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Release #215-2009  
[www.queensda.org](http://www.queensda.org)

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
TUESDAY, DECEMBER 1, 2009

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**JACKSON HEIGHTS MAN PLEADS GUILTY TO HATE CRIME ASSAULT**

*Admits Stabbing Victim After Shouting Anti-Russian Slurs*

Queens District Attorney Richard A. Brown announced today that a 20-year-old Jackson Heights resident has pleaded guilty to first-degree assault as a hate crime for a 2007 attack in which he repeatedly stabbed a 25-year-old man while making anti-Russian remarks.

District Attorney Brown said, "The defendant targeted the victim because he thought he was of Russian heritage. Clearly this is not acceptable in Queens County, the most culturally diverse county in the nation. Crimes of hate will never be tolerated here. When they do, regrettably, occur, they will be condemned in the strongest possible terms and those responsible will be brought to justice to answer for their actions."

The District Attorney identified the defendant as Andy Acosta, 20, of 86-17 30<sup>th</sup> Avenue, in Jackson Heights, Queens. Acosta pleaded guilty yesterday before Queens Supreme Court Justice Daniel Lewis to one count of first-degree assault as a hate crime. Acosta is expected to receive eight years in prison and five years' post release supervision when he is sentenced on January 22, 2010.

District Attorney Brown said that, according to court records, Oltion Mala, 25, was in the vicinity of 32-16 Crescent Street, at approximately 9:10 a.m., on May 14, 2007, when he observed the defendant and approximately four other unapprehended individuals approach him in the street. With no provocation, Acosta then called the victim "You (expletive) Russian." When Mr. Mala asked what the problem was, Acosta pulled out a knife. Mr. Mala told him to stop playing and began to walk away. Acosta again called out, "(expletive) Russian." Mr. Mala told him not to say that and Acosta pushed him and hit him and the unapprehended other also struck him. Mr. Mala broke free and Acosta chased after him with his knife. The victim then ran into a nearby building for safety, but was followed into the building by the defendant, who stabbed him twice on his left and right side, three times on his forearm and once in the hand. The victim suffered a punctured lung, which led to a blood clot forming in his lung. He also suffered a stab wound through his forearm – the blade went through the top of his forearm and came out the bottom. He was admitted to the hospital in critical condition.

The case was investigated by Detective Anthony Caban of the NYPD's Hate Crime Task Force under the supervision of Inspector Michael J. Osgood, Commanding Officer.

The case was prosecuted by Senior Assistant District Attorney Michael E. Brovner of the District Attorney's Gang Violence and Hate Crimes Bureau, under the supervision of Assistant District Attorney Mariela Palomino Herring, Bureau Chief, and Michelle E. Goldstein, Deputy Bureau Chief, and the overall supervision of Senior Executive Assistant District Attorney for Trials James C. Quinn and Deputy Executive Assistant District Attorneys for Trials John H. Larsen and Robert J. Masters.

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**Note to Editors: Press release e-version posted at [www.queensda.org](http://www.queensda.org)**