



ERIK NASARENKO

VENTURA COUNTY DISTRICT ATTORNEY

NEWS RELEASE



Follow us @VenturaCountyDA
vcdistrictattorney.com

Contact: Joey Buttitta
Title: Communications Manager/PIO
Phone: (805) 767-3400
Email: Joey.Buttitta@ventura.org

Approved: SW
Date: May 24, 2024
Release No.: 24-057

Ventura Man Charged with Human Trafficking & Sex Crimes Against Minor

VENTURA, Calif. – The Ventura County District Attorney's Office announced today that Gerardo Hernandez Cruz (DOB 11/25/92), of Ventura, has been charged with three felony counts: human trafficking of a minor, forcible rape, and forcible sexual penetration with a minor over 14. He is also charged with four special allegations, including that the victim was particularly vulnerable.

On May 9, 2024, Ventura County Sheriff's deputies responded to a 911 text for help in Casitas Springs, an unincorporated area of Ventura County. After interviewing the minor victim, they learned that she had allegedly been transported from Mexico to Ventura County. Cruz is accused of perpetrating sex acts upon the victim against her will after she arrived.

Cruz was arraigned in Ventura County Superior Court on May 13, 2024, and pled not guilty.

Deputy District Attorney Rikole Kelly, a member of the Ventura County District Attorney's Office Sexual Assault Unit, is prosecuting the case.

An early disposition conference was held on May 22, 2024, and was continued to July 10, 2024, at 1:30 p.m. in courtroom 11 of the Ventura County Superior Court. Cruz remains in custody with bail set at \$500,000.

Case: 2024012349

Defendant Information:

Gerardo Hernandez Cruz (DOB 11/25/92)
Ventura

Charges:

- PC 236.1 – Human trafficking of a minor
- PC 261(a)(2) – Forcible rape
- PC 289(a)(1)(C) – Forcible sexual penetration on minor over 14

Special Allegations:

- (3 counts) CRC 4.421(a)(3) – Victim was particularly vulnerable
- PC264(c)(2) – Victim was 14 years old or older