

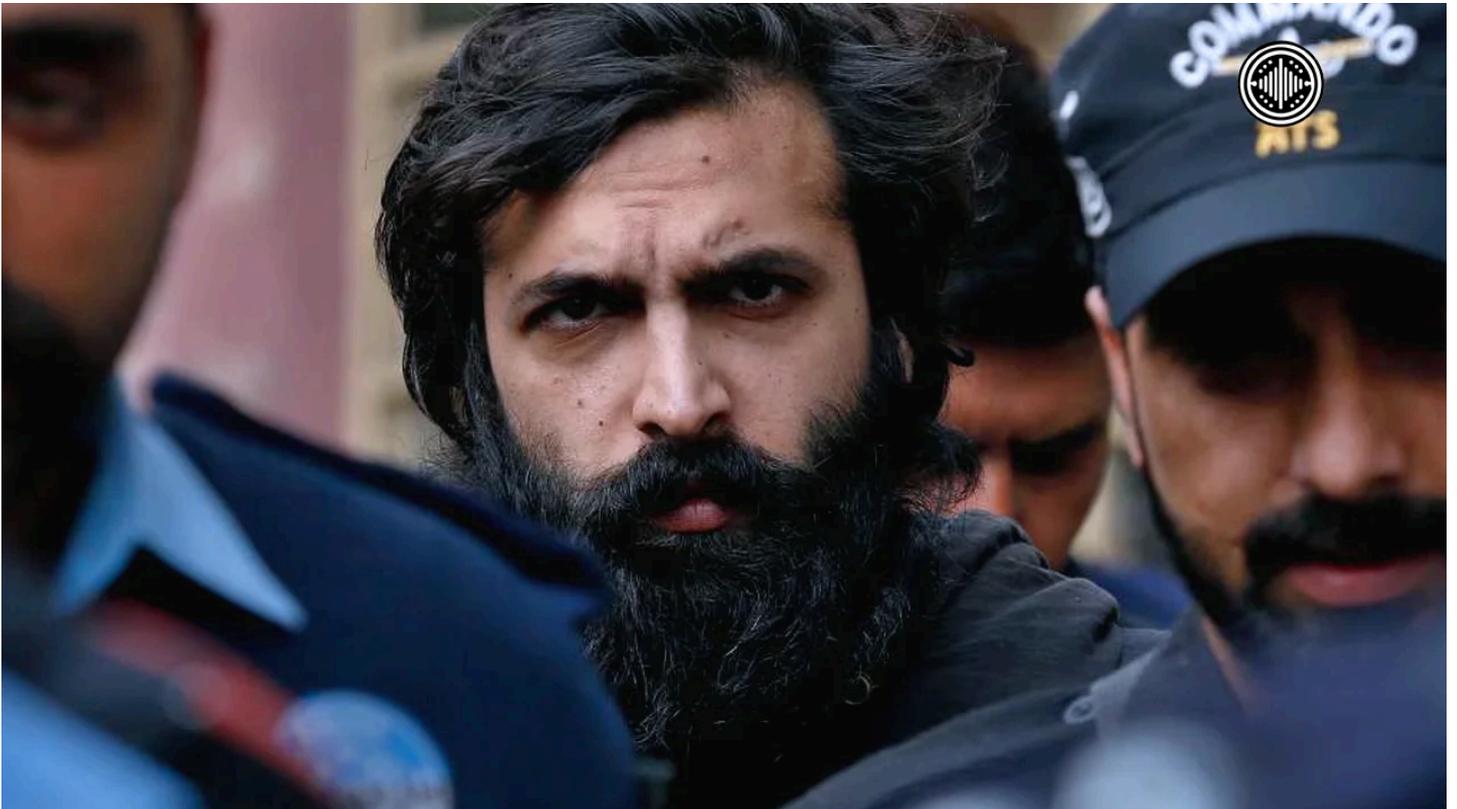
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Zahir Jaffer Requests Review of Death Sentence in Noor Mukadam Case

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Zahir Zakir Jaffer, convicted in the 2021 murder of Noor Mukadam, has filed a review petition in the Supreme Court of Pakistan (SCP) to challenge his death sentence. The petition follows the Court's May 2025 ruling upholding the penalty, and represents one of Jaffer's final legal avenues aside from a potential presidential clemency plea.

Noor Mukadam, a 27-year-old daughter of former diplomat Shaukat Mukadam, was found tortured and beheaded in July 2021 at Jaffer's residence in Islamabad's F-7/4 area. Jaffer, a dual national and heir to a

prominent business family, was convicted in February 2022 by a sessions court for murder, rape, and abduction. He received the death sentence for murder, 25 years for rape, and 10 years for abduction.

The Islamabad High Court upheld the murder conviction in 2023 and converted the rape sentence to a second death sentence. However, the Supreme Court later revised this, commuting the rape sentence to life imprisonment and reducing the abduction sentence. Jaffer's domestic staff, who had initially been sentenced for abetment, were acquitted and released for time served.

Jaffer's legal counsel argues that the prosecution's reliance on CCTV footage and digital video recorder (DVR) evidence lacked a proper chain of custody. They also cite the absence of a formal mental health evaluation during the trial, claiming this oversight undermined the fairness of the proceedings.

The review petition, filed under Article 188 of the Constitution, will be heard by the same bench that issued the original verdict. Legal experts say the scope of relief is narrow, and if the review fails, Jaffer's final option would be a mercy petition to the President of Pakistan under Article 45 of the Constitution.

The case has been a flashpoint in Pakistan's ongoing struggle against gender-based violence. It received widespread public attention due to the horrific nature of the crime and the victim's prominent background. While many celebrated the verdict as a milestone for women's rights, some critics noted that less privileged victims of similar crimes rarely receive the same level of judicial attention or media coverage.

Justice in Noor Mukadam's case was seen by many as a crucial test of the legal system's willingness to hold powerful individuals accountable.

As Zahir Jaffer seeks clemency, the case continues to symbolize both progress and the enduring challenges in protecting women's rights in Pakistan.