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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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**QUEENS MAN FACES HATE CRIMES CHARGES**  
**FOR RANDOM ATTACKS ON MUSLIMS IN QUEENS**

*Defendant Allegedly Followed and Punched Victims in Three Separate Incidents*

Queens District Attorney Melinda Katz announced today that Naved Durrni, 30, has been charged with assault as a hate crime, criminal possession of a weapon and other charges for three separate attacks on people he believed to be Muslim. The defendant allegedly pursued, struck and yelled anti-Muslim sentiments at the victims he encountered on the street over the last few weeks.

District Attorney Katz said, "As alleged, the defendant attacked and intimidated individuals because of their beliefs. That type of hate will not be tolerated in Queens County, where our diversity is our greatest strength."

Durrni, of 106<sup>th</sup> Avenue in the Jamaica, Queens, was arraigned today before Queens Criminal Court Judge Edwin Novillo on a complaint charging him with criminal possession of a weapon in the third degree, assault in the third degree as a hate crime, menacing in the second degree as a hate crime and aggravated harassment in the second degree. Judge Novillo set the defendant's return date for August 17, 2021. If convicted, Durrni faces up eight years in prison.

According to the charges, on June 20, 2021, around 9:15 p.m. the defendant encountered a man and woman walking in the vicinity of Liberty Avenue and Lefferts Boulevard. Without provocation, Durrni began to follow the pair and yell out anti-Muslim slurs, saying in sum and substance "Mohammad was a liar." At one point, the defendant allegedly pulled on the 24-year-old woman's hijab, telling her to take it off. When she did not comply, Durrni allegedly struck her in the arm and hit the 31-year-old man in the back.

About an hour later, said DA Katz, the defendant happened upon another couple walking on Inwood Street in Jamaica, Queens. Durrni began to follow them. Again, without cause, Durrni allegedly began ranting anti-Muslim statements, including saying in sum and substance "Mohammad was a liar." Then the defendant allegedly punched the 56-year-old woman in the face and head. The victim sustained a fractured nose as a result of the attack and had to be treated at an area hospital.

On Sunday, July 25<sup>th</sup>, according to the charges, the defendant was in front of 94-06 Sutphin Blvd., around 6:30 p.m., when he allegedly bumped a 38-year-old woman wearing traditional Muslim clothing into the street. The defendant yelled "Mohammad was a liar" and "Jesus tells the truth." When the victim attempted to call 911 on her cell phone, Durrni allegedly pulled out a knife, pointed it at the woman in a threatening manner before fleeing the area.

Tuesday, the defendant turned himself in at the 103<sup>rd</sup> Police Precinct in Jamaica, Queens, after seeing images of himself on newscasts about the investigation.

The investigation was conducted by Detective Michael Diaz, of the New York City Police Department's Hate Crimes Task Force.

Assistant District Attorney Michael Brovner, Bureau Chief of the District Attorney's Hate Crimes Bureau, is prosecuting the case, under the supervision of Executive Assistant District Attorney for Felony Trials Pishoy Yacoub.

*Criminal complaints and indictments are accusations. A defendant is presumed innocent until proven guilty.*

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