Federal Prison for Sexually Abusing Inmates

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For Immediate Release

U.S. Attorney's Office, District of Hawaii

HONOLULU – Acting United States Attorney Ken Sorenson announced that Mikael Salvador Rivera, 48, of Kapolei, Hawaii, was sentenced today in federal court by Senior U.S. District Judge J. Michael Seabright to 96 months' imprisonment followed by 3 years of supervised release for sexual abuse of wards.

Rivera was a correctional officer at the Federal Detention Center in Honolulu from approximately 2014 to 2018. As part of his prior guilty plea in March 2025, Rivera admitted that while on duty as a correctional officer, he ordered an inmate to participate in multiple sexual acts to which she did not consent and engaged in sexually abusive conduct with two additional inmates under his supervision. According to information provided to the Court, Rivera would leave cell doors unlocked so that he could enter or escort his victims out undetected. Rivera's guilty plea came after he initially fled on the eve of trial, leading law enforcement on a days-long manhunt across Oahu.

At sentencing, Judge Seabright imposed an upward variance from the advisory Sentencing Guidelines range, stating that with respect to the offense conduct, "there is nothing in mitigation, nothing I see but a gross abuse of Mr. Rivera's position of authority within FDC, and a gross abuse of that power in sexually abusing these three inmates over one calendar year." Judge Seabright went on to state, "His conduct was the exact opposite of what was intended. You were supposed to help, to rehabilitate those in your care. Instead, you preyed on them. You became a predator to them."

"Correctional officers serve an invaluable role in our justice system, working in dangerous environments where they are entrusted to ensure order in our detention facilities and the safety of our inmates. While nearly all federal correctional officers are hardworking, ethical, and honest, there are those very few who abuse their power over inmates. Their conduct erodes public faith in our institutions and justice system, and we must accordingly seek to investigate, prosecute, and punish those who abuse vulnerable

inmates in federal custody. Those who violate the public trust will experience the full force of law and justice in the District of Hawaii," said Acting U.S. Attorney Ken Sorenson. "Today's lengthy sentence serves as a warning that sexual misconduct by federal correctional officers will be investigated, prosecuted, and severely punished."

"Sexual abuse of individuals in custody by federal correctional officers is a profound breach of public trust. The Office of the Inspector General is committed to ensuring that those who violate that trust are held accountable for abusing their authority," said Anne Walsh, Acting Special Agent in Charge of the Department of Justice Office of the Inspector General (DOJ OIG) Western Region.

"Not only did Mikael Rivera abuse the power of his position to commit horrific acts of sexual violence and silence his victims, but his actions undermined the efforts of all correctional officers," said FBI Honolulu Special Agent in Charge David Porter. "Today's sentence sends the clear message that the FBI will investigate and hold accountable anyone who violates federal law, regardless of their position."

The investigation was conducted by the United States Department of Justice Office of the Inspector General (DOJ-OIG), with assistance from the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI).

Assistant U.S. Attorney Sara Ayabe for the District of Hawaii and Trial Attorney Nicole Lockhart of the Criminal Division's Public Integrity Section (PIN) prosecuted the case, with substantial assistance from former PIN Deputy Chiefs Jennifer Clarke and Marco Palmieri.