



U.S. Department of Justice

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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PRESS RELEASE

**FEDERAL CORRECTIONAL OFFICER AND THE GIRLFRIEND OF AN INMATE
CHARGED WITH BRIBERY**

***Correctional Officer Smuggled Narcotics and Cellular Phones into the Federal Detention
Center in Brooklyn in Exchange for Bribe Payments***

A criminal complaint was unsealed today in federal court in the Eastern District of New York charging Armando Moronta, a federal correctional officer employed by the United States Bureau of Prisons (BOP) at the Metropolitan Detention Center in Brooklyn, New York (MDC), and Alicia Alonso, the girlfriend of an inmate being held at the MDC, with carrying out a bribery scheme to bring contraband into the MDC for inmates.

The defendants' initial appearances are scheduled for this afternoon before United States Magistrate Judge Marilyn D. Go at the United States Courthouse, 225 Cadman Plaza East, Brooklyn, New York.

The charges were announced by Robert L. Capers, United States Attorney for the Eastern District of New York, Ronald G. Gardella, Special Agent in Charge, United States Department of Justice, Office of the Inspector General, New York Field Office (OIG), and William F. Sweeney, Jr., Assistant Director in Charge, Federal Bureau of Investigation, New York Field Office (FBI).

As set forth in the complaint, Alonso provided Moronta with contraband, including cellular telephones, the narcotic Suboxone, and the synthetic narcotic "K2," together with thousands of dollars in bribe payments. Moronta, using his position as a federal correctional officer, then smuggled the contraband into the MDC on approximately twelve occasions between March 2016 and December 2016 and distributed it to inmates under his guard for their use and further distribution.

"As alleged in the complaint, Moronta abused his position of trust as a federal correctional officer thereby compromising a vital component of our criminal justice system and

potentially endangering the safety and well-being of other MDC employees and inmates. Such reckless and illegal acts will not be tolerated. Those who commit, or assist others in committing, these crimes will be aggressively investigated and prosecuted to the full extent of the law,” stated United States Attorney Capers. Mr. Capers expressed his grateful appreciation to the OIG and FBI.

OIG Special Agent in Charge Gardella stated, “Whether you are a federal correctional officer, a police officer, or anyone else in a position of authority and public trust, you should know that we vigorously investigate all allegations of individuals betraying their oath of office, and we will bring you to justice.”

FBI Assistant Director in Charge Sweeney stated, “Smuggling drugs into a federal prison is not only illegal, it’s inherently dangerous and puts peoples’ lives at risk. The fact that a corrections officer is alleged to have done so in exchange for money violates the oath he swore to uphold. His badge does not allow him special privilege, or put him above the law.”

The charges in the complaint are allegations, and the defendants are presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty. If convicted, the defendants each face a maximum sentence of fifteen years’ imprisonment.

The government’s case is being handled by the Office’s Public Integrity Section. Assistant United States Attorneys Kevin Trowel, Nadia Shihata, and Andrew C. Gilman are in charge of the prosecution.

The Defendants:

ARMANDO MORONTA

Age: 38

Brooklyn, New York

ALICIA ALONSO

Age: 31

Woodbridge, New Jersey