



ERIK NASARENKO
VENTURA COUNTY DISTRICT ATTORNEY
NEWS RELEASE



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Murder Suspect Held to Answer in Death of Simi Valley Woman

VENTURA, Calif. – District Attorney Erik Nasarenko announced today that ZARBAB ALI (DOB 01/04/97), of Hawthorne, has been held to answer for the first-degree murder of Simi Valley resident Rachel Castillo.

Following a two-day preliminary hearing, Ventura County Superior Court Judge Paul Feldman determined there was sufficient evidence to move forward to trial. In addition to the murder charge, Judge Feldman held Ali to answer on multiple special allegations, including the use of a deadly weapon, murder committed for financial gain, and murder committed by means of lying in wait. Ali is also charged with the unlawful mutilation, disinterment, or act of sexual contact upon a human corpse.

“This was a senseless and brutal killing that shocked our community,” said District Attorney Erik Nasarenko. “We remain committed to securing justice for Rachel Castillo and her loved ones for this horrific crime.”

On November 10, 2022, Castillo’s sister called 911 after returning to the Simi Valley apartment they shared and finding signs of a violent attack. Although Castillo was missing, her personal belongings—including her cell phone, car keys, and car—were left behind. Three days later, on November 13, 2022, her body was discovered in a remote area of the Antelope Valley.

After a thorough investigation by the Simi Valley Police Department Detective Bureau, Ali was arrested later that same day at his parents’ home in Victorville.

Senior Deputy District Attorney David Russell, of the Major Crimes Homicide Unit, is prosecuting the case.

“Our office will present the full scope of evidence in pursuit of justice,” Mr. Russell said. “We are grateful to the detectives, officers, and special agents who worked diligently on this case.”

Ali is scheduled to return to court for an information arraignment on April 23, 2025, at 9:00 a.m. in Courtroom 12 of the Ventura County Superior Court.

Case: 2022029127

Defendant Information:

Zarbab Ali (DOB 01/04/97)

Hawthorne

Charges:

- PC 187(a) – Murder
- HS 7052(a) – Unlawful mutilation, disinterment, or act of sexual contact with human remains

Special allegations:

- PC 12022(b)(1) – Use of deadly weapon
- PC 190.2(a)(15) – Murder by means of lying in wait
- PC 190.2(a)(1) – Murder for financial gain

