



**STATE CORONER'S COURT
OF NEW SOUTH WALES**

Inquest:	Inquest into the disappearance and suspected death of Cengiz SARAC
Hearing dates:	2 December 2025
Date of findings:	16 December 2025
Place of findings:	NSW State Coroner's Court, Lidcombe
Findings of:	Deputy State Coroner Carmel Forbes
File number:	2012/00173457
Catchwords	CORONIAL – missing person – suspicious circumstances – finding of death – referral to NSW Police Unsolved Homicide Unit
Representation:	Mr D Jordan SC with Mr A Wong, Counsel Assisting, instructed by Mr J Herrington, Crown Solicitors Office

Findings:	<p>Cengiz SARAC died on or shortly after 2 August 2005.</p> <p>The available evidence does not enable me to make findings as to the place, manner or cause of his death.</p>
Recommendation:	<p>To the New South Wales Commissioner of Police:</p> <p>I recommend that the death of Cengiz SARAC be referred to the NSW Police Unsolved Homicide Unit.</p>
Non-publication Order:	<p>Pursuant to s 74 (1) Coroners Act (2009) there is to be no publication of the Coronial Brief of Evidence</p>

Introduction

1. This is an inquest into the disappearance and suspected death of Cengiz Sarac (DOB: 16 February 1981). Mr Sarac was 24 years old when he was reported missing on 5 August 2005.
2. Mr Sarac was the beloved son of Necip Sarac (father) and Zafide Sarac (mother) and the beloved brother to two sisters. At the time of his disappearance he had one child, who was about to turn four when Mr Sarac went missing.
3. Since Mr Sarac's disappearance in 2005 there has been a long running investigation by NSW Police. That police investigation has persisted over the 20 years and most recently has been the subject of comprehensive and careful review by the current Officer in Charge, Detective Sergeant Chris Vavayis.
4. When the police suspect a missing person may have died, that suspected death becomes reportable to a coroner. Once such a report has been made, the coroner then has an obligation to investigate in order to answer a number of questions. The primary questions which a coroner seeks to answer is whether the person is in fact deceased. If the coroner reaches that conclusion, then the coroner must also seek to answer questions about where and when the person died and what was the cause or manner of their death. The manner of a person's death means the circumstances surrounding their death and the events leading up to it.
5. The police investigation into Mr Sarac's disappearance has included the deployment of a range of investigative strategies. Many of these

investigative methods involve materials and information which must remain confidential in order to preserve the integrity of the investigation. For present purposes it is sufficient to note that this confidentiality serves the best interests of the police investigation into the disappearance of Mr Sarac and that the investigation remains open.

6. On the available evidence, the circumstances of Mr Sarac's death are suspicious and involved foul play. Mr Sarac had a history of criminal activity and had been involved with criminal associates, some of whom were known to be capable of extreme violence. Unfortunately, all the evidence points to Mr Sarac passing away on or sometime shortly after 2 August 2005.

Evidence supporting a finding that Mr Sarac is deceased.

Suspicious circumstances

7. There is a large body of evidence which suggests that Mr Sarac might have been killed by associates with whom he may have had criminal connections. This body of evidence is wide ranging and refers to a variety of different persons, and circumstances, said to be linked with the death of Mr Sarac.
8. There is a relatively consistent body of information indicating that Mr Sarac may have been shot and killed, on or around the evening of 2 August 2005, by criminal associates, who were known to have a propensity for violence and who were known to have had dealings with Mr Sarac, including in relation to the supply of drugs.

9. In 2012 one person was charged with the murder of Mr Sarac, but those proceedings were discontinued by the Director of Public Prosecutions, in circumstances where a key witness changed their evidence during committal proceedings.

No signs of life

10. There have been longstanding and up to date signs of life inquiries, conducted, as part of the police and coronial investigation.
11. Senior Constable Vanessa Rolfe, Missing Persons Unit, provided statements dated 21 August 2006 and 30 August 2016. She made the following enquiries in relation to Mr Sarac:

- a) **First, in relation to the Department of Immigration, Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs (DIMIA)** - On 5 September 2005 inquiries were conducted, and the records showed no movements into or out of Australia for Cengiz Sarac since the date of his disappearance.

On 20 September 2005 further enquiries were made, and it was confirmed that Cengiz Sarac had three passports. A Turkish passport in Cengiz Sarac's name was last used in 1994. An Australian passport in Cengiz Sarac's name was cancelled by immigration. An Australian passport in the name of Chris Martin had its last movement recorded as an arrival on 16 June 2004.

- b) **Second, inquiries with financial institutions** – On 25 July 2006 requests were sent to a wide range of major banks. The requests

showed that Mr Sarac had an account with the Commonwealth Bank, but it had not been used since 1 August 2005.

- c) **Third, inquiries with Australian Police Services** – On 8 September 2005 inquiries were made with Missing Persons Units throughout Australia. Each State / Territory unit was asked to make inquiries with all known information sources such as the State Coroner's Office and Corrective Services. No record was found of Mr Sarac coming under notice in any other state or territory.

- d) **Fourth, checks with Centrelink** – On 2 September 2005 and 26 October 2005 inquiries were made with Centrelink. These records went no further than incorrectly indicating that Mr Sarac was still in Silverwater Prison, as of 18 July 2005.

- e) **Fifth, inquiries with the Health Insurance Commission** – On 19 September 2005 inquiries were made with Medicare. There was no record of any services used by Mr Sarac since his disappearance.

