



718.286.6000  
WWW.QUEENSDA.ORG

QUEENS COUNTY DISTRICT ATTORNEY  
125-01 QUEENS BOULEVARD  
KEW GARDENS, NEW YORK 11415-1568



MELINDA KATZ  
DISTRICT ATTORNEY

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
WEDNESDAY, MAY 13, 2026

**CONTACT:** PRESS OFFICE (718) 286-6315  
[QDACommunications@queensda.org](mailto:QDACommunications@queensda.org)

**WOMAN INDICTED FOR FIRST-DEGREE ARSON AFTER SETTING FIRES AT THREE  
LOCATIONS IN MASPEETH THAT INJURED TWO**

*Defendant Allegedly Set Fire that Destroyed Chinese Restaurant and Injured Two Victims in Apartments  
Upstairs; Accused of Additional Fires at Jewish Center and Funeral Home  
Faces up to 25 Years, if Convicted*

Queens District Attorney Melinda Katz announced that Shaniqua Fort was indicted on charges of first-degree arson, reckless endangerment and other crimes for allegedly setting fires at several storefront locations along Flushing and Grand Avenues in Maspeth on April 13. The defendant allegedly started a blaze that destroyed a Chinese restaurant and the apartments above the business, which injured two occupants; set fire to an American flag in front of a funeral home; threw a brick through the window of an insurance office; and tossed an unknown object through the window of a Jewish center and then lit a fire outside the building.

DA Katz said: “As alleged, this defendant intentionally set multiple fires that gutted a local business, injured two victims, desecrated an American flag and damaged a Jewish center. During the chaos, the defendant also allegedly threw a rock through the window of a local storefront. My office has secured a grand jury indictment charging the defendant with upgraded first-degree arson and other crimes. She faces up to 25 years in prison, if convicted.”

Fort, 36, of Chicago, was arraigned today on an indictment charging her with arson in the first degree, arson in the second degree, two counts of arson in the third degree, reckless endangerment in the first degree, two counts of criminal mischief in the third degree, criminal mischief in the fourth degree, arson in the fifth degree, petit larceny and criminal possession of a weapon in the fourth degree.

Supreme Court Justice Toni Cimino continued remand and ordered the defendant to return to court on June 30. If convicted, Fort faces up to 25 years in prison.

DA Katz said that, according to the charges and investigation, on April 13, at approximately 9 p.m., Fort approached 888 Chinese Restaurant at 60-92 Flushing Avenue and removed a black trash bag from a trash can in front of the building. She then placed the bag into an alcove leading to an entryway, set it on fire and walked away from the location.

An occupant of a second-floor apartment above the restaurant shattered a window with his arm to climb out and escape the fire. He sustained lacerations, bleeding and substantial pain to his arm. Another victim was inside a second-floor apartment at the location and jumped from the window to avoid being burned. She was transported to a local hospital where she underwent surgery for two broken heels and treatment for a finger fracture, burns to multiple fingers and legs and soot inside of her throat and nose.

Several minutes after allegedly setting the fire at the Chinese restaurant, Fort approached D’Angelo’s Funeral Home at 64-18 Grand Avenue and set on fire an American flag hanging from the front of the building. She removed a second flag hanging from the front of the location and walked away.

Shortly afterward, Fort allegedly picked up a brick and threw it through the glass window of an Allstate insurance company office located at 65-02 Grand Avenue.

After that, Fort allegedly approached the Maspeth Jewish Center at 66-64 Grand Avenue, picked up an unknown object and threw it at a glass window, shattering it. The defendant then walked toward several objects along the side of the Jewish Center building and lit them on fire. Fort then went through her belongings, grabbed an unknown object and placed it into the fire, causing the fire to grow in intensity.

Fort was apprehended shortly afterward by members of the 104<sup>th</sup> Police Precinct.

Assistant District Attorney Samantha A. Tighe of the District Attorney's Felony Trials Bureau III is prosecuting the case, under the supervision of Assistant District Attorneys Rachel Buchter, Bureau Chief, Christine McCoy and Courtney Charles, Deputy Chiefs, and under the overall supervision of Executive Assistant District Attorney for the Supreme Court Trial Division Pishoy Yacoub.

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

#

**Note to Editors: Archived press releases are available at [www.queensda.org](http://www.queensda.org).**

