

**Department of Justice**

U.S. Attorney's Office

District of New Jersey

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Thursday, October 22, 2020

**Former Inmate Charged with Conspiring to Use Drones to Smuggle Contraband into Fort Dix Federal Prison**

NEWARK, N.J. – A Union County, New Jersey, man has been charged with conspiring to use drones to smuggle contraband, including tobacco, cell phone chargers, and a cell phone, into the federal correctional facility at Fort Dix, U.S. Attorney Craig Carpenito announced today.

Johansel Moronta, 27, of Linden, New Jersey, an inmate at Fort Dix from April 2018 to March 2019, was charged by complaint, unsealed today, with one count of conspiring to smuggle contraband into the prison and to defraud the United States and one count of being a federal inmate possessing and obtaining, and attempting to possess and obtain, contraband. Moronta will be scheduled to appear on a date to be determined by the court.

Three other men, Adrian Goolcharran, a/k/a “Adrian Ahoda” and “Adrian Ajoda,” Nicolo Denichilo, and Jason Arteaga Loayza, a/k/a “Juice,” previously have been charged with participating in the scheme to use drones to smuggle contraband into Fort Dix.

According to the documents filed in this case and statements made in court:

The U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Inspector General (DOJ-OIG) obtained evidence that in October 2018, while incarcerated at the federal prison at Fort Dix, Moronta participated, along with Arteaga, a former Fort Dix inmate, Goolcharran, and others, in a scheme to use unmanned aircrafts, or drones, to deliver contraband to inmates. Moronta's role in the scheme was to coordinate the drone drops with Goolcharran and Arteaga from within the prison, and then retrieve the contraband after the drone, piloted by Goolcharran, had dropped the contraband inside the facility.

On Oct. 30, 2018, at approximately 1:40 a.m., Fort Dix officers observed a drone with fishing line hovering above the rooftop of an inmate housing unit. Officers found Moronta leaving a bathroom in the area where the bag of contraband dropped from the drone had been found, along with bolts that secured an open rooftop hatch used to access the delivery. Officers also found a cell phone that Moronta used to coordinate drone drops with Arteaga and Goolcharran. The phone contained numerous text messages and phone calls exchanged between Moronta, Goolcharran and Arteaga in the days leading up to the drop. On Oct. 27, 2018, Moronta sent a text message to Goolcharran referring to himself as “Joe [expletive] in fort dix on the rooftop.” On Oct. 30, 2018, at 12:07 a.m., Moronta sent a text message to Goolcharran asking “U in the area,” and Goolcharran responded “Yea.,” likely meaning that Goolcharran was near Fort Dix and available to make the drone drop. At 12:36 a.m., Goolcharran messaged Moronta “How we lookin,” and Moronta responded a few minutes later with “It ok.” Moronta also sent messages to Arteaga at 12:57 a.m., stating “Two trip,” likely referring to the number of drone flights planned, and “Same cop from last week,” likely referring to the corrections officer on duty.

Moronta also coordinated other drone drops with Arteaga and Goolcharran. Location data from Goolcharran's cell phone confirmed that Goolcharran's cell phone was in the Fort Dix area during the early morning hours of October 24, 2018, and began to depart the area by about 1:54 a.m. that same morning. In addition, evidence obtained from Moronta's cell phone revealed numerous communications between Moronta, Arteaga, and Goolcharran on Oct. 23 and Oct. 24, 2018, showing the three men coordinating multiple drone drops.

The offenses charged in the complaint carry a maximum penalty of five years in prison and maximum fine of \$250,000 for the conspiracy count and one year in prison and \$100,000 maximum fine for the possessing or obtaining contraband count.

U.S. Attorney Carpenito credited agents of DOJ-OIG, New York Field Office, under the direction of Special Agent in Charge Guido Modano; DOJ-OIG's Cyber Investigations Office, under the direction of Special Agent in Charge Keith Bonanno; the U.S. Air Force Office of Special Investigations, Detachment 307 under the direction of Superintendent Jonathan Jackson; and the U.S. Department of Transportation – Office of Inspector General, Northeast Region, under the direction of Special Agent in Charge Douglas Shoemaker, with the investigation leading to the charges.

He also thanked Federal Bureau of Prisons personnel at Fort Dix, under the direction of Warden David Ortiz; agents of the FBI, under the direction of Special Agent in Charge George M. Crouch Jr.; investigating agents of the U.S. Attorney's Office, under the direction of Supervisory Special Agent Thomas J. Mahoney; and officers with the Pemberton Borough Police Department, under the direction of Chief Edward Hunter; the Pemberton Township Police Department, under the direction of Chief David Jantas; and Chesterfield Township Police Department, under the direction of Chief Kyle Wilson, for their assistance.

The government is represented by Assistant U.S. Attorneys Cari Fais and Jeffrey J. Manis of the Office's Special Prosecutions Division in Newark.

The charges and allegations contained in the complaints are merely accusations, and the defendant is presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty.