

Born	23 March 1955 <u>Tehran, Iran</u>
Died	28 October 2024 (aged 69) Tehran, Iran
Cause of death	<u>Execution</u>
Citizenship	Germany
Education	<u>Software engineering</u> , <u>information technology</u>
Occupations	Journalist · software engineer
Children	<u>Gazelle Sharmahd</u> , <u>Shayan Sharmahd</u>

Forced Disappearance and execution in Iran

In February 2023, Sharmahd was sentenced to death by a Revolutionary Court in Tehran on charges of "corruption on earth by planning and directing terrorist attacks."^{[25][26]} The Iranian Supreme Court upheld the death sentence on 26 April 2023.^[27] Amnesty International condemned the trial as grossly unfair, reporting that Iranian authorities had tortured Sharmahd while he was in detention, held him in solitary confinement for extended periods, and denied him access to his Parkinson's disease medications and other treatments.^[25] The trial was overseen by Abolghasem Salavati, a judge loyal to the Iranian regime who presided over other prosecutions of dissidents.^[21]

The German and U.S. governments also condemned the trial as a sham,^[18] with German Minister for Foreign Affairs Annalena Baerbock saying Sharmahd "never had even the semblance of a fair trial."^[28] Sharmahd was repeatedly denied German consular assistance and access to trials.^[29] In response to the sentence, Germany expelled two Iranian diplomats.^[28]

In 2022, the Working Group on Arbitrary Detention (WGAD) released a 13-page document confirming Sharmahd's arrest, forced disappearance, human rights violations, and torture.^[30] The WGAD concluded that Sharmahd's detention was arbitrary and called for his "immediate unconditional release."^[30] In January 2023, Friedrich Merz, the chairman of the CDU/CSU parliamentary group, took over the political sponsorship for Sharmahd.^[31] Merz attempted to travel to Iran to verify the health of Sharmahd, but Iranian authorities denied him a visa. Merz repeatedly demanded Sharmahd's release and called for the German government "to significantly step up its efforts to release Jamshid Sharmahd."^[32] In April 2023, the European Council publicly condemned the death sentence of Sharmahd.^[27]

Sharmahd was executed in Tehran on 28 October 2024, at the age of 69.^{[5][12]} Iranian state media announced his execution.^[33] German Chancellor Olaf Scholz condemned the execution and called it "a scandal."^[34] Baerbock, the German foreign minister, condemned "the murder of Jamshid Sharmahd by the Iranian regime in the strongest possible terms."^[12] Sharmahd's daughter criticized the U.S. and German governments, contending that they had failed to do enough to secure Sharmahd's release.^[12] She called for the return of Sharmahd's body for burial in accordance with Zoroastrian burial rites.^[12] Masih Alinejad, an Iranian American activist who was reportedly the target of an Iranian assassination attempt foiled by U.S. authorities, said in response to the execution, "The Islamic Republic understands no language of peace or diplomacy. Their language is that of hostage-taking, execution, assassination and murder."^[35] Iran Human Rights, an Oslo-based NGO, tallied Sharmahd's killing as one of at least 166 executions carried out in Iran in October 2024.^[36]

On 5 November 2024, a spokesman for the Iranian judiciary asserted that Sharmahd died before he could be executed, contradicting the Iranian government's earlier statements.^[37] The official gave no details.^[37] The German Foreign Ministry, in response, stated: "His death was confirmed to us by the Iranian side. Jamshid Sharmahd was abducted by Iran and held for years without a fair trial, in inhumane conditions and without the necessary medical care. Iran is responsible for his death."^[36]

Diplomatic fallout

Sharmahd's abduction and execution worsened Germany–Iran relations.^[18] The day after he was put to death, Germany summoned Iran's charge d'affaires to register a formal diplomatic protest.^[18] The German ambassador to Iran, Markus Potzel, also submitted a protest to the Iranian authorities and was recalled to Berlin.^[18] The German Foreign Minister also ordered the closure of all three Iranian consulates in Germany (in Frankfurt, Hamburg, and Munich), leaving only the Iranian embassy in Berlin.^[18] As part of the closure of Iranian consulates general in Germany, 32 Iranian diplomats were stripped of their residence permits.^[38]

Josep Borrell, the European Union's High Representative for Foreign Affairs, called Sharmahd's execution "appalling" and said it was "seriously harming" EU–Iran relations.^[18] Borrell noted that the EU had imposed new sanctions against Iran shortly before Sharmahd was killed, and would consider additional "targeted and significant measures" against Iran, including adding its Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps to the EU's list of terrorist groups.^[18]

See also

- Extraordinary rendition
- List of foreign nationals detained in Iran

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External links

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