



THE UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT of JUSTICE

United States Attorney's Office
District of Oregon

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Man Unlawfully Living in Oregon Charged with Aiming a Laser at a Customs and Border Patrol Helicopter

PORTLAND, Ore.—A man made his first appearance in federal court today after pointing a laser at a Customs and Border Patrol (CBP) helicopter in the Portland metro area.

Hector Miranda-Mendoza, 35, has been charged by criminal complaint with the felony offense of Aiming a Laser Pointer at an Aircraft.

According to court documents, on the evening of September 27, 2025, law enforcement identified Miranda-Mendoza as an individual who targeted multiple aircraft with a laser pointer, including a CBP helicopter. Lasers can cause blindness and spotting in vision, making it a challenge for pilots to identify other aircraft and obstacles, which could lead to a catastrophic event. CBP used an on-board mapping system to locate the origin of the laser at a Portland residence. Investigating officers contacted the defendant who admitted he recently purchased the laser and knew it was strong. Defendant reported he thought the helicopter was a drone and he remembered flashing the helicopter four or five times. Law enforcement seized the laser pointer and referred this matter for federal prosecution.

“Aiming a laser pointer at an aircraft endangers lives and is a federal crime. This conduct put the lives of CBP personnel and the community directly at risk, and my office will aggressively pursue those who engage in this illegal activity,” said Scott E. Bradford, U.S. Attorney for the District of Oregon.

“The laser strike on a CBP helicopter over the skies of Portland put our community at risk and endangered the lives of federal law enforcement officers. This activity is unacceptable, and FBI Portland will aggressively pursue anyone anywhere targeting federal agents, especially those currently holding the line at the Portland ICE facility,” said Douglas A. Olson, FBI Portland Special Agent in Charge.

Since June 13, 2025, the United States Attorney's Office has charged 29 defendants with federal crimes for offenses committed at the ICE building, including assaulting federal officers, failure to comply, and depredation of government property.

Miranda-Mendoza made his first appearance in federal court today before a U.S. Magistrate Judge. He was detained pending further court proceedings.

Aiming a laser pointer is punishable by up to five years in federal prison.

A criminal complaint is only an accusation of a crime, and a defendant is presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty.

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