



U.S. Department of Homeland Security

ICE Arrests 11 Iranian Nationals Illegally in the U.S. Over the Weekend

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Criminal illegal aliens arrested include an individual with admitted ties to Hezbollah, a known or suspected terrorist, and an alleged former sniper for the Iranian army

WASHINGTON — U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) arrested 11 Iranian nationals illegally in the United States over the weekend. ICE also arrested a U.S. citizen who threatened to kill ICE law enforcement while harboring an illegal alien from Iran. The weekend arrests reflect the Department of Homeland Security's (DHS) commitment to keeping known and suspected terrorists out of American communities.

"Under Secretary Noem, DHS has been full throttle on identifying and arresting known or suspected terrorists and violent extremists that illegally entered this country, came in through Biden's fraudulent parole programs or otherwise," said DHS Assistant Secretary Tricia McLaughlin. "We have been saying we are getting the worst of the worst out—and we are. We don't wait until a military operation to execute; we proactively deliver on President Trump's mandate to secure the homeland."

- On June 22, ICE Atlanta arrested **Ribvar Karimi** in Locust, Alabama. Karimi reportedly served as an **Iranian Army sniper** from 2018 to 2021 and at the time of his arrest, in his possession, he had an Islamic Republic of Iran Army identification card. He entered the U.S. on a [K-1 visa](https://www.uscis.gov/family/family-of-us-citizens/visas-for-fiancees-of-us-citizens) (<https://www.uscis.gov/family/family-of-us-citizens/visas-for-fiancees-of-us-citizens>), which is reserved for aliens engaged to be married to American citizens, in October 2024 under the Biden administration. Karimi never adjusted his status — a legal requirement — and is removable from the United States. He's currently in ICE custody, where he'll remain pending removal proceedings.



- On June 22, ICE Houston officials arrested **Behzad Sepehrian Bahary Nejad**, an alien with a final order of removal, who was **carrying a loaded 9mm pistol** at the time of his arrest. Sepehrian entered the U.S. in Houston on Dec. 9, 2016, on an [F-1 student visa](https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/study/student-visa.html) (<https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/study/student-visa.html>). On Aug. 19, 2017, Harris County police **arrested him for assaulting a family member by impeding breathing**; his wife told the local assistant district attorney that Sepehrian was threatening her and obtained a restraining order against him. She also alleged he was threatening her family in Iran. On July 23, 2018, the University of Texas terminated Sepehrian's status after he was placed on academic suspension. An immigration judge ordered him removed on Oct. 10, 2019, after he was released on an immigration bond; he filed a motion to reopen his case, which a Department of Justice immigration judge denied. Sepehrian is in ICE custody pending removal proceedings.



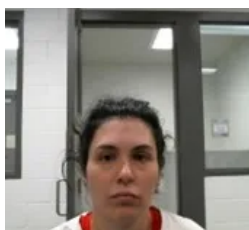
- Also in Houston, ICE arrested **Hamid Reza Bayat**, an Iranian national an immigration judge **ordered removed nearly 20 years ago**, on Aug. 4, 2005. Twice **convicted of drug crimes** and once convicted of driving on a suspended license, Bayat served time before receiving his final order of removal. He's now in ICE custody pending removal proceedings.



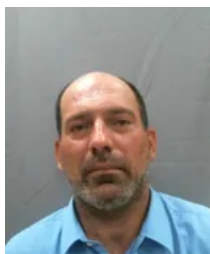
- On June 22, in Tempe — a Phoenix, Arizona suburb — ICE agents arrested **Mehrzaad Asadi Eidivand**, an Iranian citizen with a final order of removal **charged with being an alien in possession of a firearm**. Eidivand entered the U.S. in San Ysidro, California, in June 2012. In August 2013, an immigration judge granted him a voluntary departure, which allows an alien to leave the country without a formal ICE removal, but he never left. Eidivand will remain in ICE custody pending removal proceedings.



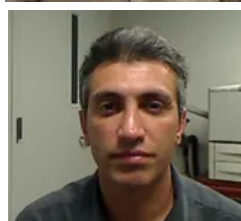
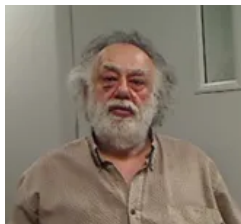
- At the same residence, officials arrested **Linnet Vartannivartanians**, a United States citizen, for threatening a law enforcement officer. She **threatened to open fire on ICE officials** if they entered her home, then said she would go outside and “shoot ICE officers in the head.” ICE officials obtained a search warrant for the residence and arrested the pair, who are now charged with federal crimes.



- On June 22, in Gluckstadt, Mississippi, ICE officers and agents arrested **Yousef Mehridehno**, an Iranian national and former lawful permanent resident. The U.S. government terminated Mehridehno's residency in October 2017 after determining he **lied on his original visa application and committed potential marriage fraud**. In February, Mehridehno was listed as a **known or suspected terrorist**, and he's now in ICE custody pending removal proceedings.



- On June 22, in Colorado Springs, ICE officials arrested **Mahmoud Shafiei** and **Mehrdad Mehdipour** — two illegally present Iranian nationals living together. Immigration officials first encountered Shafiei in Seattle, Washington, in January 1981; a judge ordered him removed in January 1987. His criminal history includes **state and federal convictions for drug crimes and arrests for assault and child abuse**. U.S. Border Patrol encountered Mehdipour in June 2023 during the Biden administration near Rio Grande Valley, Texas, and processed him as an expedited removal. Both men are in ICE custody pending removal proceedings.



- On June 22, in St. Paul, Minnesota, ICE arrested **Mehran Makari Saheli**, a 56-year-old Iranian national. He was **convicted of being a felon in possession of a firearm** in Minneapolis, where he was sentenced to 15 months in prison. He is a former member of off the **Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) with admitted connections to Hezbollah**. An immigration judge ordered him removed June 28, 2022, under the Biden administration, but he illegally remained in the U.S. Saheli is now in ICE custody pending removal.



- On June 22, ICE San Francisco arrested **Bahman Alizadeh Asfestani**, a 62-year-old Iranian national, with a **criminal history** that includes a 1994 **conviction for petty theft** and a 1995 **conviction of possession of a controlled substance for sale**. Asfestani was **sentenced to 10 years in state prison for the drug conviction** and is now in ICE custody pending removal proceedings.



- On June 23, ICE Buffalo arrested **Mohammad Rafikian**, a 65-year-old Iranian national **convicted of grand larceny, schemes to defraud, criminal impersonation and practicing as an attorney**.
- On the same date, ICE San Diego arrested **Arkavan Babk Moirokorli**, a 57-year-old Iranian national **convicted of forging an official seal**. Both are in ICE custody pending removal proceedings.

You can report crimes and suspicious activity by calling 866-DHS-2-ICE ([866-347-2423](tel:866-347-2423) (<tel:1-866-347-2423>)) or completing the [online tip form](https://www.ice.gov/webform/ice-tip-form) (<https://www.ice.gov/webform/ice-tip-form>).

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