

Steve Marshall
Alabama Attorney General



For **press** inquiries only, contact:

Amanda Priest (334) 322-5694

William Califf (334) 604-3230

Page 1 of 1

Attorney General Steve Marshall Announces Eleventh Circuit Court of Appeals Affirms Denial of Relief for Capital Murderer Mohammad Sharifi

(Montgomery, Ala) – Attorney General Steve Marshall announced that the Eleventh Circuit Court of Appeals affirmed the Northern District of Alabama’s denial of habeas corpus relief for double murderer Mohammad Sharifi on June 23, 2026. Sharifi was convicted of capital murder in the Madison County Circuit Court and sentenced to death on March 11, 2005.

Sharifi, an Iranian national, came to the United States in December 1998 on a six-month tourist visa. Before that visa expired, he married Sarah Kay Smith, and he petitioned to have his immigration status changed from “tourist” to “legal alien.” Sharifi and Sarah separated in late 1999, and shortly thereafter, Sarah, who was accompanied by Derrick Brown, met with Sharifi’s caseworker at the Department of Citizenship and Immigration Services. As a result of that meeting, Sharifi’s petition was denied and his immigration status changed to “illegal alien” because his tourist visa had expired. On December 13, 1999, Sharifi purchased a pistol and forcibly entered the apartment he and Sarah shared. He left when the police were called but returned later that day, becoming even more agitated when he learned that Derrick was inside the apartment. That was the last day that Sarah and Derrick were seen alive. Sarah’s body was found on the banks of the Tennessee River on December 26, 1999, and Derrick’s was found nearby on New Years’ Day. Both had been shot in the head with the pistol Sharifi had purchased in December 1999, shoved into trash bags, and thrown into the river.

Sharifi was arrested by the FBI in Los Angeles, California, extradited to Alabama, and ultimately convicted of capital murder in Madison County. The jury recommended the death penalty, and the trial court sentenced him accordingly. Sharifi’s conviction and death sentence were affirmed on appeal, and his state postconviction litigation ended without relief. The Northern District of Alabama denied federal habeas relief, and the Eleventh Circuit has now correctly affirmed that court’s decision.

Attorney General Marshall commended Principal Deputy Solicitor General Robert Overing for his successful work on this case.

