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HARRISBURG TERROR SUSPECT CAME TO U.S. ON FAMILY VISA, HOMELAND SECURITY SAYS

Ahmed Aminamin El-Mofty was naturalized citizen who was admitted from Egypt years ago through a distant relative

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HARRISBURG, Pa. – A gunman who shot at police in a terror attack last week came to the U.S. on a family-based immigrant visa, the Department of Homeland Security said, highlighting a program President Donald Trump has criticized.

Ahmed Aminamin El-Mofty fired at a Harrisburg police officer Friday afternoon and later at a state trooper, wounding her before pursuing her, Dauphin County District Attorney Ed Marsico said. El-Mofty was later killed by police.

Department of Homeland Security acting press secretary Tyler Q. Houlton said Saturday that El-Mofty was a naturalized U.S. citizen who was admitted to the country from Egypt.

"The long chain of migration that led to (El-Mofty's) admission into the United States was initiated years ago by a distant relative," Mr. Houlton said [in a statement](#).

Mr. Houlton said incidents like the one involving El-Mofty "highlight the Trump administration's concerns with extended family chain migration." He said chain migration and the diversity visa lottery program have been exploited by extremists.

"Not only are the programs less effective at driving economic growth than merit-based immigration systems used by nearly all other countries, the programs make it more difficult to keep dangerous people out of the United States and to protect the safety of every American," Mr. Houlton said.

Mr. Marsico said there was "no doubt" El-Mofty was targeting police officers in the state capital.

"He fired several shots at a Capitol police officer and at a Pennsylvania state police trooper in marked vehicles," Mr. Marsico said.

The gunfire began shortly after 4 p.m. Friday, when El-Mofty fired several shots at a state Capitol officer in downtown Harrisburg, striking his car several times and sending one shot "that went very close to hitting him," Mr. Marsico said. About 20 or 30 minutes later, he fired several shots at the state trooper, striking her with one of those shots.

The trooper is "doing well," is in good condition and is expected to make a full recovery, Mr. Marsico said.

El-Mofty pursued the trooper to a residential neighborhood, where city and state police encountered him.

"He approached them with two handguns...firing many shots at those police officers," and the officers returned fire, killing El-Mofty, Mr. Marsico said.

El-Mofty had ties to the Middle East and recently traveled there, Mr. Marsico said.

A relative of El-Mofty, Ahmed Soweilam, [told PennLive.com](#) that he and his family don't know what to make of the reported actions of his sister's ex-husband.

"That's not his behavior at all," said Soweilam, co-owner of a Halal store in Camp Hill. "That's not him. I still don't believe it."

Mr. Soweilam said the family had been estranged from El-Mofty, who had separated from Mr. Soweilam's sister about six years ago. He said El-Mofty had no history of violence or mental illness.