

**BETWEEN:** Public Prosecutor

**AND:** Judah John Taun  
Defendant

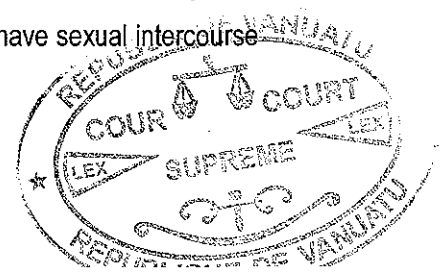
**Date of Plea:** 9<sup>th</sup> March 2026  
**Date of Sentence:** 15<sup>th</sup> April 2026  
**Before:** Hon. Oliver A Saksak  
**Counsel:** Betina Tamau for Public Prosecutor  
Lorenzo Moli for the Defendant

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**SENTENCE**

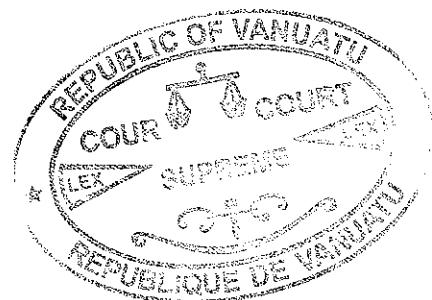
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1. Judea John Taun pleaded guilty to three counts of acts of indecency with two young girls under 15 years of age, and to one count of attempted unlawful sexual intercourse. And he is for sentence today.
2. The charges in Counts 1, 2 and 3 were laid under section 98A of the Penal Code Act [ Cap 135]. And the charge in Count 4 was laid under sections 28 (1) and 97 (2) of the Act.
3. The offence of act of indecency with a young person under section 98 A of the Act carries the maximum penalty of 10 years imprisonment. And attempted unlawful sexual intercourse with a child under 15 years of age but over 13 years carries the maximum penalty of 15 years imprisonment.
4. The defendant, now 64 years old was 62 years old in 2024 when the offendings began. His victims were two sisters Selina John ( SJ) born on 15 June 2011 and Kathrine John ( KJ) born on 16th May 2012.
5. In 2024 on many occasions the defendant exposed his penis to KJ the subject of the charge in Count 1. These acts were repeated in January and September 2025, the subject of the charge in Count 2.
6. These acts of indecent exposures were also done to KJ's older sister SJ in 2024, the subject of the charge in Count 3. But in August 2025 the defendant attempted to have sexual intercourse



with SJ, when he tried to penetrate the victim's vagina with his penis. She pushed him off because it was too painful for her.

7. Both victims were under the ages of 15 years. And these offendings occurred on Epi Island. Sometimes the acts were committed in the garden. At other times they occurred in the house when no one else was around, or at night when everyone was asleep.
8. The indecent acts involved the defendant masturbating himself in the presence of his victims. With the second victim KJ the defendant made her touch his penis and to perform oral sex on him. During all those times the defendant told the victims not to tell anyone or else they would go to prison.
9. These acts were committed by the defendant when his wife had travelled to Port Vila and left the girls in the care and protection of the defendant as the girl's grandfather.
10. There was no mitigating circumstances for the offendings. But there are aggravating factors such as the serious breach of trust by a grandfather towards his granddaughters, two underaged victims, a degree of planning involved, the repetitive acts, the great disparity of ages between the defendant being 56 and the victims being 15 years of age, the offendings occurring within the confines of the family home where the girls should have felt safe, the risk faced by KJ of physical injuries, teenage and unwarranted pregnancy and risk of catching contagious diseases, the mental effects on the two young victims present and future, and the pain felt by KJ during the attempted unlawful sexual intercourse.
11. I have had regard to PP v Iaru [2021] VUSC 258 submitted by Prosecutions and PP v Palmer [2021] VUSC 83 and PP v Kapalu [2021] VUSC 330 submitted by defence Counsel for comparative purposes. In my view the Kapalu case is distinguished in that it was a case of attempted sexual without consent. But Iaru and Palmer are relevant although they slightly differ on their facts and circumstances.
12. In my view the appropriate punishment for the defendant is to be custodial sentences. This is to mark the gravity of the offences committed, to deter others, to protect young girls and those in vulnerable situations, and to punish the defendant adequately.



13. I therefore convict and sentence the defendant as follows:-

- a) For Act of Indecency in Count 1- To a start sentence of 3 years imprisonment concurrent.
- b) For Act of Indecency in Count 2- To a start sentence of 3 years imprisonment, concurrent.
- c) For Act of Indecency in Count 3 – To a sentence of 3 years imprisonment, concurrent.

For those three counts the defendant is sentenced to a total sentence ( as a concurrent sentence) of 3 years imprisonment.

14. For Attempted Unlawful Sexual Intercourse in Count 4 – To a sentence of imprisonment for 4 years. As a separate offending, the sentence will be consecutive to the 3 years sentence for Counts 1, 2 and 3. The total sentence shall be 7 years imprisonment.

15. In mitigation, first I allow a reduction of 1/3 for his guilty plea. His sentence is reduced by 2 years and 4 months. The balance is 4 years and 8 months imprisonment.

16. Next for the substantial custom reconciliation he performed showing remorse, his clean past record, his age and other personal factors indicated in his pre-sentence report, I will allow a further reduction of his sentence by 12 months. That leaves his end sentence to be 3 years and 6 months imprisonment.

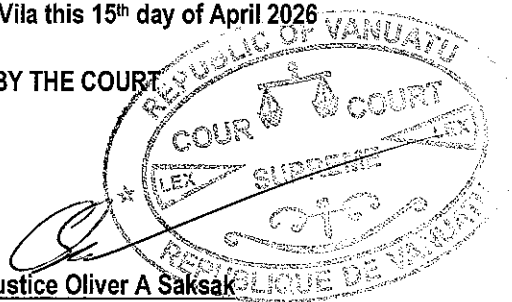
17. The defendant is now sentenced to an end sentence of 3 years and 6 months. So that he does not lose his parole privilege, I Order that his sentence shall be backdated to 3<sup>rd</sup> October 2025 when he was first remanded in custody.

18. The sentence will not be suspended. It takes immediate effect as of today.

19. The defendant has a right of appeal against this sentence within 14 days, if he so chooses.

DATED at Port Vila this 15<sup>th</sup> day of April 2026

BY THE COURT



Hon. Justice Oliver A Saksak