5.1. Article 15(a) QR: death penalty or execution

COMMON ANALYSIS
Last update: October 2026

For general guidance on the country guidance approach to this section, see ‘EUAA, Article 15(a) QD/QR: death penalty or execution in Country Guidance: explained, February 2026’.

The analysis below is based on the following EUAA COI products: Country Focus 2026, 1.2., 1.3., 4.1.1., 5.4., 5.8.; Country Focus 2024, 5.7.; Country Guidance should not be referred to as a source of COI.

The capital punishment can be imposed for over 30 distinct crimes, according to Pakistan legal system. Under the Pakistan Penal Code (PPC), the death penalty may be imposed for murder and blasphemy and is further specified for certain acts, including kidnapping for ransom or hostage-taking, under the Anti-Terrorism Act (ATA). In 2025, a significant increase in death sentences was reported, with at least 225 issued, compared to 174 in 2024. However, a *de facto* moratorium on the implementation of the death penalty has been in place since 2019, with no executions reported since then.

State actors are familiar with the practice of extrajudicial killings. For example, ‘fake encounters’ by the Pakistani police is a recurrent phenomenon. Execution could also be the outcome of initiatives by several non-state actors, such as TTP, ISKP and ISPP, SSP and LeJ, as well as mob groups.

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As indicated under 4. Refugee status, some profiles of applicants from Pakistan may be at risk of death penalty or execution (e.g. 4.1.3. Human rights defenders and activists, 4.6. Religious minorities, 4.7. Individuals (perceived as) transgressing Islamic norms, 4.10. Persons with diverse SOGIESC), and if such risk is substantiated, and all the other qualification criteria under refugee status are met, those individuals would qualify for refugee status.

If nexus to a reason for persecution is not substantiated, Article 15(a) QR would apply. In some cases, the death penalty would have been imposed for a serious crime committed by the applicant, or for other acts falling within the exclusion grounds (Article 17 QR) and, therefore, exclusion should be examined (see 8. Exclusion).

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