

Pak executes 'teen killer' amid international outcry

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Islamabad: Pakistan today hanged a convicted 'teen' killer after postponing his execution four times amid opposition from human rights groups which said he was a juvenile at the time of crime in 2004.

Shafqat Hussain, whose case sparked international outcry, was executed in Karachi Central Prison in the wee hours.

Hussain, a resident of Pakistan-occupied Kashmir, was arrested and convicted in 2004 for the kidnapping and killing of a seven-year-old boy in Karachi.

His all appeals were turned down.

Initially he was scheduled to be hanged on January 14 but the execution was to be postponed as a controversy cropped up about his age.

Various local and international human rights groups contended that he was convicted at the age of 14 and was deprived of the juvenile laws.

United Nations rights experts have said his trial "fell short of international standards" and asked Pakistan to investigate claims he confessed under torture, as well as his age.

Under Pakistan Juvenile Justice System, no one can be hanged for a crime committed before the age of 18.

Those opposing his hanging said the issue of age was overlooked.

Interior Minister Nisar Ali Khan ordered an inquiry in March to establish the veracity of the lawyers' contention that Hussain was a minor at the time of sentencing.

After a probe, it was found that Hussain was 23 at the time of crime.

But the legal wrangling went on as the Hussian's lawyer first challenged the case in Islamabad High Court which rejected their pleas.

Later, the case was taken to the Supreme Court which also rejected arguments about his age.

The hanging was postponed four times.

Pakistan lifted the ban on executions in December 2014 following a Taliban attack on a school in Peshawar that killed more than 150 people.

Pakistan has hanged around 180 convicts since restarting executions.

- PTI