



The United States Department of Justice

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September 16, 2026

ISIS-K Terrorist Sentenced to 20 Years in Prison for Role in Abbey Gate and Other Terror Attacks

WASHINGTON — Afghan national Mohammad Sharifullah, a member of the terrorist organization the Islamic State of Iraq and ash-Sham-Khorasan Province (ISIS-K), was sentenced today to 20 years in prison for his participation in a nearly 10 year conspiracy to provide material support and resources to a designated foreign terrorist organization.

“Sharifullah spent nearly a decade at the heart of a horrific campaign of terror, providing critical support for attacks against civilians around the world and, ultimately, contributed to the deaths of 13 U.S. servicemembers and dozens of others at Abbey Gate,” said Assistant Attorney General for National Security John A. Eisenberg. “Today’s sentence holds him accountable for the blood on his hands. The United States will pursue, capture, and bring to justice anyone, anywhere in the world, who takes part in the killing of our servicemembers or citizens.”

“Mohammad Sharifullah has dedicated his life to violence and murder for the sake of hatred,” said First Assistant U.S. Attorney Theophani K. Stamos for the Eastern District of Virginia. “We cannot restore the lives he has taken, but we can bring a measure of justice to the families who lost so much on that day.”

“With today’s sentencing Mohammad Sharifullah will be held accountable, on U.S. soil, for his role in the horrific ISIS-K terrorist attack which killed 13 American service members and numerous Afghan civilians,” said Assistant Director Jarod Brown of the FBI’s Counterterrorism Division. “The bombing occurred in Afghanistan — thousands of miles from the United States — but that did not stop the FBI and our interagency partners from bringing Sharifullah here to face

American justice. No matter where you are, and no matter how long it takes, we remain steadfast in our duty to bring to justice those who have harmed our citizens. I'm grateful to the men and women of the FBI, and our domestic and international partners, for their tireless efforts in this case."

"Sharifullah, an ISIS-K operative, pledged allegiance to a doctrine of hate and contributed to more than a dozen terrorist attacks — including the Abbey Gate bombing that killed 13 U.S. service members and dozens of Afghan civilians," said Assistant Director in Charge Darren Cox of the FBI Washington Field Office. "Over the years, he was a critical link in ISIS-K operations, relaying communications, conducting surveillance, and transporting suicide bombers. His sentence demonstrates the lengths the FBI will go to apprehend terrorists who harm Americans and deliver justice for the innocent."

According to court records and evidence presented at trial, on Aug. 26, 2021, American and other Coalition military forces were conducting a non-combatant evacuation operation at the Abbey Gate of the Hamid Karzai International Airport in Kabul, Afghanistan. Thousands of civilians were at Abbey Gate for evacuation.

ISIS-K leadership tasked Sharifullah with surveilling a road to the Hamid Karzai International Airport to ensure it was clear of Taliban checkpoints. At about 2:00 pm, Sharifullah travelled his assigned route and communicated to ISIS-K leadership that the route was clear. At approximately 5:36 p.m., ISIS-K operative Abdul Rahman al-Logari, whom Sharifullah knew previously from their time together in an Afghan prison, detonated a body-worn suicide bomb at Abbey Gate, killing 13 U.S. military service members and approximately 160 civilians.

Additionally, on June 20, 2016, a suicide bomber acting for ISIS-K detonated a bomb targeting Nepali security guards protecting the Canadian embassy in Kabul. Prior to the attack, Sharifullah conducted surveillance to prepare the suicide bomber and later transported the suicide bomber to the attack site.

On March 22, 2024, a group of ISIS-K gunmen attacked Crocus City Hall near Moscow. On behalf of ISIS-K, Sharifullah shared instructions on how to use AK-style rifles and other weapons with the attackers, and was in communication with them during the attack. The ISIS-K attackers used AK-style rifles to kill over 100 civilians in the attack.

In all, Sharifullah participated in over a dozen ISIS-K attacks from 2016 through his eventual apprehension in 2025. Throughout these attacks, Sharifullah was involved in various aspects of ISIS-K operations, including providing surveillance for attacks, transporting suicide bombers, transporting and cleaning armaments, communicating messages among ISIS-K personnel, and video recording explosions for ISIS-K propaganda purposes.

The FBI Washington Field Office investigated this case.

Assistant U.S. Attorneys John T. Gibbs, Avi Panth, and Reed Sawyers for the Eastern District of Virginia and Trial Attorney Ryan D. White for the Counterterrorism Section of the Department of Justice's National Security Division are prosecuting the case.

Related court documents and information are located on the website of the [District Court](#) for the Eastern District of Virginia or on [PACER](#) by searching for Case No. 1:25-cr-143.

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