



MELINDA KATZ DISTRICT ATTORNEY

FOR THE DA'S WEEKLY EBLAST,
EMAIL REQUESTS TO
INFO@QUEENS.DA.ORG

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A Message from District Attorney

MELINDA KATZ

JUSTICE FOR SUBWAY AND BUS RIDERS

Our public transportation system is the lifeblood of our communities – it connects commuters to their jobs and children to their schools. The subways and buses must be safe for everyone.

A subway attacker was sentenced last month to 25 years to life in prison for a violent, unprovoked attack on a 57-year-old woman entering the Queens Plaza station in Long Island City in 2022.

The victim was kicked down the stairs, repeatedly struck with a hammer and her tote bag was stolen. She, thankfully, survived and testified before a jury that convicted the defendant of assault in the first degree and other crimes.

My office is also currently prosecuting another high-profile violent attack on our transit system – a man was seriously injured in May on an MTA Q9 bus. The defendant allegedly used a pen to stab another rider in the eye.

Those who cause mayhem or commit senseless acts of violence on our buses and subways will be brought to justice.

In Friendship,

Melinda Katz

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RELENTLESSLY WORKING TO KEEP QUEENS SAFE

The goal of the office of Queens District Attorney Melinda Katz is to do everything possible to keep the residents, workers and visitors of the borough safe. Halfway through the year, the numbers show that these efforts are making a real difference. There has been a remarkable reduction in shootings, robberies and more.

During the first six months of the year, there was a 25% decline in shootings in Queens and a 20% decrease in shooting victims, compared to the same period in 2024.

Robberies were down 28% and burglaries down 1%. Grand larcenies decreased by 15% and the theft of cars dropped by 6%.

“My office will continue doing everything possible to end senseless gun violence in our neighborhoods,” said DA Katz. “We are aggressively targeting drug and gun traffickers, gang members and others who cause havoc in our communities.”

DA Katz held two press conferences earlier this year highlighting the culmination of long-term investigations. In May, the DA alongside NYPD Police Commissioner Jessica S. Tisch, announced the indictment of 20 people charged with operating a complex car theft ring in the tri-state area.

The defendants allegedly stole 126 vehicles, ranging from BMWs, Mercedes-Benzes and Land Rovers to Dodge Hellcats and Hondas and more with a value exceeding \$4.6 million.

In January, the DA and Commissioner Tisch announced that a gun trafficking crew of 10 reputed Tren de Aragua gang members were indicted.

In addition to seizing 34 illegal firearms,

undercover law enforcement personnel also recovered “pink cocaine” during this long-term investigation that uncovered a multi-state trafficking operation.

The DA will not allow hate to gain a foothold in Queens. In June, she announced that a defendant was sentenced to 10 years in prison after pleading guilty to assault as a hate crime. After a Kew Gardens fender bender in October 2023, the defendant derided the 66-year-old victim as “turban man” and repeatedly punched him, knocking him to the ground. The victim died of a head injury the next day.

The DA hosted her 11th gun buyback event since taking office in January 2020. The event removed 74 weapons from the streets. The June event brought the total number of firearms recovered to 617.

In the first half of 2025, the DA's office processed nearly 31,000 arrests and conducted 24,000 arraignments. There have been 25,000 cases adjudicated.

The DA is laser focused on removing violent criminals, illegal guns and drugs from the streets of Queens.



ILLEGAL CANNABIS SMOKE SHOP SHUTTERED



The District Attorney's office continues to target illegal cannabis shops and recently shuttered another business – this one located on 90th Avenue in Hollis.

The shop, called Hollis Convenience, allegedly sold cannabis even though it was not a licensed dispensary. QDA investigators executed a court-authorized search warrant and found a trove of illegal marijuana allegedly being sold at the business. Items seized from the store shelves included colorful plastic pill-shaped bottles filled with what appeared to be cannabis flower, and an endless array of brightly colored packets that resembled kids' candy.

Earlier this year, the DA's office closed a mobile cannabis dispensary operating under the Long Island Expressway in Rego Park. The operators allegedly sold edibles – again in colorful cartoon-designed packaging. Law enforcement seized 4 pounds of leaf cannabis and a pound of concentrated cannabis.

And at the start of the year, the DA's team seized more than \$38,000 worth of marijuana products from another brick-and-mortar shop in Forest Hills.

Since November 2022, the DA's office working in conjunction with other law enforcement agencies, has confiscated more than \$25 million worth of products from 400 alleged illegal cannabis dispensaries.

In that time, more than 7,000 pounds of cannabis edibles have been seized, along with 12,000 pounds of cannabis flower and over 18,000 cannabis vape pens.



CASES OF INTEREST

The shocking case of a doctor charged with raping and sexually abusing patients and acquaintances is nearing a close after the defendant pleaded guilty.

Dr. Zhi Alan Cheng, a gastroenterologist, now stands convicted of four counts of rape in the first degree and three counts of sexual abuse in the first degree. The 35-year-old Astoria resident was arrested in 2022 after a woman accused the physician of rape and found numerous videos of herself and other women being sexually assaulted in the defendant's home.

At sentencing, Cheng faces 24 years in prison.



In a separate case, **Antonio Olmeda** was sentenced to 35 years in prison after a jury took just eight minutes to convict the defendant of two counts of attempted murder in the first degree, attempted aggravated assault of a police officer and attempted assault in the first degree.

Olmeda, 66 was stopped by cops on foot patrol in Jackson Heights in 2011. The defendant was wearing a fake moustache, fedora and trench coat disguise. When stopped by the officers, he pulled out a gun and fired at them. The officers were not injured, but a bullet did pierce the window of a nearby pediatric dentist's office.



QDA LEADERSHIP SUMMER PROGRAM

District Attorney Melinda Katz welcomed 31 students for the QDA Leadership Summer Internship, including three youngsters from the city's Summer Youth Employment Program. For six weeks, the 14- to 18-year-olds learned from legal professionals, explored career options, as well as participated in community service events.

The group helped with food distribution to combat food deserts in Long Island City and assisted the Astoria Houses Youth Enrichment

Services with neighborhood improvement projects, including painting, weeding and planting.

The youngsters learned from both prosecutors and defense attorneys about the importance of hard work and the value of surrounding oneself with positive influences. The students gained knowledge on entrepreneurship, building healthy relationships and recognizing the value of meaningful mentorships.



EMS CERTIFICATE OF RECOGNITION

The FDNY's EMS Station 49 in Astoria honored District Attorney Katz and the office's homicide prosecutors with a Certificate of Recognition following the recent conviction and sentencing of the man who fatally stabbed Captain Alison

Russo.

The EMS captain, who was 61 at the time of her death, served her community for 24 years and was a beloved fixture at Stationhouse 49.

