

# WARREN COUNTY PROSECUTOR'S OFFICE



JESSICA L. CARDONE  
ACTING PROSECUTOR

BRENTON S. WARNE  
ACTING CHIEF OF DETECTIVES

413 Second Street, Belvidere New Jersey 07823  
Phone: (908)475-6275 Fax: (908)475-6344

[www.wcpo-nj.us](http://www.wcpo-nj.us)

---

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
September 4, 2025

JOSHUA MAKUTA  
ALLEN TOWN, PENNSYLVANIA  
AGE: 23

JOREL RIVERA  
CATASAUQUA, PENNSYLVANIA  
AGE: 20

On Sunday, August 31, 2025, at approximately 1:40 P.M., members of the Phillipsburg Police Department responded to 3000 Rand Boulevard after receiving a report of shots fired. While enroute officers were provided a description of the suspect vehicle observed fleeing the scene. No injuries were reported on scene. Soon thereafter, the suspect vehicle was located and stopped by the Lopatcong Township Police Department. The occupants of the vehicle, Joshua Makuta and Jorel Rivera, were arrested for firearms related offenses, processed, and lodged in the Warren County Correctional Center. Makuta has been released from the Warren County Correctional Center on pre-trial monitoring and subject to non-monetary conditions.

Makuta was charged on a Complaint Warrant with the offenses below.

1. Unlawful Possession of a Weapon, specifically a handgun, without first obtaining a permit, in violation of N.J.S.A. 2C:39-5B(1), a crime of the second degree;
2. Possession of hollow nose or dum-dum bullets, in violation of N.J.S.A. 2C:39-3F(1), a crime of the fourth degree crime.
3. Possession of a large capacity magazine, in violation of N.J.S.A. 2C:39-3J, a crime of the fourth degree.

Rivera was charged on a Complaint Warrant with the offenses below.

1. Unlawful Possession of a Weapon, specifically a handgun, without first obtaining a permit, in violation of N.J.S.A. 2C:39-5B(1), a crime of the second degree;
2. Possession of a Weapon for an Unlawful Purpose, in violation of N.J.S.A. 2C:39-4A(1), a crime of the second degree.

Second degree crimes carry a maximum sentence of ten (10) years in the New Jersey State Prison and fourth degree crimes carry a maximum sentence of eighteen (18) months in the New Jersey State Prison

PRESS RELEASE

September 4, 2025

Page 2

The charges are merely accusations. The defendants are presumed innocent until and unless proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt in a court of law.

The investigation was conducted by the Phillipsburg Police Department. Assisting with the investigation were the Warren County Prosecutor's Office and the Lopatcong, Greenwich, and Pohatcong Township Police Departments.