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## Upstate Man Charged With Beheading His Estranged Wife

By [LIZ ROBBINS](#)

A man who founded a Muslim-American television station to help fight Muslim stereotypes is to appear on Wednesday in a suburban Buffalo court on charges that he decapitated his wife last week.

The man, Muzzammil Hassan, 44, went to a police station in Orchard Park, N.Y., on Thursday to report that his wife, Aasiya Zubair Hassan, was dead, Chief Andrew Benz said on Tuesday. Mr. Hassan told the police that her body could be found in the nearby office of the television station, Bridges TV. The police later arrested him on charges of second-degree murder, Chief Benz said.

On Feb. 6, Ms. Hassan, 37, had filed for divorce and obtained an order of protection against Mr. Hassan, Chief Benz said.

It was unclear on Tuesday night whether Mr. Hassan had legal representation.

The news of the killing stunned Buffalo, a city already overwhelmed with emotion by the commuter-plane crash that killed 50 people in the hamlet of Clarence Center on Thursday.

The gruesome death of Ms. Hassan prompted outrage from Muslim leaders after suggestions that it had been some kind of "honor killing" based on religious or cultural beliefs.

Dr. Sawsan Tabbaa, a Muslim community leader who teaches orthodontia at the State University at Buffalo, said, "This is not an honor killing, no way."

Dr. Tabbaa added, "It has nothing to do with his faith."

At the Muslim Community Center in Amherst, N.Y., on Tuesday, Dr. Tabbaa joined more than 200 others for early morning prayers and a funeral service for Ms. Hassan, who had been active at the center's mosque.

"She was more of a practicing Muslim" than her husband, said Hassan Shibly, Dr. Tabbaa's son, who worked for the television station with the Hassans before going to law school. "She really believed in the cause, wanting to present her faith in an accurate light and now people are blaming her very faith for her death."

Rabbi Bradley Hirschfeld, the president of the National Jewish Center for Learning and Leadership in New York, worked with Ms. Hassan, who was a programmer at the station, for three years and

said he and she were good friends. He said that when he first met Mr. Hassan, he considered him smart and charming.

Rabbi Hirschfeld said that Ms. Hassan had confided in him a few years ago about incidents of domestic abuse, but at the time she insisted that her husband was getting counseling. She later told Rabbi Hirschfeld that the counselor had told her she was safe.

“I knew there were issues in the marriage,” Rabbi Hirschfeld said. “I didn’t know it was this bad. My immediate response is horror and incredible sadness.”

The Associated Press reported on Tuesday that the police had responded in the past to domestic dispute calls at the Hassan house.

The couple had two children in elementary school and Mr. Hassan had two teenage children from a previous marriage, friends of the couple said.

At the television station on Tuesday, bouquets of flowers were left next to the locked door. One had a note: “In memory of Aasiya. May Allah keep you at peace and from any more harm.”

*Michael D. Regan contributed reporting from Orchard Park, N.Y.*

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