

Israeli indicted for sexual abuse of 45 underage girls

Prosecutors add obstruction of justice charge after 26-year-old Uriah Assis tried to fake mental illness in bid for leniency

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Illustrative image of a criminal in handcuffs. (YakobchukOlena/iStock, by Getty Images)

Prosecutors on Sunday indicted a 26-year-old resident of the ultra-Orthodox West Bank settlement of Emmanuel for dozens of alleged sex offenses against underage girls.

The indictment handed to Uriah Assis by the Tel Aviv District Court said that over the past four years, he used the internet to abuse at least 45 girls aged 13 to 18, along with several young women over 18.

The charges against Assis include rape or sodomy of a minor, indecent assault, sexual harassment, making threats, obstruction of justice and the possession and production of child pornography.

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According to reports, prosecutors said they added the obstruction of justice charge after Assis sought leniency from police during his interrogation, claiming that he had schizophrenia. But a psychiatric examination found that he was faking the mental illness and was fit to stand trial.

Police announced Assis's arrest last week following a months-long investigation by the Lahav 433 serious crimes unit's cyber crime division.

In a statement released Thursday, police said Assis had been targeting underage girls online using fake social media profiles for years. Lahav investigators said Assis posed as a soldier, police officer, modeling agent, swimming coach or gynecologist to approach the young girls online.

