

26. Pejman Karshenas Najafabadi

Who was Pejman Karshenas Najafabadi? Pejman Karshenas Najafabadi was a 59-year-old Iranian man who had lived in the U.S. since 1991.

How did Pejman Karshenas Najafabadi end up in ICE custody? ICE took custody of Pejman Najafabadi on April 22, 2025. He was initially held at Winn Correctional Center in Louisiana before being transferred to the Louisiana ICE Processing Center in Angola on October 25, 2025. Medical records indicate he had chronic health conditions including cardiac issues and MRSA, and received ongoing medical care throughout his detention.

How did Pejman Karshenas Najafabadi die under ICE custody? He was incarcerated for nearly a year in a rural Louisiana prison despite suffering from chronic heart disease. On February 20, 2026, ICE Health Service Corps staff evaluated Pejman for ongoing medical concerns and transferred him to Riverbridge Specialty Hospital in Vidalia, Louisiana. Hospital staff reported he was stable without signs of distress on March 1st, 2026. He suffered a cardiac arrest at approximately 6 p.m. that same day, and was pronounced dead at 6:32 p.m. after unsuccessful resuscitation efforts.

What happened after Pejman Karshenas Najafabadi died under ICE custody? ICE noted Najafabadi's history of blood infection and heart disease during an initial health screening when he was detained in April 2025. According to the agency's statement upon his death, an immigration judge had previously ordered Pejman's removal in 2014, but he was released on court supervision because officials could not deport him to Iran at the time. Najafabadi received a second health screening for chronic illness on October 25, 2025 and a third on February 20, 2026, at which time the staff transferred him to a specialty hospital outside of the prison. He died of heart failure nine days later.

Ryan Costello, policy director at the National Iranian American Council (NIAC), said Najafabadi's death is "deeply disturbing. It is highly possible, if not likely, that the terrible conditions at ICE facilities played a role in Mr. Najafabadi's declining conditions and death." "Democratic lawmakers, civil rights groups, people jailed by ICE, and their family members have all reported medical neglect and other abuses in jails run by the agency and its contractors for months now. Immigrant rights groups have said those waiting for immigration hearings should not be incarcerated in the first place — especially if they have health problems."

Sources:

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