

News Release  
U.S. Department of Justice  
United States Attorney  
District of Rhode Island



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## **Ten-year maximum sentence for “menace to society” involved in a shooting incident outside a nightclub**

A federal judge today sentenced **Raul Soto**, of Central Falls, to ten years in federal prison – the maximum prison sentence – for being a felon in possession of a firearm in connection with a shooting incident outside a Providence nightclub.

United States Attorney Robert Clark Corrente announced the sentence, which U.S. District Court Judge Mary M. Lisi imposed in U.S. District Court, Providence. Judge Lisi called Soto a “menace to society,” and said that the ten-year sentence was necessary to protect the public.

In June, Soto pleaded guilty to being a felon in possession of a firearm. At the plea hearing, Assistant U.S. Attorney Terrence P. Donnelly said that the government could prove that, at about 2:00 AM on March 5, Providence Police officers were attempting to disburse a crowd in front of Club Pulse at 86 Crary Street, when they saw two men fighting. As the officers approached, they heard gunshots and saw a man holding a black pistol.

After taking cover, the officers heard additional gunshots and one of them saw a muzzle flash from a window of a gold Honda Accord as it pulled away from the scene. One officer was so close to the shooting that he temporarily lost his hearing.

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Officers pursued the car, which went out of control and crashed against street curbing on Allens Avenue. The driver, later identified as Soto, refused orders to exit the vehicle and show his left hand. Officers arrested Soto and seized a black, .40-caliber pistol from under the driver's seat.

Soto, 31, of 23 Tiffany Street, Central Falls, has a prior conviction for assault with a dangerous weapon.

**Providence Police** and the **Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives** investigated the case. Assistant U.S. Attorney Richard W. Rose prosecuted the case as part of **Project Safe Neighborhoods**, a Department of Justice initiative against gun crimes. Assistant U.S. Attorney Donnelly represented the government at the plea hearing in June.

Under Project Safe Neighborhoods, the U.S. Attorney's Office, working with Providence Police, ATF, the Rhode Island Attorney General's Office, and other agencies, aggressively prosecutes federal firearms offenses in an effort to incarcerate those responsible for gun violence and deter others from committing gun crimes. Since 2001, federal firearms prosecutions in Rhode Island have more than doubled and gun offenders have been sentenced to a total of more than 650 years in federal prison.

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Contact: 401-709-5032

[Thomas.connell@usdoj.gov](mailto:Thomas.connell@usdoj.gov)