- f) **Finally, inquiries with the Australian Taxation Office (ATO)** – On 25 July 2006, inquiries were made with the ATO for further information. Tax returns for years ending 2005 and 2006 were not lodged under the name Cengiz Sarac, and there was no record in the ATO database under the name Chris Martin, which had also been used by Mr Sarac.

12. Further signs of life investigations occurred in 2012. Senior Constable Kathryn Fairbrother from the Missing Persons Unit performed updated searches as follows:

- a) **First, further inquiries with Missing Persons Units** - On 5 June 2012 requests under the name of Cengiz Sarac and his aliases (Chris Martin, Mike Jun, Jimmy Sarac and Geniz Sarac) were made to all Missing Person's Units in Australia. There was no record of Mr Sarac being located anywhere in Australia.
- b) **Second, further inquiries with Centrelink** – On 4 June 2012, a request was made to Centrelink to search their records for information relating to Mr Sarac and, in particular, if he received any government payment. No records were found.
- c) **Third, further checks with the Department of Immigration, Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs (DIMIA)** – On 27 July 2012 DIMIA confirmed that there were no records of Mr Sarac leaving or returning to Australia.
- d) **Fourth, follow up with the Health Insurance Commission** – On 5 June 2012 inquiries were made with Medicare. There was no record of any services used since Mr Sarac's disappearance.
- e) **Fifth, further inquiries with Financial Institutions** – On 4 June 2012 follow up requests were sent to major banks, to search their records. It was confirmed that there were no current records

located of Mr Sarac having an account, or accessing any account, since he was reported missing.

13. In 2019 and 2020, Detective Sergeant Vavayis conducted further updated checks with the same institutions including DIMIA, Centrelink, Medicare, and financial institutions. There were no positive results indicating any sign of life.
14. In 2019 and 2020, Detective Sergeant Vavayis also made further inquiries with the police forces in other Australian jurisdictions. There were no records showing any sign that Mr Sarac was alive in those jurisdictions.

Opinion of the OIC, Detective Sergeant Christopher Vavayis

15. In his capacity as the Officer in Charge, Detective Sergeant Vavayis, has continued to review and progress the investigation, over several years.
16. In his most recent statement dated 18 November 2025, Detective Sergeant Vavayis, stated that in his opinion, based on the available and up to date evidence, Mr Sarac died on or soon after 2 August 2005. He based this opinion on the following considerations:
 - a) *First*, while there have been historical sightings of Mr Sarac, none of these sightings have been confirmed. It is of note that the last reported sighting was nearly 20 years ago.
 - b) *Second*, signs of life inquiries have failed to produce any indication that Mr Sarac may still be alive. These inquiries indicate that Mr Sarac has not fled the country (using a legitimate passport), has not accessed known bank accounts, has not been in receipt of government

assistance and has not come to police attention in any Australian jurisdiction.

- c) *Third*, Mr Sarac lacked the financial means and sophistication to purposefully disappear.
- d) *Fourth*, there is no credible evidence suggesting Mr Sarac *intended* to disappear, nor is there evidence of him preparing to do the same. To the contrary, there is evidence to suggest that he intended to pursue his criminal activities, located in southwestern Sydney.

Conclusion

- 17. At the time of his disappearance Mr Sarac had a family, who he was communicating with, and was also in a partner relationship. In particular, evidence suggests that Mr Sarac did have a loving interest in the life of his son, who was nearly 4 years old at the time of Mr Sarac's disappearance, in 2005.
- 18. There is no credible evidence indicating that Mr Sarac was intending to 'disappear himself' by fleeing or hiding in other locations. There is also no credible evidence to suggest any intention on the part of Mr Sarac to commit suicide.
- 19. On the available evidence I am satisfied on the balance of probabilities that he is deceased and that he died on or shortly after 2 August 2005. I am also satisfied that he died in suspicious circumstances and that there should be a continuing investigation. I recommend that his death be referred to the NSW Police Unsolved Homicide Unit for ongoing

investigation in accordance with the protocols and procedures of that Unit.

20. The available evidence only allows me to make findings in relation to his identity and date of death. At this point of the investigation, I am unable to make findings in relation to the place, cause, or manner of his death.
21. I offer my condolences and sympathy to Mr Sarac's family.
22. I would like to acknowledge and express my thanks to the officer in charge, Detective Sergeant Christopher Vavayis for his exemplary investigation of this matter, his work is to be commended.
23. Finally, I thank the counsel assisting team, Mr Dean Jordan SC, Mr Andrew Wong, and Mr James Herrington, for the work they put into assisting me in this inquest.

Findings pursuant to s 81 (1) Coroners Act (2009):

Identity

The person who died was Cengiz Sarac

Date of death

Cengiz Sarac died on or shortly after 2 August 2005

Place of death

The available evidence does not allow for any finding to be made as to the place of Cengiz Sarac's death.

Cause of death

The available evidence does not allow for any finding to be made as to the cause of Cengiz Sarac's death.

Manner of Death

The available evidence does not allow for any finding to be made as to the manner of Cengiz Sarac's death.

Recommendation:

To the New South Wales Commissioner of Police:

I recommend that the death of Cengiz Sarac be referred to the NSW Police Unsolved Homicide Unit.

I close this inquest.

Magistrate Carmel Forbes

Deputy State Coroner

16 December 2025

NSW State Coroner's Court Lidcombe